Everyone is Talking about...

CHURCH IN THE ERA OF THE CORONA VIRUS

Each Issue Featuring

CATHOLIC NEWS
DAILY READINGS
LIVES OF THE SAINTS
DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS
SPIRITUAL TEXTS
PUZZLES
ACTIVITIES
April 19, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Readers,

What is THE LANTERN? Well, years ago Holy Cross used to have a Parish newspaper called THE LANTERN, at some point in the 1990s it disappeared. Recently, amidst the Coronavirus situation we find ourselves in, I began preparing resources for both the Immaculate Conception Parish and Holy Cross Parish websites. As I was directly updating pages at Immaculate Conception website with spiritual and prayer content (various files, images, etc.), it occurred to me that a unified source of much of this information might make all of this more accessible.

Then, a light bulb went on (or perhaps it was a lantern), why not revive THE LANTERN for this period of the Coronavirus outbreak when so many are shut-in or in lock-down. And so, I set to work, and this edition (Volume 2, #1) is the first-fruits of that labor.

In this Parish magazine for both Holy Cross and Immaculate Conception are the daily Mass readings, extended scripture readings, great spiritual writing, life stories of the saints, links to daily devotional prayers, a reproduction of the Pastor’s Column from our Parish Bulletin, some puzzles, activities and Catholic news… and other “stuff.”

THE LANTERN, it is my hope, will be a weekly online magazine available to be connected to from our Parishes websites. This magazine can be read online, downloaded as a PDF for reading later, or, if you choose, printed out.

To be clear, this is not a permanent publication, but one born out of necessity, and will be retired (or certainly reduced frequency) once the necessity has abated.

I hope you find this publication useful, and engaging.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. James Lentini
Pastor
The building is there, and there are faces we remember, but the Church is empty in these days of Coronavirus

PASTOR’S COLUMN (FROM THIS WEEK’S BULLETIN)

CHURCH IN THE ERA OF THE CORONA VIRUS

What do we do for ourselves as Catholics, understanding that life has changed, not ended. Perhaps a reflection on St. John’s writings in the Book of Revelation can help us out!

By Fr. James Lentini, Pastor

In the South Atlantic, in the most distant part of the world that it is possible to be in, there is an island group called Tristan da Cuhna. It is named after the Portuguese explorer who first encounter these islands in 1506. It’s quite isolated. How isolated is it?

It is 1,200 miles from the nearest inhabited land, Saint Helena, 1,500 miles from South Africa and over 2,000 miles from South America. It makes Pocomoke, Maryland look like downtown Manhattan. One of the islands in the group is name “Inaccessible Island.” Another famous island in that area of the world is St. Helena – the island on which Napoleon was ultimately exiled to assure that there was no way for him to get back to civilization.

Meanwhile in TV Land. Then of course, we all know Gilligan’s Island – fictionally located in the south Pacific, population seven castaways! Notably on this island, is a professor who can make an atomic reactor of coconuts but can’t build raft, a movie star with a seemingly larger collection of dresses than Bloomingdale’s and a millionaire with suitcases of useless money. But for all their isolation, it seemed that each week the castaways were visited by folks who stumbled upon this island – and who failed to give the castaways what they wanted most: The chance to get back to the mainland, and to be with their fellow citizens.

Let’s Talk Turkey. Well today, we are not heading to Inaccessible Island, or Gilligan’s Island. No! Today we step into the Wayback machine, set the dials for the late First Century, and head for the Greek Island of Patmos – an island that was a mere backwater of Greek portion of the Roman Empire, right off the coast of modern-day Turkey. It was on that island that St. John the Apostle had an encounter with the risen Lord. In the Book of Revelation, written by St. John, he wrote this:

I, John, your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day. (Revelation 1:9-10)

Voted on to the Island. Now, the island of Patmos is not and was not a normal island or town, rather it was a small isolated island in the Aegean

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DAILY READINGS

Each day during the week, stop for a moment, pause and take a good listen to the word of God

MONDAY, APRIL 20

ACTS 4:23-31

After their release Peter and John went back to their own people and reported what the chief priests and elders had told them. And when they heard it, they raised their voices to God with one accord and said, “Sovereign Lord, maker of heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them, you said by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David, your servant:

Why did the Gentiles rage and the peoples entertain folly? The kings of the earth took their stand and the princes gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed.

Indeed they gathered in this city against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed, Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do what your hand and your will had long ago planned to take place. And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and enable your servants to speak your word with all boldness, as you stretch forth your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” As they prayed, the place where they were gathered shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

PSALM 2

Why do the nations rage and the peoples utter folly? The kings of the earth rise up, and the princes conspire together against the Lord and against his anointed: “Let us break their fetters and cast their bonds from us!”

R. Blessed are all who take refuge in the Lord.

He who is enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord derides them. Then in anger he speaks to them; he terrifies them in his wrath: “I myself have set up my king on Zion, my holy mountain.” I will proclaim the decree of the Lord.

R. Blessed are all who take refuge in the Lord.

The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; this day I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will give you the nations for an inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall rule them with an iron rod; you shall shatter them like an earthen dish.”

R. Blessed are all who take refuge in the Lord.

GOSPEL: JOHN 3:1-8

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus at night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless one is born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother’s womb and be born again, can he?” Jesus answered, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless one is born of water and spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

TUESDAY, APRIL 21

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the Apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the Apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

Thus Joseph, also named by the Apostles Barnabas (which is translated, Ason of encouragement”), a Levite, a Cypriot by birth, sold a piece of property that he owned, then brought the money and put it at the feet of the Apostles.

PSALM 93

The Lord is king, in splendor robed; robed is the Lord and girt about with strength.

R. The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.

And he has made the world firm, not to be moved. Your throne stands firm from of old; from everlasting you are, O Lord.

R. The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.

Your decrees are worthy of trust indeed: holiness befits your house, O Lord, for length of days.

R. The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.
GOSPEL: JOHN 3:7-15
Jesus said to Nicodemus: “‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus answered and said to him, ‘How can this happen?’ Jesus answered and said to him, “You are the teacher of Israel and you do not understand this? Amen, amen, I say to you, we speak of what we know and we testify to what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony. If I tell you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

PSALM 34
I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall be ever in my mouth. Let my soul glory in the LORD; the lowly will hear me and be glad.
R. The Lord hears the cry of the poor.
Glorify the LORD with me, let us together extol his name. I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.
R. The Lord hears the cry of the poor.
Look to him that you may be radiant with joy, and your faces may not blush with shame. When the poor one called out, the LORD heard, and from all his distress he saved him.
R. The Lord hears the cry of the poor.
The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. Taste and see how good the LORD is; blessed the man who takes refuge in him.
R. The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

ACTS 5:27-33
When the court officers had brought the Apostles in and made them stand before the Sanhedrin, the high priest questioned them, “We gave you strict orders did we not, to stop teaching in that name. Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and want to bring this man’s blood upon us.” But Peter and the Apostles said in reply, “We must obey God rather than men. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, though you had him killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as leader and savior to grant Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. We are witnesses of these things, as is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.”

