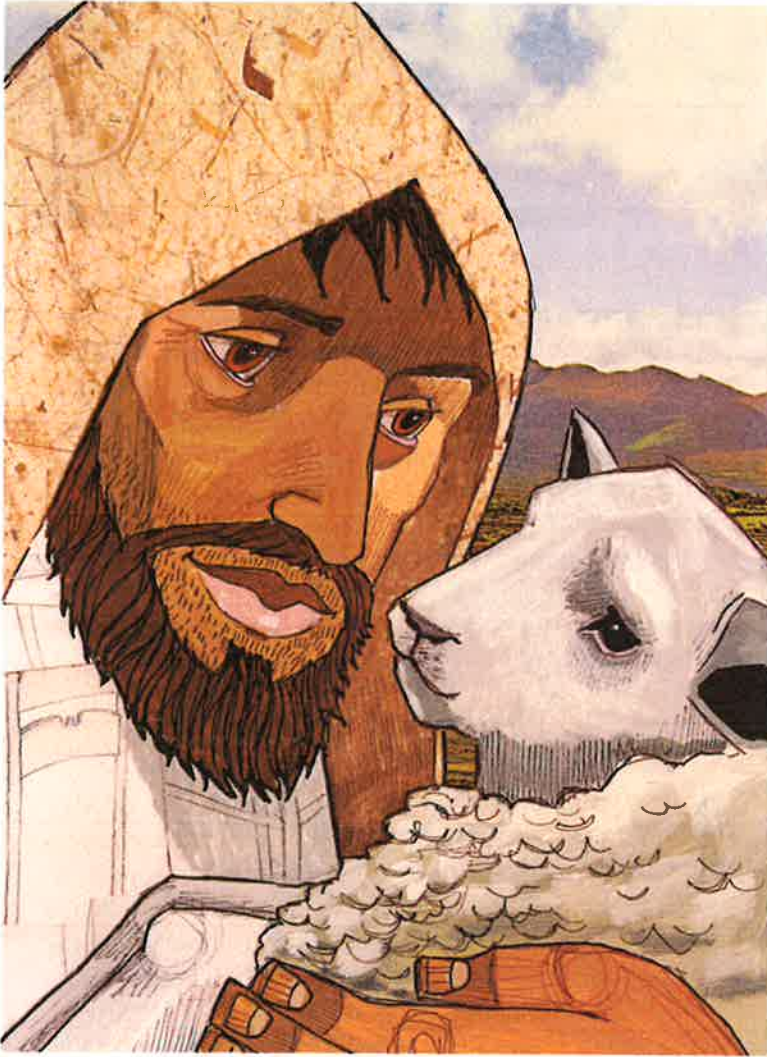


FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Prayer for Unity

Dear God,
through your Son, the Good Shepherd,
we have been comforted when weary
guided when we have lost our way,
and protected from those who seek to
scatter the flock.
We are grateful that the Shepherd's love
is such
that he laid down his life for us.

United now in Baptism,
Help us to be one flock, one Body
in Christ.
May we always heed the Word of
the Shepherd,
listening to his voice when others seek to
lead us astray.
Grant that we may continue to follow
his path,
so that we may know you more deeply.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus
Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, April 26, 2015 An Intimate Relationship

Today's Readings: Acts 4:8–12; Psalm 118:1, 8–9, 21–23, 26, 28, 29 (22); 1 John 3:1–2; John 10:11–18. What could be more comforting than the images in today's Second Reading and Gospel? From the First Letter of John, we hear that we are children of God. We are not just disciples or followers, but children. We have an intimate relationship with our Creator. God provides only good things for his children, and included in those good things is transformation. We are told at the end of this reading that we will be like God. We will be holy. We will be saints, and as saints we will see God. What could be better but to live with and see God?

The image from the Gospel resonates with us, even if we have never met a shepherd and know little about sheep.

We know from this reading that the Good Shepherd would give up his life for the sheep, and that an intimacy born from love exists between the two. We might consider here that the work is not only the shepherd's. Knowing someone requires spending time. Have you left your relationship with God up to the Good Shepherd, or are you doing your part by spending time alone in quiet with God, perhaps for a few minutes after Mass? Or do you spend time alone with the Word of God to know Christ? How have you taken the time so that you can know Christ just as the Father knows him? Do you know the sound of the Good Shepherd's voice?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, April 27, 2015

Abundant Life

Today's Gospel, which calls the Lord a Good Shepherd, is obviously about God's care for us. Implicit in this Gospel, though, is that our trust should be in God. Like any good shepherd, the Lord cares for us and makes himself known to us. In laying down his life for us, God has done more for us than any other shepherd would do for his sheep. God has provided us with abundant life. What more could we ask from anyone? Do we place our trust in the Lord? Today's Readings: Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 42:2-3; 43:3, 4 (3a); John 10:1-10.

