

Sunday, May 23, 2021

SOLEMNITY OF PENTECOST

Sing a new church into being

Pentecost celebrates crowded places, multiple languages, and diverse people uniting in one Spirit. It's a hard feast to celebrate during a pandemic in an era clouded by social conflict. All the more reason to challenge ourselves by celebrating not only what makes us the same, but also what makes us different. God showers on the world "gifts that differ," as Benedictine hymnist Delores Dufner declares. So "Bring the hopes of every nation;/ bring the art of every race. /Weave a song of peace and justice;/ let it sound through time and space." And let the church say: Amen!

TODAY'S READINGS: Day: Acts 2:1-11; Galatians 5:16-25 or 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13; Sequence Veni Sancte Spiritus; John 20:19-23 (63). "There are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone."

Monday, May 24, 2021

MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

The mother of all feasts

In 2018, Pope Francis created the new Marian memorial that the universal church celebrates today, the Monday after Pentecost. The title "Mother of the Church" was bestowed on Mary in 1964 by Pope Saint Paul VI at the closing of the Second Vatican Council. Her role as mother of the church goes back to when Jesus, on the cross, gave her and the beloved disciple to one another and to when she became the mother of Christ, whose body we are all members of. Not everyone has a mother figure to rely on—know that you can always rely on the mother of us all.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 3:9-15, 20 or Acts 1:12-14; John 19:25-34 (572A). "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son.'"

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

MEMORIAL OF MARY MAGDALENE DE' PAZZI, VIRGIN

A Spirit for the dry season

When Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi became a Carmelite nun in 1583, she couldn't foresee the great physical suffering from an unknown disease that would besiege her. Nor could she foresee having the same type of ecstatic religious visions—followed by years of "spiritual dryness"—as did another Carmelite saint, Teresa of Ávila. Magdalene's bout of spiritual dryness, so severe that she considered suicide, ended on Pentecost in 1590. With Pentecost 2021 so recently behind us, pray as she did: "Come, Holy Spirit . . . Come, as you descended on Mary, that the Word might become flesh and work in us through grace."

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 35:1-12; Mark 10:28-31 (348). "Give to the Most High as he has given to you, generously."

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

MEMORIAL OF PHILIP NERI, PRIEST

Now is the time to do good

In the middle of Rome in the 16th century lived a man whose joyful nature made him something of a people magnet for both the powerful and the poor. Saint Philip Neri was a deeply spiritual man who exuded natural warmth, listened well, and in loving generosity, led others to know God. This spiritual director, priest, and confessor was known to ask, "Well, when shall we begin to do good?" It is no surprise that Neri, known as the "Apostle of Rome,"

inspired followers to join him in caring for the sick and the poor. Where can you do some good today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 36:1, 4-5a, 10-17; Mark 10:32-45 (349).

"For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve."

Thursday, May 27, 2021

MEMORIAL OF AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY, BISHOP

Can't win them all

Augustine of Canterbury, memorialized today, is remembered as a major figure in evangelizing England. The renowned Canterbury Cathedral was built on the site of a church and monastery he built around the end of the sixth century. In spite of his stature now as "Apostle of the English," he met with bitter disappointment, too. His efforts to bring the English bishops in line with Rome were roundly rebuffed, a disappointment he took to his death. Can you let go of your failures, knowing that, like Augustine, they do not define your life?

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 42:15-25, Mark 10:46-52 (350). "He began to cry out and say, 'Jesus, son of David, have pity on me.'"

Friday, May 28, 2021

Give a fig!

Figs are a popular fruit in the Bible, from Genesis with Eve and Adam wearing fig leaves clear through the Book of Revelation's apocalyptic falling of winter figs. Why so many figs? The fig itself is sweet and has lots of dietary fiber, calcium, and various minerals and vitamins. It is a great source of energy and flavor. Perhaps because it is so plentiful, delicious, and nutritious, the fig is also rich in symbolism for health and abundance. In the gospels, Jesus expects us to be like figs—to be "nutritious" to others and abundant in our presence and giving. Let us go forth to nurture the world!

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 44:1, 9-13; Mark 11:11-26 (351). "As they were leaving Bethany Jesus was hungry. Seeing from a distance a fig tree in leaf, he went over to see if he could find anything on it."

Saturday, May 29, 2021

MEMORIAL OF PAUL VI, POPE

A Pentecostal pope

The ecumenical movement received a much-needed boost during the papacy of Saint Pope Paul VI (1963-78). After the Second Vatican Council in the mid-1960s, Pope Paul went out of his way to promote ecumenical dialogue and partnership. When asked by a cardinal for permission to initiate a joint Catholic-Protestant translation of the Bible, Paul is said to have responded, "I am totally in favor!" He issued formal approval later that year on Pentecost Sunday, our recently celebrated feast commemorating the moment when the Holy Spirit allowed believers of all backgrounds and languages to truly understand each other. Come, Holy Spirit!

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 51:12cd-20; Mark 11:27-33 (352). "By what authority are you doing these things?"

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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