When they heard this, they became infuriated and wanted to put them to death.
PSALM 34
I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall be ever in my mouth. Taste and see how good the LORD is; blessed the man who takes refuge in him.
R. The Lord hears the cry of the poor.
The LORD confronts the evildoers, to destroy remembrance of them from the
earth. When the just cry out, the LORD hears them, and from all their distress he rescues them.

R. The Lord hears the cry of the poor.
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves. Many are the troubles of the just man, but out of them all the LORD delivers him.

R. The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

GOSPEL: JOHN 3:31-36
The one who comes from above is above all. The one who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of earthly things. But the one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever does accept his testimony certifies that God is trustworthy. For the one whom God sent speaks the words of God. He does not ration his gift of the Spirit. The Father loves the Son and has given everything over to him. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

ACTS 5:34-42
A Pharisee in the Sanhedrin named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up, ordered the Apostles to be put outside for a short time, and said to the Sanhedrin, “Fellow children of Israel, be careful what you are about to do to these men. Some time ago, Theudas appeared, claiming to be someone important, and about four hundred men joined him, but he was killed, and all those who were loyal to him were disbanded and came to nothing. After him came Judas the Galilean at the time of the census. He also drew people after him, but he too perished and all who were loyal to him were scattered. So now I tell you, have nothing to do with these men, and let them go. For if this endeavor or this activity is of human origin, it will destroy itself. But if it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy them; you may even find yourselves fighting against God.” They were persuaded by him. After recalling the Apostles, they had them flogged, ordered them to stop speaking in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them. So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name. And all day long, both at the temple and in their homes, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the Christ, Jesus.

PSALM 27
The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear? The LORD is my life’s refuge; of whom should I be afraid?

R. One thing I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord.

One thing I ask of the LORD this I seek: To dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, That I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD and contemplate his temple.

R. One thing I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord.

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD with courage; be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD.

R. One thing I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord.

GOSPEL: JOHN 6:1-15
Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. The Jewish feast of Passover was near. When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, “Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?” He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, “Two hundred days’ wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little.” One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?” Jesus said, “Have the people recline.” Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted. When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, “Gather

SATURDAY, APRIL 24 SAINT MARK

1 PETER 5:5-14
Beloved: Clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for: God opposes the proud but bestows favor on the humble.

So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you.

Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your brothers and sisters throughout
the world endure the same sufferings. The God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory through Christ Jesus will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered a little. To him be dominion forever. Amen.

I write you this briefly through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, exhorting you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Remain firm in it. The chosen one at Babylon sends you greeting, as does Mark, my son. Greet one another with a loving kiss. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

PSALM 89

The favors of the LORD I will sing forever, through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness. For you have said, "My kindness is established forever"; in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

The heavens proclaim your wonders, O LORD, and your faithfulness, in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies can rank with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the sons of God?

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Blessed the people who know the joyful shout; in the light of your countenance, O LORD, they walk. At your name they rejoice all the day, and through your justice they are exalted.

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

GOSPEL: MARK 16:15-20

Jesus appeared to the Eleven and said to them: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

SUNDAY, APRIL 26

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed: “You who are Jews, indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem. Let this be known to you, and listen to my words. You who are Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it. For David says of him: I saw the Lord ever before me, with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed. Therefore my heart has been glad and my tongue has exulted; my flesh, too, will dwell in hope, because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.

“My brothers, one can confidently say to you about the patriarch David that he died and was buried, and his tomb is in our midst to this day. But since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he abandoned to the netherworld nor did his flesh see corruption. God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured him forth, as you see and hear.”

PSALM 16

Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge; I say to the LORD, “My Lord are you.” O LORD, my allotted portion and my cup, you it is who hold fast my lot.

R. Lord, you will show us the path of life.

I bless the LORD who counsels me; even in the night my heart exhorts me. I set the LORD ever before me; with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

R. Lord, you will show us the path of life.

Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices, my body, too, abides in confidence; because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption.

R. Lord, you will show us the path of life.

You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in your presence, the delights at your right hand forever.

R. Lord, you will show us the path of life.

1 PETER 1:17-21

Beloved: If you invoke as Father him who judges impartially according to each one’s works, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourn, realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb.

He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

LUKE 24:13-35

That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus’ disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about
all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, “What are you discussing as you walk along?” They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?” And he replied to them, “What sort of things?” They said to him, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see.” And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?” So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

CLICK HERE TO READ DAILY REFLECTIONS ON THE SCRIPTURE BY OUR CLERGY

Bishop Barron of "Word on Fire" Website celebrates Easter Sunday Mass

April 16, 2020

MASS from Bishop Barron’s Chapel
OFFICE OF READINGS

In its tradition, the Church commends the faithful to engage in the official prayer of the Church which is commonly called the Divine Office. One section of that Divine Office is called The Office of Readings. Below are daily selection from the Office of Reading — extended scriptures and spiritual writings.

Let these beautiful texts help your grow in your spiritual life!

MONDAY, APRIL 20

First reading
From the beginning of the book of
Revelation 1:1-20

John’s vision of the Son of Man

This is the revelation God gave to Jesus Christ, that he might show his servants what must happen very soon. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who in reporting all he saw bears witness to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Happy is the man who reads this prophetic message, and happy are those who hear it and heed what is written in it, for the appointed time is near!

To the seven churches in the province of Asia: John wishes you grace and peace — from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead and ruler of the kings of earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his own blood, who has made us a royal nation of priests in the service of his God and Father — to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen

See, he comes amid the clouds! Every eye shall see him, even of those who pierced him. All the peoples of the earth shall lament him bitterly. So it is to be! Amen! The Lord God says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the One who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty!”

I, John, your brother, who share with you the distress and the kingly reign and the endurance we have in Jesus, found myself on the island called Patmos because I proclaimed God’s word and bore witness to Jesus. On the Lord’s day I was caught up in ecstasy, and I heard behind me a piercing voice like the sound of a trumpet, which said, “Write on a scroll what you now see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”

I turned around to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I did so I saw seven lamp stands of gold, and among the lamp stands One like a Son of Man wearing an ankle-length robe, with a sash of gold about his breast. The hair of his head was as white as snow-white wool and his eyes blazed like fire. His feet gleamed like polished brass refined in a furnace, and his voice sounded like the roar of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars. A sharp, two-edged sword came out of his mouth, and his face shone like the sun at its brightest.

