We’ve been down this road before.
Praying in a time of sickness:

PRAYER, DEVOTION
AND "THE 14 HOLY HELPERS OF GOD"

Each Issue Featuring
CATHOLIC NEWS
DAILY READINGS
LIVES OF THE SAINTS
DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS
SPIRITUAL TEXTS
PUZZLES
ACTIVITIES

Cover: St. Blaise along with the other members of Fourteen Holy Helpers
May 2, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Readers,

Well, we've made it to the third issue of THE LANTERN, a parish magazine to provide our faithful with powerful Catholic spiritual resources in this time of their needed. Our cover features fourteen phenomenal friends of our Father in heaven -- the saintly cohort known as the Fourteen Holy Helpers!

What's that all about? Well, the Fourteen Holy Helpers have deep roots in Catholic tradition. They are saints, all from the first millenium —most from the fourth century— who sacrificed greatly for the Lord. These saints also, each of them, are patron saints invoked against various ailments or problems suffered by people. The rise in the realm of our faith of "the Holy Helpers" came during an earlier pandemic-like time: the era of the Black Death, the Bubonic Plague. Those suffering from the plague, fearful of it, or saddened by the loss of loved ones due to it, would turn in prayer to the Fourteen Holy Helpers. Many people would pray to a specific saint in the group for a specific problem, and ask that saint to pray to God for them. Other times, people would seek the intercession of the Holy Helpers in general.

In this issue, a reproduction of my Pastor's Column from the Bulletin highlights, in some detail, the history of the devotion to the Holy Helpers, as well as a hagiography (saint biography) of each of the fourteen of these holy folks.

This issue of THE LANTERN again features prayers, scripture, spiritual texts, hagiographies (lives of the saints), and much more to put you in the Catholic zone of prayers and connection to faith. While in that zone, pray to God, seek the intercession of our great saints, and remind yourself of the beautiful words of next Sunday's (May 10) Psalm (Psalm 98): "Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you." So pray hard, and pray often. And know that there are 14 Holy Helpers ready and willing to lend you a hand.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. James Lentini
Pastor
Mary and Jesus are flanked by a throng of saints known as the 14 Holy Helpers. In our Catholic tradition, these saints are known as powerful intercessors in times of sickness.

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

PRAYING TO AND WITH THE 14 HOLY HELPERS

In the tradition of the Church, in times of sickness, there’s a team of 14 saints, Holy Helpers, to seek intercession from in prayer

By Fr. James Lentini, Pastor

As we deal with and live through the situation of lockdown, social distancing and the coronavirus, it is easy to get depressed, fatalistic, or despairing. But this situation—though new to us—isn’t something new in the life of the Church.

The Church, our home of our faith, has been through this before with:

- the bubonic plague (which in the 14th century wiped out nearly half the population of Europe)
- the consumption (tuberculosis, which still kills 4,000 people a day, peaked in the late 19th century, with millions of annual deaths worldwide),
- malaria (in 2018, there were 405,000 deaths from malaria, and it is said, though somewhat hyperbolically, to have killed half of everyone who ever lived; it afflicted the world massively in the early and mid 20th century)

A Super Team. I read an article recently (which I will borrow from in this column) that noted that during the time of the plague and sickness, people turned strongly to their faith. And one specific devotional development that rose up was seeking the intercession of a group of saints called “The 14 Holy Helpers,”—most of whom were saints that had been martyrs in the early Church. The group of 14 Holy Helpers was to the faith, what The Avengers and The Justice League are to Marvel and DC Comics: a super team devoted to doing good. These 14 Holy Helpers were turned to, in prayer, by Catholics of the era of the Bubonic plague, and later invoked against the plague as well as other serious illnesses.

Helpers in Need. The devotion to this team of 14 saints, grouped as the Holy Helpers, started in Germany at the time of the great plague. In the German areas of Europe, these 14 were called the “Nothelfer,” meaning “helpers in need.” As the plague spread, devotion to the Holy Helpers also spread—not just in Europe, but later, throughout the world. Ultimately, Pope Nicholas V affirmed this devotion, by that time more broadly applied than just to the plague, and granted to it special indulgences. In a Missal used at Mass in the late 15th century it stated:

“The Mass of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, approved by Pope Nicholas … it is powerful on their behalf, however so much one is in great illness or anguish or sadness, or in whatsoever tribulation a man shall be. It is powerful also on behalf of the imprisoned and detained, on behalf of merchants and pilgrims, for those that have been sentenced to die, for those who are at war, for women who are struggling in childbirth, or with a miscarriage, and for (the forgiveness of) sins, and for the dead.”

A Deci quartet of Saints. The feast of the Holy Helpers (no longer on the Church calendar as a memorial or feast,) is still celebrated in some places, usually on August 8. The opening prayer for the Mass on the feast of 14 Holy Helpers names each member of this deci quartet (I made that word up) of saintly intercessors:

“Almighty and merciful God, who didst adorn Thy Saints George, Blase, 

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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, May 4


The Apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles too had accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem the circumcised believers confronted him, saying, ‘You entered the house of uncircumcised people and ate with them.” Peter began and explained it to them step by step, saying, “I was at prayer in the city of Joppa when in a trance I had a vision, something resembling a large sheet coming down, lowered from the sky by its four corners, and it came to me. Looking intently into it, I observed and saw the four-legged animals of the earth, the wild beasts, the reptiles, and the birds of the sky. I also heard a voice say to me, ‘Get up, Peter. Slaughter and eat.’ But I said, ‘Certainly not, sir, because nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ But a second time a voice from heaven answered, ‘What God has made clean, you are not to call profane.’ This happened three times, and then everything was drawn up again into the sky. Just then three men appeared at the house where we were, who had been sent to me from Caesarea. The Spirit told me to accompany them without discriminating. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. He related to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, saying, ‘Send someone to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter, who will speak words to you by which you and all your household will be saved.’ As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them as it had upon us at the beginning, and I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, ‘John baptized with water but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If then God gave them the same gift he gave to us when we came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to be able to hinder God?” When they heard this, they stopped objecting and glorified God, saying, “God has then granted life-giving repentance to the Gentiles too.”

Psalm 42

As the hind longs for the running waters, so my soul longs for you, O God. Athirst is my soul for God, the living God. When shall I go and behold the face of God?

R. Athirst is my soul for the living God.

Send forth your light and your fidelity; they shall lead me on And bring me to your holy mountain, to your dwelling-place.

R. Athirst is my soul for the living God.

Then will I go in to the altar of God, the God of my gladness and joy; Then will I give you thanks upon the harp, O God, my God!

R. Athirst is my soul for the living God.

Gospel - St. John 10:11-18

Jesus said: “I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father.”

Tuesday, May 5

Acts of the Apostles 11:19-26

Those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose because of Stephen went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but Jews. There were some Cypriots and Cyrenians among them, however, who came to Antioch and began to speak to the Greeks as well, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The news about them
reached the ears of the Church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to go to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord in firmness of heart, for he was a good man, filled with the Holy Spirit and faith. And a large number of people was added to the Lord. Then he went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the Church and taught a large number of people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

Psalm 87
His foundation upon the holy mountains the LORD loves: The gates of Zion, more than any dwelling of Jacob. Glorious things are said of you, O city of God!

R. All you nations, praise the Lord.

I tell of Egypt and Babylon among those who know the LORD; Of Philistia, Tyre, Ethiopia: “This man was born there.” And of Zion they shall say: “One and all were born in her; And he who has established her is the Most High LORD.”

R. All you nations, praise the Lord.

They shall note, when the peoples are enrolled: “This man was born there.” And all shall sing, in their festive dance: “My home is within you.”

