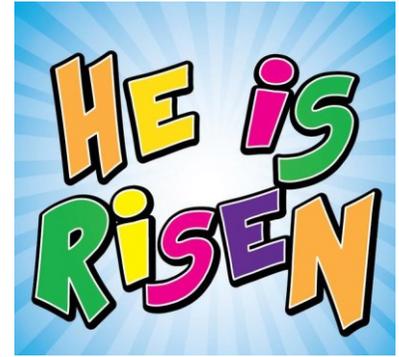




Coloma Catholic Life.



Eastertide



The Fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as one "great Sunday."

These above all others are the days for the singing of the Alleluia.

The Sundays of this season rank as the paschal Sundays and, after Easter Sunday itself, are called the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh

Sundays of Easter. The period of fifty sacred days ends on Pentecost Sunday. The first eight days of the Easter Season make up the octave of Easter and are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord.

On the fortieth day after Easter the Ascension is celebrated, except in places where, not being a holy day of obligation, it has been transferred to the Seventh Sunday of Easter. This solemnity directs our attention to Christ, who ascended into heaven before the eyes of his disciples, who is now seated at the right hand of the Father, invested with royal power, who is there to prepare a place for us in the kingdom of heaven; and who is destined to come again at the end of time.

The weekdays after the Ascension until the Saturday before Pentecost inclusive are a preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.



Pope Francis

Prayer Intention for April:

Fundamental Rights.

'We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even democracies in crisis.'

Video:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-04/pope-francis-prayer-intention-april-2021-human-rights.html>

Tweet: 'Being Christian is not first of all a doctrine or a moral ideal; it is a living relationship with the Risen Lord.'

Liturgical Year

Week: Third Sunday of Easter.

Colour: White

This sacred season of fifty days comes to an end on Pentecost Sunday, which commemorates the giving of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, the beginnings of the Church and its mission to every tongue and people and nation. (Excerpted from the *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Ceremonial of Bishops*)

7 Ways to Remind Yourself We Are Still Celebrating Easter

1. Pray the Glorious Mysteries, regardless of the day of the week, until the end of Eastertide, to help you really meditate and go deeper into the events of the Resurrection.
2. Keep some Easter decorations up to visually remind you that we're still in Easter and keep your place looking festive.
3. Pray the Via Lucis – *the Way of Light*. It is a similar format to the *Stations of the Cross*, but for Eastertide. You can find it here.
4. Pray the Regina Coeli prayer. It's short and very much about Easter!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtvoDS7CFs8>
5. Keep wishing people a Happy Easter when you greet them! If they look at you, confused, you can explain why!
6. Set aside some time in the remaining weeks (maybe on the Sundays) to do something out of your usual routine – cook a special meal, go for a beautiful walk, spend time as a family.
7. Prepare for Pentecost – Read the Pentecost scriptures, check out the videos on the <http://thewildgooseisloose.com> website, and plan to make Pentecost a special day of celebration too.

Holy Month of Ramadan - 13th April – 12th May 2021

Ramadan is the name of the 9th month of the Islamic Calendar.

The Muslim year is a lunar year which is about 11 days shorter than the solar year on which the Gregorian (British) calendar is based, so in the Gregorian calendar Ramadan occurs ten or eleven days earlier each year.

During the month of Ramadan Muslims fast from dawn to sunset.

Fasting (sawm) is the fourth of the five pillars of Islam, requiring self-discipline and giving everyone some experience of deprivation. Those who are not able to fast are expected to give charity to compensate for the 'lost' days. While children may be encouraged to fast, the full fast is not compulsory until puberty is reached, often by the age of 12, but many young people still attempt to keep some, or even all of it.

It is most important that Muslims show intent before they fast. It is a requirement that they recite a short prayer of intent either before they sleep or just before Suhoor, the pre-fast meal. No food or drink may be consumed during the hours of daylight during Ramadan, and those fasting must also abstain from smoking and from sexual relations. According to the Quran, one may eat and drink at any time during the night '*until you can plainly distinguish a white thread from a black thread by the daylight: then keep the fast until night*'.



Muslims who are travelling or sick and women who are pregnant or nursing a child are allowed to postpone their fast. These are all required to make up the days of missed fasting during the year ahead. After the custom of the Prophet, the fast is traditionally broken each evening by taking dates and water (*iftar*). For Muslims Ramadan one of the holiest months of the year, and one they dedicate to spiritual renewal, prayer and intensive devotional reading of the *Qur'an*. It is the month in which, according to Islamic belief, the Prophet received the first revelation of verses of the *Qur'an*, though the actual night is unknown. This night is called *Lailat ul Qadr*. To stand in prayer throughout the night is said to be 'better than a thousand months of worship'. Ramadan is often called 'the month of the *Qur'an*', and many Muslims attempt to recite as much of the *Qur'an* as they can during the month. Most Sunni mosques arrange a recital of one thirtieth of the *Qur'an* each night during the *Taraweeh* prayers, which are longer than the usual evening prayers and are special ones for Ramadan.

