

Catholic Culture Update for the week beginning April 29, 2018

A quote to ponder this week
“I will praise you, Lord.” Psalm 22:26a

April 29th, 2018 is Fifth Sunday of Easter > Practice of Faith > “Jesus asks us to “remain in me, as I remain in you,” and by this to bear fruit for the Kingdom. How do we do this? There are many practices that help us, such as prayer, Scripture study, and acts of charity. But perhaps the best way is by receiving the gift of the Eucharist, where we and Christ abide together in the most intimate of ways. <>Think about your experience of the Eucharist. What has this sacrament meant to you? Sometimes we fall into the habit of approaching the Eucharist in a mechanical manner. Next time you are at Mass, pray to experience Christ in you more deeply as you receive his Body and Blood. <>The Eucharist is the “heart and centre of our lives as Christians,” writes Kathleen Hughes, RSCJ, “...familiar in its every contour, it is mystery at its core.” To read more about the beautiful mystery of the Eucharist and other sacraments, see Sr. Kathleen’s book, *Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament* (LTP, 1999).” AT HOME with the WORD 2018, page 83

Month of May – “The fifth month is named after the goddess Maia. She is the oldest of the Pleiades, the seven sisters. According to legend, the Pleiades were placed in the sky to shine as a beautiful cluster of tiny stars. The word *mai* is also a northern European word that means fresh green growth. In England, hawthorn blossoms are called “may.” Originally, maypoles were small trees that had the lower branches chopped off. They were hung with ribbons and gifts and given to newlyweds as a wish for a life filled with blessings. In some places they were set up in the centres of towns to celebrate Easter or May Day or Midsummer Day, June 24. Many central European towns continue to keep this custom.” Companion to the Calendar – A guide to the Saints, Seasons, and Holidays of the Year, Second Edition, page 67

Month of Our Lady – “May is Mary’s Month. Gerard Manley Hopkins wondered about this in a lovely poem called “The May Magnificat.” “May is Mary’s month, and I / Muse at that and wonder why ... the Lady Month, May, / Why fasten that upon her, / With a feasting in her honour?” he asked. Hopkins speculates that it is the springtime explosion of new life, in birds and flowers, that make May the right month for Mary. “This ecstasy all through mothering earth / Tells Mary her mirth till Christ’s birth.” Whatever the reason, May is a special time of prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is also Easter Time, so we join with Mary in rejoicing in Christ’s Resurrection from the dead. We can honour Mary in this month by praying the Rosary or another Marian devotion and by participating in Mass on the Feast of the Visitation, which concludes the month on May 31. It’s also a good time for quiet reflection on the seven joys of Mary, the traditional counterpart to her seven sorrows. The joys of Mary are [the Annunciation, the birth of Jesus, the adoration of the Magi, the Resurrection, the Ascension of Jesus into heaven, the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and Mary’s coronation as Queen of Heaven.](#)” Companion to the Calendar – A guide to the Saints, Seasons, and Holidays of the Year, Second Edition, page 68

May 1st is also a memorial of **St. Joseph the Worker**. “The memorial of St. Joseph the Worker is a relatively new addition to the calendar. It was introduced by Pope Pius XII in 1955, as an alternative to secular May Day celebrations of the worker, which originated in Communist countries and which did more to promote Communist propaganda than to promote the worker. Pope Pius XII urged workers to look to St. Joseph the carpenter and to see the dignity inherent in human labour, which could become a source of holiness. The prayers for today from *The Roman Missal* call Joseph our “wise and faithful servant” who is our patron as we “complete the works [God] set us to do.” Companion to the Calendar – A guide to the Saints, Seasons, and Holidays of the Year, Second Edition, page 69 *St. Joseph the Worker, pray for us.* Do some good work today to honour St. Joseph’s day.

