



Coloma Catholic Life.



Pentecost Sunday



As the second most important festival in the Christian year, Pentecost is often seen as the 'birthday' of the Church, since this is when the disciples of Jesus first proclaimed the Gospel after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is named after the Jewish festival (Shavuot) on which this event happened, which is celebrated 50 days after Passover. Shavuot (Pentecost) commemorates the anniversary of the day the entire nation of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from God.

The name Pentecost comes from the Greek pentekoste, "fiftieth". Pentecost for Christians accordingly falls on the Sunday 50 days after Easter. The alternative name of Whitsuntide comes from the custom of converts presenting themselves for baptism on this day dressed in white.

Clergy in church often wear robes with red in their design as a symbol of the flames in which the Bible says the Holy Spirit came to the early disciples. The symbols of Pentecost are those of the Holy Spirit and include the wind, the breath of God and flames. The dove is also a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The Acts of the Apostles tells how the followers of Jesus found themselves speaking in foreign languages, inspired by the Holy Spirit. People passing by at first thought that they must be drunk, but the apostle Peter told the crowd that he and the other apostles were full of the Holy Spirit.

The central Christian belief that God is three in one – Father, Son and Holy



Pope Francis

Prayer Intention for May:

The World of Finance.

'Let us pray that those in charge of finance will work with governments to regulate the financial sphere and protect citizens from its danger.'

Video:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-05/pope-francis-may-2021-prayer-intention-sustainable-finance.html>

Tweet: "The Holy Spirit, the love of God, acts in our spirit. He comes down "within the heart", as "the soul's most welcome guest". He is the very love of God, who does not abandon us."

Liturgical Year

Week: Pentecost Sunday.

Colour: Red

Spirit – is at the heart of Christian teaching about the nature of God and is central to preaching and teaching both at this time and on the following Sunday, Trinity Sunday. It is the belief in the divinity of Christ and the reality of the Holy Spirit which separates orthodox Christian faith from other monotheistic religions.

Week of Prayer for China 23rd – 30th May

Bishop Declan Lang is encouraging the faithful in England and Wales to engage in a Week of Prayer for the Church and people of China from 23 – 30 May 2021.



Statement by His Eminence Charles Cardinal Bo, President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences

Fourteen years ago, in 2007, Pope Benedict XVI published his letter to the Church in the People's Republic of China, and designated 24 May, the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, as an annual Worldwide Day of Prayer for the Church in China.

On behalf of the Church throughout Asia, as President of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, I would like to call on the faithful to extend that to a Week of Prayer for the Church in China and the peoples of China, from Sunday 23 May until Sunday 30 May. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the peoples of China have faced increasing challenges, which impact on us all. It is right that we should pray not only for the Church but for all persons in the People's Republic of China.

We should ask Our Lady of Sheshan to protect all humanity and therefore the dignity of each and every person in China, in the words of Pope Benedict XVI's prayer, "to believe, to hope, to love".

In fact, we are reminded that "the whole of the Church's social doctrine develops from the principle that affirms the inviolable dignity of the human person".

Many parts of the world are currently challenged, including my own country of Myanmar at this time, but in a spirit of solidarity it is right to focus not only on our own challenges but to pray also for others, in the clear knowledge that their well-being is closely linked to ours.

In proposing this Week of Prayer, I am expressing my love for the peoples of China, my respect for their ancient civilization and extraordinary economic growth, and my hopes that as it continues to rise as a global power, it may become a force for good and a protector of the rights of the most vulnerable and marginalised in the world.

Pope Francis rightly reminds us that "there is also a deeper hunger, the hunger for a happiness that only God can satisfy, the hunger for dignity."

I am calling for prayer for each person in China that they may seek and realise the full measure of happiness that our Creator has given to them. So I urge the faithful, throughout the world, to join me in prayer for the Church and the peoples of China, from 23-30 May, and especially to join with Pope Francis, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and the whole Church to ask, in the words of Benedict XVI, the "Mother of China and all Asia" to support the faithful, that "they never be afraid to speak of Jesus to the world, and of the world to Jesus", and "always be credible witness to this love, ever clinging to the rock of Peter".