Religious Festivals

Rama Navami, Hinduism – 21st April



This is the birthday of Rama, the seventh avatar of Vishnu. It is one of the most important festivals for Hindus, particularly for those of the Vaishnava sect. On this auspicious day, devotees repeat the name of Rama with every breath and vow to lead a righteous life. The festival is celebrated especially at twelve noon since Rama was reputedly born at that time, and it takes the form of the ceremony of *aarti* (pronounced aar-tee). This is usually performed in front of the baby Rama (represented by a doll in a swinging cradle) or a devotional picture showing the scene of his birth.

Dedicated worshippers of Lord Rama normally observe a fast at this time, taking only milk and fruit for all nine days of the festival. Some fast only on the Rama Navami day itself. Apart from fasting, the day is marked by extremely colourful ceremonies. Temples are decorated and the image of Lord Rama is richly adorned. Devotees greet one another with 'Sri Ram' or 'Jai Ram-ji-ki', and invoke his name to grant them blessings and protection.

The epic poem 'Ramayana' is read in the temples and learned scholars narrate the thrilling episodes of the poem. Those who cannot recite the entire epic may repeat a single verse, which contains, in a nutshell, the story of the Ramayana. The two great Hindu epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, have exerted great influence on generations of believers. Rama is considered to be the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and the Ramayana tells the story of his life and his search for human values that are a model for all to follow. Rama is regarded as the perfect person, the embodiment of compassion, gentleness, kindness, righteousness and integrity. Although he had all the power in the world at his fingertips, he still remained peaceful and gentle.

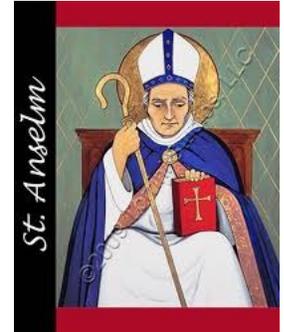
Celebrations begin with a prayer to the Sun early in the morning. At midday a special prayer is performed in honour of Rama. A '*havan*,' or sacred fire ceremony, is also performed. It is claimed that the repetition of his name (*Rama Nama*) is the surest, fastest and easiest way to attain purity, peace, wisdom, understanding, joy, prosperity and ultimately liberation. Rama Himself said, 'Repetition of My name once is equal to the repetition of a thousand names of God or to the repetition of a Mantra a thousand times.'

In addition to this meditation, devout followers clean their homes and put pictures of Lord Rama, Lakshman, Sita and Hanuman on a dais in preparation for the *puja*. Fruit, flowers and incense are placed before the family deities. The ceremony begins with the youngest female member of the family applying *tika* to all the male members present. A red bindi is also applied on the foreheads of the female members. Everyone participates in the *puja* by first sprinkling water on the gods and then showering handfuls of rice onto their heads. Then all stand up to perform the *aarti*, at the end of which *ganga* water (or plain water if that is not available) is sprinkled over the gathering. The singing of *bhajans* goes on for the entire *puja*. Finally, *prasad* is distributed among all the people who have gathered.

Saints of the Week

St Anselm of Canterbury, Bishop & Doctor – 21st April.

Anselm was born at Aosta in the Italian Alps. His family was noble and seems to have been related to the house of Savoy, the leading territorial magnates of the region. But Anselm's parents no longer possessed political or social prominence, and the family's economic resources were declining. After the death of his mother about 1056, Anselm argued with his father and left Aosta forever. He traveled across the Alps and contacted his mother's relatives in the kingdom of Burgundy. After a period of study in Burgundy and northern France, he went to the monastery of Bec in Normandy to study under its prior, Lanfranc, a leading teacher in northern Europe.



In 1060 Anselm entered the monastic life at Bec. His proficiency in learning was such that 3 years later, on the occasion of Lanfranc's departure from Bec in order to become abbot of St. Stephen's in Caen, Anselm was appointed prior of Bec and head of the monastic school. Prior and Abbot of Bec. The office of prior did not initially alter Anselm's love for solitude and meditation. In spite of his teaching activity, little is known of Anselm during his first 10 years at Bec. After 1070, however, he became more active, and the demand from his students to write down some of his teachings resulted in the writing of several works of major import.

