

Pentecost

A PRAYER FOR UNITY

O God, we are told that on that Pentecost the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit as Jews from every nation looked on. We come before you in this age—many nationalities, races, ethnicities.

Bring us together as you did in Jerusalem. Blow the winds of your love on us, that we may see you in each other, that we may believe that we are all one as you have created us one.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



MAY 11, 2008 THE SPIRIT IS HERE

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Blessed Trinity, may seem hard to know compared with Jesus, who became man, and God the Father, whom we call Abba, or Father. On Pentecost, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to the apostles gathered in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1–11). We know that this coming lasts forever and that the Spirit is just as present with us as it was with the apostles.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, there are many rich symbols of the Spirit in scripture. In the form of a dove, the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus when he rose out of the water at his baptism. Tongues of flame flashed over the disciples' heads when they recognized for the first time that the Spirit was with them. At the

Transfiguration on the mountain, the Spirit came in a cloud over Jesus (Luke 9:34–35). In the sacraments, we signify the Spirit's presence through another symbol: oil. The newly baptized, those to be confirmed, those receiving Holy Orders, and the sick are all anointed with oil as a sign of conferring on them the Holy Spirit. And when the bishop or priest lays his hands on the head of someone receiving sacraments, it is a sign that the Holy Spirit is present, entering the person. All of these symbols help us draw closer to the Third Person of the Trinity. Jesus said he would not abandon us but would send the Holy Spirit to be with us forever. The Spirit is indeed here.

Ordinary Time at Home

A NEW SEASON

The liturgical year now re-enters Ordinary Time, the time we began counting after the season of Christmas and before the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. Now we continue in Ordinary Time until the beginning of the next liturgical year on the First Sunday of Advent, November 30. Ordinary Time is our long, green season. The vestments used at liturgy are green, the color of growing things. Our faith life during this period continues to grow, and like any living thing, it must be nurtured and cared for in order to stay alive and healthy. We keep it green and growing by continuing to celebrate the sacraments, read and study, and talk with God regularly in prayer.

SOME SPECIAL DAYS IN ORDINARY TIME MAY 18—THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

Thank you, God the Father, for creating the world and placing it in our care. Thank you, Jesus, for coming to show us how to live and offering yourself as our Redeemer. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for your gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. Amen.

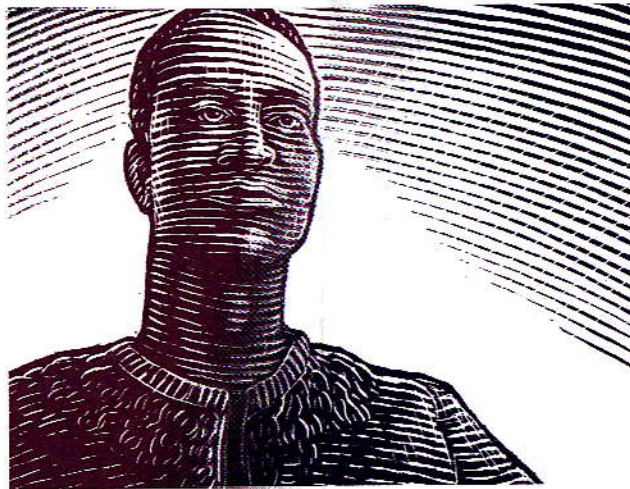
MAY 31—A VISITOR

Today we celebrate the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, recalling Mary's visit to her older cousin, Elizabeth. Mary knew that Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist, needed help. Mary didn't hesitate. She lived with Elizabeth for three months, helping her as

they both waited for the birth of their children. We can imitate Mary's generous concern by visiting a person who could use help. Perhaps offer to clean his or her house, bring a meal, or just lift that person's spirits with a visit. It's what Mary did.

JUNE 3—MEMORIAL OF CHARLES LWANGA AND COMPANIONS

Charles Lwanga was a catechumen in Uganda who asked to be baptized one night in 1886 when he learned he was to be murdered because of his faith. Charles and six others who refused to deny their Christian faith were cruelly martyred. We honor them on this date each year. *God our Father, we have not been asked to die for our faith. We are expected to live our faith. Help us do that each day we are alive. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*



JULY 26—MEMORIAL OF SAINT JOACHIM AND SAINT ANNE

These were ordinary people and ordinary parents. Their daughter, Mary, became the Mother of the long-awaited Savior. No parent can see ahead in a child's life. Today, on this memorial of Mary's parents, thank your own parents, living or dead, for all they do or did for you.

AUGUST 8—MEMORIAL OF SAINT DOMINIC

Saint Dominic founded the Order of Preachers in 1216 so that the Gospel could be preached and the teaching of the Church be better understood. *Thank you loving God, for Saint Dominic and for all those who have preached the Gospel to us. May our own lives preach the love of God to others. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.*

SEPTEMBER 29—FEAST OF SAINT MICHAEL, SAINT GABRIEL, AND SAINT RAPHAEL

Today we celebrate these three archangels who serve God in different ways. Saint Michael is known as defender of God's people and leader of the angels in the great battle at the end of time. Saint Gabriel is the messenger God sent to announce to Zechariah the birth of John the Baptist and to Mary that she would bear the Christ. Saint Raphael is the disguised helper and traveling companion of Tobiah in the book of Tobit. Thanks be to God for these holy messengers and helpers.