Fraternally yours,

Cardinal Charles Bo

President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)

Vatican Message for the Feast of Vesakh 2021

Thursday, May 20th, 2021 @ 3:13 pm



Buddhist communities around the world celebrate the Feast of Vesakh on Wednesday, 26 May. It's sometimes called Buddha Day as it marks Gautama Buddha's birthday, although the feast celebrates all three important stages of the Buddha's life – his birth, enlightenment and passing away. All are said to have taken place at the full moon of the fifth month.

Each year the Vatican's [Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue](#) sends a message of greeting to Buddhists to promote solidarity and fraternal dialogue.

This year, the Council's President, Cardinal Angel Ayuso Guixot has titled the message *Buddhists and Christians: Promoting a Culture of Care and Solidarity*.

Message

Dear Buddhist Friends,

On behalf of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, I am writing to you on the occasion of the feast of Vesakh to offer my heartfelt greetings. It is my prayer that this annual feast of the birth, enlightenment, and passing away of Gautama Buddha may bring joy, serenity, and hope to the hearts of Buddhists throughout the world.

The current world situation, tragically marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, challenges the followers of all religions to collaborate in new ways at the service of the human community. In his Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, signed in Assisi on 3 October 2020, Pope Francis reiterated the urgency of a universal solidarity that allows humanity to overcome together the difficult crises that threaten it, because "no one is saved alone" (Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, 32).

The Vesak greetings, of which we celebrated the 25th anniversary last year, have highlighted many of the values we hold in common and the wisdom that supports the collaboration we foster, especially in addressing times as hard as the present one. The suffering caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has made us aware of our shared vulnerability and interdependence. We are called to discover and practice the solidarity enshrined in our respective religious traditions.

As Pope Francis says, "ancient stories, full of symbolism, bear witness to a conviction which we today share, that everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationship with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others." (Pope Francis, *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2021).

The Buddhist teaching on Brahma Viharas (Four Heavenly Abodes or Virtues) offers us a timeless message of solidarity and active care. In speaking about mettii (loving kindness), it exhorts followers to extend boundless love to all. "As a mother even with her life protects her only child, so let one cultivate immeasurable loving-kindness towards all living beings" (*Metta Sutta*). As the Buddha taught, practitioners are equally encouraged

to “make haste in doing good deeds; one should restrain one’s mind from evil; for the mind of one who is slow in doing good tends to take delight in doing evil” (Dhammapada, 116).

May this dramatic situation of the COVID-19 pandemic strengthen our bonds of friendship and further unite us in service to the human family, adopting “a culture of dialogue as the path, mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard” (Pope Francis, Fratelli tutti, 285).

Dear Buddhist friends, these are the thoughts that I wish to share with you this year. Let us look forward to the future with hope and serenity.

Happy Feast!

Miguel Angel Cardinal Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ
President

Msgr. Kodithuwakku K. Indunil J.
Secretary

Spiritual Riches

You can also download a printable two-page PDF for Vesakh with information, bidding prayers, newsletter text and more.

[Spiritual Riches – VESAKH](#)

Religious Festivals

Vesakha Puja/Wesak/Buddha day/Bodhi day – 26th May



On Wesak Theravadin Buddhists celebrate the birth, the enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree in Bodhgaya in North India, and the final passing away of Gautama Buddha.

Mahayanist Buddhists have separate days for each of these events but on Buddha Day they celebrate both the birth and the enlightenment of the Buddha. They also celebrate his enlightenment on Bodhi Day in December. It is common in almost all Buddhist traditions to decorate the houses where Buddhists live with lanterns and garlands, and the temples are ringed with little oil lamps, consisting of a simple cloth or cotton wick in a small clay vessel of oil. Many Buddhists also send ‘Wesak cards’ to their friends.

On this day particular stress is laid on the Buddha’s enlightenment and many lay people come together at monasteries for this, the biggest of all the Buddhist festivals. No matter how important the Dharma and the Sangha may be in Buddhist belief and practice, it is the Buddha himself who is the central figure and originator of Buddhist teaching, and the celebration at this festival of his enlightenment is of central importance to all Buddhist communities.