When I caught sight of him I fell down at his feet as though dead. He touched me with his right hand and said: “There is nothing to fear. I am the First and the Last and the One who lives. Once I was dead but now I live—forever and ever. I hold the keys of death and the nether world. Write down, therefore, whatever you see in visions—what you see now and will see in time to come. This is the secret meaning of the seven stars you saw in my right hand, and of the seven lamp stands of gold: the seven stars are the presiding spirits of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches.

Second reading
From an ancient Easter homily by Pseudo-Chrysostom

The spiritual Passover

The Passover we celebrate brings salvation to the whole human race beginning with the first man, who together with all the others is saved and given life.

In an imperfect and transitory way, the types and images of the past prefigured the perfect and eternal reality which has now been revealed. The presence of what is represented makes the symbol obsolete: when the king appears in person no one pays reverence to his statue.

How far the symbol falls short of the reality is seen from the fact that the symbolic Passover celebrated the brief life of the firstborn of the Jews, whereas the real Passover celebrates the eternal life of all mankind. It is a small gain to escape death for a short time, only to die soon afterward; it is a very different thing to escape death altogether as we do through the sacrifice of Christ, our Passover.

Correctly understood, its very name shows why this is our greatest feast. It is called the Passover because, when he was
striking down the firstborn, the destroying angel passed over the houses of the Hebrews, but it is even more true to say that he passes over us, for he does so once and for all when we are raised up by Christ to eternal life.

If we think only of the true Passover and ask why it is that the time of the Passover and the salvation of the firstborn is taken to be the beginning of the year, the answer must surely be that the sacrifice of the true Passover is for us the beginning of eternal life. Because it revolves in cycles and never comes to an end, the year is a symbol of eternity.

Christ, the sacrifice that was offered up for us, is the father of the world to come. He puts an end to our former life, and through the regenerating waters of baptism in which we imitate his death and resurrection, he gives us the beginning of a new life. The knowledge that Christ is the Passover lamb who was sacrificed for us should make us regard the moment of his immolation as the beginning of our own lives. As far as we are concerned, Christ’s immolation on our behalf takes place when we become aware of this grace and understand the life conferred on us by this sacrifice. Having once understood it, we should enter upon this new life with all eagerness and never return to the old one, which is now at an end. As Scripture says: We have died to sin — how then can we continue to live in it?

TUESDAY - APRIL 21

First reading
From the Book of Revelation 2:1-11

To the churches at Ephesus and Smyrna

I, John, heard the Lord saying to me: “To the presiding spirit of the church in Ephesus, write this: “The One who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven lamp stands of gold has this to say: I know your deeds, your labors, and your patient endurance. I know you cannot tolerate wicked men; you have tested those self-styled apostles who are nothing of the sort, and discovered that they are impostors. You are patient and endure hardship for my cause. Moreover, you do not become discouraged. I hold this against you, though: you have turned aside from your early love. Keep firmly in mind the heights from which you have fallen. Repent, and return to your former deeds. If you do not repent I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place. But you have this much in your favor: you detest the practices of the Nicolaitans, just as I do.

“Let him who has ears heed the Spirit’s word to the churches! I will see to it that the victor eats from the tree of life which grows in the garden of God.’

“To the presiding spirit of the church in Smyrna, write this:”The First and the Last who once died but now lives has this to say: I know of your tribulation and your poverty, even though you are rich. I know the slander you endure from self-styled Jews who are nothing other than members of Satan’s assembly. Have no fear of the sufferings to come. The devil will indeed cast some of you into prison to put you to the test; you will be tried over a period of ten days. Remain faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life.

“Let him who has ears heed the Spirit’s word to the churches!

The victor shall never be harmed by the second death.”

Second reading
From a book addressed to Monimus by Saint Fulgentius of Ruspe, bishop

The sacrament of unity and love

The spiritual building up of the body of Christ is achieved through love. As Saint Peter says: Like living stones you are built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. And there can be no more effective way to pray for this spiritual growth than for the Church, itself Christ’s body, to make the offering of his body and blood in the sacramental form of bread and wine. For the cup we drink is a participation in the blood of Christ, and the bread we break is a participation in the body of Christ. Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, since we all share the same bread. And so we pray that, by the same grace which made the Church Christ’s body, all its members may remain firm in the unity of that body through the enduring bond of love.

We are right to pray that this may be brought about in us through the gift of the one Spirit of the Father and the Son. The holy Trinity, the one true God, is of its nature unity, equality and love, and by one divine activity sanctifies its adopted sons. That is why Scripture says that God’s love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit he has given us. The Holy Spirit, who is the one Spirit of the Father and the Son, produces in those to whom he gives the grace of divine adoption the same effect as he produced among those whom the Acts of the Apostles describes as having received the Holy Spirit. We are told that the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, because the one Spirit of the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is one God, had created a single heart and soul in all those who believed.

This is why Saint Paul in his exhortation to the Ephesians says that this spiritual unity in the bond of peace must be carefully preserved. I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, he writes, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, with all humility and meekness and with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit.

God makes the Church itself a sacrifice pleasing in his sight by preserving within it the love which his Holy Spirit has poured out. Thus the grace of that spiritual love is always available to us, enabling us continually to offer ourselves to God as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to him for ever.
WEDNESDAY - APRIL 22

First reading
From the Book of Revelation 2:12-29

To the churches at Pergamum and Thyatira

I, John, heard the Lord saying to me: “To the presiding spirit of the church in Pergamum, write this: “The One with the sharp, two-edged sword has this to say: I know you live in the very place where Satan’s throne is erected; and I know you hold fast to my name and have not denied the faith you have in me, not even at the time when Antipas, my faithful witness, was martyred in your city where Satan has his home. Nevertheless I hold a few matters against you: there are some among you who follow the teaching of Balaam, who instructed Balak to throw a stumbling block in the way of the Israelites by tempting them to eat food sacrificed to idols and to practice fornication. Yes, you too have those among you who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent! If you do not, I will come to you soon and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

“Let him who has ears heed the Spirit’s word to the churches! To the victor I will give the hidden manna; I will also give him a white stone upon which is inscribed a new name, to be known only by him who receives it.

