

ST. ANGELA MERICI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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MAY 23, 2021

PENTECOST SUNDAY

We Welcome Into The Church Our Newly Confirmed

Ava Marie Amandine Anders
Kaitlyn Elizabeth Ann Seton Andrachik
Graciannie Grace of Lerida Back
Madison Grace Bammerlin
Paige Elizabeth of Hungary Bammerlin
Daniel St. John the Baptist Becker
Matthew Gabriel Bloom
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Erin Catherine of Siena Carney
Benjamin Anthony of Padua Choma
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Brian Michael the Archangel Conroy
Kennedy Gemma Galgani Crandall
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Hannah Catherine Laboure Danburg
Nolan Leo the Great Davis
Cameron P. Ignatius of Loyola Drozdz
Grace Catherine of Siena Fitzpatrick
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Annaliese Gemma Galgani Monahan
Nora Joan of Ark Mooney
Joselyn Philomena Moore
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Joseph Charles Borromeo O'Neill
James Ignatius of Loyola Pacetti
Jack Pio of Pietrelcina Pofok
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William Christopher Sowell
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Sienna Cecilia of Rome Stephens
Drew Paul the Apostle Styers
Kaylee Luigi Synk
Lily Therese of Lisieux Thompson
Cristian Juan Diego Trump
Vincent Joseph Valente
Jack James the Greater Wallenhorst
Tegan Veronica Webb
Brady Sebastian Weir
Luke Christopher Wilkins
Thomas Genesius of Rome Wilson

Sacrament
of CONFIRMATION

Dear Friends,



A blessed feast of Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Easter, the close of the Easter season as we continue our pilgrimage of evangelization in the world.

Pentecost Sunday, a joyous occasion in Christianity and celebrated with red flowers in the world, is often called the "birthday of the Church". Why red? In some countries the feast is called *Festa Rosalia*, the Rose Feast. The Greeks call it *Rousalia*. But it is in Eastern Europe where the red **peony**, which is also called "Mary's rose," has been associated with Pentecost for over a thousand years. The understanding is that its "flaming red petals represent the flaming tongues of the fire of the Holy Spirit." In Germany the Pfingstrose (German for peony) is also known as the "Pentecost rose," and churches are decorated accordingly. So when you see peonies, think of Pentecost!



The beautiful artistic representation of Pentecost by El Greco gives us a hint at the powerful spirituality of the feast. Here are some reflections for us as we contemplate the joy and challenge of Pentecost now in this 21st Century:

Pentecost Sunday—CYCLE B Text: Acts 2:1-11



Happy Birthday

The text from the Book of Acts this Lord's Day begins with these intriguing words: "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come;" many have always wondered what the words "fully come" mean. What if 'Dr.' Luke the evangelist is telling us that the festivities of the day, the Jewish Pentecost celebration around the Temple, had come to its fulfillment? In other words, the Jewish feast was over – they had done all the celebrating they could do. Those who attended the festivities were expecting nothing less, nothing more, just worship as they had always had it for a thousand years on this feast day celebrating the harvest.

But what happened that day was hardly ordinary. The people attending the feast came expecting a Jewish festival. What they ended up experiencing was the birth of a new work

of God in a group of rag-tag, uneducated, simple people. Those first Christians huddled in an upper room, frightened for their very lives, thinking the Romans who had but a few weeks ago pinned their blessed teacher to a cross would soon be rapping at the door. They would be next: found, named, dragged into court, crucified, dead. Hardly something worth celebrating.

But in that moment when expectation sat down in the lap of fear, we are told the Spirit of God rushed upon those first believers and the Church took its first gasping breath. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. Pentecost is the day when we celebrate the beginning of what has spanned almost two thousand years of witness across every culture of the world. We are all the sons and daughters of those first believers who met in an upper room a long time ago.

 **There can be at times much misunderstanding about Pentecost.** Let's take a look at some of those misunderstandings and then ask, "*What does this day mean for us?*" – **to see first that Pentecost is the creation of a special people, not the creation of special effects.** We like special effects. We hunger for experience. And if we are not careful, we will read this story and conclude, "*Pentecost is a special effects experience*" and miss the enduring meaning of the story. Far more important than the heart stopping gasp of a Las Vegas show, **God creates a new people at Pentecost.** Special effects are the stock and trade of Hollywood. And they do it quite well. God's business is creating a new people who are unique: called to trumpet to the world a distinctive perspective on life. "Listen. Hello! Life does not have to spiral down into defeat and despair and disillusionment. Rather, in Jesus Christ, life is like a joyful birthday party that moves toward resurrection. God has called us from the darkness into light. God has set our face toward a new reality. We who worship this Pentecost are God's special people who live toward and into that calling."