R. All you nations, praise the Lord.

Gospel - St. John 10:22-30
The feast of the Dedication was taking place in Jerusalem. It was winter. And Jesus walked about in the temple area on the Portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered them, “I told you and you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify to me. But you do not believe, because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.”

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**Wednesday, May 6**

Acts of the Apostles 12:24-13:5A

The word of God continued to spread and grow. After Barnabas and Saul completed their relief mission, they returned to Jerusalem, taking with them John, who is called Mark.

Now there were in the Church at Antioch prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Symeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who was a close friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, completing their fasting and prayer, they laid hands on them and sent them off.

So they, sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and from there sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived in Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues.

Psalm 67

May God have pity on us and bless us; may he let his face shine upon us. So may your way be known upon earth; among all nations, your salvation. R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

May the nations be glad and exult because you rule the peoples in equity; the nations on the earth you guide.

R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you! May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear him!

R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

Gospel - St. John 12:44-50

Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me believes not only in me but also in the one who sent me, and whoever sees me sees the one who sent me. I came into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me might not remain in darkness. And if anyone hears my words and does not observe them, I do not condemn him, for I did not come to condemn the world but to save the world. Whoever rejects me and does not accept my words has something to judge him: the word that I spoke, it will condemn him on the last day, because I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. So what I say, I say as the Father told me.”

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**Thursday, May 7**


From Paphos, Paul and his companions set sail and arrived at Perga in Pamphylia. But John left them and returned to Jerusalem. They continued on from Perga and reached Antioch in Pisidia. On the sabbath they entered into the synagogue and took their seats. After the reading of the law and the prophets, the synagogue officials sent word to them, “My brothers, if one of you has a word of exhortation for the people, please speak.”

So Paul got up, motioned with his hand, and said, “Fellow children of Israel and you others who are God-fearing, listen. The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and exalted the people during their sojourn in the land of Egypt. With uplifted arm he led them out, and for about forty years he put up with them in the desert. When he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance at the
end of about four hundred and fifty years. After these things he provided judges up to Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king. God gave them Saul, son of Kish, a man from the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. Then he removed him and raised up David as their king; of him he testified, I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will carry out my every wish. From this man’s descendants God, according to his promise, has brought to Israel a savior, to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it. I am not speaking of all of you. I know those whom I have chosen. But so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, The one who ate my food has raised his heel against me. From now on I am telling you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I AM. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

Friday, May 8


When Paul came to Antioch in Pisidia, he said in the synagogue: “My brothers, children of the family of Abraham, and those others among you who are God-fearing, to us this word of salvation has been sent. The inhabitants of Jerusalem and their leaders failed to recognize him, and by condemning him they fulfilled the oracles of the prophets that are read sabbath after sabbath. For even though they found no grounds for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him put to death, and when they had accomplished all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and placed him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. These are now his witnesses before the people. We ourselves are proclaiming this good news to you that what God promised our fathers he has brought to fulfillment for us, their children, by raising up Jesus, as it is written in the second psalm, You are my Son; this day I have begotten you.”

Psalm 2

“I myself have set up my king on Zion, my holy mountain.” I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; this day I have begotten you.”

R. You are my Son; this day I have begotten you.

And now, O kings, give heed; take warning, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice before him; with trembling rejoice.

R. You are my Son; this day I have begotten you.

Gospel - John 14:1-6

Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way.” Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Saturday, May 9


On the following sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and with violent abuse contradicted what Paul said. Both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first, but since you reject it and condemn yourselves as unworthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, I have made you a
light to the Gentiles, that you may be an instrument of salvation to the ends of the earth.”

The Gentiles were delighted when they heard this and glorified the word of the Lord. All who were destined for eternal life came to believe, and the word of the Lord continued to spread through the whole region. The Jews, however, incited the women of prominence who were worshipers and the leading men of the city, stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their territory. So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. The disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 98
Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds; His right hand has won victory for him, his holy arm.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

The LORD has made his salvation known: in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice. He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness toward the house of Israel.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation by our God. Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands; break into song; sing praise.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Gospel - St. John 14:7-14
Jesus said to his disciples: “If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to Jesus, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it.”

Sunday, May 10

As the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, “It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them. The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

Psalm 98
Exult, you just, in the LORD; praise from the upright is fitting. Give thanks to the LORD on the harp; with the ten-stringed lyre chant his praises.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Upright is the word of the LORD, and all his works are trustworthy. He loves justice and right; of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him, upon those who hope for his kindness. To deliver them from death and preserve them in spite of famine.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

1 Peter 2:4-9
Beloved: Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it says in Scripture: Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame. Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and A stone that will make people stumble, and a rock that will make them fall. They stumble by disobeying the word, as is their destiny.

You are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
Gospel - St. John 14:1-12

Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way.” Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.”

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

Word on Fire: Bishop Barron's Homily for the Third Sunday of Easter

SUNDAY HOMILY
from Bishop Barron

April 26, 2020
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, May 4

First Reading
From the Book of Revelation 13:1-18

The two beasts

I, John, saw a wild beast come out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads; on its horns were ten diadems and on its heads blasphemous names. The beast I saw was like a leopard, but it had paws like a bear and the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave it his own power and throne, together with great authority.

I noticed that one of the beast’s heads seemed to have been mortally wounded, but this mortal wound was healed. In wonderment, the whole world followed after the beast. Men worshiped the dragon for giving his authority to the beast; they also worshiped the beast and said, “Who can compare with the beast, or come forward to fight against it?”

The beast was given a mouth for uttering proud boasts and blasphemies, but the authority it was given was to last only forty-two months. It began to hurl blasphemies against God, reviling him and the members of his heavenly household as well. The beast was allowed to wage war against God’s people and conquer them. It was likewise granted authority over every race and people, language and nation. The beast will be worshiped by all those inhabitants of earth who did not have their names written at the world’s beginning in the book of the living, which belongs to the Lamb who was slain.

Let him who has ears heed these words! If one is destined for captivity, into captivity he goes! If one is destined to be slain by the sword, by the sword he will be slain! Such is the faithful endurance that distinguishes God’s holy people.

Then I saw another wild beast come up out of the earth; it had two horns like a ram and it spoke like a dragon. It used the authority of the first beast to promote its interests by making the world and all its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound had been healed.

It performed great prodigies; it could even make fire come down from heaven to earth as men looked on. Because of the prodigies it was allowed to perform by authority of the first beast, it led astray the earth’s inhabitants, telling them to make an idol in honor of the beast that had been wounded by the sword and yet lived. The second wild beast was then permitted to give life to the beast’s image, so that the image had the power of speech and of putting to death anyone who refused to worship it. It forced all men, small and great, rich and poor, slave and free, to accept a stamped image on their right hand or their forehead. Moreover, it did not allow a man to buy or sell anything unless he was first marked with the name of the beast or with the number that stood for its name.

A certain wisdom is needed here; with a little ingenuity anyone can calculate the number of the beast, for it is a number that stands for a certain man. The man’s number is six hundred sixty-six.

Second Reading
From the book On the Holy Spirit
by Saint Basil the Great, bishop

The Spirit gives life

Our Lord made a covenant with us through baptism in order to give us eternal life. There is in baptism an image both of death and of life, the water being the symbol of death, the Spirit giving the pledge of life. The association of water and the Spirit is explained by the twofold purpose for which baptism was instituted, namely, to destroy the sin in us so that it could never again give birth to death, and to enable us to live by the Spirit and so win the reward of holiness. The water into which the body enters as into a tomb symbolizes death; the Spirit instills into us his life-giving power, awakening our souls from the death of sin to the life that they had in the beginning. This then is what it means to be born again of water and the Spirit: we die in the water, and we come to life again through the Spirit.