“To the presiding spirit of the church in Thyatira, write this: “The Son of God, whose eyes blaze like fire and whose feet gleam like polished brass, has this to say: I know your deeds—your love and faith and service—as well as your patient endurance; I know also that your efforts of recent times are greater than ever. Nevertheless I hold this against you: you tolerate a Jezebel—that self-styled prophetess who seduces my servants by teaching them to practice lewdness and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I have given her a chance to repent but she refuses to turn from her lewdness. I mean to cast her down on a bed of pain; her companions in sin I will plunge into intense suffering unless they repent of their sins with her, and her children I will put to death. Thus shall all the churches come to know that I am the searcher of hearts and minds, and that I will give each of you what your conduct deserves.

And now I address myself to you others in Thyatira who do not uphold this teaching and know nothing of the so-called “deep secrets” of Satan; on you I place no further burden. In any case, hold fast to what you have until I come.

“To the one who wins the victory, who keeps to my ways till the end, I will give authority over the nations—the same authority I received from my Father. He shall rule them with a rod of iron and shatter them like crockery; and I will give him the morning star.

“Let him who has ears heed the Spirit’s word to the churches!

Second reading
From a sermon by Saint Leo the Great, pope

Christ lives in his Church

My dear brethren, there is no doubt that the Son of God took our human nature into so close a union with himself that one and the same Christ is present, not only in the firstborn of all creation, but in all his saints as well. The head cannot be separated from the members, nor the members from the head. Not in this life, it is true, but only in eternity will God be all in all, yet even now he dwells, whole and undivided, in his temple the Church. Such was his promise to us when he said: See, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

And so all that the Son of God did and taught for the world’s reconciliation is not for us simply a matter of past history. Here and now we experience his power at work among us. Born of a virgin mother by the action of the Holy Spirit, Christ keeps his Church spotless and makes her fruitful by the inspiration of the same Spirit. In baptismal regeneration she brings forth children for God beyond all numbering. These are the sons of whom it is written: They are born not of blood, nor of the desire of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

In Christ Abraham’s posterity is blessed, because in him the whole world receives the adoption of sons, and in him the patriarch becomes the father of all nations through the birth, not from human stock but by faith, of the descendants that were promised to him. From every nation on earth, without exception, Christ forms a single flock of those he has sanctified, daily fulfilling the promise he once made: I have other sheep, not of this fold, whom it is also ordained that I shall lead; and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Although it was primarily to Peter that he said: Feed my sheep, yet the one Lord guides all the pastors in the discharge of their office and leads to rich and fertile pastures all those who come to the rock. There is no counting the sheep who are nourished with his abundant love, and who are prepared to lay down their lives for the sake of the good shepherd who died for them.

But it is not only the martyrs who share in his passion by their glorious courage; the same is true, by faith, of all who are reborn through baptism. That is why we are to celebrate the Lord’s paschal sacrifice with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The leaven of our former malice is thrown out, and a new creature is filled and inebriated with the Lord himself. For the effect of our sharing in the body and blood of Christ is to change us into what we receive. As we have died with him, and have been buried and raised to life with him, so we bear him within us, both in body and in spirit, in everything we do.

11 THE LANTERN
THURSDAY - APRIL 23

First reading
From the book of Revelation 3:1-22

To the churches at Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea

I, John, heard the Lord saying to me: “To the presiding spirit of the church in Sardis, write this: ‘The One who holds the seven spirits of God, the seven stars, has this to say: I know your conduct; I know the reputation you have of being alive, when in fact you are dead! Wake up, and strengthen what remains before it dies. I find that the sum of your deeds is less than complete in the sight of my God. Call to mind how you accepted what you heard; keep to it, and repent. If you do not rouse yourselves I will come upon you like a thief, at a time you cannot know. I realize that you have in Sardis a few persons who have not soiled their garments; these shall walk with me in white because they are worthy. The victor shall go clothed in white. I will never erase his name from the book of the living, but will acknowledge him in the presence of my Father and his angels.

‘Let him who has ears heed the Spirit’s word to the churches!’

“To the presiding spirit of the church in Philadelphia, write this: ‘The holy One, the true, who wields David’s key, who opens and no one can close, who closes and no one can open, has this to say: ‘I know your deeds; that is why I have left an open door before you which no one can close. I know that your strength is limited; yet you have held fast to my word and have not denied my name. I mean to make some of Satan’s assembly, those self-styled Jews who are not really Jews but frauds, come and fall down at your feet; they will learn of my love for you in that way. Because you have kept my plea to stand fast, I will keep you safe in the time of trial which is coming on the whole world, to test all men on earth. I am coming soon. Hold fast to what you have lest someone rob you of your crown. I will make the victor a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall never leave it. I will inscribe on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which he will send down from heaven, and my own name which is new.

‘Let him who has ears heed the Spirit’s word to the churches!’

“To the presiding spirit of the church in Laodicea, write this: ‘The Amen, the faithful Witness and true, the Source of God’s creation, has this to say: I know your deeds; I know you are neither hot nor cold. How I wish you were one or the other—hot or cold! But because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of my mouth! You keep saying, “I am so rich and secure that I want for nothing.” Little do you realize how wretched you are, how pitiable and poor, how blind and naked! Take my advice. Buy from me gold refined by fire if you would be truly rich. Buy white garments in which to be clothed, if the shame of your nakedness is to be covered. Buy ointment to smear on your eyes, if you would see once more. Whoever is dear to me I reprove and chastise. Be earnest about it, therefore. Repent! Here I stand, knocking at the door. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will enter his house and have supper with him, and he with me. I will give the victor the right to sit with me on my throne, as I myself won the victory and took my seat beside my Father on his throne.

‘Let him who has ears heed the Spirit’s word to the churches.’”

Second reading
From a sermon by Saint Gaudentius of Brescia, bishop

The inheritance of the new covenant

The heavenly sacrifice, instituted by Christ, is the most gracious legacy of his new covenant. On the night he was delivered up to be crucified he left us this gift as a pledge of his abiding presence.

This sacrifice is our sustenance on life’s journey; by it we are nourished and supported along the road of life until we depart from this world and make our way to the Lord. For this reason he addressed these words to us: Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have life in you.

It was the Lord’s will that his gifts should remain with us, and that we who have been redeemed by his precious blood should constantly be sanctified according to the pattern of his own passion. And so he commanded those faithful disciples of his whom he made the first priests of his Church to enact these mysteries of eternal life continuously. All priests throughout the churches of the world must celebrate these mysteries until Christ comes again from heaven. Therefore let us all, priests and people alike, be faithful to this everlasting memorial of our redemption. Daily it is before our eyes as a representation of the passion of Christ. We hold it in our hands, we receive it in our mouths, and we accept it in our hearts.

