

May 2023

Liturgical Resources



The Madonna of the Book (1481)

Sandro Botticelli



diocese
of limerick
our catholic community

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May 2023

Liturgical Resources

Selected Significant Dates

- 1 May - St. Joseph the Worker
- 3 May - Sts. Philip and James, Apostles
- 7 May - 5th Sunday of Easter
- 13 May - Our Lady of Fatima
- 14 May - 6th Sunday of Easter
- 16 May - St. Brendan
- 21 May - The Ascension of the Lord
- 22 May - St. Rita of Cascia
- 24 May - World Day of Prayer for the Church in China
- 26 May - St. Philip Neri
- 28 May - Pentecost Sunday (50 Days of Easter Conclude)
- 29 May - The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church
- 31 May - The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

A guide for May
Crowning is
included with the
5th Sunday of
Easter.



May is traditionally celebrated as the month of Mary. As the Queen of Heaven and Earth, she is honoured for her great faith and love. She is our heavenly mother and intercedes on our behalf with her son, Jesus.

1 May - St. Joseph the Worker

Liturgical Resources

This feast was instituted in 1955 by Pope Pius XII for two purposes:

- 1) to help foster a devotion to St. Joseph and
- 2) in response to Communist “May Day” celebrations which were prevalent at the time.

The feast emphasizes the importance of labour in a Catholic context.

Suggested Reading

St. Joseph the Worker emphasizes the dignity of human labour. Beginning in Genesis, human work is illustrated as a participation in God’s creation. The papal encyclical, *Laborem Exercens*, focuses on the importance, dignity, and rights of all who work. The encyclical can be accessed here:

https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html.

Suggested Prayers

The *Novena to St. Joseph to Find a Job* is an excellent prayer to pray for those who are seeking employment. It can be found here: <https://www.praymorenovenas.com/novena-to-st-joseph-to-find-a-job>.



Drawn From:

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-joseph-the-worker/>

3 May - Sts. Philip and James, Apostles

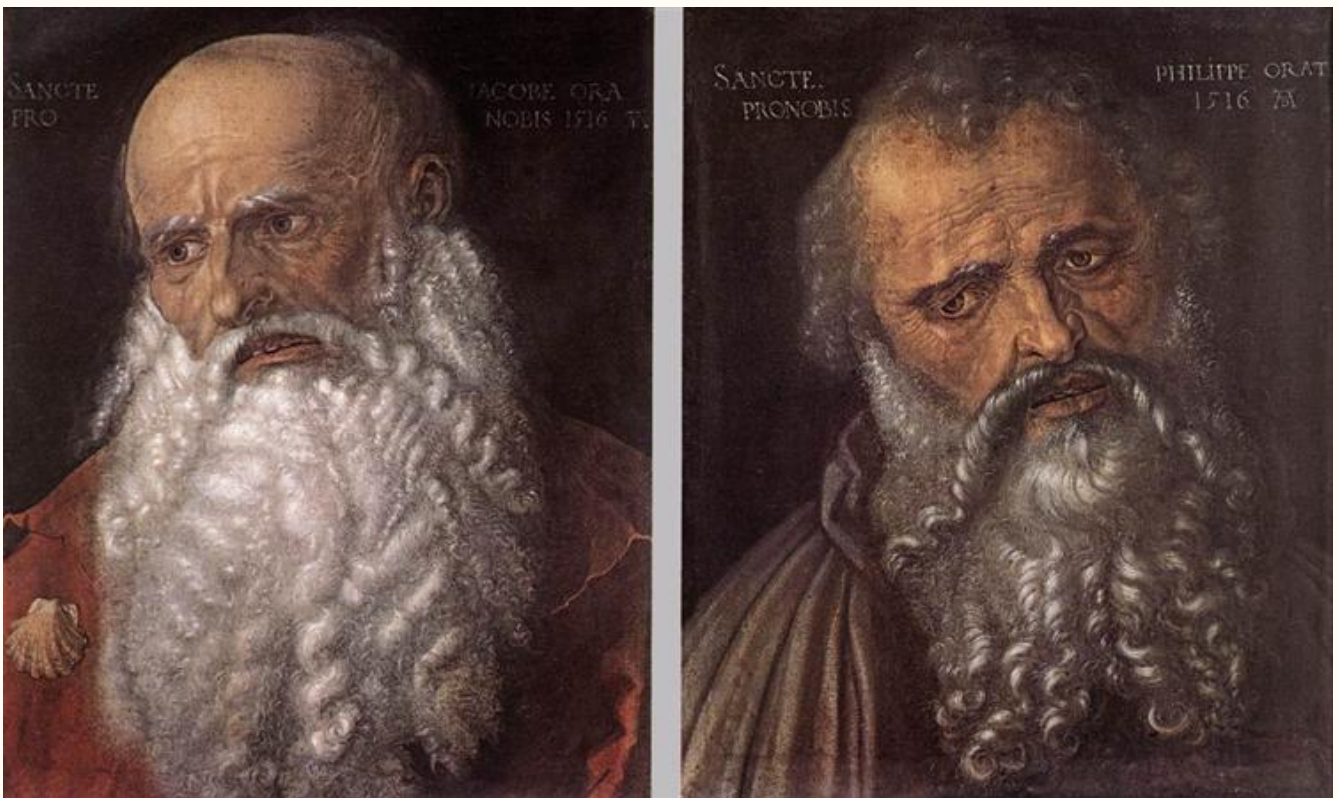
Liturgical Resources

Very little is known about Saints Philip and James, apostles of Christ. St. James the Lesser (called this to avoid confusing him with James, son of Zebedee) was the son of Alphaeus. He was chosen by Christ to be one of the 12 apostles.

St. Philip was from the same town as Peter and Andrew, Bethsaida. Jesus called Philip directly (John 1) and interacts with him a handful of times in the Gospels.

Reflection

Saints Philip and James were two simple men privileged to be called by Jesus. They remind us that holiness is a gift from God - who calls us all to be saints in our own ways.



**"The Apostles Philip and James," by Albrecht Durer,
1516, public domain**

Drawn From:

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saints-philip-and-james/>

7 May - Fifth Sunday of Easter

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“Jesus explains that he himself is the way, the truth, and the life. In knowing and loving Jesus, the disciples now love God the Father. ... The connection between Jesus and his Father, between Jesus’ work and the work of the Father, is made clear in today’s Gospel. Jesus is in the Father, and God the Father is in Jesus. As God spoke his name to Moses, ‘I am,’ so too Jesus speaks his name to his disciples: ‘I am the way and the truth and the life.’”

Suggestions for Mass

Consider having a May crowning today, the first Sunday in May.

Here’s how:

- Place a statue of Our Lady in the front of the church (near the sanctuary) where everyone can see it. Decorate the stand or table with a tablecloth (in blue or white) and with candles.
- Create a small crown of flowers (as fancy or simple as you like) which will fit on Mary’s head. Choose a young girl or boy to carry in the crown during the entrance procession of Mass.
- Additionally, consider having flowers available all children attending Mass to take one and process in at the entrance of Mass. They can lay their flowers on the table or stand, or place them in vases already there.
- Sing favourite Marian hymns during today’s Mass, such as: A Mhuire Mháthair, Our Lady of Knock, Immaculate Mary, Hail Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star, Hail Holy Queen Enthroned Above, etc.



Drawn From:

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/fifth-sunday-of-easter-cycle-a-sunday-connection/>

13 May - Our Lady of Fatima

Liturgical Resources

In 1917, Mary appeared to three children – Francisco, Jacinta, and Lucia – and asked them to pray the rosary. The apparitions began on May 13 and continued through October 13, until Mary eventually identified herself as Our Lady of the Rosary, as she called for prayer and conversion. The feast of Our Lady of Fatima was added to the calendar in 2002 by Pope St. John Paul II.

Suggested Movie

The 2020 film, *Fatima*, does a lovely portrayal of the apparitions of Mary to the three Portuguese children. It is available to watch online.

Consider hosting a viewing of *Fatima* at your parish!



Drawn From:

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/our-lady-of-fatima/>

14 May - Sixth Sunday of Easter

Liturgical Resources

“He reassures them that even though he will leave them, he will not abandon them. Instead he will send them the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, through whom the disciples will continue to live in union with Jesus. Jesus uses the term Advocate to describe the Holy Spirit, whom the disciples will receive. Another word used to describe the Holy Spirit is Paraclete, a legal term meaning “one who offers defense for another.” Note that Jesus says that he will send “another Advocate.” Jesus himself is the first advocate, interceding for his disciples with the Father. ... Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the disciples will come to know and appreciate the unity of the Son and the Father. They will also understand that they too participate in the communion between the Father and the Son: “On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you” (John 14:20).”

Suggested Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.
And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
Did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
Grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever
enjoy his consolations.
Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.