Secondly, we are wise to remember that Pentecost is the birthday of the Church, not its life experience. You may have seen the movie, "*The Apostle*," with Robert Duvall: a gripping, disturbing film at many levels. One of the many impressions one has walking out of the theater is that to be a Pentecostal Christian is to be a disciple whose faith is like that of "the apostle." *When in fact the Scriptures clearly teach that the day of Pentecost was the Church's birthday, not the Church's life experience every day.*

 **Much like our fascination with the birth of our Lord at Christmas,** we of faith are tempted to be so fascinated with the birth of the Church we miss the larger story being told. We think the birth experience is the purpose of life rather than its beginning. God calls us in Christ to celebrate the Church's birthday, but to move beyond it into the life that God calls us to have and to be in Christ. Our best evidence of being Pentecostal Christians to live out our calling to be God's people through our service to others, our care for the poor and needy, our willingness to be generous if all dimensions of our life.

There is a third reminder tucked in this text: the coming of the Spirit empowers the Church to speak of Jesus Christ and to live in his power and his love. When Saint Peter stands to preach to the crowd that first Pentecost Sunday, **he does not talk about the experience of Pentecost. He talks about the Christ who is behind the experience of**

Pentecost. His sermon soars because he tells the story of our Lord's life, death, and resurrection, pointing that massive congregation to place their faith in this One who died and rose again.



We of Christian faith today can be tempted to speak more about the spiritual experiences we have than the Lord we serve.

Not surprising, we ape the culture in which we live, *a culture intoxicated by and with feelings*. Isn't it interesting when news people interview folk today on television one of their first questions is, "How did you feel about that?" We are very "into" our emotions, quick to tell people how we feel about this person or that event. And all of us have opinions, don't we?

Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost and talked about Jesus. He said, "Jesus is the one whom you crucified. Jesus is the one God raised from the dead. Jesus is the one who can set you free." Someone has said, "If you are thirsting for the experience it will be the experience that you will have." But if you are longing for a life brimming with joy and deep meaning, there is only One to follow. His name is Jesus Christ. Peter talked about Jesus.



Now what does this day mean for us? It means at the very least that we would be wise to dress for the work we have been given rather than the weather. Experiences come and go like the weather. The weather changes all time, the emotional, trendy weather of the human family. Trends and ideas, good and difficult times will come and go. If we dress for the weather, rather than our work, we are going to be sorely disappointed.

Pentecost reminds us that we follow Jesus not because the weather is fair, but because he has given us good work to do. Our assignment is to stand up where we work, or where we study, or where we live, or where we do our business, and to live our lives in word and action that dares reveal the good news that grace is alive on this planet. Hope will have the last word. Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, calls us to be faithful to our work *regardless of the weather*. We have good work to do. That work is speaking Good News, living the faith we say we believe, being God's people of hope and grace. Happy Birthday, people of God! Amen.

Some very wise advice! Now here is a reflection from Fr. Foley:



Too Deep for Words! *The most essential thing we can say is that the Holy Spirit is completely and truly God.*



This is the last Sunday of the Easter season! Its Mass is vivid and exciting. We hear from Sacred Scripture the following:

Suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were.

Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. (First Reading)



Wouldn't you have loved to be there?

How thrilling! Even more delightful, look at the wording. The noise was not an actual wind but something "like" a wind. And these were not tongues of fire, but tongues "as of fire" (i.e., "as if they were made of fire"). These were marvels that could not be described "as is." So the writer uses metaphors. Imagine it this way:

There was this sound that came from the sky, something that sounded like, uh, oh, let's see, uh, wind! That's it. It wasn't wind but that is the closest I can get. And then stuff that looked sort of like chunks of fire, or maybe like tongues made out of fire. Only it wasn't really fire. Or tongues either. Oh, I can't describe it.

It was a presence that is very real but too deep for words. So "as if" becomes a way to help us sense it. We call this procedure "metaphor," or just "comparison."

But why don't we get to prophesy and talk in tongues as the apostles did? Saint Paul handles this question beautifully in the Second Reading, but the answer is also found by recalling who the Holy Spirit is, as we have been doing in previous weeks. **The most essential thing we can say is that the Holy Spirit is completely and truly God. The third person of the Holy Trinity comes to dwell within us. No wonder it is hard to describe!**



As time went by, the bestowal of the Spirit became less dramatic but just as real. Look, for instance, at Acts 19:1-8, in which Saint Paul came upon a dozen or so disciples who had never even heard of the Holy Spirit! He baptized them, and, as he "laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied." It was the sacrament of Baptism! Today, when we receive baptism and other sacraments, we are receiving the Holy Spirit! But quietly and in ritual form. Christ and his Father come to dwell within us.