It is appropriate that we should receive the body of Christ in the form of bread, because, as there are many grains of wheat in the flour from which bread is made by mixing it with water and baking it with fire, so also we know that many members make up the one body of Christ which is brought to maturity by the fire of the Holy Spirit. Christ was born of the Holy Spirit, and since it was fitting that he should fulfill all justice, he entered into the waters of baptism to sanctify them. When he left the Jordan he was filled with the Holy Spirit who had descended upon him in the form of a dove. As the evangelist tells us: Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan.

Similarly, the wine of Christ’s blood, drawn from the many grapes of the vineyard that he had planted, is extracted in the wine-press of the cross. When men receive it with believing hearts, like capacious wine-skins, it ferments within them by its own power.

And so, now that you have escaped from the power of Egypt and of Pharaoh, who is the devil, join with us, all of you, in receiving this sacrifice of the saving passover with the eagerness of dedicated hearts. Then in our inmost being we shall be wholly sanctified by the very Lord Jesus Christ whom we believe to be present in his sacraments, and whose boundless power abides for ever.
FRIDAY - APRIL 24

First reading
From the book of Revelation 4:1-11
The vision of God

I, John, had another vision: above me there was an open door to heaven, and I heard the trumpet-like voice which had spoken to me before. It said, “Come up here and I will show you what must take place in time to come.”

At once I was caught up in ecstasy. A throne was standing there in heaven, and on the throne was seated One whose appearance had a gem-like sparkle as of jasper and carnelian. Around the throne was a rainbow as brilliant as emerald. Surrounding this throne were twenty-four other thrones upon which were seated twenty-four elders; they were clothed in white garments and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning and peals of thunder; before it burned seven flaming torches, the seven spirits of God.

The floor around the throne was like a sea of glass that was crystal-clear. At the very center, around the throne itself, stood four living creatures covered with eyes front and back. The first creature resembled a lion, the second an ox; the third had the face of a man, while the fourth looked like an eagle in flight. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and eyes all over, inside and out.

Day and night, without pause, they sing: “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, He who was, and who is, and who is to come!”

Whenever these creatures give glory and honor and praise to the One seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before the One seated on the throne, and worship him who lives forever and ever. They throw down their crowns before the throne and sing: “O Lord our God, you are worthy to receive glory and honor and power! For you have created all things; by your will they came to be and were made!”

Second reading
From a sermon by Saint Theodore the Studite
The precious and life-giving cross of Christ

How precious the gift of the cross, how splendid to contemplate! In the cross there is no mingling of good and evil, as in the tree of paradise: it is wholly beautiful to behold and good to taste. The fruit of this tree is not death but life, not darkness but light. This tree does not cast us out of paradise, but opens the way for our return.

This was the tree on which Christ, like a king on a chariot, destroyed the devil, the Lord of death, and freed the human race from his tyranny. This was the tree upon which the Lord, like a brave warrior wounded in his hands, feet and side, healed the wounds of sin that the evil serpent had inflicted on our nature. A tree once caused our death, but now a tree brings life. Once deceived by a tree, we have now repelled the cunning serpent by a tree. What an astonishing transformation! That death should become life, that decay should become immortality, that shame should become glory! Well might the holy Apostle exclaim: Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world! The supreme wisdom that flowered on the cross has shown the folly of worldly wisdom’s pride. The knowledge of all good, which is the fruit of the cross, has cut away the shoots of wickedness.

The wonders accomplished through this tree were foreshadowed clearly even by the mere types and figures that existed in the past. Meditate on these, if you are eager to learn. Was it not the wood of a tree that enabled Noah, at God’s command, to escape the destruction of the flood together with his sons, his wife, his sons’ wives and every kind of animal? And surely the rod of Moses prefigured the cross when it changed water into blood, swallowed up the false serpents of Pharaoh’s magicians, divided the sea at one stroke and then restored the waters to their normal course, drowning the enemy and saving God’s own people? Aaron’s rod, which blossomed in one day in proof of his true priesthood, was another figure of the cross, and did not Abraham foreshadow the cross when he bound his son Isaac and placed him on the pile of wood?

By the cross death was slain and Adam was restored to life. The cross is the glory of all the apostles, the crown of the martyrs, the sanctification of the saints. By the cross we put on Christ and cast aside our former self. By the cross we, the sheep of Christ, have been gathered into one flock, destined for the sheepfolds of heaven.

SATURDAY - APRIL 25

First Reading
From the letter of the apostle Paul to the Ephesians 4:1-16
The various graces for the different ministries in the one body of Christ.

I plead with you, then, as a prisoner for the Lord, to live a life worthy of the calling you have received, with perfect humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another lovingly. Make every effort to preserve the unity which has the Spirit as its origin and peace as its binding force. There is but one body and one Spirit, just as there is but one hope given all of you by your call. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all, and works through all, and is in all.

Each of us has received God’s favor in the measure in which Christ bestows it. Thus you find Scripture saying: “When he ascended on high, he took a host of captives and gave gifts to men.”
“He ascended” — what does this mean but that he had first descended into the lower regions of the earth? He who descended is the very one who ascended high above the heavens, that he might fill all men with his gifts.

It is he who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in roles of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ, till we become one in faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, and form that perfect man who is Christ come to full stature.

Let us, then, be children no longer, tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine that originates in human trickery and skill in proposing error. Rather, let us profess the truth in love and grow to the full maturity of Christ the head. Through him the whole body grows, and with the proper functioning of the members joined firmly together by each supporting ligament, builds itself up in love.

Second reading
From the treatise Against Heresies
by Saint Irenaeus, bishop

Preaching truth

The Church, which has spread everywhere, even to the ends of the earth, received the faith from the apostles and their disciples. By faith, we believe in one God, the almighty Father who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them. We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became man for our salvation. And we believe in the Holy Spirit who through the prophets foretold God’s plan: the coming of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, his birth from the Virgin, his passion, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, and his final coming from heaven in the glory of his Father, to recapitulate all things and to raise all men from the dead, so that, by the decree of his invisible Father, he may make a just judgment in all things and so that every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth to Jesus Christ our Lord and our God, our Savior and our King, and every tongue confess him.

The Church, spread throughout the whole world, received this preaching and this faith and now preserves it carefully, dwelling as it were in one house. Having one soul and one heart, the Church holds this faith, preaches and teaches it consistently as though by a single voice. For though there are different languages, there is but one tradition.