May 2nd is also a memorial to **St. Athanasius**, Bishop and Doctor of the Church. “St. Athanasius (295-373), bishop of Alexandria and Doctor of the Church, contributed immensely to the development of doctrine and spirituality. He defended the teaching of the First Council of Nicaea (325 CE) that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. The Arians, who taught that Jesus was not divine, unleashed a series of attacks upon the Athanasius, resulting in exile not just once, but five times in his life, amounting to 17 years out of the 45 he was bishop. During one of these exiles, he wrote the influential biography of the renowned hermit and monk St. Anthony of Egypt. This spiritual classic, entitled *Life of Antony*, has been and continues to be read by people longing to remove worldly distractions that keep them from mystical union with God. He is also noted for two other works: *On the Incarnation* and *Discourses against the Arians*. Many titles have been bestowed upon him, including defender of the faith, champion of orthodoxy, mystical theologian, and spiritual master. Athanasius is venerated by the Eastern Orthodox as well as Western Christians, and is

especially revered by the Coptic (Egyptian) Orthodox.” Companion to the Calendar – A guide to the Saints, Seasons, and Holidays of the Year, Second Edition, page 70 *St. Athanasius, inspire us with the courage of our convictions and beliefs. If need arise, defend the faith today.*

May 3rd is also the Feast of **Sts. Philip and James**, Apostles. “St. Philip (first century) was a native of Bethsaida, and was among John the Baptist’s followers who saw John point out Jesus as the Lamb of God. He is most prominent in the Gospel according to John. It was Philip who asked Jesus to “show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” To which Jesus replied, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:8-9). Legends of Philip have him preaching in Greece, Phrygia, and Syria along with Bartholomew. Philip enraged the proconsul by converting his wife to Christianity and was crucified upside-down in 54 CE. A gnostic gospel found at Nag Hammadi is attributed to him, but there is no evidence it was actually written by him. Philip is shown in art with two loaves or a basket filled with bread, because of his role in the story of the feeding of the five thousand (see John 6:5-7). The St. James (first century) who is celebrated today is “James the Less,” described in the Gospel as the “brother of the Lord,” which at that time could also mean “cousin,” and in Acts of the Apostles 15 as the leader of the Church at Jerusalem. He is usually thought to be the same person as James, the son of Alphaeus and, James the Just. He was called to be a disciple along with his brother, Jude. James appears in the lists of the Apostles, but he becomes more prominent after the Ascension, when he was made the first bishop of Jerusalem. He, along with Peter and John, authorized Paul’s mission to the Gentiles. The Church historian, Eusebius, records that James was martyred by being stoned and then thrown from the highest point of the Temple in Jerusalem. Sts. Philip and James are celebrated on the same day in honour of the anniversary of the church dedicated to them in Rome (now called the Church of the Twelve Apostles.)” Companion to the Calendar – A guide to the Saints, Seasons, and Holidays of the Year, Second Edition, page 70-71 *St. Philip help us to feed those who are hungry. St. James encourage us to be a leader in the faith. Celebrate these saints by reading either John 6:5-7 or Acts 15.*

Scripture Insights > Today’s readings continue the previous Sunday’s emphasis on the community of the resurrected Christ – living and life giving. The First Reading gives us a thumbnail sketch of the illustrious teacher and missionary Paul, who began as Saul, a zealous Jew and persecutor of the Jesus followers, who experienced conversion, was persecuted by fellow Jews, and for some time was viewed warily by Jesus’ disciples. Eventually he became the missionary to the Gentiles. The reading from the First Letter of John highlights the most important attribute that makes the Church truly alive and authentic – love. But this love is not simply a warm feeling or tender words. Rather, it is love “in deed and truth.” If we stay grounded in God’s command to believe in his Son and love one another, we remain in his and he remains in us. In today’s Gospel, John gives us another metaphor for understanding what it means to be Church – the vineyard, for wine was considered a necessity of life. First-century vineyards were constructed differently from today’s vineyards. They were surrounded by a stone wall to keep animals from trampling the vines, which were allowed to spread along the ground. When the vines were pruned to increase production, the discarded branches were placed on the wall to dry so that they could later be used for fuel. Vineyards also had towers, where the owner and his workers kept watch during harvest time to protect their produce from thieves and marauders. This is the cultural context for understanding the metaphor of the vineyard.

