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The Holy Father's September Prayer Intentions

General Intention:

That by means of sincere search for the truth, scholars and intellectuals may arrive at an understanding of the one true God

Mission Intention:

That the Church, aware of her own missionary identity, may strive to follow Christ faithfully and to proclaim His Gospel to all peoples

Contact:

Brendan Murphy
Director of Family Life, Mar-
riage Preparation, and Adult
Faith Formation
(570) 207-2213, ext. 1133
Brendan-Murphy@dioceseof
scranton.org



Disciple

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Breaking Open the Word—Notes on the Sunday Gospels

Feb. 7 (Lk. 5:1-11)

In today's Gospel we hear about the call of the first disciples. It is interesting to note that these men—Simon (Peter), James, and John—will go on to have an especially close relationship with Jesus. When He restores life to Jairus' daughter (8:51) and when He is transfigured (9:28) He only allows these three to accompany Him. He also gives them new names—in Simon's case he receives a new proper name, Peter (Rock), which designates his new role in the Church. In the case of James and John it is more of a nickname ("sons of thunder").

Feb. 14 (Lk. 6:17, 20-26)

St. Ambrose morally interpreted today's Gospel in the following way: "The Lucan Beatitudes reflect the four cardinal virtues.

The *poor* exhibit temperance as they shun the vain and excessive pleasures of the world. The *hungry* display justice as they share the plight of the lowly and give to those who have little. Those who *weep* exercise prudence as they lament the vanity of temporal things and look to what is eternal. Those *hated* by men exercise fortitude because they persevere when persecuted for their faith."

Feb. 21 (Lk. 4:1-13)

In today's Gospel he read of Jesus' temptation in the desert after 40 days, which calls to mind the fact that we are at beginning of the 40 days of Lent. In Scripture the number 40 is "symbolic of probation and testing. It is linked with the flood (Gn. 7:4, 17), Moses' fast on Mt.

Sinai (Ex. 34:28), Israel's journey in the desert (Dt. 8:2), the twelve spies' inspection of Canaan (Num. 14:34), Israel's oppression by the Philistines (Judg. 13:1), Elijah's fasting (1 Kgs 19:8), and Nineveh's opportunity to repent at the preaching of Jonah (Jon. 3:4).

Feb. 28 (Lk. 9:28b-36)

"The Transfiguration has 3 levels of significance. 1. Christ reveals His glory to offset the shock of His first Passion prediction (9:22). 2. The Father's voice, the chosen Son, and the cloud of the Spirit manifests the presence of the Blessed Trinity. 3. The prophets Moses and Elijah testify that Jesus will fulfill the Law and prophets of the Old Testament. This episode also parallels God's manifestation to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

Faith Foundations—Basics of Catholic Christian Belief

The Sacrament of Confirmation

(From the Compendium of the
Catechism of the Catholic Church)

The following is a brief overview of Catholic belief about Confirmation

What place does Confirmation have in the divine plan of salvation?

In the Old Testament the prophets announced that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the awaited Messiah and on the entire messianic people. The whole life and mission of Jesus were carried out in total communion with the Holy Spirit. The

apostles received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and proclaimed "the great works of God" (Acts 2:11). They gave the gift of the same Spirit to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands. Down through the centuries, the Church has continued to live by the Spirit and to impart him to her children.

Why is this sacrament called Chrismation or Confirmation?

It is called Chrismation (in the Eastern Churches: Anointing with holy myron or chrism) because the essential rite of the sacrament is anointing with chrism. It is called Confirmation because it confirms and strengthens baptismal grace.

What is the essential rite of Confirmation?

The essential rite of Confirmation is the anointing with Sacred Chrism (oil mixed with balsam and consecrated by the bishop), which is done by the laying on of the hand of the minister who pronounces the sacramental words proper to the rite. In the West this anointing is done on the forehead of the baptized with the words, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit". In the Eastern Churches of the Byzantine rite this anointing is also done on other parts of the body with the words, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit".

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Faith Foundations...Continued

What is the effect of Confirmation?

The effect of Confirmation is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit like that of Pentecost. This outpouring impresses on the soul an indelible character and produces a growth in the grace of Baptism. It roots the recipient more deeply in divine sonship, binds him more firmly to Christ and to the Church and reinvigorates the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his soul. It

gives a special strength to witness to the Christian faith.

Who can receive this sacrament?

Only those already baptized and should receive this sacrament which can be received only once. To receive Confirmation efficaciously the candidate must be in the state of grace.

Who is the minister of Confirmation?

The original minister of Confirmation is the bishop. In this way

the link between the confirmed and the Church in her apostolic dimension is made manifest. When a priest confers this sacrament, as ordinarily happens in the East and in special cases in the West, the link with the bishop and with the Church is expressed by the priest who is the collaborator of the bishop and by the Sacred Chrism, consecrated by the bishop himself.



“The effect of Confirmation is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit like that of Pentecost.”

Faith and Media—Reading and Viewing Recommendations

Book of the Month:

God and the World by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

This book is a follow up to the interview Peter Seewald conducted with Cardinal Ratzinger in 1996 and published as *Salt of the Earth* (see the Jan. 2009 Disciple). Whereas that volume dealt with many controversial questions, this book (again an interview with Seewald) focuses on many of the fundamental beliefs of Christianity as divided into three major sections—God, Jesus Christ, and Church. The questions seem to reflect Seewald’s

transformation from questioning agnostic (his spiritual state in 1996) to someone on the verge of returning to the Church, but wanting to be certain about what he believes (his state at the time of this book). As a result, the questions he asks are similar to questions many people have and wish they could ask. This book is a great read for those seeking a deeper appreciation of their faith and/or looking for a book to use in an adult faith formation setting.

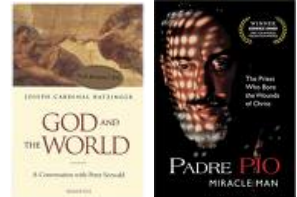
[This book is available at the Diocesan Resource Center and

most libraries and new and used book retailers.]

Film of the Month:

Padre Pio: Miracle Man

This award winner is by far the best of the recent films on the life of saints. It has the ability to inspire the viewer to actually want to be a saint, regardless of their state of life. This Italian film (which is broken into two parts and runs a total of 3 hours) is well crafted and acted. Highly recommended. [This film is available at the Diocesan Resource Center and most video rental/retail stores.]



Left: God and the World (Ignatius Press)

Right: Padre Pio: Miracle Man (Ignatius Press)

Catholic Calendar—Upcoming Opportunities for Adult Faith Formation

Days of Reflection Lent: A Time of Invitation and Response

Rev. John Polednak, V.E.
February 17
Fatima Renewal Center
\$30 (includes lunch)

Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King: Model for Catechists

Msgr. David Tressler
March 20
Fatima Renewal Center

\$20 (includes lunch)

Transformed by the Cross- Challenged by New Life

Msgr. John Esseff
April 10
Fatima Renewal Center
\$30 (includes lunch)

The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Parable of Homecoming

Rev. Philip Altavilla, V.E.

May 15

Fatima Renewal Center
\$30 (includes lunch)

Each Day of Reflection will include the celebration of Mass and the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**To register call the Fatima
Renewal Center at (570)
563-8500.**

**“Always be
prepared to
make a defense
to any one who
calls you to
account for the
hope that is in
you...”**

~1 Pt. 3:15