The faith and the tradition of the churches founded in Germany are no different from those founded among the Spanish and the Celts, in the East, in Egypt, in Libya and elsewhere in the Mediterranean world. Just as God’s creature, the sun, is one and the same the world over, so also does the Church’s preaching shine everywhere to enlighten all men who want to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Now of those who speak with authority in the churches, no preacher however forceful will utter anything different — for no one is above the Master — nor will a less forceful preacher diminish what has been handed down. Since our faith is everywhere the same, no one who can say more augments it, nor can anyone who says less diminish it.

SUNDAY - APRIL 26

First reading
From the book of Revelation 6:1-17

The Lamb opens the seals of the book of God.

I, John, watched while the Lamb broke open the first of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures cry out in a voice like thunder, “Come forward!” To my surprise I saw a white horse; its rider had a bow, and he was given a crown. He rode forth victorious, to conquer yet again.

When the Lamb broke open the second seal, I heard the second living creature cry out, “Come forward!” Another horse came forth, a red one. Its rider was given power to rob the earth of peace by allowing men to slaughter one another. For this he was given a huge sword.

When the Lamb broke open the third seal, I heard the third living creature cry out, “Come forward!” This time I saw a black horse, the rider of which held a pair of scales in his hand. I heard what seemed to be a voice coming from in among the four living creatures. It said: “A day’s pay for a ration of wheat and the same for three of barley! But spare the olive oil and the wine!”

When the Lamb broke open the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature cry out, “Come forward!” Now I saw a horse sickly green in color. Its rider was named Death, and the nether world was in his train. These four were given authority over one quarter of the earth, to kill with sword and famine and plague and the wild beasts of the earth.

When the Lamb broke open the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the spirits of those who had been martyred because of the witness they bore to the word of God. They cried out at the top of their voices: “How long will it be, O Master, holy and true, before you judge our cause and avenge our blood among the inhabitants of the earth?” Each of the martyrs was given a long white robe, and they were told to be patient a little while longer until the quota was filled of their fellow servants and brothers to be slain, as they had been.

When I saw the Lamb break open the sixth seal, there was a violent earthquake; the sun turned black as a goat’s hair
tent-cloth and the moon grew red as blood. The stars in the sky fell crashing to earth like figs shaken loose by a mighty wind. Then the sky disappeared as if it were a scroll being rolled up; every mountain and island was uprooted from its base. The kings of the earth, the nobles and those in command, the wealthy and powerful, the slave and the free—all hid themselves in caves and mountain crags. They cried out to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us! Hide us from the face of the One who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! The great day of their vengeance has come. Who can withstand it?”

Second Reading
From the first apology in defense of the Christians
by Saint Justin, martyr

The celebration of the Eucharist

No one may share the Eucharist with us unless he believes that what we teach is true, unless he is washed in the regenerating waters of baptism for the remission of his sins, and unless he lives in accordance with the principles given us by Christ.

We do not consume the Eucharistic bread and wine as if it were ordinary food and drink, for we have been taught that as Jesus Christ our Savior became a man of flesh and blood by the power of the Word of God, so also the food that our flesh and blood assimilates for its nourishment becomes the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus by the power of his own words contained in the prayer of thanksgiving.

The apostles, in their recollections, which are called gospels, handed down to us what Jesus commanded them to do. They tell us that he took bread, gave thanks and said: Do this in memory of me. This is my body. In the same way he took the cup, he gave thanks and said: This is my blood. The Lord gave this command to them alone. Ever since then we have constantly reminded one another of these things. The rich among us help the poor and we are always united. For all that we receive we praise the Creator of the universe through his Son Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday we have a common assembly of all our members, whether they live in the city or the outlying districts. The recollections of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as there is time. When the reader has finished, the president of the assembly speaks to us; he urges everyone to imitate the examples of virtue we have heard in the readings. Then we all stand up together and pray.

On the conclusion of our prayer, bread and wine and water are brought forward. The president offers prayers and gives thanks to the best of his ability, and the people give assent by saying, “Amen.” The Eucharist is distributed, everyone present communicates, and the deacons take it to those who are absent.

The wealthy, if they wish, may make a contribution, and they themselves decide the amount. The collection is placed in the custody of the president, who uses it to help the orphans and widows and all who for any reason are in distress, whether because they are sick, in prison, or away from home. In a word, he takes care of all who are in need.

We hold our common assembly on Sunday because it is the first day of the week, the day on which God put darkness and chaos to flight and created the world, and because on that same day our savior Jesus Christ rose from the dead. For he was crucified on Friday and on Sunday he appeared to his apostles and disciples and taught them the things that we have passed on for your consideration.

Want to learn more about St. Justin Martyr? Watch this video
LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Let's remember these exemplars of the faith who have gone before.
Let's ask their intercession before the Lord, in our need.

Born in Antioch (modern-day Turkey), St. Sara was the child of a wealthy Imperial Roman family. When she got older she got married to a Roman army officer, who was not a Christian, and practiced the pagan religion of the Roman Empire. He knew she was a Christian, and tolerated that fact so long as Sara kept her faith secret. One day, while traveling on ship that she feared would be wrecked during a terrible storm, Sara was publicly exposed as a Christian when she had her children baptized. This Baptism occurred against the wishes of her non-Christian husband.

The ship survived but Sara, upon reaching land, was turned over to the authorities. For her faith she died a martyrs death, being burned at the stake in 305 A.D., under the authority of Emperor Diocletian, who was leading a persecution against Christians.

Born in Cyprus in the early half of the seventh century, St. Anastasius of Sinai was a student of medicine and seemed to have a greater knowledge of the subject than most people.

He went on to become a Monk at Saint Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai. From there, he later traveled to Damascus, Syria, and Alexandria, Egypt. He was a great defender of the faith, and he urged Christians to keep their faith in the face of invading Muslim forces in those area. He ministered to and cared for those who had been driven into exile for having remained as Christian.

Later in life he was appointed as Abbot of Saint Catherine’s Monastery. He is best known for having intellectually battled against many of the heresies of his day, and for his writing on a number of theological topics. He died of natural causes around 700 A.D.

Born in Normandy, France, in the early eighth century, St. Opportuna was the sister of one saint, St. Chrodegang of Sées and the niece of another, St. Lantulda. A faithful young woman, St. Opportuna became a Benedictine nun, and ultimately became the Abbess of the Benedictine convent located near Almenèches, France. In the ceremony in which she became an Abbess, she received the veil from her brother St. Chrodegang.