Drawn From:

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/sixth-sunday-of-easter-a-sunday-connection/>

16 May - St. Brendan

Liturgical Resources

“St. Brendan was a Kerryman who was born in 486. He studied at Clonard under Finnian. His name is connected with many places in Kerry such as Ardfert and Mount Brandon. He visited Scotland and reached the Hebrides and possibly areas beyond. He founded a monastery in Clonfert in 568 and died there in 578.” He is one of the “Twelve Apostles of Ireland” and is said to have undertaken a series of voyages seeking a place God revealed to him in a vision.

Liturgical Calendar for Ireland 2023, p. 187

Quotes from the Saints

St. Brendan the Navigator is the patron saint of sailors. This prayer is attributed to him:

O Lord, protect me for the sea is so vast and my boat is so small.



"St. Brendan and the Whale," 15th century manuscript, public domain

Drawn From:

<https://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/our-diocese/genealogy/saints/st-brendan/>

21 May - The Ascension of the Lord

Liturgical Resources

“Today our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; let our hearts ascend with him. Listen to the words of the Apostle: *If you have risen with Christ, set your hearts on the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth.* For just as he remained with us even after his ascension, so we too are already in heaven with him, even though what is promised us has not yet been fulfilled in our bodies. ... So the Apostle says: *Just as the human body, which has many members, is a unity, because all the different members make one body, so is it also with Christ.* He too has many members, but one body. Out of compassion for us he descended from heaven, and although he ascended alone, we also ascend, because we are in him by grace. Thus, no one but Christ descended and no one but Christ ascended; not because there is no distinction between the head and the body, but because the body as a unity cannot be separated from the head.”

Suggested Prayer

God our Father,
make us joyful in the ascension of your Son Jesus Christ.
May we follow him into the new creation
for his ascension is our glory and our hope.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Drawn From:

https://www.vatican.va/spirit/documents/spirit_20010525_agostino_en.html#:~:text=%22Today%20our%20Lord%20Jesus%20Christ,things%20that%20are%20on%20earth

22 May - St. Rita of Cascia

Liturgical Resources

St. Rita of Cascia lived a very full life as a wife and mother, widow, and member of a religious community. Born in central Italy in 1381, St. Rita wanted to become a nun but was forced to marry a harsh man. She had two sons and after 18 years of marriage, her husband died, along with her sons. Then, Rita joined the Augustinian nuns where her piety and charity became renowned. Eventually, St. Rita of Cascia developed wounds on her forehead, much like Christ's wounds from the crown of thorns. She was a gentle and loving nun, who spent time caring for her sick sisters and counselling the laity who came to her. She is the patron saint of difficult marriages, impossible causes, infertility, and parenthood. Her body is incorrupt.

Drawn From:

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-rita-of-cascia/>

24 May - World Day of Prayer for the Church in China

Liturgical Resources



Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed May 24 as a day to pray for the faithful in China. Catholics (and members of all religions) in China face a particularly difficult situation as regards their freedom to worship. This day was chosen because it is the feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians, who is particularly venerated at the Marian shrine of Sheshan.

Our Lady of Sheshan © Peter Potrowl, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

24 May - World Day of Prayer for the Church in China (continued)

Liturgical Resources

Suggested Prayer

Virgin Most Holy, Mother of the Incarnate Word and our Mother, venerated in the Shrine of Sheshan under the title "Help of Christians," the entire Church in China looks to you with devout affection.

We come before you today to implore your protection. Look upon the People of God and, with a mother's care, guide them along the paths of truth and love, so that they may always be a leaven of harmonious coexistence among all citizens.

When you obediently said "yes" in the house of Nazareth, you allowed God's eternal Son to take flesh in your virginal womb and thus to begin in history the work of our redemption. You willingly and generously cooperated in that work, allowing the sword of pain to pierce your soul, until the supreme hour of the Cross, when you kept watch on Calvary, standing beside your Son, who died that we might live.

From that moment, you became, in a new way, the Mother of all those who receive your Son Jesus in faith and choose to follow in his footsteps by taking up his Cross. Mother of hope, in the darkness of Holy Saturday you journeyed with unfailing trust towards the dawn of Easter.

Grant that your children may discern at all times, even those that are darkest, the signs of God's loving presence. Our Lady of Sheshan, sustain all those in China, who, amid their daily trials, continue to believe, to hope, to love. May they never be afraid to speak of Jesus to the world, and of the world to Jesus.