To signify this death and to enlighten the baptized by transmitting to them knowledge of God, the great sacrament of baptism is administered by means of a triple immersion and the invocation of each of the three divine Persons. Whatever grace
there is in the water comes not from its own nature but from the presence of the Spirit, since baptism is not a cleansing of the body, but a pledge made to God from a clear conscience.

As a preparation for our life after the resurrection, our Lord tells us in the gospel how we should live here and now. He teaches us to be peaceable, long-suffering, undefiled by desire for pleasure, and detached from worldly wealth. In this way we can achieve, by our own free choice, the kind of life that will be natural in the world to come.

Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, we ascend to the kingdom of heaven, and we are reinstated as adopted sons. Thanks to the Spirit we obtain the right to call God our Father, we become sharers in the grace of Christ, we are called children of light, and we share in everlasting glory. In a word, every blessing is showered upon us, both in this world and in the world to come. As we contemplate them even now, like a reflection in a mirror, it is as though we already possessed the good things our faith tells us that we shall one day enjoy. If this is the pledge, what will the perfection be? If these are the first fruits, what will the full harvest be?

Tuesday, May 5

First Reading
From the Book of Revelation 14:1-13

The victory of the Lamb

I, John, watched and the Lamb appeared. He was standing on Mount Zion, and with him were the hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. I heard a sound from heaven which resembled the roaring of the deep, or loud peals of thunder; the sound I heard was like the melody of harps playing on their harps. They were singing a new hymn before the throne, in the presence of the four living creatures and the elders. This hymn no one could learn except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been ransomed from the world. These are men who have never been defiled by immorality with women. They are pure and follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been ransomed as the first fruit of mankind for God and the Lamb. On their lips no deceit has been found; they are indeed without flaw.

Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, the herald of everlasting good news to the whole world, to every nation and race, language and people. He said in a loud voice: "Honor God and give him glory, for his time has come to sit in judgment. Worship the Creator of heaven and earth, the Creator of the sea and the springs." A second angel followed and cried out:

"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, which made all the nations drink the poisoned wine of her lewdness!"

A third angel followed the others and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast or its image, or accepts its mark on his forehead or hand, he too will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger. He will be tormented in burning sulphur before the holy angels and before the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment shall rise forever and ever. There shall be no relief day or night for those who worship the beast or its image or accept the mark of its name." This is what sustains the holy ones, who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

I heard a voice from heaven say to me: "Write this down: Happy now are the dead who die in the Lord!" The Spirit added, "Yes, they shall find rest from their labors, for their good works accompany them."

Second Reading
From a sermon by Saint Peter Chrysologus, bishop

Each of us is called to be both a sacrifice to God and his priest

I appeal to you by the mercy of God. This appeal is made by Paul, or rather, it is made by God through Paul, because of God’s desire to be loved rather than feared, to be a father rather than a Lord. God appeals to us in his mercy to avoid having to punish us in his severity.

Listen to the Lord’s appeal: In me, I want you to see your own body, your members, your heart, your bones, your blood. You may fear what is divine, but why not love what is human? You may run away from me as the Lord, but why not run to me as your father? Perhaps you are filled with shame for causing my bitter passion. Do not be afraid. This cross inflicts a mortal injury, not on me, but on death. These nails no longer pain me, but only deepen your love for me. I do not cry out because of these wounds, but through them I draw you into my heart. My body was stretched on the cross as a symbol, not of how much I suffered, but of my all-embracing love. I count it no loss to shed my blood: it is the price I have paid for your ransom. Come, then, return to me and learn to know me as your father, who repays good for evil, love for injury, and boundless charity for piercing wounds.

Listen now to what the Apostle urges us to do. I appeal to you, he says, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice. By this exhortation of his, Paul has raised all men to priestly status.

How marvellous is the priesthood of the Christian, for he is both the victim that is offered on his own behalf, and the priest who makes the offering. He does not need to go beyond himself to seek what he is to immolate to God: with himself and in himself he brings the sacrifice he is to offer God for himself. The victim
remains and the priest remains, always one and the same. Immolated, the victim still lives: the priest who immolates cannot kill. Truly it is an amazing sacrifice in which a body is offered without being slain and blood is offered without being shed.

The Apostle says: I appeal to you by the mercy of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice. Brethren, this sacrifice follows the pattern of Christ’s sacrifice by which he gave his body as a living immolation for the life of the world. He really made his body a living sacrifice, because, though slain, he continues to live. In such a victim death receives its ransom, but the victim remains alive. Death itself suffers the punishment. This is why death for the martyrs is actually a birth, and their end a beginning. Their execution is the door to life, and those who were thought to have been blotted out from the earth shine brilliantly in heaven.

Paul says: I appeal to you by the mercy of God to present your bodies as a sacrifice, living and holy. The prophet said the same thing: Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but you have prepared a body for me. Each of us is called to be both a sacrifice to God and his priest. Do not forfeit what divine authority confers on you. Put on the garment of holiness, gird yourself with the belt of chastity. Let Christ be your helmet, let the cross on your forehead be your unfailing protection. Your breastplate should be the knowledge of God that he himself has given you. Keep burning continually the sweet smelling incense of prayer. Take up the sword of the Spirit. Let your heart be an altar. Then, with full confidence in God, present your body for sacrifice. God desires not death, but faith; God thirsts not for blood, but for self-surrender; God is appeased not by slaughter, but by the offering of your free will.

Wednesday, May 6

First Reading
From the Book of Revelation 14:14 — 15:4

The harvest at the end of time

As I, John, watched, a white cloud appeared, and on the cloud sat One like a Son of Man wearing a golden crown on his head and holding a sharp sickle in his hand. Another angel came out of the temple and in a loud voice cried out to him who sat on the cloud, “Use your sickle and cut down the harvest, for now is the time to reap; the earth’s harvest is fully ripe.” So the one sitting on the cloud wielded his sickle over all the earth and reaped the earth’s harvest.

Then out of the temple in heaven came another angel, who likewise held a sharp sickle. A second angel, who was in charge of the fire at the altar of incense, cried out in a loud voice to the one who held the sharp sickle, “Use your sharp sickle and gather the grapes from the vines of the earth, for the clusters are ripe.” So the angel wielded his sickle over the earth and gathered the grapes of the earth. He threw them into the huge winepress of God’s wrath. The winepress was trodden outside the city, and so much blood poured out of the winepress that for two hundred miles around, it reached as high as a horse’s bridle.

I saw in heaven another sign, great and awe-inspiring: seven angels holding the seven final plagues which would bring God’s wrath to a climax.

I then saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire. On the sea of glass were standing those who had won the victory over the beast and its image, and also the number that signified its name. They were holding the harps used in worshiping God, and they sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

“Mighty and wonderful are your works, Lord God Almighty! Righteous and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who would dare refuse you honor, or the glory due your name, O Lord? Since you alone are holy, all nations shall come and worship in your presence. Your mighty deeds are clearly seen.”

Second Reading
From the treatise On the Trinity by Saint Hilary, bishop

The unity of the faithful in God through the incarnation of the Word and the sacrament of the eucharist

We believe that the Word became flesh and that we receive his flesh in the Lord’s Supper. How then can we fail to believe that he really dwells within us? When he became man, he actually clothed himself in our flesh, uniting it to himself for ever. In the sacrament of his body he actually gives us his own flesh, which he has united to his divinity. This is why we are all one, because the Father is in Christ, and Christ is in us. He is in us through his flesh and we are in him. With him we form a unity which is in God.