- Carefully analyze today’s Gospel and unpack its metaphor. Who is the vineyard owner? The vine and its branches? What does it mean to remain part of the vine? To be cut off from the vine? To bear much fruit?
- The Second Reading invites us to love “in deed and truth.” What does that phrase mean to you?
- Today’s Responsorial Psalm is the concluding section of Psalm 22, a lament psalm that began with a complaint and a call for help. This section promises to praise God. For what would you like to praise God?” AT HOME with the WORD 2018, page 83

Faith Development – Studying and Praying Scripture by Michael Cameron

“A recent study claimed that only 22 percent of American Catholics read the Bible regularly, and just 8 percent are involved in Scripture groups. [I would imagine that Canadian Catholics may be on par or at percentages lower than the above.] Not many know how profoundly biblical the Roman Catholic Church has been from her very roots, having “always venerated the divine scriptures as she venerates the Body of the Lord” (*Di Verbum [Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation], 21*). How many Catholics learn to read Scripture? This essay sketches a path for seekers.

READING FOR WISDOM –Read as one who seeks God, like the writer of Psalm 119. Ask what the text is asking you to believe, do, or hope for. Jesus’ powerful proclamation in Mark 1:15 gives a strong framework: “This is the time of fulfillment” (now is the time to be attentive and ready to act); “the kingdom of God is at hand” (God is about to speak and act); “repent” (be willing to change your mind and move with fresh direction); “believe in the gospel” (embrace the grace that has already embraced you). Read books straight through, a self-contained section at a time, carefully, slowly, and meditatively. Stop where natural breaks occur at the end

of stories or sequences of thought. Beware the sense that you already know what the text is going to say. Read attentively, asking what God is teaching you through this text at this minute about your life or about your communities – family, church, work, neighbourhood, nation. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide you to what you need.” AT HOME with the WORD 2018, page 15

Praying the Promise - a quote for the week

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. Ephesian 6:18

Catholic Character Education and the Virtues + Respect, Stewardship and Reverence

A quote to inspire us to the end of the month: “All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today.”

Indian Proverb

Living Our Mission Statement

We strive to cultivate enriching opportunities that will deepen faith. On these beautiful Spring days, we can celebrate the goodness of creation and all of God’s gifts.

Staff Self-Care Tip of the Week – For the next few weeks, I am going to post activities for self-care for the Big List:

1. Go for a walk in the park or someplace that is peaceful.
2. Go get a haircut
3. Eat your favourite ice cream
4. Find something funny to do, like reading the comics
5. Watch a funny movie
6. Go for a picnic

Relationships – Strategic Direction of the Multi Year Strategic Plan

Since I was in school one hundred years ago, the relationship triangle of home, school and parish has been a main focus of Catholic education. It becomes a bit more challenging when families may not be invested in participating in the parish before the child comes to school. Nevertheless, we continue to build bridges between our homes, our schools and our parishes. Catholic education works best when these three spaces are linked.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2012 Calls to Action

“In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes the following calls to action.

Reconciliation

National Council for Reconciliation

53. We call upon the Parliament of Canada, in consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to enact legislation to establish a National Council for Reconciliation. The legislation would establish the council as an independent, national, oversight body with membership jointly appointed by the Government of Canada and national Aboriginal organizations, and consisting of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members. Its mandate would include, but not be limited to, the following: iv. Promote public dialogue, public/private partnerships, and public initiatives for reconciliation.

Our Blanket exercises promote public dialogue for reconciliation. At a recent BE, one student shared that his experience of the Blanket exercise “would help him understand his indigenous friends more.” That was an awesome insight! Reconciliation at work!

Twenty-first Century Learning

<https://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/2018/04/storytelling-as-a-tool-for-evangelization/>> Joe Paprocki, of RE AQ course fame, discusses Storytelling as a tool for evangelization.