Alright, then why do we not act as someone who has God within us? Well, like anything planted so deep, the Spirit's presence must have time to make its way into our actions, our words, our deeds. Whenever we find patches of charity or joy in ourselves, or patience and kindness, or the ability to endure hardship and injuries; when we are tempted toward mildness and modesty, then we can believe that the Holy Spirit is at work within us.



It is not as if heavy winds and tongues of fire were raging, as in former days. But it is the same Spirit of Jesus and of the Father—the one we celebrate today. — Fr. John Foley, SJ

Thank you, Fr. Foley. Fr. Hamm has a few insights for us, too:



The Church's Jewish Birthday. *The end-time gift of the Holy Spirit comes to bestow the blessings of the new covenant.*

Long before it became a Christian feast, Pentecost had been a Jewish feast. Attending to that fact helps us understand Luke's narrative of what has rightly been called "the birth of the Church." *Pentecostes* (Greek for "fiftieth") is the Greek name for the Jewish feast of Weeks—so-called because it occurs seven weeks, or on the fiftieth day, after Unleavened Bread/Passover. These were the first two of the three classic pilgrim feasts of the Israelite religion.



Originally in agricultural feasts, Unleavened Bread celebrated the beginning of the cereal harvest, Weeks the end of the grain harvest, and Booths the vintage. Eventually each of these agricultural feasts became a commemoration of a specific event of Israel's sacred history. Unleavened Bread, joined early with Passover, became the time to recall the redemption from Egypt. Once that Passover/Exodus link was forged, it was almost inevitable that Weeks should be associated with the event that Exodus 19:1 places "in the third month after their departure," that is, the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, a meaning many scholars think the feast already had in Jesus' day.

These three pilgrim feasts were the occasions when Jews living in other parts of the Mediterranean world would prefer to visit the homeland. Indeed, the economy of Jerusalem depended on the income brought in by these pilgrim-tourists. One estimate is that the population of the city, around 140,000, doubled during these feasts, filling the inns and inundating the streets.



Though they date from post-New Testament times, the liturgical readings for Weeks recorded by rabbinical sources surely reflect tradition and provide important background for

the Christian understanding of Pentecost. They include Genesis 11 (the tower of Babel), Exodus 19-20 (the Sinai theophany and covenant), and Psalm 68 (interpreted as referring to Moses' reception of the Law).

 **With those elements of the Jewish background of the feast in mind, watch how Luke tells of the Christian events on Pentecost** in images that allude to those elements, showing how "the time for Pentecost" was indeed "fulfilled." The reconstituted Twelve (with the 120) are gathered like the twelve tribes at Sinai. The sound from heaven, the filling of the entire house (like the shaking of the entire mountain in Exodus 19:18) and the fire recall the theophany at Sinai. The tongues of fire symbolize the powerful presence of God (like fire) that will find expression in human words, the prophetic ministry of the disciples (tongues).

In the larger sweep of the narrative, the Moses connection is evident in that Jesus ascends with a cloud (Ex 1:9) and then mediates the gift of the word of God for his people (Ex 2:4, 11, 18, 33). Thus on the feast of the giving of the Law (the privileged communication of God's word) and the forging of the first covenant, the end-time gift of the Holy Spirit comes to bestow the blessings of the new covenant and to enable the new expression of the divine word in the ministry of the apostles.

 **Now it becomes clear why Luke lists the geographical origins of the Jewish pilgrims.** By highlighting this inclusive gathering, Luke proclaims that this assembly is in fact the long-awaited end-time ingathering of Israel. The Pentecostal gift is destined for Jews first, but then for "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), "those far off" (Acts 2:39; Is 57:19).

Some hear in Luke's account a reversal of the story of the tower of Babel. Whereas Genesis 11 tells of a sinful people who wish to make a great name for themselves and are scattered in confusion, losing their ability to communicate. Acts 2 tells of a people of many languages, gathered and "confused" (Luke says deliberately) by a new ability to receive communication, and enabled to become a new community as they repent from their sin and call upon the name of the Lord.