The manner of our indwelling in him through the sacrament of
his body and blood is evident from the Lord’s own words: This world will see me no longer but you shall see me. Because I live you shall live also, for I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you. If it had been a question of mere unity of will, why should he have given us this explanation of the steps by which it is achieved? He is in the Father by reason of his divine nature, we are in him by reason of his human birth, and he is in us through the mystery of the sacraments. This, surely, is what he wished us to believe; this is how he wanted us to understand the perfect unity that is achieved through our Mediator, who lives in the Father while we live in him, and who, while living in the Father, lives also in us. This is how we attain to unity with the Father. Christ is in very truth in the Father by his eternal generation; we are in very truth in Christ, and he likewise is in us.

Christ himself bore witness to the reality of his unity when he said: He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I in him. No one will be in Christ unless Christ himself has been in him; Christ will take to himself only the flesh of those who have received his flesh.

He had already explained the mystery of this perfect unity when he said: As the living Father sent me and I draw life from the Father, so he who eats my flesh will draw life from me. We draw life from his flesh just as he draws life from the Father. Such comparisons aid our understanding, since we can grasp a point more easily when we have an analogy. And the point is that Christ is the wellspring of our life. Since we who are in the flesh have Christ dwelling in us through his flesh, we shall draw life from him in the same way he draws life from the Father.

Thursday, May 7

First Reading
From the book of Revelation 15:5—16:21
The seven bowls of God’s wrath

I, John, had another vision. The heavenly sanctuary which is the tent of witness opened up, and out of it came the seven angels holding the seven plagues. The angels were dressed in pure white linen, each with a sash of gold about his breast. One of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of the God who lives forever and ever. Then the sanctuary became so filled with the smoke which arose from God’s glory and might that no one could enter it until the seven plagues of the seven angels had come to an end.

I heard a mighty voice from the sanctuary say to the seven angels, “Go and pour out upon the earth the seven bowls of God’s wrath!”

The first angel went out, and when he poured out his bowl on the earth, severe and festering boils broke out on the men who had accepted the mark of the beast or worshiped its image.

The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea. The sea turned to blood like that of a corpse, and every creature living in the sea died.

The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs. These also turned to blood. Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters cry out:

“You are just, O Holy One who is and who was, in passing this sentence! To those who shed the blood of saints and prophets, you have given blood to drink; they deserve it.” Then I heard the altar cry out: “Yes, Lord God Almighty, your judgments are true and just!”

The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun. He was commissioned to burn men with fire. Those who were scorched by the intense heat blasphemed the name of God who had power to send these plagues, but they did not repent or give him due honor.

The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast. Its kingdom was plunged into darkness; men bit their tongues in pain and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their suffering and their boils. But they did not turn away from their wicked deeds.

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. Its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings of the East. I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet; these spirits were devils who worked prodigies. They went out to assemble all the kings of the earth for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. (Be on your guard! I come like a thief. Happy the man who stays wide awake and fully clothed for fear of going naked and exposed for all to see!) The devils then assembled the kings in a place called in Hebrew “Armageddon.”

Finally, the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the empty air. From the throne in the sanctuary came a loud voice which said, “It is finished!” There followed lightning flashes and peals of thunder, then a violent earthquake. Such was its violence that there has never been one like it in all the time men have lived on the earth. The great city was split into three parts, and the other Gentile cities also fell. God remembered Babylon the great, giving her the cup filled with the blazing wine of his wrath. Every island fled and mountains disappeared. Giant hailstones like huge weights came crashing down on mankind from the sky, and men blasphemed God for the plague of hailstones, because this plague was so severe.

Second Reading
From a treatise on John by Saint Augustine, bishop
The new commandment

A new commandment I give you, that you love one another. This commandment that he is giving them is a new one, the Lord Jesus tells his disciples. Yet was it not contained in the Old Law, where it is written: You shall love your neighbor as yourself? Why does the Lord call it new when it is clearly so old? Or is the commandment new because it divests us of our former selves and clothes us with the new man? Love does indeed renew the
man who hears, or rather obeys its command; but only that love which Jesus distinguished from a natural love by the qualification: As I have loved you.

This is the kind of love that renews us. When we love as he loved us we become new men, heirs of the new covenant and singers of the new song. My brothers, this was the love that even in bygone days renewed the holy men, the patriarchs and prophets of old. In later times it renewed the blessed apostles, and now it is the turn of the Gentiles. From the entire human race throughout the world this love gathers together into one body a new people, to be the bride of God’s only Son. She is the bride of whom it is asked in the Song of Songs: Who is this who comes clothed in white? White indeed are her garments, for she has been made new; and the source of her renewal is none other than this new commandment.

And so all her members make each other’s welfare their common care. When one member suffers, all the members suffer with him, and if one member is glorified all the rest rejoice. They hear and obey the Lord’s words: A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; not as men love one another for their own selfish ends, nor merely on account of their common humanity, but because they are all gods and sons of the Most High. They love one another as God loves them so that they may be brothers of his only Son. He will lead them to the goal that alone will satisfy them, where all their desires will be fulfilled. For when God is all in all, there will be nothing left to desire.

This love is the gift of the Lord who said: As I have loved you, you also must love one another. His object in loving us, then, was to enable us to love each other. By loving us himself, our mighty head has linked us all together as members of his own body, bound to one another by the tender bond of love.

Friday, May 8

First reading
From the book of Revelation 17:1-18

Babylon the great harlot

I, John, watched and one of the seven angels who were holding the seven bowls came to me and said: “Come, I will show you the judgment in store for the great harlot who sits by the waters of the deep. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the earth’s inhabitants have grown drunk on the wine of her lewdness.”

The angel then carried me away in spirit to a desolate place where I saw a woman seated on a scarlet beast which was covered with blasphemous names. This beast had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and pearls and other jewels. In her hand she held a gold cup that was filled with the abominable and sordid deeds of her lewdness. On her forehead was written a symbolic name, “Babylon the great, mother of harlots and all the world’s abominations.” I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God’s holy ones and the blood of those martyred for their faith in Jesus.

When I saw her I was greatly astonished. The angel said to me: “Why are you so taken aback? I will explain to you the symbolism of the woman and of the seven-headed and ten-horned beast carrying her. The beast you saw existed once but now exists no longer. It will come up from the abyss once more before going to final ruin. All the men of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of the living from the creation of the world shall be amazed when they see the beast, for it existed once and now exists no longer, and yet it will exist again.

Here is the clue for one who possesses wisdom! The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits enthroned. They are also seven kings: five have already fallen, one lives now, and the last has not yet come; but when he does come he will remain only a short while. The beast which existed once but now exists no longer, even though it is an eighth king, is really one of the seven and is on its way to ruin. The ten horns you saw represent ten kings who have not yet been crowned; they will possess royal authority along with the beast, but only for an hour. Then they will come to agreement and bestow their power and authority on the beast. They will fight against the Lamb but the Lamb will conquer them, for he is the Lord of lords and the King of kings; victorious, too, will be his followers—the ones who were called: the chosen and the faithful.”

The angel then said to me: “The waters on which you saw the harlot enthroned are large numbers of peoples and nations and tongues. The ten horns you saw on the beast will turn against the harlot with hatred; they will strip off her finery and leave her naked; they will devour her flesh and set her on fire. For God has put it into their minds to carry out his plan, by making them agree to bestow their sovereignty on the beast until his will is accomplished. The woman you saw is the great city which has sovereignty over the kings of the earth.”

Second Reading
From a letter to the Corinthians by Saint Clement, pope

The preservation of unity

Beloved, Jesus Christ is our salvation, he is the high priest through whom we present our offerings and the helper who supports us in our weakness. Through him our gaze penetrates the heights of heaven and we see as in a mirror, the most holy face of God. Through Christ the eyes of our hearts are opened, and our weak and clouded understanding reaches up toward the light. Through him the Lord God willed that we should taste eternal knowledge, for Christ is the radiance of God’s glory, and as much greater than the angels as the name God has given him is superior to theirs.