<https://www.kairosCanada.org/kairos-top-12-wishes-for-2018> > If Grade 7 and 8 classes or high school classes who have had the Blanket Exercise want an extension activity, they may find one here.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/educator-resources> > Resources for teaching difficult topics in history

www.CARFLEO.com > best kept secret for religious education teachers of every grade

<http://www.wccm-canada.ca/> > This is the Canadian site for the World Community of Christian Meditation > Ten Helpful Hints for the Teacher > http://media.wix.com/ugd/1e8072_89404bfd48bd4bd6a98dd6b862be2c0d.pdf

115 Sainly FUN Facts ~ Smiles and Surprises for Kids of All Ages by Bernadette McCarver Snyder

“**Tarasius** > This saint was the secretary to a ten-year-old boy! AND the ten-year-old was the emperor! Tarasius worked for Emperor Constantine VI, whose mother, Empress Irene, was the true ruler. She later named Tarasius to be the Patriarch of

Constantinople. This was a very high position in the Church, BUT at that time, the Church in Constantinople had been “separated” from the pope because of wars between the emperors. Tarasius accepted the new post ONLY on the condition that he be allowed to hold a council and settle differences so THAT part of the Church could be “reconciled” with the pope. After holding a successful council, Tarasius continued to work very hard and pray very hard to reform his clergy and his people. He was very charitable and visited every “poor house” and hospital in the city to be sure no poor person would be overlooked. Tarasius went from being the secretary to the head of a country to being the head of that country’s Church! And he did both jobs well. Do you know what kind of work a secretary does? Some secretaries have very important jobs. They take notes at big meetings, schedule appointments, type letters dictated by the “boss,” and handle all the little OR big chores necessary to keep an office running smoothly. Would YOU like to be a secretary? Why don’t you try being a secretary of your HOUSE for a day and handle as many things as you can to keep it running smoothly!” pages 134-135

WHAT DO YOU KNOW? A Catholic Identity Game for the Whole Community by Peggy O’Neill Fisher

1. On which Sunday are the Scripture reads about a good shepherd? **The fourth Sunday of Easter (last weekend).**
2. What is the first verse of the twenty-third psalm? **The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.**
3. What is the shepherd’s job? **To care for the sheep in his/her flock.**
4. Who is the leader of a parish? **The pastor, from the Latin word Pastore, meaning shepherd.**
5. What is the name of the pastor of your parish/Church? **My pastor is Father Pat Woods, with Fr. Daniele Muscolino as his assistant.**

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1. Who shepherds all the faith communities in a diocese?
2. What is the shepherd’s staff that the bishop carries in formal ceremonies?
3. What are the three jobs of the bishop in leading the faith communities?
4. What name do we usually call the bishop of Rome?
5. What do we call bishops who wear red and elect the pope?

Taking Jesus to the Movies ...A blog by Pat Carter

Indian Horse ~ This movie is based on the book by the same title written by Richard Wagamese. It tells the story of a young Indigenous boy life journey from childhood to his mid thirties. It was filmed in Sudbury and Peterborough. Saul Indian Horse, the name of the main character, becomes a great hockey player. There are many sad moments in the story, most especially coming from Saul’s time in Residential School. I give this movie /5

A Blog for Eclectic Readers - by Pat Carter csj

Forgiveness by Mark Sakamoto ~ This is a book about the grandson of a Japanese prison of war (on his mother’s side of the family) and a Japanese woman interred in Canada during that same war (on his father’s side of the family.) Mark shares their stories as they were told to him. The forgiveness that both these grandparents were able to live helped Mark learn forgiveness’ power. Both grandparents experienced the harsh realities of war from how they were treated by each side of the conflict.

I give this book  - If anyone would like to borrow the book, I have my own copy.

Trivia for Those Who Read to the end...Just like the credits at the movies.

“*Meet the Press* is the longest running TV show, running for 70 years.” That’s LONG! Huh! https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_longest-running_United_States_television_series