**Sunday 20 May – Pentecost Sunday**

Scripture: Acts 2: 1-11, Psalm 103, 1 Corinthians 12: 3-7, 12-13 or Galatians 5:16-25, John 20:19-23 *or John 15: 26-27, 16: 12-15*

*Jesus said to the disciples,
 ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’*

Obviously these words were originally directed to the first disciples. But it is clear that John sees them as worth recording for later ones – that is us. It is interesting to note too what Jesus puts together here. In other places, he talks about the good news – baptising in the name of the Trinity – and so on. But here it is a bit simpler. Jesus makes his presence known – and his presence brings peace. It does not deny that horrible things have happened – or that similar things will happen again. But his presence brings peace – and it is this peace in all its richness that we are called to take into our families – our friends – our colleagues – and more…

* When have you felt the presence of Christ bringing you peace in difficult times?
* How can you be a person who brings peace into places of tension and discord?

One image of prayer that can be helpful is that of breathing. Many prayer exercises start with being aware of breathing and becoming still. The other aspect to reflect on that our in-breath can represent our breathing-in the love and power of God and the Holy Spirit – and our out-breath can represent us letting that flow through us in our words and actions in the world. Try for a while – breathing in the love, power and peace of God – and breathing it out to those you love – and maybe those you don’t! Then follow the prayer up with action…

KT

**Monday 21 May – Mary Mother of the Church**

Scripture: Genesis 3:9–15.20 or Acts 1:12–14; Psalm 86 (87); John 19:25–34

*When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.*

This feast has been in the liturgical calendar for some years but on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes (11 February) this year, Pope Francis instructed that it be “upgraded” and celebrated on the Monday after Pentecost. As we heard in the Reading from Acts yesterday, “ as a caring guide to the emerging Church Mary had already begun her mission in the Upper Room, praying with the Apostles while awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:14).” Now that her Son was no longer physically present, she focused her attention as he had directed her – to the disciples and to those who love him.

* Why did Jesus think it was important for Mary to take on the role of mother to his disciples?
* How does Mary inspire you as a follower of Jesus?

Although traditionally the Mysteries for Monday are the Joyful ones, this could be a day to pray the Glorious Mysteries – especially “The Coming of the Holy Spirit”. Pray for Mary’s intercession for the diocese – for the Church – for all who need to know the love and consolation of God – and for any particular intention close to your own heart.

KT

**Tuesday 22 May (Seventh Week in Ordinary Time, St Rita of Cascia)**

Scripture: James 4:1-10; Psalm 54 (55), Mark 9: 30-37

*Jesus and the disciples came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, ‘What were you arguing about on the way?’ But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.’*

When people travel in large groups like this one seems to have been, it is inevitable that you pick up snatches of conversation. It is clear that Jesus has picked up enough to know that something needs to be dealt with. He does not go up and down the groups of disciples but waits until they are all gathered in one place and poses a question. He knows the answer but his question invites the disciples to think about their words and actions and realise for themselves that there is an issue. Another small but significant detail – he sits down. He does not stand over them and tell them off – but sits at their level and makes his point simply but firmly – and perhaps more effectively because of that.

* When have you been in a situation where someone has defused and argument or conflict by sitting and talking and listening to those around them?
* When can dialogue or conversation be more effective than dictating?

Reflect today on things that might be irritating or annoying you – or where people do not seem to get what you are trying to say or do. You might like to put an empty chair or cushion in front of you and imagine Jesus there. Tell him about it – in your own words and with your own feelings… Then pause to allow him to respond. You may not solve the problem today but perhaps will be given a little insight into how to proceed.

KT

**Wednesday 23 May – Wednesday of Week 7**

Scripture: James 4: 13-17; Psalm 48; Mark 9: 38-40

*John said, ‘Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.’*

When we look around, we see many people doing great and good things but who are people of other denominations – or faiths – or no faith at all. We may even see people we do not like doing them – or people whose lifestyles we do not approve of. It is tempting then, like John to want to dismiss or complain to Jesus that it is not right. Admittedly, many of the people doing these things today are not doing them in Jesus’ name but perhaps it is a case of trusting that they are being inspired by the God of all goodness and that, in his own mysterious way, God gathers up all the acts of kindness, healing and more to build up the sum of good in a fallen world.