Tradition tells us that a peasant farmer once stole a donkey from the Benedictine convent of which St. Opportuna was Abbess. The thief refused to acknowledge his crime to the nuns of the convent. St. Opportuna, as Abbess, reflected on the matter, and turned it over to God. The next day the peasant farmer’s field was sown with salt. Seeing this as a sign of God’s displeasure with his theft, the peasant returned the donkey, earning him St. Opportuna’s forgiveness. He also gave over his field to the nuns for their use.
THURSDAY
APRIL 23
ST. HELEN OF UDINE
PRAY FOR US

Born in 1396 in Udine, Italy, Bl. Helen of Udine was the daughter of the regal family of Count Maniago. She was married at the age of 15 to a knight named Anthony del Cavalcanti. The two were happily married for 25 years and had six children. Upon Anthony’s death, Helen found herself a widow. She then committed her life to being an Augustinian tertiary. In the role with the Augustinian order she was noted for her charity and austerity. Additionally, she took a vow of silence, speaking only on Christmas night. Bl. Helen had an ongoing fight with worldly temptation, and her silence and generosity helped her to overcome them. It was said that she was given to ecstatic trances in which she drew especially close to the Lord. She was also known to have the gift of healing. Bl. Helen spent the final last three years of life sick and bed-ridden. Even in her sickness, she practiced an ascetic lifestyle, preferring to sleep on a pallet of stones and straw rather than in a bed. She died on April 23, 1441. She was beatified in 1848 by Pope Pius IX, and is Patron Saint of widows, and is invoked against temptation.

FRIDAY
APRIL 24
ST. FIDELIS OF SIGMARIENGEN
PRAY FOR US

Born in 1577, as Mark Rey, St. Fidelis was a lawyer and philosophy teacher. He grew disgusted by the greed, corruption, and lack of interest in justice by his fellow lawyers, and abandoned the law. He became a priest, specifically a Franciscan Friar with his brother George, changed his name to Fidelis, and gave away his worldly wealth to the poor. He served his Friary as guardian, and worked with the sick, especially healing soldiers.

He led a group of Capuchins to preach to Calvinists and Zwinglians in Switzerland. The success of this work, and lack of violence suffered by this preaching mission was attributed to St. Fidelis spending his nights in prayer. His converts were numerous; but in the end he was stabbed to death by the fanatics on April 24, 1622 in Grusch, Switzerland. He was canonized by Pope Benedict XIV in 1746.

SATURDAY
APRIL 25
SAINT MARK THE EVANGELIST
PRAY FOR US

St. Mark is believed by Traditio to be the young man who ran away when Jesus was arrested (Mark 14:51-52), and the “John whose other name was Mark” (Acts 12:25). St. Mark was a disciple of Saint Peter the Apostle, and travelled with him to Rome. He was referred to as “my son Mark” by the St. Peter. St. Mark travelled with his cousin St. Barnabas, and with Saint Paul throughout Cyprus. He famously evangelized in Alexandria, Egypt, established the Church there, and served as the first Bishop of Alexandria. He also founded the first Christian school in that Diocese. St. Mark is the author of the earliest canonical Gospel, the Gospel of St. Mark. He was martyred in Alexandria on April 25, 68 A.D. He is the patron saint of lawyers, and is invoked against insect bites. His relics are housed in Venice, Italy.

SUNDAY
APRIL 25
ST. CLETUS, POPE
PRAY FOR US

St. Cletus (sometimes called Anacletus) was a Greek convert to the faith who brought to the faith by Saint Peter the Apostle, who also ordained him as Priest and Bishop. St. Cletus went on to become the third Pope, following St. Linus. He ordained a many priests during his Pontificate.

He is referenced in a writing by Saint Augustine of Hippo and is mentioned in the Roman Canon of the Mass. Martyred in the persecutions of Domitian in 89 A.D. His relics are housed in St. Linus Church in Vatican City.
SIGHTED

Drive-thru testing for Coronavirus by some of the hardworking staff Dover’s Kent General Hospital in Downtown Dover.

(above) St. Mark’s in Venice, Italy, is also feeling the effectis of the coronavirus. In an area especially hard hit, its famous street-side cafes sit nearly empty

(left) Bishop Malooly celebrating the Mass from his Episcopal seat at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Wilmington.
Sea and served as a place of banishment for prisoners sentenced to isolation and hard labor rather than to execution. It was an early version of a prison-type labor camp. John was sent there “because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus,” meaning, because of his loyalty to the word of God and his insistence in preaching the message of Jesus. It was a time of persecution of Christians under the reign of the emperor Domitian.

John identifies himself to the Christians to whom he is writing as “your brother.” Together, joined in faith, with these Christians he shares three things:

(a) the present reality of “the persecution,”
(b) the future hope of “the kingdom,” and
(c) the means to go from the one (persecution) to the other (the Kingdom of God) — namely, by “patient endurance.”

**Then and Now.** As we celebrate the glorification of Christ at Easter, the Church reminds us, through John, that our hope of future glory can only be attained if we accept with patient endurance the persecutions and crosses that life throws at us when we resolve to live our lives in faithfulness to Jesus and his teachings.

So, today, right now, for us, like St. John at Patmos, who was living in his own version of lock-down, we also together with our brothers and sisters in our Catholic faith share three things:

(a) the present reality of “the persecution”

— in this case the persecution of our way of life, caused by a virus.

(b) the future hope of “the kingdom,”

— our common faith that “we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ,” and

obviously, there is no Christian assembly, no church. It is now Sunday, the day of the Lord, and what does St. John do? He cannot attend a Church services (sound familiar?) in Patmos, since there are none. So, he does the next best thing. He recollects himself and joins himself in spirit with his brothers and sisters in the faith who are worshipping elsewhere at that time. In spirit, he connects with them and with the risen Lord. Since he had no liturgy to attend on Earth, God admits St. John into the heavenly liturgy where Jesus, the lamb that was slain and who now lives forever, is both priest and victim.

**A Revelation!** Thus, that great Scriptural writing, the Book of Revelation is basically an account of what St. John saw, heard and experienced, in his privileged participation in the heavenly liturgy while on Patmos.

The place where this happened can still be visited today: On the island of Patmos one can find the Cave of the Apocalypse (the Apocalypse being the alternate name for the Book of Revelation); it is located beneath the Church of St. John the Theologian. It is the spot where St. John encountered God in the heavenly liturgy. Where he
connected the earthly worship of the Church to the Mass of the Lamb in heaven.

His Presence in the Present. And so, for us, in normal times, because of that connection, our Sunday observance—the opportunity to connect with one another and with the Lord in weekly worship—should not be seen as merely an obligation but as a privilege. And maybe these days we feel that more than during previous times. Now, as we find ourselves in the situation where it is impossible to attend Sunday Mass, we, like St. John, need to recollect ourselves in God’s presence. We can read the word of God, pray, and place ourselves in spiritual communion. The Lord himself will meet us in our place of need and grant us the same blessings that he has reserved for those who worship him in spirit and in truth.