Saints of the Week

St Bede the Venerable, Priest and Doctor – 25th May.



Bede is one of the few saints honoured as such even during his lifetime. His writings were filled with such faith and learning that even while he was still alive, a Church council ordered them to be read publicly in the churches.

At an early age, Bede was entrusted to the care of the abbot of the Monastery of St. Paul, Jarrow. The happy combination of genius and the instruction of scholarly, saintly monks produced a saint and an extraordinary scholar, perhaps the most outstanding one of his day. He was deeply versed in all the sciences of his times: natural

philosophy, the philosophical principles of Aristotle, astronomy, arithmetic, grammar, ecclesiastical history, the lives of the saints and especially, Holy Scripture.

From the time of his ordination to the priesthood at 30—he had been ordained a deacon at 19—till his death, Bede was ever occupied with learning, writing, and teaching. Besides the many books that he copied, he composed 45 of his own, including 30 commentaries on books of the Bible.

His *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is commonly regarded as of decisive importance in the art and science of writing history. A unique era was coming to an end at the time of Bede's death: It had fulfilled its purpose of preparing Western Christianity to assimilate the non-Roman barbarian North. Bede recognized the opening to a new day in the life of the Church even as it was happening.

Although eagerly sought by kings and other notables, even Pope Sergius, Bede managed to remain in his own monastery until his death. Only once did he leave for a few months in order to teach in the school of the archbishop of York. Bede died in 735 praying his favourite prayer: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As in the beginning, so now, and forever."

St. Philip Neri, Priest – 26th May

St Philip Neri was born into a prominent family in Florence in 1515, although the financial fortunes of his family had declined by the time of his birth. He was educated by the Dominican friars in Florence, where he learned to venerate the memory of the fiery Florentine friar, Savonarola. As a young man he was sent to work for his uncle in San Germano, near Monte Cassino, who planned to hand over his business to Philip. It was here, while living in the shadow of the Benedictine abbey at Monte Cassino, that Philip gained a profound love for the sacred liturgy and an appreciation for the wisdom of the desert fathers. Philip had little interest in taking over his uncle's business and within a year had gone to live in Rome.



When Philip came to Rome he lived with a Florentine family who gave him lodgings and food in return for teaching their two sons. His real joy, however, lay in spending nights in the catacombs in prayer. He had a great affinity with the early Christians, and in his Litany of St Philip, Newman calls him *Vir Prisci Temporis* or Man of Primitive Times. In his early years in Rome, Philip pursued philosophical and theological studies with the Augustinians in the city, but was content to remain as layman. Contemporaries noted his great eloquence in theological matters, but Philip didn't see his studies as an end in themselves and happily sold his text books to give financial help to other students.

In 1544 Philip had a mystical experience, while praying in the catacombs of San Sebastiano, in which he felt the Holy Spirit enter him in a special way, and from that time onwards he had a great feeling of warmth in his heart. Philip hid this experience for most of his life, and only in his last years did he confide in his trusted friend Pietro Consolini about the experience.

Philip had a magnetic personality, and when he was not teaching the two boys, he used to walk the streets of Rome, engaging young men in pious conversation. At that time in Renaissance Rome, there seem to have been many young men with little to do after lunch. Philip hoped that he could draw these men out of their idleness and towards the pursuit of holiness. One of his favourite phrases was 'when shall we begin to do good?' During his fifteen years as a layman Philip attracted a strong following. His first companions were mainly

Florentines and craftsmen, but he later attracted the attention of courtiers, artists and musicians. He used to bring these young men together for prayer, sermons and music. When the numbers were small the meetings were informal, but as numbers grew it became more structured. These gatherings were the beginning of what would become known as the Oratory.