 **The rest of the Acts of the Apostles indicates that empowerment by the Holy Spirit is not simply some kind of "jump start" to get the Church going but the normal way the community expands through its mission outreach.** And the reading from Paul's letter to the Christians in Corinth confirms that a local church is empowered by the Holy Spirit with a diversity of gifts, services, and works (Second Reading). It is to illustrate this empowerment that Paul develops his teaching on Church as body of Christ. The gifts, in all their diversity, are meant not for competition or self-aggrandizement but to build up that body in love. We read Luke, Paul, and John because we live in the same Church that is pictured in their writings. — Fr. Dennis Hamm, SJ

Prayer to the Holy Spirit
Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of Your faithful and
kindle in them the fire of Your love.
Send forth Your Spirit and
they shall be created,
and You shall renew
the face of the earth.
O God, who by the light
of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Holy Spirit
we may be truly wise
and ever enjoy His consolations,
through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Some great reflections here! My favorite older sister always reminds me of the constant working of the Spirit in our lives, the many actual graces we receive from God as the Spirit prompts us to action or goodness. Remember studying about grace? **Sanctifying grace** (God's own life in us) and **Actual grace** is something different. Sanctifying grace is distinguished from actual grace, which the Catechism

identifies as "God's interventions, whether at the beginning of conversion or in the course of the work of sanctification." So, in short, *sanctifying grace* is God's permanent gift residing in the soul that properly disposes us to love God and neighbor, and *actual grace* is God's temporary interventions that prompts us to collaborate with the Lord as we continue to grow in holiness. One writer has said in rather blunt terminology: *Actual grace is a supernatural push or encouragement. It's transient. It doesn't live in the soul, but acts on the soul from the outside, so to speak. It's a supernatural 'kick in the pants'. It gets the will and intellect moving so we can seek out and keep sanctifying grace.*

 **As I said, rather blunt. But it gets the point across that God is lovingly urging us to goodness and love at every moment of our existence.**

Perhaps a jolt or battery recharge to keep us from complacency. For example, why did I suddenly get the urge to call a friend who is in trouble? Perhaps a 'kick' from the Lord to bring love and care into that person's life. A bolt from the blue! A prompting, an urging, a persuading gift to stimulate our call to love! *Actual grace* derives its name, actual, from the Latin *actualis* (*ad actum*), for it is granted by God for the performance of salutary acts and is present and disappears with the action itself. So now you know a bit more perhaps about the action of God's love in our lives at every moment of our existence. Hint: to experience actual grace, it's good to be quiet and a tad reflective as we listen to our hearts, our consciences, and the voice of our loving God in the very recesses of our souls. No wonder quiet time is important in our lives at all times!

 **And let's not forget why the apostles weren't sad to say farewell to Jesus at the ascension, something so intimately tied to the celebration of Pentecost.** The Spirit was at work even then no doubt. Why should we too rejoice at seeing Jesus ascending into heaven? Because the Ascension completes Jesus' mission among us. Indeed, if it is for us that Jesus descended from heaven, it is also for us that he ascends there. After having descended into our humanity and redeeming it – God, the Son of God, descends and becomes man, takes our humanity and redeems it – he now ascends into heaven, taking our flesh with him. He is the first man who enters heaven, because Jesus is man, true man; he is God, true God; our flesh is in heaven and this gives us joy. Now at the right hand of the Father sits a human body, for the first time, the body of Jesus, and in this mystery each of us contemplates our own future destination. This is not at all an abandonment; Jesus remains forever with the disciples – with us. He remains in prayer, because he, as man, prays to the Father, and as God, man and God, shows Him his wounds, the wounds by which he has redeemed us. Jesus' prayer is there, with our flesh: he is one of us, God man, and he prays for us.

 **And this has to give us confidence, or rather joy, great joy and hope!** And the second reason for joy is Jesus' promise. He told us: "I will send you the Holy Spirit". And there, with the Holy Spirit, that commandment is made which he gives in his farewell: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel". And it will be the power of the Holy Spirit that leads us there into the world, to bring the Gospel. It is the Holy Spirit of that day that

Jesus promised. It is precisely the Holy Spirit who made it possible for us to be this way today. A great joy! Jesus went to heaven: the first man before the Father.

 **Perhaps that is why we get so excited each year for the celebrations of the Sacrament of Confirmation in our parishes.** This year we have five different celebrations due to the pandemic. For me this year, I am especially excited and honored to have my grandnephew Charlie coming up from Columbus to celebrate with us here at SAM. Congratulations, Charlie. Along with all the families, we are proud of you!

And speaking of the Spirit, a good reminder to pray for our clergy meetings this month with Bishop Malesic. We are discussing the importance of Catholic education and schools. So keep us in prayer as we look to the future.

We are also continuing to pray about the pandemic and the 'light at the end of the tunnel' for returning to Mass and the many 'normal' activities of our faith lives. I shared with you the words of Bishop Malesic re Mass obligation and other issues as they relate to the CDC in the nation, the issue of vaccinations and their necessity, the protocols of masks and distancing as that affects us, and the communications of the State of Ohio and the dioceses of Ohio. We'll keep you informed as we enter into June. Keep us your prayers for the world during this COVID time and for all who need our regard. Amen!



