PENTECOST SUNDAY
MAY 31, 2020

LORD, SEND OUT YOUR Spirit
AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH

PSALM 104
Weekly Scripture

Sunday, May 31
Pentecost Sunday
Acts 2:1-11
Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34
1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13
Jn 20:19-23

Monday, June 1
Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church (Ninth Week in Ordinary Time)
Gen 3:9-15, 20 or Acts 1:12-14
Ps 87:1-2, 3 and 5, 6-7
Jn 19:25-34

Tuesday, June 2
Weekday
2 Pet 3:12-15a, 17-18
Ps 90:2, 3-4, 10, 14 and 16
Mk 12:13-17

Wednesday, June 3
Memorial of Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs
2 Tim 1:1-3, 6-12
Ps 123:1b-2ab, 2cdef
Mk 12:18-27

Thursday, June 4
Weekday
2 Tim 2:8-15
Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14
Mk 12:28-34

First Friday, June 5
Memorial of Saint Boniface, Bishop and Martyr
2 Tim 3:10-17
Ps 119:157, 160, 161, 165, 166, 168
Mk 12:35-37

First Saturday, June 6
Weekday
2 Tim 4:1-8
Ps 71:8-9, 14-15ab, 16-17, 22
Mk 12:38-44

A Reconciling Presence
Gospel Reflection on John 20:19-23

The Season of Easter concludes with today’s celebration, the Feast of Pentecost. On Pentecost we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem; this event marks the beginning of the Church. The story of Pentecost is found in the Acts of the Apostles, today's first reading. The account in today's Gospel, John 20:19-23, also recounts how Jesus gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to his disciples. Yet the event in John's Gospel takes place on Easter Sunday. There is no need to try to reconcile these two accounts. It is enough that we know that after his death, Jesus fulfilled his promise to send to his disciples a helper, an advocate, who would enable them to be his witnesses throughout the world.

We already heard today's Gospel proclaimed on the Second Sunday of Easter this year (Lectionary Cycle A). That Gospel passage, however, also included the description of Jesus' appearance to Thomas. In that context, we were led [to] reflect on belief and unbelief.

In the context of the Feast of Pentecost, John 20:19-23 reminds us about the integral connection between the gifts of peace and forgiveness and the action of the Holy Spirit. Jesus greets his disciples with the gift of peace. Jesus then commissions his disciples to continue the work that he has begun, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” He breathes the Holy Spirit upon the disciples and sends them to continue his work of reconciliation through the forgiveness of sins. Jesus' act of breathing the Holy Spirit mirrors God's act of breathing life into Adam at the time of Creation. In fact, both the Greek and Hebrew words for “spirit” can also be translated as “breath.”

This Gospel reminds us that the Church is called to be a reconciling presence in the world. The reconciling presence of Christ is celebrated in the Church's sacramental life. In the Sacrament of Baptism, we are cleansed of sin and become a new creation in Christ. In the Sacrament of Penance, the Church celebrates the mercy of God through the forgiving of sins. This reconciling presence is also to be a way of life for Christians. In situations of conflict, we are to be agents of peace and harmony among people.
Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions
Feast Day: June 3

One of 22 Ugandan martyrs, Charles Lwanga is the patron of youth and Catholic action in most of tropical Africa. He protected his fellow pages, aged 13 to 30, from the homosexual demands of the Bagandan ruler, Mwanga, and encouraged and instructed them in the Catholic faith during their imprisonment for refusing the ruler’s demands. Charles first learned of Christ's teachings from two retainers in the court of Chief Mawulugungu. While a catechumen, he entered the royal household as assistant to Joseph Mukaso, head of the court pages.

On the night of Mukaso's martyrdom for encouraging the African youths to resist Mwanga, Charles requested and received baptism. Imprisoned with his friends, Charles's courage and belief in God inspired them to remain chaste and faithful. For his own unwillingness to submit to the immoral acts and his efforts to safeguard the faith of his friends, Charles was burned to death at Namugongo on June 3, 1886, by Mwanga's order. When Pope Paul VI canonized these 22 martyrs on October 18, 1964, he also made reference to the Anglican pages martyred for the same reason.

Like Charles Lwanga, we are all teachers and witnesses to Christian living by the examples of our own lives. We are all called upon to spread the word of God, whether by word or deed. By remaining courageous and unshakable in our faith during times of great moral and physical temptation, we live as Christ lived.


Sequence
Veni, Sancte Spiritus

Come, Holy Spirit, come!
And from your celestial home
Shed a ray of light divine!
Come, Father of the poor!
Come, source of all our store!
Come, within our bosoms shine.
You, of comforters the best;
You, the soul's most welcome guest;
Sweet refreshment here below;
In our labor, rest most sweet;
Grateful coolness in the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe.
O most blessed Light divine,
Shine within these hearts of yours,
And our inmost being fill!
Where you are not, we have naught,
Nothing good in deed or thought,
Nothing free from taint of ill.
Heal our wounds, our strength renew;
On our dryness pour your dew;
Wash the stains of guilt away:
Bend the stubborn heart and will;
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
Guide the steps that go astray.
On the faithful, who adore
And confess you, evermore
In your sevenfold gift descend;
Give them virtue's sure reward;
Give them your salvation, Lord;
Give them joys that never end.

Amen. Alleluia.

From Decree on the Celebration of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of the Church in the General Roman Calendar

Cardinal Robert Sarah
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