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The Holy Father's Prayer Intentions For This Month

General Intention:

That those who work in the media may always respect truth, solidarity and the dignity of each person.

Mission Intention:

That the Lord may grant the Church in China the capacity to persevere in fidelity to the Gospel and to grow in unity.

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Disciple

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Breaking Open the Word—Notes on the Sunday Gospels

May 1 (Jn. 20:19-31)

In today's Gospel we see Jesus giving the apostles the power to forgive sins. "Jesus' ministry of mercy and reconciliation will continue through them (2 Cor 5:18-20; Jas 5:14-15). The power to 'forgive and retain' sins in the name of Jesus is elsewhere described as the authority to 'bind and loose' (Mt. 16:19; 18:18, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) paragraphs 553, 730).

May 8 (Lk. 24:13-35)

In today's Gospel we hear about some disciples encountering Jesus on the road to Emmaus without realizing it until he "took the bread and blessed and broke it" (v. 30). This action recalls the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. "The structure of the Emmaus episode reflects the structure of

the Eucharistic liturgy, where Jesus gives Himself to the Church in word and sacrament, in the proclamation of Scripture (24:27) and the Eucharistic Bread of Life (24:30, 35).

May 15 (Jn. 10:1-10)

In today's Gospel Jesus uses imagery from the experience of shepherds to illustrate His mission. The fact that He calls His sheep by name illustrates His intimacy with them. Overall, the point of the passage is that the sheep who hear Christ's voice and follow Him wherever He goes are His disciples.

May 22 (Jn. 14:1-12)

In today's Gospel Jesus tells apostles that He is "the way" (v. 6). In other words, "He is the sole Savior of the world (Acts 4:12). He is the one mediator chosen by the Father to bring

the human family to glory. Earlier Jesus made this claim when He compared Himself to Jacob's ladder (1:51) (CCC 661 and 2466).

May 29 (Jn. 14:15-21)

In today's Gospel Jesus says that the Holy Spirit "dwells with you, and will be in you." The first part ("dwells with you") refers to the Holy Spirit's presence within the Church as a whole, while the second part ("and will be in you") refers to the Spirit's presence within the children of God individually. Because of this both the universal Church (Eph. 2:19-22) and individual Christians (1 Cor. 6:19) can be called "temples" of the Holy Spirit (CCC 797)

Faith Foundations—Basics of Catholic Christian Belief

Mary, Mother of God

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

The following is a brief overview of Catholic belief about Mary.

In what sense is the Blessed Virgin Mary the Mother of the Church?

"The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of the Church in the order of grace because she gave birth to Jesus, the Son of God, the Head of the body which is the Church. When He was dying on the cross Jesus gave His

mother to His disciple with the words, 'Behold, your mother' (Jn. 19:27)."

How does the Virgin Mary help the Church?

"After the Ascension of her Son, the Virgin Mary aided the beginnings of the Church with her prayers. Even after her Assumption into Heaven, she continues to intercede for her children, to be a model of faith and charity for all, and to exercise over them a salutary influence deriving from the superabundant merits of Christ. The faithful

see in Mary an image and an anticipation of the resurrection that awaits them and they invoke her as advocate, helper, benefactress and mediatrix."

What kind of devotion is di- rected to the holy Virgin?

"It is a singular kind of devotion which differs essentially from the cult of adoration given only to the Most Holy Trinity. This special veneration directed to Mary finds particular expression in the liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and in

(continued on next page)

Faith Foundations...Continued

Marian prayers such as the holy Rosary which is a compendium of the whole Gospel.

In what way is the Blessed Virgin Mary the eschatological icon of the Church?

“Looking upon Mary, who is completely holy and already glorified in body and soul, the Church contemplates in her what she herself is called to be on earth and what she will be in the homeland of Heaven.”

Some Marian Prayers

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To you do we send up

our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show to us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God. That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.



“The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of the Church in the order of grace because she gave birth to Jesus, the Son of God, the Head of the body which is the Church”

Faith and Media—Reading and Viewing Recommendations

Book of the Month:

***Handbook of Christian Apologetics* by Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli**

“Apologetics” is the term used to describe the act of explaining or defending something. This great book is a thorough resource for explaining and defending the Christian faith, as well as for personal faith formation. Topics covered include such things as: Does God exist? If He does, why does evil exist in the world? Is there life after death? Is the Bible myth? Was Jesus really raised from the

dead? Do faith and reason conflict? Was Jesus really divine? And many more. Kreeft and Tacelli are both professors of philosophy and very skilled at what they do. You’ll find answers to both simple and more complex arguments against the Christian faith here.

Film of the Month:

The King’s Speech

This Academy Award winning historical drama recounts the true-life relationship between Albert—the Duke of York—and Lionel Logue, an unconventional speech therapist. When

Albert and Lionel meet, the Duke is on the verge of losing hope that he will ever overcome his profound stuttering. Their work takes on an increasing urgency once Albert becomes King and is required to give a speech on the radio to build up the morale of his subjects at the outbreak of World War II. The film features great themes such as overcoming obstacles, determination, compassion, and integrity in public service. The film carries an “R” rating due to two brief scenes involving cursing.



Left: *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (InterVarsity Press)

Right: *The King’s Speech* (Weinstein Company)

Catholic Calendar—Upcoming Opportunities for Adult Faith Formation

Reflection Day

“The Reign of the Sacred Heart Through Mary’s Immaculate Heart”

Presenter:

Msgr. John Esseff

Date:

May 14 9:30-2:30

Location:

Fatima Renewal Center, Dalton, PA

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is an expression of the Church’s profound devotion to the person of Jesus. Monsignor Esseff will trace the beginnings of this devotion as given to us by a Visitation nun, St. Margaret Mary. In citing the significance of this devotion, Monsignor will specifically address and promote the reign of Jesus through the Enthronement of the Sa-

cred Heart among families, especially through the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Cost of the day is \$30, which includes lunch. To register please call (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