And keep our newly-ordained priests for the Diocese of Cleveland in your prayers.

Here they are. They look rather young, I think! Congratulations

to them. These four men were ordained to the Priesthood/Order of Presbyters by Bishop Edward C. Malesic on Saturday, May 15th: Alexander V. Clark of St. Francis de Sales, Akron; Cameron D. Popik of St. Adalbert, Berea; Alexander C. Spenik of Mother of Sorrows, Peninsula; James T. Winings of St. Dominic, Shaker Hts. Let's pray for them as they undertake their lives of ministry to the Church and pray for vocations from our own parish of SAM. Amen.

 **And now more insights into prayer from Pope Francis:**

Catechesis on prayer: The Struggle of Prayer

Dear brothers and sisters,

 **I am happy to resume this face-to-face meeting, because I will tell you something: it is not nice to speak in front of nothing, to a camera.** It is not nice. And now, after many months, thanks to the courage of Msgr. Sapienza, who said, "No, we'll do it there", we are gathered here again. Msgr. Sapienza is good! And finding people, finding you here, each one of you with your own story, people who come from all over, from Italy, from the United States, from Colombia... That little football team of four Swiss brothers, I think... who are over there... four. The little sister is missing, I hope she arrives... And seeing each one of you pleases me as we are all brothers and sisters in the Lord, and looking at each other helps us to pray for each other. Also people who are far away but always make themselves close to us. The ever-present Sister Geneviève who comes from Lunapark, people who work... So many. They are all here. Thank you for your presence and your visit. Take the Pope's message to everyone. The Pope's message is that I pray for everyone, and I ask you to pray for me, united in prayer.

And speaking of prayer, Christian prayer, like all Christian life, is not a "walk in the park". None of the great people of prayer we meet in the Bible and in the history of the Church found prayer "comfortable". Yes, one can pray like a parrot – blah, blah, blah, blah, blah – but that is not prayer. Prayer certainly gives great peace, but through inner struggle, at times hard, which can accompany even long periods of life. Praying is not something easy, and this is why we flee from it. Every time we want to pray, we are immediately reminded of many other activities, which at that moment seem more important and more urgent. This happens to me too! It happens to me. I go to pray a little... and no, I must do this and that... We flee from prayer, I don't know why, but that is how it is. Almost always, after putting off prayer, we realize that those things were not essential at all, and that we may have wasted time. This is how the Enemy deceives us.

 **All Godly men and women report not only the joy of prayer, but also the tediousness and fatigue it can bring: at times it is a difficult struggle to keep to the time and ways of praying.** Some saints continued it for years finding any satisfaction in it, without perceiving its usefulness. Silence, prayer and concentration are difficult exercises, and sometimes human nature rebels. We would rather be anywhere else in the world, but not there, in that church pew, praying. Those who want to

pray must remember that faith is not easy, and sometimes it moves forward in almost total darkness, without points of reference. There are moments in the life of faith that are dark, and therefore some saints call this "the dark night", because we hear nothing. But I continue to pray.

The Catechism lists a long series of enemies of prayer, those that make it difficult to pray, that put us in difficulty (cf. nos. 2726-2728). Some doubt that prayer can truly reach the Almighty: why does God remain silent? If God is Almighty, He could say a couple of words and end the matter. Faced with the elusiveness of the divine, others suspect that prayer is a merely psychological operation; something that may be useful, but is neither true nor necessary: and one could even be a practitioner without being a believer. And so it goes on, many explanations.

 **However, the worst enemies of prayer are found within us.** The Catechism describes them thus:

"Discouragement during periods of dryness; sadness that, because we have 'great possessions', we have not given all to the Lord; disappointment over not being heard according to our own will; wounded pride, stiffened by the indignity that is ours as sinners; our resistance to the idea that prayer is a free and unmerited gift" (2728). This is clearly a summary that could be extended.

What should be done in time of temptation, when everything seems to waver? If we look at the history of spirituality, it is immediately seen that the masters of the soul were very clear about the situation we have described. To overcome it, each of them offered some type of contribution: a word of wisdom, or a suggestion for dealing moments fraught with difficulty. It is not a question of elaborate theories, of preconceived theories, no, but of advice born of experience, which shows the importance of resisting and persevering in prayer.