The first of these works was the *Monologion* (ca. 1077), a treatise which examines the existence and nature of God. For Anselm, God is that highest good. Anselm also used the argument of contingency—that is, everything must come into existence through the agency of something prior. It is thus necessary to posit a first cause or being on which everything else depends, for if there were nothing on which it depended, it could not exist. That first cause, for Anselm, is God.

More revolutionary in nature was the work which Anselm entitled *Proslogion* (ca. 1078). It was the result of a "discovery" of a definition of God, and the ontological argument based upon the definition seemed to Anselm (and to many later philosophers) to be convincing by its very logical simplicity. Anselm's biographer, Eadmer, later described the discovery: "Behold, one night during Matins, the grace of God shone in his heart and the matter became clear to his understanding, filling his whole being with immense joy and jubilation."

The discovery of Anselm was a definition of God that was anticipated in part by Augustine and Seneca; namely, God was that being a greater than which could not be conceived. Using that definition as the basic content of anyone's idea of God, Anselm went on to argue that such a being necessarily existed not only as an idea in the mind but also in external reality. Although attacked in his own time and in later centuries, Anselm's ontological argument greatly influenced the course of philosophical and theological thought.

In 1078 Anselm was elected abbot of Bec, a position he held until 1093. In spite of the demands of the office, Anselm found time to complete several works on philosophy and theology. Among them were his philosophical works on grammar and truth and his theological treatises on free will and the devil. While these works are significant in the thought and development of Anselm, they did not make as great an impression on his contemporaries or later generations as did his earlier works.

From 1090 to 1093 Anselm was drawn into two controversies that changed his career. One was over the understanding of the Incarnation of Christ and the doctrine of the Atonement.

The other conflict that influenced Anselm in this period was the political and ecclesiastical situation in England. Lanfranc had become archbishop of Canterbury in 1070. After his death in 1089, King William Rufus allowed the position to remain vacant to avoid creating a strong ecclesiastical opponent and to appropriate Church revenues. The King wished to avoid accepting an archbishop who would oppose royal control of the English Church. Illness and fear of eternal retribution, however, finally caused him to appoint a successor to Lanfranc, and to that post he called Anselm. In spite of Anselm's initial reluctance, he was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury on Dec. 4, 1093.

Anselm's advocacy of Church reform and the recognition of Urban II as the rightful pope precipitated a conflict with the King. To gain support, Anselm convened a council of bishops and noblemen at Rockingham in 1095, but the indecisive results of that council and the growing animosity of the King forced Anselm to flee England in 1097.

Anselm went to central and southern Italy, where he remained for several years as a close associate of the papacy. After the death of William Rufus in 1100, his brother and successor, Henry I, summoned Anselm back to England. The problem of lay investiture and Henry's demand that Anselm renew his oath of feudal homage to the English king brought the two men into conflict. The opposition of the King soon forced Anselm to journey once more to Rome, and Anselm remained away from England until 1106. A compromise was finally worked out whereby the King gave up the right of investiture in return for a guarantee that Anselm would consecrate all candidates for episcopal and monastic office who had already been appointed by the King and had taken the oath of homage.

On the basis of this agreement, Anselm returned to England as archbishop and remained there for the last 3 years of his life.

St George, Martyr – 23rd April.



Very little is known about St. George's life, but it is thought he was a high-ranking officer in the Roman army who was killed in around AD 303. It seems that the Emperor Diocletian had St. George tortured to make him deny his faith in Christ. However, despite some of the most terrible torture even for that time, St George showed incredible courage and faith and was finally beheaded near Lydda in Palestine. His head was later taken to Rome where it was interred in the church dedicated to him.

Stories of his strength and courage soon spread throughout Europe. The best-known story about St. George is his fight with a dragon, but it is highly unlikely that he ever fought a dragon, and even more unlikely that he ever visited England, however his name was known there as early as the eighth-century. In the Middle Ages the dragon was commonly used to represent the Devil.

Unfortunately, the many legends connected with St. George's name are fictitious, and the slaying of the 'Dragon' was first credited to him in the 12th century. St. George, so the story goes, killed a dragon on the flat topped Dragon Hill in Uffington, Berkshire, and it is said that no grass grows where the dragon's blood trickled down!

It was probably the 12th century Crusaders however who first invoked his name as an aid in battle. King Edward III made him the Patron Saint of England when he formed the Order of the Garter in St. George's name in 1350, and the cult of the Saint was further advanced by King Henry V, at the battle of Agincourt in northern France.

Shakespeare made sure that nobody would forget St. George and has King Henry V finishing his pre-battle speech with the famous phrase, 'Cry God for Harry, England and St. George!'