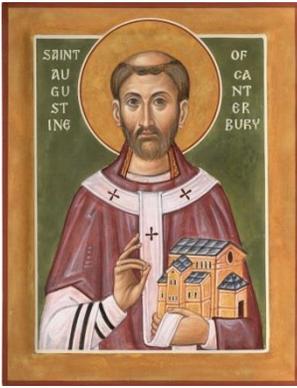
Philip was not content only to discuss holiness, but was keen that he and his companions would live it. He was especially conscious of the needs of the sick, and he and his companions visited them in hospital. At this time, conditions in hospitals were grim and patients relied on volunteers to nurse them. While this was a valuable work of mercy, it also served as a source of mortification for himself and his followers. Philip was more concerned to mortify the reason of his followers than their bodies, which sometimes resulted in mortifications which appeared bizarre to onlookers. For example, he insisted on one of his followers, Tarugi, carrying Capriccio, a dog who had originally belonged to a cardinal but who became attached to Philip.

In 1550 Philip founded the Confraternity of the Most Holy Trinity to look after pilgrims in the Jubilee Year. That same year, after living for fifteen years in Rome as a layman, he reluctantly agreed to be ordained a priest so that he might be of more service to his companions. He had already completed his studies, and so it was possible for him to be ordained soon afterwards. He went to lodge in a house for priests attached to the Church of San Girolamo. Philip had always preached the value of frequent confession and communion, and as soon as he was ordained to the priesthood, he himself became a valued confessor. He directed many young men into religious life, but encouraged some of his penitents to remain at court, where he hoped they would have a positive influence on those around them. As a priest he spent his mornings hearing confessions and said the last Mass of the morning around noon.

Owing to the originality of Philip's apostolic methods, it is not altogether surprising that he fell under the suspicion of the authorities. His processions through the city and the rumours that he allowed lay people to preach at his meetings were sources of particular concern, though any sincere investigators were forced to conclude that his orthodoxy was beyond reproach and that his good works were edifying and admirable. Towards the end of his life he became a trusted advisor of Popes and Cardinals, among others. After a while, Philip had some of his followers ordained priests. These included Tarugi, who was forced to carry the Cardinal's dog, and Caesar Baronius, who became famous as a writer of ecclesiastical history. In 1575 St Philip was given the church of Santa Maria in Vallicella. It was soon pulled down, and a new church, still known as the 'chiesa nuova', was built on the same site. The relics of St Philip now lie in that church, beneath his altar, which is still the home of the Roman Oratory.

On the 11th of May 1615 Philip was beatified by Pope Paul V. On the 12th of March 1622 Philip was canonized by Pope Gregory XV, along with Teresa of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier and Isidore the Farmer. His feast is kept on the 26th of May.

St Augustine of Canterbury, Bishop – 27th May



In the year 596, some 40 monks set out from Rome to evangelize the Anglo-Saxons in England. Leading the group was Augustine, the prior of their monastery. Hardly had he and his men reached Gaul when they heard stories of the ferocity of the Anglo-Saxons and of the treacherous waters of the English Channel. Augustine returned to Rome and to Gregory the Great—the pope who had sent them—only to be assured by him that their fears were groundless.

Augustine set out again. This time the group crossed the English Channel and landed in the territory of Kent, ruled by King Ethelbert, a pagan married to a Christian, Bertha. Ethelbert received them kindly, set up a residence for them in Canterbury and within the year, on Pentecost Sunday 597, was himself baptized. After being consecrated a bishop in France, Augustine returned to Canterbury, where he founded his see. He constructed a church and monastery near where the present cathedral, begun in 1070, now stands. As the faith spread, additional sees were established at London and Rochester.

Work was sometimes slow and Augustine did not always meet with success. Attempts to reconcile the Anglo-Saxon Christians with the original Briton Christians—who had been driven into western England by Anglo-Saxon invaders—ended in dismal failure. Augustine failed to convince the Britons to give up certain Celtic customs at variance with Rome and to forget their bitterness, helping him evangelize their Anglo-Saxon conquerors. Labouring patiently, Augustine wisely heeded the missionary principles—quite enlightened for the times—suggested by Pope Gregory: purify rather than destroy pagan temples and customs; let pagan rites and festivals be transformed into Christian feasts; retain local customs as far as possible. The limited success Augustine achieved in England before his death in 605, a short eight years after his arrival, would eventually bear fruit long after in the conversion of England. Augustine of Canterbury can truly be called the “Apostle of England.”

Prayer to Our Lady of Sheshan

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 unflinching 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!

Pope Benedict XVI



Our Lady of Sheshan