 **It would be interesting to review at least some of these pieces of advice, because each one deserves to be explored further.** For example, the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola is a short book of great wisdom that teaches how to put one's life in order. It makes us understand that the Christian vocation is militancy, it is the decision to stand beneath the standard of Jesus Christ and not under that of the devil, trying to do good even when it becomes difficult.

 **In times of trial, it is good to remember that we are not alone, that someone is watching over us and protecting us.** Saint Anthony the Abbot, the founder of Christian monasticism, also faced terrible times in Egypt, when prayer became a difficult struggle. His biographer, Saint Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, recounts one of the worst episodes in the life of the hermit saint when he was about the age of thirty-five, a time of middle age that for many people involves a crisis. Anthony was disturbed by the ordeal, but resisted. When he finally became serene again, he turned to his Lord with an almost reproachful tone: "But Lord, where were you? Why did you not come immediately to put an end to my suffering?" And Jesus answered: "Anthony, I was there. But I was waiting to see you fight" (Life of Anthony, 10).

 **Fighting in prayer. And very often, prayer is combat.** I am reminded of something I experienced close up, when I was in the other diocese. There was a married couple with a daughter aged nine, with an illness that the doctors were unable to diagnose. And in the end, in hospital, the doctor said to the mother, "Madam, call your husband". And the husband was at work; they were laborers, they worked every day. And he said to the father, "The child will not survive the night. There is nothing we can do to stop this infection". Perhaps that man did not attend Mass every Sunday, but he had great faith. He left, weeping; he left his wife there with the child in the hospital, he took the train and he travelled seventy kilometers towards the Basilica of Our Lady of Luján, Patroness of Argentina. And there – the Basilica was already closed, it was almost ten o'clock at night, in the evening – he clung to the grates of the Basilica and spent all night praying to Our Lady, fighting for his daughter's health.

This is not a figment of the imagination: I saw him! I saw him myself. That man there, fighting. At the end, at six o'clock in the morning, the Church opened, he entered to salute Our Lady, and returned home. And he thought: "She has left us. No, Our Lady cannot do this to me". Then he went to see [his wife], and she was smiling, saying: "I don't know what happened. The doctors said that something changed, and now she is cured". That man, fighting with prayer, received the grace of Our Lady. Our Lady listened to him. And I saw this: prayer works miracles, because prayer goes directly to the heart of the tenderness of God, who cares for us like a father. And when He does not grant us a grace, He will grant us another which in time we will see. But always, combat in prayer to ask for grace. Yes, at times we ask for grace we are not in need of, but we ask for it without truly wanting it, without fighting... We do not ask for serious things in this way. Prayer is combat, and the Lord is always with us.

 **If in a moment of blindness we cannot see His presence, we will in the future.** We will also end up repeating the same sentence that the patriarch Jacob said one day: "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it" (Gen 28:16). At the end of our lives, looking back, we too will be able to say: "I thought I was alone, but no, I was not: Jesus was with me". We will all be able to say this. Thank you.

 **Thank you, Pope Francis for your constant and beautiful reflections for us.** It cannot be easy for our pope to keep on top of all the world's happenings – from the challenges in the Middle East to the pandemic to India to global warming. He must have the true presence of the Spirit to keep him on the right track!



Before I forget, I want to make sure you have met and are getting acquainted with our new front office personnel: David Becker and Ellie Munday. Some may remember Ellie as a long-time and esteemed elementary teacher in the diocese, who served many years at OLA. She has been working and ministering with **Kathy Lynch, our DRE**, for years now in PSR at SAM. She also has added to her ministry part time in the front office. With the retirement of Mrs. Crable, we needed to find the right folks for

this pivotal part of parish life. We looked and found David Becker – a long-term parishioner with his wife Rosemary – who recently moved on from a career at The Plain Dealer. He was interested in managing our parish sacristy (a HUGE job) as Katie Whitmore moves on to Law School this summer. And he is also working in tandem with Ellie to serve in the front office – another HUGE job at any parish. So, thought you'd like to know. I hope you will get to know these great people who have dedicated with work life to your benefit. We are blessed to have them on board. So stop by and introduce yourself.



Again congratulations to our wonderful second graders and their families on the occasion of their First

Holy Communion. We had three First Communion sessions this year and will have had five Confirmation sessions by the end of June. God bless them all as they now journey with Jesus in love, Jesus who is the Bread of Life and the true Vine. They are now stronger branches on his vine! **And again, to our Confirmation candidates**, we say congratulations. Also to everyone graduating from Pre-School to doctoral programs. Best of luck. Now it's time to think about those college loans! And answer letters from the development offices of high schools and universities. Oi vey!



Oremus pro invicem. Soli Deo Gloria.