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

St. Peter Chanel, Priest and Martyr

As a parish priest, Peter Chanel's care for the sick drew his parishioners' attention. However, the young priest longed to be a missionary and joined the Society of Mary (Marists) in 1831 and was sent to Oceania. After he mastered the language of the people, many were baptized and instructed in the faith, but when the chieftain's son requested Baptism, Chanel was clubbed to death and his body cut into pieces. In today's reading from Acts, the Apostles, filled with the Spirit, went out and became missionaries to the Gentiles. Today's Readings: Acts 11:19-26; Psalm 87:1b-3, 4-5, 6-7 (117:1); John 10:22-30.

Wednesday, April 29, 2015

St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin and Doctor of the Church

St. Catherine of Siena was a spiritual writer and mystic. She worked to establish peace and concord between cities, fought for the rights and freedom of the pope, and promoted renewal of religious life. Today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles speaks of the work of the early Christian community. Catherine's zeal, and that of the early Christian community, serves as a model for today's Church. Do we bring enthusiasm to our evangelizing mission? Today's Readings: Acts 12:24-13:5a; Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6 and 8 (4); John 12:44-50.

Thursday, April 30, 2015

St. Pius V, Pope

As a youth who worked as a shepherd, Antonio Ghislieri lived simply. Such a background may have helped him stay focused on the salvation of souls, first as a Dominican priest and then later as a bishop and then pope. While the inquisitor general, he drew the ire of the pope when he opposed his policies, including nepotism. While pope, he lived an ascetic life and kept in mind the needs of the poor, the care of the sick, and catechesis as he made reforms in Rome. Today's Readings: Acts 13:13-25; Psalm 89:2-3, 21-22, 25 and 27 (2); John 13:16-20.

Friday, May 1, 2015

St. Joseph the Worker

The Apostles in today's Gospel sound so much like us today. They have questions and want to be sure that they have a path. Christ tells them not to be troubled. As for a path, he says, "I am the way and the truth and the life." Is that enough direction for you? Are you able to trust that Christ is the way to the Father, the way to eternal life? Or do you grow anxious about what God wants of you? Today's Readings: Acts 13:26-33; Psalm 2:6-7, 8-9, 10-11ab (7bc); John 14:1-6.

Saturday, May 2, 2015

St. Athanasius, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?" While St. Athanasius lived, he battled Arianism, the belief that Jesus was not God. He is known for his spiritual writings and sermons that provided insight into the Incarnation. He was unabashed in spreading the faith, even though at different times, he lived in fear of exile or being killed. Today's Readings: Acts 13:44-52; Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 (3cd); John 14:7-14.



Growing in FAITH™

Discovering **hope** and **joy** in the Catholic faith.

May 2015

St. Cecilia Church

Rev. James L. Secora, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Joseph the Worker

Our primary responsibility is to fulfill our daily obligations.

Yet, St. Joseph demonstrated that work can lead to holiness if our efforts are for God.



St. Joseph was not rich. He and Mary made a modest Temple offering when Jesus was born. As a carpenter he had to work hard to support his family. Yet, he offered all he was to raise God's son and protect him from harm. St. Joseph made everyday life holy.

Upward glance

Try spending part of each day alone with God. Human conversation keeps you grounded on Earth. Moments spent with God are moments glancing toward the Heaven that awaits.

"When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home" (John 19:26-26).



Whom do you want to please?

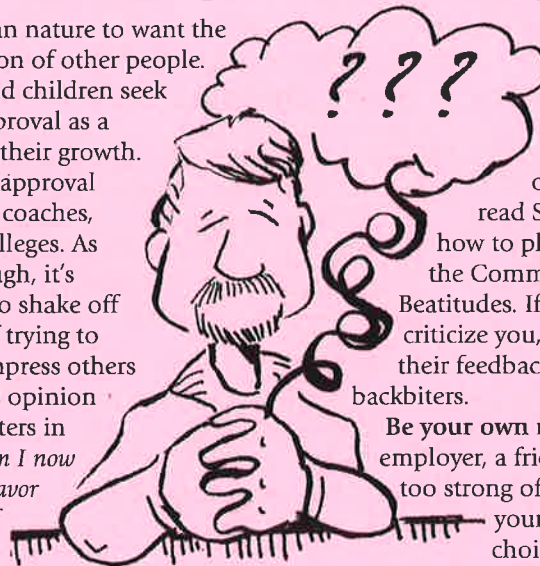
It is human nature to want the good opinion of other people.

Toddlers and children seek parents' approval as a measure of their growth.

Teens want approval from peers, coaches, teachers, colleges. As adults, though, it's important to shake off the habit of trying to please or impress others when God's opinion is what matters in the end.

"Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men?" (Galatians 1:10).

Whose standard is it anyway? Others tend to judge you from their own perspectives, their own interests, and through their own filters. People see only your actions. God sees your heart.



Don't defend yourself. Make consistently good choices and you won't have to defend or explain. Regularly read Scripture to remember how to please God. Follow the Commandments and the Beatitudes. If people legitimately criticize you, gratefully receive their feedback. Reject the backbiters.

Be your own master. Don't let an employer, a friend, or a relative gain too strong of a hold on you. Make your own decisions and choices without pressure.