* When have you seen or heard of people of different faith, culture or lifestyle doing something that you would normally see as “Christian”?
* If God inspires goodness in people of no faith, how much more do you feel is expected of you as a person of faith?

Reflect today on the many needs in our world – and the people who respond to them with compassionate action. Choose someone who you might struggle with seeing doing these things – of a different race, creed, nationality or sexual orientation… Pray for the grace to be glad that they are responding to God’s call to goodness.

KT

**Thursday 24 May, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest**

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31–34 or Hebrews 10:11–18; Psalm 109(110); Mark 14: 22–25

*(At the Last Supper) Jesus said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.’*

Blood offerings were a traditional part of establishing and recalling the covenant between God and the Jewish people. This was, of course, the blood of animals but, here, Jesus is taking it to a new level. He is offering not the blood of a yearling sheep or goat but his own blood. This is a new covenant which goes out into a wider world. Some will reject it – or not hear about it – but it is given freely so that more of the people of the world can be drawn into the covenant of love between God and humanity.

* Why do you think Jesus chose to use his own blood to establish the new and everlasting covenant rather than that of an animal?
* What do you think those first listeners made of this new way of thinking?

If you are able, get to Mass today to hear and pray those words used during the Eucharistic Prayer. If you are unable to go, you might like to pray through one of the Eucharistic Prayers in a Missal – or [here](http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/EP.htm) – you will need to follow your chosen one down the page! You might like to choose one your are less familiar with and allow the words to feed your soul.

KT

**Friday 25 May – St Bede the Venerable**

Scripture: Ecclesiasticus 39: 6-10, Psalm 36, Matthew 5: 13-16

*Jesus said, ‘You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.’*

When he heard about the death of St Bede, St Boniface (who lived in Germany) said that "the candle of the Church, lit by the Holy Spirit, has been extinguished" and wrote to his Abbot, Huetbuert of Wearmouth and to Archbishop Egbert of York, asking for copies of his work to be sent to him so that others could “enjoy the light that God bestowed on you.” In days long before mass media and fast communications (around 746AD), it is incredible to think that a monk working away in Jarrow could have been seen as a light to all the Church. And yet it shows how far the light of Christ can penetrate if we but allow it.

* How do you think St Bede would have reacted to know that his reputation had spread throughout Europe?
* How does the light that God kindled in Bede continue to light up our world today?

Here is what St Bede wrote about our Scriptures – and a prayer that you might like to use today.

"Holy Scripture is above all other books
not only by its authority because it is Divine,
or by its utility because it leads to eternal life,
but also by its antiquity and its literary form"

And I pray thee, loving Jesus,
that as Thou hast graciously given me to drink in with delight the words of Thy knowledge,
so Thou wouldst mercifully grant me to attain one day to Thee,
the fountain of all wisdom,
and to appear forever before Thy face."

*KT*

**Saturday 26 May (St Philip Neri))**

Scripture: James 5: 13-20; Psalm 140 (141); Mark 10: 13-16

*People were bringing little children to Jesus in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me; do not stop them…’*

There are two words that help to set the scene for us – the word “sternly” and “indignant”. One describes the disciples and how they were, in effect, managing crowd control – and Jesus when he sees how they are doing it. We might witness similar things today – when the ordinary folk are kept firmly away from the celebrity or important figure. To an extent this is for safety – theirs and the person they want to get close to – but sometimes, there is a bit of excessive wielding of power which is less about safety and more about being given a bit of authority and abusing it.

* Do you think the disciples were focused on Jesus’ safety or their power to tell the “little people” (mums and children) what they could and could not do?
* What does Jesus indignation tell you about him?

Pray today for the “little people” – the ones who very few people see as important and who are easy to ignore or to side-line. Pray for the grace, like Jesus, to be indignant on their behalf and to act accordingly.

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