Father Michael J. Lanning, Pastor



Preschool Enrollment for the 2021-2022

St. Angela Merici Preschool program still has openings in our PreKindergarten Enrichment (5 day), our PreKindergarten (4 day) and our 3 Year old class (2 day) in the afternoon.

Visit samparish.org/preschool for more information or to apply.

CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

**The Bishops of Ohio Announce the Lifting of the Dispensation from the Obligation to attend Holy Mass
on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation**
May 13, 2021

As we move beyond the worst of the coronavirus pandemic and access to the COVID-19 vaccine has become more widespread, the time has arrived for the good of all the faithful when the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is no longer necessary.

Together, the Bishops of Ohio have decided that the general obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation (including the Saturday/Vigil Mass) is to be reinstated (CIC, can. 1247). This will take effect in each of the Dioceses of Ohio the weekend of June 5-6, 2021. As has always been the case, those who have a serious reason are exempt from attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2181). This includes those who are ill, have significant health risk factors or care for someone who is immuno-compromised or ill, as well as those who have significant fear or anxiety of contracting the coronavirus in a large group of persons. Nevertheless, these persons should observe the Lord's Day (CIC, can. 1247) and are encouraged to spend time in prayer on Sunday, meditating on the Lord's passion, death and resurrection; an appropriate way to do this is through viewing a broadcast of the Sunday Mass. Masses that are broadcast through various media are not intended as a substitute nor do they fulfill the obligation for the persons who are able to gather for a Sunday celebration and other Holy Days of Obligation. Instead, they are intended for the sick, home-bound, the imprisoned, etc., who are unable to attend Mass in person. Kindly consult your pastor with any specific questions regarding the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.

The book of Exodus reminds us to keep holy the Sabbath day (Exodus 20: 8-10). As Catholics, we are invited by God to gather together in community, and participate fully in the Sunday Eucharist, which is the "source and summit of the Christian life." "Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity. Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2182).

The obligation to attend Mass on Sunday and Holy Days is not something God asks of us out of his own necessity to be worshipped, but rather a gift to the faithful for their spiritual well-being, eternal salvation and formation in our relationship with God and one another. To that end, Saint John Vianney rightly asserts, "There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, He would have given it to us." The Eucharist is the greatest gift Christ left to the Church—the gift of Himself. There is no substitute for Mass celebrated in person.

We are profoundly grateful to our pastors and all of the faithful for their flexibility, fidelity and great generosity in support of the mission of the Church throughout this unprecedented time. As we prepare for the reinstatement of the obligation to attend Mass, we are excited once again to gather together in person without restrictions in our parish churches, most fittingly on the solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. As we reflect on our Lord's goodness and mercy in the midst of the sacrifices made during the coronavirus pandemic, we ask Saint Joseph to intercede for us, that through his fatherly protection and care, we may experience a renewal of faith in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

We welcome you back with great joy and eagerness!

The Most Rev. Dennis M. Schnurr
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

The Most Rev. Robert J. Brennan
Diocese of Columbus

The Most Rev. Edward C. Malesic
Diocese of Cleveland

The Most Rev. David J. Bonner
Diocese of Youngstown

The Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas
Diocese of Toledo

The Most Rev. Jeffrey M. Monforton
Diocese of Steubenville



REMEMBER in your prayers

OREMS PRO INVICEM

(Pray for one another)

In your prayers, please remember those in need of healing, especially: Frances Allington, Maureen Ashdown, Donna Bartos, Frank Bartos, Paul Boscoe, Bill Bringman, Mary Ellen Bringman, Ella Burns, Lainey Chisholm, Levi Chisholm, Andy Corcoran, Joseph Crupi, Ken DeCrane, Deacon Kenneth DeLuca, Francisco Deras-Solits, Jean DiRuggiero, Peggy Drew, Aranka Gajzer, Woody Granger, Ann Hawk, Frank Hawk, Hank Hout, Megan Keefe, Barb Loyer, Fr. Jim Lee, Robert Lynch, Maureen Materna, Imelda Moenter, Deborah Mortack, Mike O'Donnell, Mary O'Hern, Frances Parcaro, Michael Pitts, Marion Rich, William Schmidt, Margaret Simmons, Ann Stromp, Matthew Yaroma, Kimberly Yaeger, Charlotte Zak and Daniel Zak.

REST IN PEACE

Please pray for Thomas Kilbane, Fr. Thomas McGovern and Fr. Daniel P. Redmond. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.