Otherwise you will find yourself suspending your better judgment in favor of theirs.

Stay who you are. Don't try to appear better than those around you or to hide the real you. God loves you just as you are.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

The Church calls Sacred Scripture "sacred" because it is divinely inspired by God, and credits him as its author. *"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).*

Why do we believe Scripture is Sacred?



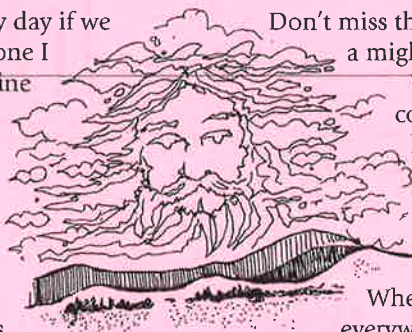
The Scriptures describe how God revealed himself to man along with his saving plan. Every event and every prophecy recorded in the Old Testament points to and is fulfilled in the New Testament in the person of Jesus.

Where is God when you need him?

God can be found one hundred times every day if we look for him. "So it was you all along. Everyone I ever loved, it was you. Everything decent or fine that ever happened to me, everything that made me reach out and try to be better, it was you" C.S. Lewis.

When you need encouragement, God sends you a kind glance or a friendly word. Look for his face in the person who gives it.

God surrounds us with beauty to help us think of him and remind us of his love for us.



Don't miss the chance to appreciate a lovely garden or a mighty tree.

When you are anxious or lonely, God comes to you in the sympathetic friend who listens, or the stranger who smiles at you.

When we are on unfamiliar ground, God sends us a colleague to make us feel comfortable at work or a neighbor to help us feel more at home.

Where is God when you need him? He is everywhere you are.

from Scripture

Matthew 28:16-20; Jesus gives disciples their charge

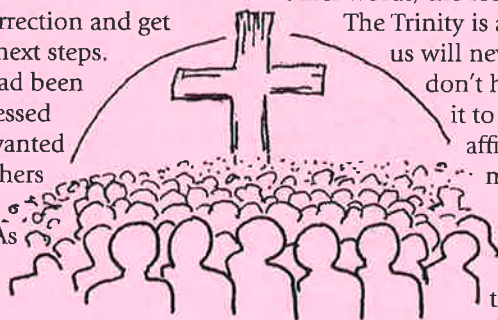
When Jesus appeared to the Eleven on the mountain top in Galilee, it was so the crowd with them could witness his Resurrection and get instructions for next steps. Now that they had been taught and witnessed Jesus' glory, he wanted them to teach others how to live as God's children. As his followers today, that's our mission, too.

Jesus gave his listeners three commands: Go, make disciples of all nations, and baptize them. Baptism signifies a renewed relationship with

the Father, as revealed through the Son, to be filled with the Holy Spirit – in other words, the Holy Trinity.

The Trinity is a mystery most of us will never understand. We don't have to understand it to believe it. And we affirm it each time we make the Sign of the Cross and say the words Jesus said, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

Holy Spirit." We are also reminded that the Cross of Jesus is the only means by which we can follow Christ into the eternal life of the Trinity.



Feasts & Celebrations

In May we celebrate mothers and the mother of all, the Blessed Virgin Mary. We can honor her by praying the Rosary and observing her feast days.

May 14 – Ascension of the Lord. This Holy Day of Obligation marks the completion of Jesus' mission of salvation and his triumphant entry into Heaven by his own power. Note: In some dioceses, observance has been moved to the following Sunday.

May 21 – St. Christopher Magallanes (1937). Fr. Christopher Magallanes was part of the Catholic Action Movement

in Mexico, resisting the anti-Catholic Mexican government. Despite great persecution, he established a seminary at Totatiche. Eventually, he was arrested, tortured, and martyred.

May 25 – Pope St. Gregory VII (1085). During dark days for the Church, Pope Gregory worked to eliminate simony (the buying and selling of sacred offices), unlawful marriages of the clergy, and lay investiture (kings and nobles appointing Church officials). St. Gregory fought

attacks on the authority of the Church. For this he suffered and died in exile.



Q & A Why do Catholic churches display crucifixes?

Many Christian churches display simple crosses or other peaceful symbols of their faith. Non-Catholics wonder why we choose instead the crucifix, which can be a disturbing image.

The crucifix is not just part of our Catholic identity. The Catholic Church requires that a crucifix be visible during the celebration of Mass to remind us of the sacrifice of Jesus on the altar of the Cross, which is made present for us each time we celebrate the Holy Eucharist. It is a powerful representation of the body and blood Jesus shed for us.

To Catholics, the crucifix is a symbol of the ultimate act of love. A cross recalls the Resurrection and Jesus' triumph over death. That is important to us, too. But to fully understand our own redemption, we need to be reminded of what Jesus had to endure, namely his Passion and death, before the Resurrection. We are also reminded that God gave his only Son for our salvation. The Crucifix is a full image of our redemption.

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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible - Revised)