So then, my brothers, let us do battle with all our might under his unerring command. Think of the men serving under our military commanders. How well disciplined they are! How readily and submissively they carry out orders! Not everyone can be a
prefect, a tribune, a centurion, or a captain of fifty, but each man in his own rank executes the orders of the emperor and the officers in command. The great cannot exist without those of humble condition, nor can those of humble condition exist without the great. Always it is the harmonious working together of its various parts that insures the well-being of the whole. Take our own body as an example: The head is helpless without the feet; and the feet can do nothing without the heart. Even our least important members are useful and necessary to the whole body, and all work together for its well-being in harmonious subordination.

Let us, then, preserve the unity of the body that we form in Christ Jesus, and let everyone give his neighbor the deference to which his particular gifts entitle him. Let the strong care for the weak and the weak respect the strong. Let the wealthy assist the poor and the poor man thank God for giving him someone to supply his needs. The wise man should show his wisdom not by his eloquence but by good works; the humble man should not proclaim his own humility, but leave others to do so; nor must the man who preserves his chastity ever boast of it, but recognize that the ability to control his desires has been given him by another.

Think, my brothers, of how we first came into being, of what we were at the first moment of our existence. Think of the dark tomb out of which our Creator brought us into his world where he had his gifts prepared for us even before we were born. All this we owe to him and for everything we must give him thanks. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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**Saturday, May 9**

**First reading**

**From the book of Revelation 18:1-20**

**The destruction of Babylon**

I, John, saw another angel coming down from heaven. His authority was so great that all the earth was lighted up by his glory. He cried out in a strong voice:

“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons. She is a cage for every unclean spirit, a cage for every filthy and disgusting bird; For she has made all the nations drink the poisoned wine of her lewdness. The kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the world’s merchants grew rich from her wealth and wantonness.”

Then I heard another voice from heaven say:

“Depart from her, my people, for fear of sinning with her and sharing the plagues inflicted on her! For her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God keeps count of her crimes. Pay her back as she has paid others; pay her double for her deeds! Pour into her cup twice the amount she concocted! In proportion to her boasting and sensuality, repay her in torment and grief! For she said to herself, ‘I sit enthroned as a queen. No widow am I, and never will I go into mourning!’ Therefore her plagues will come all at once, death and mourning and famine. She shall be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who condemns her.”

The kings of the earth who committed fornication with her and Wallowed in her sensuality will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke arise as she burns. They will keep their distance for fear of the punishment inflicted on her, and will say:

“Alas, alas, great city that you are, Babylon the mighty! In a single hour your doom has come!”

The merchants of the world will weep and mourn over her too, for there will be no more market for their imports—their cargoes of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen and purple garments, silk and scarlet cloth; fragrant wood of every kind, all sorts of ivory pieces and expensive wooden furniture; bronze, iron and marble; cinnamon and amomum, perfumes, myrrh and frankincense; wine and olive oil, fine flour and grain; cattle and sheep, horses and carriages; slaves and human lives.

“The fruit your appetite craved has deserted you. All your luxury and splendor are gone; you shall never find them again!”

The merchants who deal in these goods, who grew rich from business with the city, will keep their distance for fear of the punishment inflicted on her. Weeping and mourning, they cry out:

“Alas, alas, the great city, dressed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, Adorned all in gold and jewels and pearls! In a single hour this great wealth has been destroyed!”

Every captain and navigator, all sailors and seafaring men, then stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke go up as the city burned to the ground: “What city could have compared with this great one?” They poured dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and mourning:

“Alas, alas, the great city, in which all shipowners grew rich from their profitable trade with her! In a single hour her destruction has come about!”

Rejoice over her, you heavens, you saints, apostles and prophets! For God has exacted punishment from her on your account.
Second reading
From the commentary on the letter to the Romans
by Saint Cyril of Alexandria, bishop

God’s mercy has been extended to all;
the whole world has been saved

Though many, we are one body, and members one of another, united by Christ in the bonds of love. Christ has made Jews and Gentiles one by breaking down the barrier that divided us and abolishing the law with its precepts and decrees. This is why we should all be of one mind and if one member suffers some misfortune, all should suffer with him; if one member is honored, all should be glad.

Paul says: Accept one another as Christ accepted you, for the glory of God. Now accepting one another means being willing to share one another’s thoughts and feelings, bearing one another’s burdens, and preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This is how God accepted us in Christ, for John’s testimony is true and he said that God the Father loved the world so much that he gave his own Son for us. God’s Son was given as a ransom for the lives of us all. He has delivered us from death, redeemed us from death and from sin.

Paul throws light on the purpose of God’s plan when he says that Christ became the servant of the circumcised to show God’s fidelity. God had promised the Jewish patriarchs that he would bless their offspring and make it as numerous as the stars of heaven. This is why the divine Word himself, who as God holds all creation in being and is the source of its well-being, appeared in the flesh and became man. He came into this world in human flesh not to be served, but, as he himself said, to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Christ declared that his coming in visible form was to fulfill the promise made to Israel. I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he said. Paul was perfectly correct, then, in saying that Christ became a servant of the circumcised in order to fulfill the promise made to the patriarchs and that God the Father had charged him with this task, as also with the task of bringing salvation to the Gentiles, so that they too might praise their Savior and Redeemer as the Creator of the universe. In this way God’s mercy has been extended to all men, including the Gentiles, and it can be seen that the mystery of the divine wisdom contained in Christ has not failed in its benevolent purpose. In the place of those who fell away the whole world has been saved.

Sunday, May 10

First reading
From the book of Revelation 18:21-19:10

The wedding feast of the Lamb

A powerful angel picked up a stone like a huge millstone and hurled it into the sea and said:

“Babylon the great city shall be cast down like this, with violence, and nevermore be found! No tunes of harpists and minstrels, of flutists and trumpeters, shall ever again be heard in you! No craftsmen in any trade shall ever again be found in you! No sound of the millstone shall ever again be heard in you! No light from a burning lamp shall ever again shine out in you! No voices of bride and groom shall ever again be heard in you! Because your merchants were the world’s nobility, you led all nations astray by your sorcery.

“In her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all who were slain on the earth.” After this I heard what sounded like the loud song of a great assembly in heaven. They were singing:

“Allahu! Salvation, glory and might belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just! He has condemned the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her harlotry. He has avenged the blood of his servants which was shed by her hand.”

Once more they sang “Alleluia!” And as the smoke began to rise from her forever and ever, the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God seated on the throne and sang, “Amen! Alleluia!” A voice coming from the throne cried out:

“Praise our God, all you his servants, the small and the great, who revere him!”

Then I heard what sounded like the shouts of a great crowd, or the roaring of the deep, or mighty peals of thunder, as they cried:

“Allahu! The Lord is king, our God, the Almighty! Let us rejoice and be glad, and give him glory! For this is the wedding day of the Lamb; his bride has prepared herself for the wedding. She has been given a dress to wear made of finest linen, brilliant white.”
Second reading
From a sermon by Saint Maximus of Turin, bishop

Christ is the day

Christ is risen! He has burst open the gates of hell and let the dead go free; he has renewed the earth through the members of his Church now born again in baptism, and has made it blossom afresh with men brought back to life. His Holy Spirit has unlocked the doors of heaven, which stand wide open to receive those who rise up from the earth. Because of Christ’s resurrection the thief ascends to paradise, the bodies of the blessed enter the holy city, and the dead are restored to the company of the living. There is an upward movement in the whole of creation, each element raising itself to something higher. We see hell restoring its victims to the upper regions, earth sending its buried dead to heaven, and heaven presenting the new arrivals to the Lord. In one and the same movement, our Savior’s passion raises men from the depths, lifts them up from the earth, and sets them in the heights.