The Feast of Heaven and Earth. This Sunday (and indeed on all these Sundays of "no Mass") try to have the experience of St. John, and unite yourself in spirit to the Feast of Heaven and Earth. Unite yourself to the Mass in eternity — a Mass that connects to and is reflected in the Mass we celebrate here on Earth. Know that the Mass instituted by Jesus Christ, carried out by his Apostles and their successors (today’s Priests and Bishops), whether celebrated in Marydel, or Dover, has a foothold in Heaven.

St. John the Apostle learned of this, he experienced it and he wrote about it. His revelation to us, about God’s Revelation to him — put forth in a book appropriately entitled, the Book of Revelation, is a book of the Bible worth coming to understand. During these days, let’s take courage and strength from the experience of St. John the Apostle, who gives us a sound spiritual perspective for our current circumstance.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. James Lentini,
Pastor

DAILY REFLECTIONS BY OUR CLERGY

During the period when the faithful are challenged by an ongoing health crisis in our nation, the clergy serving our two Parishes are providing Daily Reflections on the daily readings for the faithful.

Click here to see the latest Daily Reflections

DEVOTIONS FOR THE DAYS OF THE WEEK

In its tradition, the Church has a specific focus of devotion for each day of the week. The prayers nourish the prayer life of the faithful and keep them close to the heart of Christ and his Church. The focus of devotional practices for each day of the week as made known in the Tradition of the Church are:

- Monday – Poor Souls in Purgatory
- Tuesday – The Holy Angels
- Wednesday – St. Joseph
- Thursday – The Most Blessed Sacrament
- Friday – The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ
- Saturday – Blessed Virgin Mary
- Sunday – The Most Holy Trinity

Click on any of the links above to access these litanies for your prayer life.
CLICK ON THE PUZZLE BELOW TO TRY TO SOLVE THE "EASTER SEASON" WORD SEARCH

EASTER SEASON PUZZLE

See if you can find all of these words that are related to the Easter Season.

WORD LIST:

ALLELUIA
ANGELS
ASCENSION
ASPERGES
BELIEVE
BELIEVE
BE NOT AFRAID
DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY
DOUJTING THOMAS
EASTER
EMPTY TOMB
GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY
GO TEACH ALL NATIONS
HEAVEN
HE IS RISEN
HOLY SPIRIT
JESUS
JOY
LILIES
LINES
MAGDALEN
MORNING
OCTAVE/EASTER
PASCHALTIDE
PENTECOST
PETER
RESURRECTION
ROAD TO EMMMAUS
SCRIPTURE
SEVEN SUNDAYS
SEVEN SUNDAYS
SOLDIERS
SOLEMNITY
SPEAKING IN TONGUES
STONE
TONGUES OF FIRE
UPPER ROOM
VIGIL
WOMEN
WRAPPINGS
ACTIVITIES
TEST YOU CATHOLIC TRIVIA SKILLS
ON THIS CHALLENGING TRIVIA QUIZ!

CLICK THE IMAGE BELOW TO PLAY

TEST YOUR CATHOLIC TRIVIA

Here are some trivia questions that will pique the Catholic trivia portion of your brain. Enjoy!

START

Catholic Trivia
Pope says living faith without sacraments, community is dangerous

By Carol Glatz Catholic News Service

April 17, VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis said he was praying for expectant mothers who may be anxious or worried about giving birth during the COVID-19 pandemic.

And he said the forced isolation devised to stop the pandemic was presenting the danger of people living the faith only for themselves -- detached from the sacraments, the church and the people of God.

Online Masses and spiritual communion do not represent the church, he said in his homily at his morning Mass in the chapel of his residence April 17.

"This is the church in a difficult situation that the Lord is allowing, but the ideal of the church is always with the people and with the sacraments -- always," Pope Francis said.

In his homily, the pope reflected on serious concerns about the faithful not being able to come together as a community to celebrate Mass or to receive the sacraments because of government restrictions against people gathering in groups as part of efforts to stem the spread of the coronavirus.

Masses, prayers and faith-based initiatives have been offered online, and the faithful have been encouraged to make an act of spiritual Communion given their lack of access to holy Communion, but "this is not the church," the pope said.

One's relationship with Jesus "is intimate, it is personal, but it is in a community," and this closeness to Christ without community, without the Eucharist, without the people of God assembled together and "without the sacraments is dangerous," he said.

It is dangerous, he said, because people could start living their relationship with God "for just myself, detached from the people of God."

As the Gospels show, Jesus' disciples always lived their relationship with the Lord as a community -- they gathered "at the table, a sign of community. It was always with the sacrament, with bread," the pope said.

"I am saying this because someone made me reflect on the danger of this moment we are living, this pandemic that has made all of us communicate, even in a religious sense, through the media, through means of communication," he said.

By broadcasting his morning Mass, for example, people are in communion, but they are not "together," he said.

The very small number of people present at his daily morning Mass will receive the Eucharist, he said, but not the people watching online who will only have "spiritual Communion."

"This is not the church," Pope Francis said. People are living this "familiarity with the Lord" apart from each other in order to "get out of the tunnel, not to stay in it."

Michigan: Governor Whitmer calls abortion 'life sustaining'

(CNA) Apr 17, 2020 - Pro-life advocates have criticized the governor of Michigan for calling abortion a "life-sustaining" procedure during an interview on Thursday.

In an April 16 appearance on the podcast "The Axe Files," Gov. Gretchen Whitmer was asked by host David Axelrod to react efforts by some states to limit abortions as part of their efforts to conserve medical resources and combat the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. "We stopped elective surgeries here in Michigan. Some people have tried to say that that type of a procedure is considered the same and that's ridiculous," said Whitmer.

"A woman's healthcare, her whole future, her ability to decide if and when she starts a family is not an election, it is a fundamental to her life. It is life sustaining and it's something that government should not be getting in the middle of," the governor said.

Axelrod, the host of the podcast, is a former senior advisor to President Barack Obama.

Right to Life of Michigan issued a statement on Friday criticizing Whitmer for calling abortion "life sustaining."

"Whether or not it's time for Michigan to allow surgeries deemed non-essential is a question for public health experts. However, we demand Governor Whitmer's rule be applied equally to everyone. Abortion doesn't sustain life. Elective abortions sustain lifestyles through taking lives," said Barbara Listing, president of Right to Life of Michigan.

Listing said it was "unfair" that people in Michigan are unable to receive certain medical treatments, such as joint replacements, "while abortion facilities have free reign."