Monday, May 24—Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church
8:30AM Marianne A. Synek

Tuesday, May 25—St. Bede the Venerable, Priest and Doctor of the Church; St. Gregory VII, Pope; St. Mary Magdalene de'Pazzi, Virgin
8:30AM Ben Stefanek

Wednesday, May 26—St. Philip Neri, Priest
8:30AM Ed Manning

Thursday, May 27—St. Augustine of Canterbury, Bishop
8:30AM Daniel C. Kocon

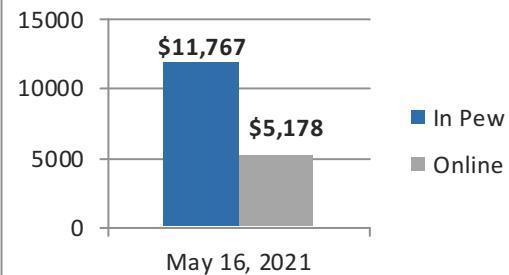
Friday, May 28—St. Christopher Magallanes, Priest, and Companions, Martyrs
8:30AM Kyle Smith

Saturday, May 29—St. Paul VI, Pope; BVM
8:30AM Pakie Cafferkey
4:30PM Nina Cattigan

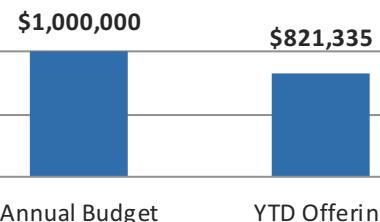
Sunday, May 30—The Most Holy Trinity
7:30AM Joseph Kaučuk
9:30AM Dorothy & Wilfred Marquard
11:30AM Terry Gravens
5:30PM For the Parish

FINANCIAL REPORTS

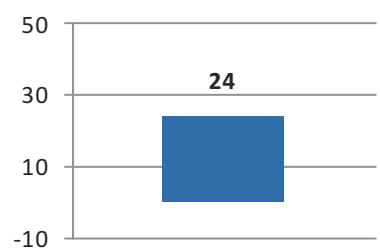
Weekly Offertory



YTD Offering 2020-2021



YTD Online Offertory Percentage



With summer vacation right around the corner, please be sure to SLOW DOWN in the parking lot!



Father's Day Mass Cards are the perfect way to remember our fathers, both living and deceased, at our Father's Day Mass. The cards are available in the Parish Center office for just \$2 each.



READINGS FOR THE WEEK



SUNDAY: Vigil: Gn 11:1-9 or Ex 19:3-8a, 16-20b or Ez 37:1-14 or Jl 3:1-5 / Ps 104:1-2, 24, 35, 27-28, 29, 30 / Rom 8:22-27 / Jn 7:37-39 **Extended Vigil:** Gn 11:1-9 / Ps 33:10-15 / Ex 19:3-8a, 16-20b/ Dn 3:52, 52, 53, 55, 56 or Ps 19:8-11 / Ez 37:1-14 / Ps 107:2-9 / Jl 3:1-5 / Ps 104:1-2, 24, 35, 27-28, 29, 30 / Rom 8:22-27 / Jn 7:37-39 **Day:** Acts 2:1-11 / Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34 / 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13 or Gal 5:16-25 / Jn 20:19-23 or Jn 15:26-27; 16:12-15

MONDAY: Acts 1:12-14 / Ps 87:1-3, 5-7 / Jn 19:25-34

TUESDAY: Sir 35:1-12 / Ps 50:5-8, 14, 23 / Mk 10:28-31

WEDNESDAY: Sir 36:1, 4-5a, 10-17 / Ps 79:8-9, 11, 13 /Mk 10:32-45

THURSDAY: Sir 42:15-25 / Ps 33:2-9 / Mk 10:46-52

FRIDAY: Sir 44:1, 9-13 / Ps 149:1b-6a, 9b / Mk 11:11-26

SATURDAY: Sir 51:12cd-20 / Ps 19:8-9, 19, 11 / Mk 11:27-33

NEXT SUNDAY: Dt 4:32-34, 39-40 / Ps 33:4-6, 9, 18-20, 22 / Rom 8:14-17 / Mt 28:16-20

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FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE ARMED SERVICES

Lord, we pray for all family members in the armed services, especially those who have asked for prayers:

Jason Actis, Liam Anglin, Captain Kevin Comiskey, Brent Cox, Patrick Elfers, Michael P. Gallagher, James Graham, Ron Grethel, Shane Hillman, Michael Hills, Derek Lisowski, Coulton Manning, Reese Marsh, Matthew Martis, Dan Meleason, Joseph O'Malley, Andrew Pipak, Captain Christopher Salisbury, and Jonathan Traczyk.

Please keep all of our armed forces stationed here and in foreign lands including those disabled by war in your prayers.



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