St Fidelis of Sigmaringen, Priest & Martyr – 23rd April.



Born Mark Rey, he was a well-educated young man who developed a burning zeal to live and preach the true gospel. He was martyred as he tried to win back Calvinists and Zwinglians to the Catholic faith in Switzerland.

Born in Sigmaringen, a town in the Danube Valley, in the State of Baden-Wuttenberg in south west Germany, his baptismal name was Mark and his father, Johannes Roy or Rey, was the *burgomeister*, or local mayor. Mark studied law and philosophy at Freiburg-in-Breisgau (Germany) and subsequently taught philosophy there.

From 1604 to 1610 Mark became tutor to three young Swabian men who were on their travels in Italy and France. During these travels, he visited churches and hospitals, cared for the poor and would frequently attend Mass. One of these companions afterwards testified that he often practised serious asceticism during the journey. On their return, Mark took his doctorate in canon and civil law in Freiburg 1611, and for a while practised as a lawyer at Colmar in Alsace. However, he soon returned to Freiburg to join the Capuchin Franciscan Order and took the name Fidelis, meaning "faithful". During his novitiate, he wrote a book recording the spiritual exercises he did and his own spiritual development. It was subsequently published in many languages. After the novitiate, Fidelis went to Constance to complete theology studies under Polish Capuchin Father John-Baptist who had a reputation for holiness and learning. He was ordained priest in 1612.

From 1618 Fidelis became guardian of three houses in succession – Rheinfelden, Freiburg and Feldkirch – (1618-22) and was well-known as a preacher and for his care of the sick. In 1622 Rome set up the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to help spread the gospel in the newly discovered countries, and also to win back people in the Christian areas of Europe influenced by Protestantism. The Congregation appointed Fidelis as superior of a mission in the Grisons area of Switzerland around Chur where Calvinists and Zwinglians had acquired great influence. He campaigned strongly, especially by preaching, not only in the churches but also often even in the public streets. He wrote pamphlets and held conferences with the local magistrates and chief townsmen, often far into the night. When as a result of Fidelis's preaching one influential leader returned to the Catholic Church, the opposition stiffened to him. As he travelled through the area of north-east Switzerland, Fidelis had a premonition that he might meet a martyr's death. In fact, he was quite prepared for this and seems to have even desired it.

On 24th April, after making his confession and celebrating Mass at Grusch, he set out for the Seewis-im-Prättigau region, near the border with Austria. His companions remarked that he was especially cheerful that day along the way. Stopping at a church to preach, a confrontation arose and continued outside the church. A serious scuffle with an armed group broke out. Some of the confronting crowd offered to save his life if he would join the Calvinists. Fidelis replied: *“I am sent to root out heresy, not to embrace it. The Catholic religion is the faith of all ages, I do not fear death.”*

Fidelis was beaten, struck down and died – the first martyr of the Congregation for Propagation of the Faith. His courage in facing death was a confirmation of all the hard choices he had been making during his life. His body was taken to Feldkirch and buried in the church of his order there, but his head and left arm were brought to the cathedral at Chur, where they remain today. He was beatified in 1729 and canonised in 1745.

St Adalbert of Prague, Bishop & Martyr – 23rd April.

Opposition to the Good News of Jesus did not discourage Adalbert, who is now remembered with great honour in the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Germany.

Born to a noble family in Bohemia, he received part of his education from Saint Adalbert of Magdeburg. At the age of 27, he was chosen as bishop of Prague. Those who resisted his program of clerical reform forced him into exile eight years later.



In time, the people of Prague requested his return as their bishop. Within a short time, however, he was exiled again after excommunicating those who violated the right of sanctuary by dragging a woman accused of adultery from a church and murdering her.

After a short ministry in Hungary, he went to preach the Good News to people living near the Baltic Sea. He and two companions were martyred by pagan priests in that region. Adalbert's body was immediately ransomed and buried in the Gniezno, Poland, cathedral. In the mid-11th century, his relics were moved to Saint Vitus Cathedral in Prague.

Regina Cœli

Queen of heaven, rejoice,
alleluia.

For He, whom thou
did merit to bear,
alleluia.

Has risen, as He said,
alleluia.

Pray for us to God,
alleluia.

Rejoice and be glad,
O virgin Mary,
alleluia.

For the Lord has truly risen,
alleluia.

Let us pray.

O God, who gave joy to the world
through the resurrection of Thy son,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
grant we beseech Thee,
that through the intercession
of the virgin Mary,
His mother, we may obtain
the joys of everlasting life.
Through the same
Christ our Lord.

Amen

Anastpaul! 19