Christ is risen. His rising brings life to the dead, forgiveness to sinners, and glory to the saints. And so David the prophet summons all creation to join in celebrating the Easter festival: Rejoice and be glad, he cries, on this day which the Lord has made.

The light of Christ is an endless day that knows no night. Christ is this day, says the Apostle; such is the meaning of his words: Night is almost over; day is at hand. He tells us that night is almost over, not that it is about to fall. By this we are meant to understand that the coming of Christ’s light puts Satan’s darkness to flight, leaving no place for any shadow of sin. His everlasting radiance dispels the dark clouds of the past and checks the hidden growth of vice. The Son is that day to whom the day, which is the Father, communicates the mystery of his divinity. He is the day who says through the mouth of Solomon: I have caused an unfailling light to rise in heaven. And as in heaven no night can follow day, so no sin can overshadow the justice of Christ. The celestial day is perpetually bright and shining with brilliant light; clouds can never darken its skies. In the same way, the light of Christ is eternally glowing with luminous radiance and can never be extinguished by the darkness of sin. This is why John the evangelist says: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never been able to overpower it.

And so, my brothers, each of us ought surely to rejoice on this holy day. Let no one, conscious of his sinfulness, withdraw from our common celebration, nor let anyone be kept away from our public prayer by the burden of his guilt. Sinner he may indeed be, but he must not despair of pardon on this day which is so highly privileged; for if a thief could receive the grace of paradise, how could a Christian be refused forgiveness?
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.

MONDAY
MAY 4
THE CARthusian Martyrs
PRAY FOR US

These 18 Carthusian monks were put to death in England under King Henry VIII between 1535-1540 for maintaining their allegiance to the Pope. The Carthusians, founded by St. Bruno in 1054, are the strictest and most austere monastic order in the western Church. They live an isolated life with their ‘monastery’ actually being a number of hermitages built next to each other. When Henry VIII issued his “Act of Supremacy” (declaring that all who refused to take an oath recognizing him as head of the Church of England committed an act of high treason), these 18 Carthusians refused and were sentenced to death.

The Carthusians were the first martyrs to die under the reign of Henry VIII. All 18 had been tortured and killed for refusing to pledge their allegiance to the king before their allegiance to the Pope. They were beatified in 1886 by Pope Leo XIII, and three, John Houghton, Robert Lawrence, and Augustine Webster, were canonized by Pope Paul VI in 1970.

TUESDAY
MAY 5
ST. HilaRius of Arles
PRAY FOR US

Born in Lorraine, France, in 400, and raised as a pagan, Hilary was a relative of Saint Honoratus of Arles. Honoratus invited Hilary, a highly placed civil authority, to the recently completed abbey of Lerins. That action brought Hilary to the faith. Later, Hilary was baptized at Lerins, and joined the community as a monk. When Honoratus became bishop of Arles (in modern France), Hilary served as his secretary. Hilary succeeded Honoratus as bishop of Arles in 429. Hilary was an exuberant bishop, working so hard to spread the faith that he caused problems with the people and the civil authorities, and twice had to be reproved by the Vatican – his zealousness was causing more trouble than converts. Although some questioned his methods, none questioned his sanctity or his true belief. After bringing thousands into the faith, he died in 449 of natural causes.

WEDNESDAY
MAY 6
Blessed Maria Catalina Troiani
PRAY FOR US

Blessed Maria Catalina Troiani was born in Rome in 1813. She was a Franciscan tertiary who dedicated her life to the teachings of Saint Francis, and to the care and education of girls. She took the habit as a Franciscan nun in 1829. At that same time, she took the name Sister Maria Teresa of Saint Rose in honor of Saint Rose of Viterbo. In 1852 the Apostolic Vicar of Egypt requested that a Franciscan school for poor girls be established in Cairo; Blessed Maria and four other sisters met with Pope Pius IX to offer their service, and he gave them his blessing. The sisters arrived in Cairo ten days later to begin their work. In 1868, the group received approval as a formal congregation under the name “The Third Order Franciscan Sisters of Cairo.” In 1950, were renamed “The Franciscan Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.” In any event, from the day of their founding until the day of her death, Sister Maria served as Mother Superior to the group. Blessed Maria Catalina Troiani died on May 6, 1897 in Cairo, Egypt, and was canonized by Pope John Paul II in April 1985.
**THURSDAY MAY 7**

**ST. DOMITIAN OF HUY**

Priest and, later, Bishop of Tongres (in modern Belgium) St. Domitian spoke out convincingly against heretics and pagans. He opposed heretics at the Synod of Orleans in 549, encouraged the development of writings and sermons against heresy, and worked in the Meuse Valley to convert pagans. He built churches and hospices to care for the spiritual and physical needs of the people. St. Domitian was well-known for his generosity, his fund-raising abilities that helped ease a famine, and his work against heretics.

**Also on May 7:** The Apparition of the Holy Cross over Jerusalem

This event commemorates the appearance on 7 May 351, (Pentecost of that year), of a luminous image of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. It stretched from Mount Golgotha to the Mount of Olives (about two miles / three kilometers), was brighter than the sun, lasted several hours, and was seen by the entire city. It led to many conversions and was reported in a letter attributed to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem.

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**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**ST. VICTOR THE MOOR**

St. Victor, born in Mauritania (west Africa) in the third century, was a Roman soldier who was stationed in Milan. In the Emperor’s army, Victor was required to worship and make offerings to the Roman gods; he refused and was eventually arrested and put in solitary confinement for six days without food and water to weaken his resistance. After six days, he was again asked to offer sacrifices to the Roman idols, he again refused. He was taken to back to prison and was further tortured by guards who poured molten lead into his wounds. St. Victor escaped from the prison but was re-captured by the Emperor’s men and was summarily beheaded. His body was left unburied for a week, but the local Bishop, St. Maternus found St. Victor’s body still intact and being watched over by two wild beasts. To honor this faithful saint, a magnificent tomb was built for him. Many buildings and churches in Milan have been built in honor of St. Victor, most notably, the St. Victor’s Prison. He is patron saint of prisoners and exiles, and 13 Italian cities.

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**SATURDAY MAY 9**

**BLESSED KAROLINA GERHARDINGER**

Born in 1797 to a working-class family, Blessed Karolina was educated by the Augustinian canonesses until 1809 when religious orders were closed by decree of the Bavarian government in Germany. Bl. Karolina decided to start a new religious order devoted to God and Christian education. In 1828, the Vatican got concessions from the Bavarian government; this resulted in the re-opening of many religious communities. Bl Karolina and other sisters started the order that was to become the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Bl. Karolina took the name Theresa in religious life, but people soon began calling her “Sr. Theresa of Jesus” because of her devotion to the True Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. This holy sister’s Rule and Constitutions were approved by the Vatican in 1854, and the Order quickly began to spread. Teresa spent the rest of her life devoted to that work. She died in 1879 and was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1985.

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**SUNDAY MAY 10**

**ST. DAMIAN DE VEUSTER**

Although Joseph de Veuster was born the son of a farmer in 1840, he began his studies for the priesthood with the Picpus Fathers in 1860. Upon entry into their order, Joseph took the name Damian. He studied for the priesthood at a seminary in Paris and volunteered for missionary work. He was sent to Hawaii. In 1864, he was ordained to the priesthood in Honolulu, Hawaii. In addition to his parish work, he was the resident priest for the leper colony on Molokai where he worked alone for years to minister to the needs of the lepers. Through his work, he turned the colony into spiritual community with the best treatments of the day. In 1885, St. Damian contracted leprosy. Though crippled by the disease, he worked in the service of Christ in Molokai until his death. He died in 1889 and was canonized on October 11, 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI.
Organist playing music for people-less Mass

How many people does it take to put on a nightly TV news broadcast? Well, it looks like the answer is three. This is a behind the scenes photo of an Indiana TV station news broadcast.

Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem, from a few weeks ago, burning bread to mark the start of Passover

Sign in front of store gave a thumbs-down to the month of March.

A solitary figure sits on a quiet beach in Fujisawa, Japan. No beach traffic to worry about there!

With car sales down in some parts of the country right now, there is a pile up of 'em sitting and waiting for buyers. Here are some new cars lined up next to the dock at the Port of Los Angeles.
SIGHTED

A man walks alone through the nearly empty Oculus transport hub at the World Trade Center in New York City.

Russian Orthodox faithful in Ivanovo region take part in an Easter procession on April.

With signs of re-opening on the horizon, Las Vegas prepares by posting some cautionary notices.

Faithful guards at the Vatican keep things secure as they protect the sovereign territory of the Vatican City-State amidst the lockdown in Italy.

Priests gathered for Mass with just a lector and a camera present for the celebration of the Sacrament.
Pastor’s Column:
Praying to and with the Fourteen Holy Helpers
continued from page 3

Erasmus, Pantaleon, Vitus, Christopher, Denis, Cyriacus, Acacius, Eustace, Giles, Margaret, Barbara and Catherine with special privileges above all others, so that all who in their necessities implore their help, according to the grace of Thy promise, may attain the salutary effect of their pleading, grant to us, we beseech Thee, forgiveness of our sins, and with their merits interceding, deliver us from all adversities, and kindly hear our prayers.”

So, who are these 14 Holy Helpers whom I would commend that we should turn to in prayer during these trying times of the coronavirus? Well, some of them you may know already, and some are quite obscure. The following is a rundown of this deci quartet (I think I’m going to get a trademark on that term) of saintly helpers who intercede for us in times vast sickness. These are the 14 Holy Helpers.

Saint George: Martyred under Roman Emperor Diocletian, he was a soldier in the Roman army. However, St. George got into a kerfuffle with the powers that be, when he refused to arrest Christians and offer sacrifices to Roman gods. He was cajoled and bribed to do so, but resisted. Ultimately, he was tortured and then executed for his offenses. He is a saint who is invoked against skin diseases and palsy.

Saint Blase: A side note, I love the way all word processors change this saints name from Blase to Blasé. And trust me, this saint is anything but blasé. But to appease my word processor, I will spell this saints name the traditional way: Blaise. End of problem. Another fourth century martyr, St. Blase was Bishop in Armenia during a time of Christian persecution, and was arrested for practicing his faith. While in prison, a mother with a son who had gotten a fishbone stuck in his throat visited St. Blase, who was her Bishop, and his blessing on her son. Upon blessing the boy, the bone dislodged and he was saved. The authorities continued to demand St. Blaise recant his faith in Christ; he refused. He was then tortured and beheaded for this offense. St. Blaise is invoked against diseases of the throat.

St. Erasmus: St. Erasmus (also known as St. Elmo, famously named in the title of the 80s brat-pack film “St. Elmo’s Fire”) was Bishop of Formia (half way between Rome and Naples). He served as a Bishop during the time of the Christian persecution led by the Roman Emperor Diocletian, in the early fourth century. For a while, he fled to Mount Lebanon to escape persecution; there, it is said, he was fed by a raven. He was found by the authorities and jailed, but he made multiple miraculous escapes with the help of an angel. He was tortured in the most brutal manner, and yet his wounds healed; he went on to die of natural causes (though deemed by the Church as a martyr). St. Erasmus is invoked by those suffering from stomach pains and disorders, and by women in labor.

St. Pantaleon: Here we go again: St. Pantaleon is yet another early fourth century martyr persecuted under — you guessed it —

Word on Fire: Lessons from the Quarantine, and Missing the Eucharist
Roman Emperor Diocletian. St. Pantaleon was the son of a rich pagan, but was raised a Christian by his mother with the help of a local priest. He went on to work as a physician to Emperor Maximinianus. Some nefarious peers revealed to the Emperor that St. Pantaleon was a Christian. The Emperor told St. Pantaleon he would be spared if he worshipped the pagan gods of Rome; he refused and was tortured. He was attempted to be put to death many times, but each time, he was rescued from death by Christ, who appeared to him in the form of a priest. Ultimately, after he was better prepared for his death, he was beheaded. He is invoked as a patron saint of physicians and midwives.

St. Vitus: Another early fourth century martyr persecuted by you-know-who. St. Vitus was born into a pagan family but converted to Christianity by the assistance of a nurse. It is said that good St. Vitus inspired many conversions and performed many miracles. This went on bad with the anti-Christian crowd. So, St. Vitus, the Christian nurse who converted him, and the nurse’s husband, were ordered to be put to death. They were sent to be killed by lions in the Colosseum, but survived that ordeal. They were eventually put to death on the rack. St. Vitus is invoked against epilepsy, paralysis, and diseases of the nervous system.

St. Christopher: Something different: St. Christopher wasn’t a fourth century martyr and wasn’t persecuted by Emperor Diocletian. Also different: His name wasn’t actually Christopher. Here’s the story: He was a third century martyr originally called Reprobus. Not only was he a pagan, but he specifically pledged his service to a certain pagan king and to Satan. Yep, Satan. So, how did this guy get into the saint books? Well, Reprobus gave up his reprobate way (that’s the origin of the word), and with the help of a Monk, converted to Christianity. Reprobus was called on to use his strength to help carry folks across a raging stream that had no bridge. Once he was carrying a child who revealed himself as Christ, and declared that Reprobus would be called “Christopher” (meaning Christ-bearer). Inspired, St. Christopher began to evangelize and converted thousands. The Emperor Decius, who fiercely hated Christians, had Christopher arrested, and later beheaded, around the year 250. He is invoked against epilepsy and toothache, and is the patron saint of a holy death.

St. Denis: St. Denis was the a Bishop of Paris in Gaul (modern day France) and a third century martyr. He was a missionary on fire with the Holy Spirit, and he eventually came to France, where he became Bishop. It was also where he was beheaded on Montmartre (Mount of Martyrs) — a site so-called because so very many early Christians were martyred there for their faith. It is said that St. Denis was seen walking the streets of Paris carrying his own head in his hands; he walked four miles holding his head, which delivered a sermon, before finally collapsing and dying. He is invoked against demonic attacks.

St. Cyriacus: St. Cyriacus, was a fourth century deacon who was actually well liked by that nefarious Roman Emperor Diocletian. Why? Because he cured the Emperor’s daughter in the name of Jesus. So, in spite of Christianity, St. Cyriacus was spared. But, then after Diocletian died, his successor, emperor Maximinus, who held no particular partiality for Cyriacus, imprisoned him. He was tortured on the rack and beheaded for refusing to renounce Christianity. He is the patron of those who suffer from eye diseases.

St. Acacius: A fourth century martyr under Roman Emperor Galerius, St. Acacius was a captain in the Roman army. One day the voice of God came to him, “Call on the help of the God of Christians.” St. Acacius obeyed the voice, and then immediately sought and received Baptism. He then set out to convert his fellow soldiers in the Roman army, and denounced the Roman Emperor. This went over like a darts tournament in a balloon factory. The Emperor tortured St. Acacius, who refused to denounce his faith. He was beheaded in the year 311. He is the patron saint of those who suffer from headaches.