In the statue overlooking the Shrine you lift your Son on high, offering him to the world with open arms in a gesture of love. Help Catholics always to be credible witnesses to this love, ever clinging to the rock of Peter on which the Church is built. Mother of China and all Asia, pray for us, now and for ever. Amen!

Drawn From:

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/251338/prayer-for-church-in-china>

26 May - St. Philip Neri

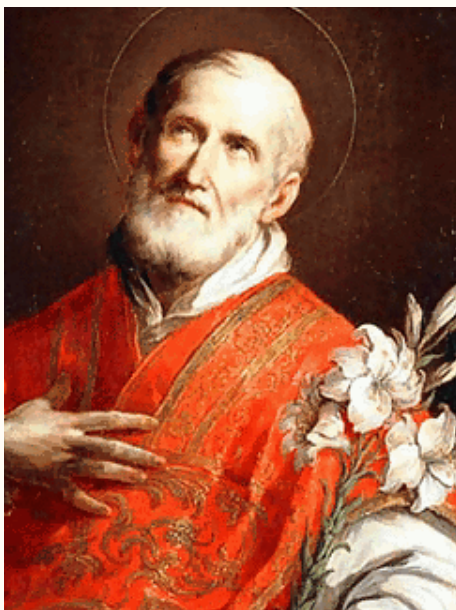
Liturgical Resources

As a young man, St. Philip Neri chose to abandon his chance to become a businessman and studied theology and philosophy.

During a long break from his religious studies, Philip established a prayer and discussion group in Rome. Eventually, he was ordained a priest and was known for his humour and charity in confession. He organized excursions and events for his parishioners. Eventually, some of his followers became priests and banded together in what is today known as the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. One of Philip's friends was Giovanni Palestrina, the famous composer. He is one of the most influential figures of the Counter-Reformation.

Suggested Reflection

"Many people wrongly feel that such an attractive and jocular personality as Philip's cannot be combined with an intense spirituality. Philip's life melts our rigid, narrow views of piety. His approach to sanctity was truly catholic, all-embracing, and accompanied by a good laugh. Philip always wanted his followers to become not less but more human through their striving for holiness." St. Philip Neri, help us to be joyful Christians no matter what vocation we live out!



"Philip Neri" by Sebastiano Conca, 18th century, public domain

Drawn From:

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-philip-neri/>

28 May - Pentecost Sunday

Liturgical Resources

“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. ...

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.”

Suggested Activities

Have a birthday party for the Church! Pentecost is sometimes called the “Birthday of the Church” so we should all celebrate. Consider hosting a party at your parish after Mass, or at least encouraging parishioners to celebrate at home!

When planning your party be sure to:

- Include a dessert of your choice: it’s a birthday after all!
- Use red: the colour of the Holy Spirit! Red paper plates, red napkins, red decorations, red food, etc.
- Read aloud the story of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-11



"Pentecost" by Jean Restout, 1732, public domain

Drawn From:

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/pentecost-sunday-cycle-a-sunday-connection/>

29 May - The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

Liturgical Resources

A new addition to the Roman Calendar, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, was instituted by Pope Francis in 2018. The memorial helps remind the faithful of Mary's role as not only Jesus' mother, but our mother too. Pope Paul VI declared "the Blessed Virgin Mary as 'Mother of the Church, that is to say of all Christian people, the faithful as well as the pastors, who call her the most loving Mother.'"

Suggested Devotion

Consider recommending the practice of reciting 3 *Hail Marys* each day for one's future or current spouse, family, and vocation.

Drawn From:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2018-03/pope-institutes-new-celebration-of-mary--mother-of-church.html#:~:text=In%201964%2C%20the%20decree%20says,invoked%20by%20the%20entire%20Christian>

31 May - The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Liturgical Resources

Dating back to the 14th century, the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary commemorates Mary's visit to Elizabeth. When Mary arrives, John the Baptist leaps for joy in the womb and Elizabeth – filled with the Holy Spirit – addresses Mary with words of praise. It is interesting to note that Elizabeth's words praise God first, then Mary. Mary never "steals the show" from God – but merely reflects his goodness. Then, Mary proclaims the greatness of the Lord in the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55).

Suggested Prayers

Pray the Joyful Mysteries of the rosary today and reflect especially on the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Short reflections for each mystery can be found here:

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/franciscan-spirit-blog/reflections-on-the-joyful-mysteries/>.

Drawn From:

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/visitation-of-the-blessed-virgin-mary/>