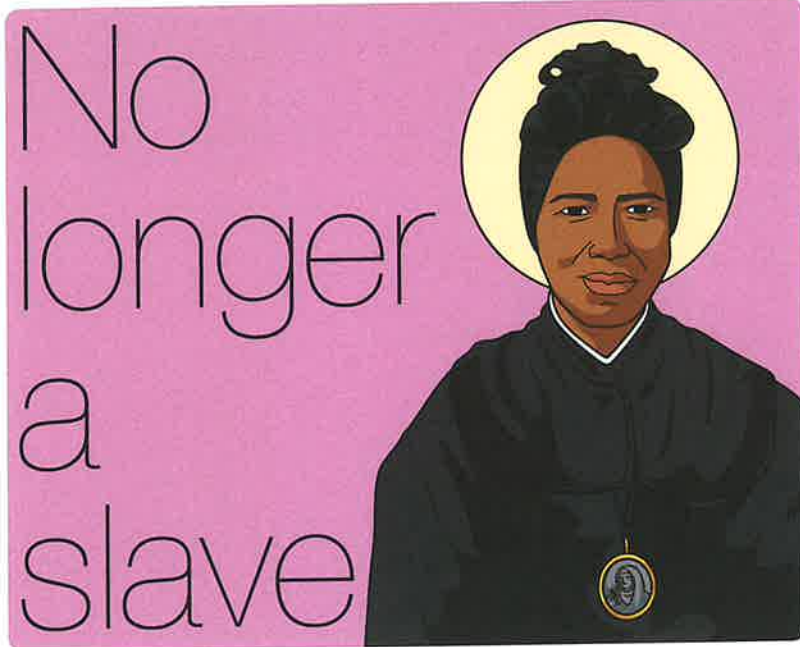


SUNDAY *Plus*

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time **Divine Office Week I** Year A

Day for Victims of Trafficking



I am thinking of the African Josephine Bakhita, canonised by Pope John Paul II. She was born around 1869 (she herself did not know the precise date) in Darfur in Sudan. At the age of nine, she was kidnapped by slave-traders, beaten till she bled, and sold five times in the slave-markets of Sudan. Eventually she found herself working as a slave for the mother and the wife of a general, and there she was flogged every day till she bled; as a result of this she bore 144 scars throughout her life. Finally, in 1882, she was bought by an Italian merchant for the Italian consul Callisto Legnani, who returned to Italy... Here, after the terrifying "masters" who had owned her up to that point, Bakhita came to know a totally different kind

of "master"... Up to that time she had known only masters who despised and maltreated her, or at best considered her a useful slave. Now, however, she heard that there is a [master] above all masters, the Lord of all lords, and that this Lord is good, goodness in person. She came to know that this Lord even knew her, that he had created her – that he actually loved her... Now she had "hope" – no longer simply the modest hope of finding masters who would be less cruel... "I am awaited by this Love. And so, my life is good." Through the knowledge of this hope, she was "redeemed", no longer a slave, but a free child of God.

Pope Benedict XVI, 2007, Spe Salvi, 3

Lord, fill my heart with your goodness.
Dwell in me and let me know your peace.
Enter into the dark places of my life –
there let there be light
that I may overflow with your love
and reflect your forgiveness
bringing forth the fruits of love and joy and peace.
✠ Amen.

When you fall in love

If you fall in love then it's impossible to separate life and breath from prayer. Prayer is simply union with God. Prayer does not need words. When people are in love, they look at each other, look into each other's eyes... Neither of them talks... Such is the life of prayer with God. You enter into God and God enters into you, and the union is constant...

God's love is insatiable. He wants us to go into the depths of his heart. But his heart is fathomless. Our defencelessness means to do his will... It means to forgive all enemies, great or small. It means to be his reflection. To forgive everyone who in the smallest way upset or hurt us is to be a reflection of his loving heart. So to be defenceless and to forgive is to be free.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty, Poustinia

We want to be a synodal Church, a Church that moves forward, a Church that always seeks peace, that always seeks charity, that always seeks to be close above all to those who are suffering.

Pope Leo



Saints

St Martin de Porres: the embracer

By Sr Thérèse Garman OLP

Martin was the son of a black, freed woman and a Spanish grandee. In childhood, he experienced prejudice as local Indians were discriminated against and his father, ashamed of Martin's dark complexion, abandoned him. He recognised the need for social justice and by God's grace was able to bear the perceived inadequacy of his origins. Martin embodied a mix of races and heritages and saw beyond differences. He was a bridge-builder reaching out in compassion into another person's world to bring healing and unity. He healed a high-ranking Spanish official, thus showing the powerful folly of division, oppression and hatred – all obstacles to receiving God's healing grace. He treated everyone regardless of their colour, race or status, including slaves brought from Africa. As a Dominican, he tended those forgotten, disenfranchised, maligned and overlooked by society. He begged for alms to feed one hundred and sixty poor people daily. Today, we are called to shun prejudice and embrace the humility and social justice modelled by Martin.

Sr Thérèse Garman is a Sister of Our Lady of Providence and a treasured former member of the Redemptorist Publications editorial team

READINGS

Today:
Isaiah 58:7-10
1 Corinthians 2:1-5
Matthew 5:13-16

Monday:
1 Kings 8:1-7, 9-13
Mark 6:53-56

Tuesday:
1 Kings 8:22-23, 27-30
Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday:
1 Kings 10:1-10
Mark 7:14-23

Thursday:
1 Kings 11:4-13
Mark 7:24-30

Friday:
1 Kings 11:29-32; 12:19
Mark 7:31-37

Saturday:
1 Kings 12:26-32;
13:33-34
Mark 8:1-10

Next Sunday:
Ecclesiasticus 15:15-20
1 Corinthians 2:6-10
Matthew 5:17-37