

Seventh Sunday of Easter



Sanctify Us in Your Truth

Father,
when your Son sent the disciples
into the world
to preach forgiveness of sins,
he asked you to sanctify them in the truth
so that they would be strong and protected.

We, too, wish to do your will in the world
and ask to be sanctified in your truth,
clear and deep in our grasp of the faith
and strong against temptations
and distractions of the world.

Bind us ever closer in love
to each other, and to you and the Son,
that we may be your faithful children.
We ask this through the same Lord Jesus
Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen

May 16, 2010
Love, Wind, and Fire

(For a reflection on the Ascension of the Lord, see Thursday, May 13 in the previous week.)

These are the last days of the Easter season. We have rejoiced in the Resurrection. We have listened to the stories of the first Christian community—its high energy, boldness, utter conviction in its mission, and the opposition it faced. We have pondered the commissioning of the disciples and Jesus' teaching that he is the way and the bread of life who will sustain us. We listened as the disciples witnessed the Ascension, and today the radiance of that event still hangs in the air as we hear Jesus asking the Father that his disciples may be one just as he and the Father are one (John 17:20–26). This radical way of loving God and neighbor is one of the ways the early community, and we along with it, have been

trying to align ourselves with the responsibilities, powers, and instruction pouring down on us from the Father and the Son. Alongside the apostles in the Easter scriptures, we are trying to learn and discern how we can act on our discipleship in our time and place.

Now, as we await the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit next week at Pentecost, we hear in the Second Reading (1 John 4:11–16) that we have already received God's abundant love. Even though we have never seen God, this divine love enables us to love and bear with each other in community, and through that love of each other we are pressing ever closer to God and coming to know God, who is love. May that love be a cushion and coolant for next week's marvelous wind and fire.

This Week at Home



Monday, May 17

“Let the righteous be joyful!”

For the first three days this week, our readings include Psalm 68. It is a long song of praise for God (*psalm* means “song,” and these verses would have been sung). For scripture scholars, Psalm 68 is something of a mystery and its interpretation is widely discussed. Today we hear the praise of God who is Father to widows and orphans and who gives the desolate a home. But the same section makes it clear that the wicked will perish before God, and the rebellious will live in a parched land. Contrasting the fates of opposites like the wicked and the righteous is common in Hebrew poetry.

Tuesday, May 18

Saint John I

Saint John I was Pope for only three years, 523 to 526. He fell victim to King Theodoric the Great, who supported the heresy that Jesus was not one with the Father and did not fully share in the divine nature, a belief called Arianism. Theodoric sent Pope John I to Emperor Justin of Constantinople to ask for mercy for the Arianites. John probably advised Justin to be patient with the heretics, but he supported the emperor's orthodoxy. When he returned, Theodoric arrested John as a conspirator and imprisoned him until he died. Saint John, pray for us.

Wednesday, May 19

Entrusting Desires to God

The last verses of Psalm 68, “sing to God,” sound like many people singing during liturgy. In verse 30 we see the very human request that God “scatter the people who delight in war.” The psalmists knew that their emotions were not hidden from God, and in an act of trust they placed their desires in God's hands, knowing that God would answer what needed to be answered and transform what needed to be transformed. We could take a lesson.

Thursday, May 20

Saint Bernardine of Siena

Saint Bernardine preached with such power in Italy that it was said he cleansed all of Italy of its sins. A priest of the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans), he, like Francis, sought peace with all, though his attempts to turn back corruption and vice often made enemies of the local authorities. He died on his way to Naples, and people reported that his grave leaked blood until opposing forces in the city reconciled. He was canonized only six years after he died.

Friday, May 21

Saint Christopher Magallanes

Saint Christopher Magallanes is new to the American liturgical calendar. He was a priest in Mexico in the early twentieth century who protested the government's anti-Catholic stance. During his life, he established a secret seminary and preached the Gospel across the land. He and 24 other priests and laymen, all members of the Cristeros movement, were captured and killed for their actions. They were canonized by John Paul II in 2000.

Saturday, May 22

Saint Rita of Cascia

Like many women saints of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Saint Rita was given in marriage at an early age and, after the death of her husband, entered a convent of Augustinian sisters. Augustinians describe their spirituality as a great thirst for God, and Rita devoted her life to prayer and helping the poor. Like Saint Jude, she is considered to have a special knack for impossible causes. Her shrine is in Italy, in the city of Cascia.



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