St. Eustace: A second century martyr, persecuted under Roman Emperor Trajan, According to tradition, St. Eustace was a general in the army who converted to Christianity after a vision of a Crucifix appeared to him in-between the antlers of a deer that he was hunting. His whole family then converted Christianity. When this was found out, he and his wife were burned at the stake after refusing to participate in a pagan ceremony, and renounce their Christian faith. St. Eustace is invoked against fires.

St. Giles: Not a martyr, St. Giles was a seventh century monk who lived near Athens. Seeking a more contemplative setting he eventually retreated to the wilderness. There he went on to found a monastery under the rule of St. Benedict. He was a holy man to whom many miracles were ascribed. Giles died peacefully around the year of 712, and is invoked against crippling diseases.

St. Margaret of Antioch: Another early fourth century martyr persecuted by Roman Emperor Diocletian, St. Margaret was a convert to Christianity. This angered her family and her father disowned her. Thereafter, committed to Christ, she lived the life of a consecrated virgin. One day when a Roman spotted her and sought to make her his wife; she refused, and was brought before a court. The court ordered St. Margaret to denounce her faith or die. She refused. The court ordered that she be boiled alive. Miraculously she was spared from that fate, but eventually was beheaded. She is invoked as a patron of pregnant women and those suffering from kidney diseases.

St. Barbara: A third century martyr, St. Barbara is said to have been the daughter of a wealthy, pagan man who sought to keep Barbara from the world. One day, she confessed to him that she had converted to Christianity. Her father denounced her and turned her over to the local Roman authorities. It was then ordered that St. Barbara be beheaded. It is said that her own father did the beheading, after which he was struck by lightning. St. Barbara is invoked against fires and lightning storms.

St. Catherine of Alexandria: An early fourth century martyr and daughter of the Queen of Egypt. St. Catherine converted to Christianity following the experience of a vision of Jesus and Mary. Her mother, the Queen, inspired by her daughter also converted to Christianity. When Roman Emperor Maximinus started persecuting Christians in Egypt, St. Catherine openly opposed the Emperor and set out to prove to him that the Roman gods were false. She debated the Emperor’s best scholars — and by the end of the debate many of those scholars actually converted to Christianity as a result of her arguments. This did not go over well with the Emperor. St. Catherine was arrested, scourged, imprisoned, and later, beheaded. She is the patron saint of philosophers and young students.

So, these are the Holy Helpers — 14 in all — who we can turn to in the worst of times. They know our hearts, and they have likewise experienced pains and troubles in their own lives that moved them closer to the Lord. During these days of lockdown, and these times of difficulty, turn in prayers to these saints, and seek their intercession before God. They will be praying for you and with you. Even though the Governor Carney and Governor Hogan say we can’t gather in groups of more than 10, I think they will make an exception for us to gather in prayer with the 14 Holy Helpers.
PUZZLE PAGE

CLICK ON THE PUZZLE IMAGE BELOW TO TRY TO SOLVE "THE CHURCH BY NUMBERS" CROSSWORD PUZZLE ONLINE

IT'S A DATE - A SAINT'S DATE

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ACTIVITIES
TEST YOU CATHOLIC TRIVIA SKILLS
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Catholic Geography

START
VATICAN CITY (CNS - April 28) -
Pope Francis approved the establishment of the John Paul I Vatican Foundation to preserve and promote the writings, thinking, example and study of "the smiling pope." The pope also appointed as the foundation president Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, who, like Pope John Paul, is from Italy's northern Veneto region. The Vatican made the announcement April 28.

Born Albino Luciani in 1921, Pope John Paul I served only 33 days as pope. He died in 1978 at the age of 65, shocking the world and a church that had just mourned the death of St. Paul VI. St. John Paul II said his predecessor's importance was inversely proportional to his brief pontificate, and Cardinal Parolin said this pope "was and remains a point of reference within the history of the universal church." Much about the pope, his life and work has been gathered over the course of his sainthood cause, which Pope Francis furthered in 2017 with the recognition that Pope John Paul lived the Christian virtues in a heroic way.

Cardinal Parolin said in a written comm-

mentary in the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, April 28 that assembling all the sources of information for the sainthood cause has spurred on new research and important details from a historical point of view. "Therefore, a necessary reclaiming of the memory of Pope Luciani is now possible so that his historical significance may be fully restored" and new prospects be opened to greater study into his work, the cardinal wrote.

Having this new foundation, he added, would allow for the needed preservation of all of the late pope's works and writings, and would help promote his thinking and spirituality, particularly since his example and message are "extraordinarily timely" today. This Italian pope, born into poverty in a small mountain village, was "a pastor near to his people, focused on the essentials of the faith, including an extraordinary social sensitivity," the cardinal wrote. "Being close, humility, simplicity, insisting on God's mercy, love for one's neighbor and solidarity are some of his major characteristics," he wrote.

PRO-LIFE NEWS

Brazil’s Supreme Court rejects effort to legalize abortion in Zika cases

(CNA - April 27, 2020) A majority of Brazil’s Supreme Federal Tribunal has voted against an intervention seeking to decriminalize abortion for expectant mothers diagnosed with the Zika virus. The judges convened a virtual plenary session April 24 to hear arguments for and against the "Direct Action on Unconstitutionality- ADI 5581," a legal intervention filed with the court by the National Association of Public Defenders. While the court has until April 30 to vote on the matter, 7 of its 11 members have already voted in opposition, effectively rejecting the measure. Abortion is illegal in Brazil but previous Supreme Court rulings have declared it a “non-punishable crime” in cases of rape, a proven risk to life of the mother and, as of 2012, babies diagnosed with anencephaly.

Ahead of the Supreme Court ruling, pro-life groups in Brazil had spoken out against efforts to expand abortion in the country. A CitizenGo petition against the legal action drew more than 184,000 online signatures. The Brazilian Bishops’ Conference had also opposed the attempt, calling on Catholics to defend life and oppose abortion. The conference wrote an open letter and also wrote privately to the Supreme Court, reiterating the duty to value the inviolable gift of life.
CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

China Resumes Cross Removals as Virus Subsides

CHINA (UCANews) Communist administration in China has started another wave of cross removals as the coronavirus pandemic subsides there. In the past two weeks, authorities have removed crosses from the top of two churches, sources told UCANews on April 27. They fear more such actions.

The removals began as the administration reported the discharge of the last Covid-19 patient in Wuhan, the central Chinese city where the coronavirus was first reported last December. The cross removals began as government officials became relatively free from the pressure of fighting the pandemic, Christian leaders said. Authorities removed the cross of Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Anhui Diocese on April 18, said John, a source in the diocese.

Five days before the incident, John said, parish leaders approached local authorities about repairing the building. But officials said the plan was to remove the crosses of both Catholic and Protestant churches in the area. A local government official, known as the community director, on April 16 asked parishioners for the keys to the church. “They wanted to enter the church and remove the cross,” John said. The matter was reported to Bishop Liu Xinhong of Anhui. On April 18, the community director led a team of young people to remove the cross.

In another incident in Anhui Diocese on April 19, a cross was removed from a church in Yongqiao district of Suzhou City around 4am, probably to avoid Catholics gathering in opposition, parishioner Paul said. A mobile phone was taken away when someone took a picture. On April 27, authorities removed the cross of a Protestant church in Suzhou Road in Hefei City. “The same routine and tactics are used all across China,” said Father Chen from Anhui. “This is not the case of a particular diocese or province. It is happening all over the mainland,” he said.

DAILY REFLECTIONS BY OUR CLERGY

During the time when the faithful are challenged by an ongoing health crisis, the clergy serving our Parishes are providing Daily Reflections on the scriptures 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 focus of devotion for each day of the week to nourish the prayer life of the faithful and keep them close to the heart of Christ and his Church.

In Catholic tradition, these are the focus of prayers each day of the week:

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.