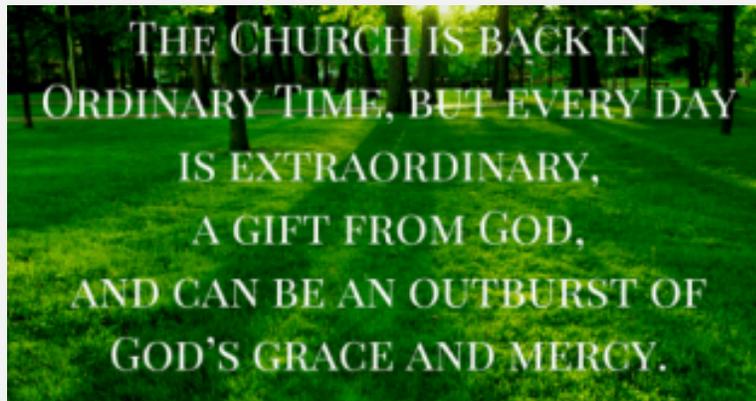


# Coloma Catholic Life.

## Liturgical Year

2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time – Liturgical colour: Green



## Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for January Entrusted to the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

### Promotion of World Peace

That Christians, followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill may promote together peace and justice in the world.

## Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for January 2020



In his prayer intention for the month of January 2020, Pope Francis calls us to pray that Christians, followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill may promote together peace and justice in the world.

It has become the custom of Pope Francis to release a video message detailing his prayer intention for each month.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-01/pope-prayer-intention-january-2020.html>

## Pope Francis Tweet

“Whoever has faith feels a great need for God and, in our own smallness, we surrender ourselves, trusting fully in him.”

## Jesus the Lamb of God.

The Gospel reading for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time usually comes from the Gospel of John. It was John the Baptist who gave Jesus the title Lamb of God (John 1:29). The Book of Revelation



## 26th February

Ash Wednesday – Service & distribution of ashes during the day.

Lent begins.

**3rd March** – Periods 5 & 6 Reconciliation for Year 7

**10th March** – Periods 5 & 6 Reconciliation for Year 8

**17th March** – Periods 5 & 6 Reconciliation for Year 9

**24th March** – Periods 5 & 6 Reconciliation for Year 10

**1st April** - Periods 5 & 6 Reconciliation for Year 11

Years 12 & 13 are warmly invited to attend any of the above to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

speaks of the Lamb at least 29 times. In a vision John sees a lamb. Four living creatures and 24 elders fall before the Lamb and sing praise because he purchased all people with his blood (Revelation 5:9).

In the biblical story of the Exodus, God led the Israelites out of Egypt, where they were slaves, and into the promised land. On the night God's people were to depart, the firstborn in all the Egyptian families died. The firstborn of the Israelites was saved because God had instructed them to kill a lamb or goat and mark their doorposts with its blood. The angel of death then knew to pass over those houses. The Israelites ate the lamb in a meal before they left. The lamb was to have no blemish, and none of its bones were to be broken. To this day the Jews remember this night with the Feast of Passover. On this day they share a special meal called a Seder meal. The shank of a lamb is one item on the Seder plate.

Jesus is called the lamb of God because he is the perfect sacrifice offered to God. In 1 Peter 1:18-19 we are told, "You were ransomed . . . not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb." A prophecy about the Messiah states, "Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; Like a lamb led to the slaughter" (Isaiah 53:7). After Jesus' crucifixion, soldiers did not break his legs to kill him because he was already dead. Like the Passover lamb, his bones were unbroken.

Paul states, "Our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus' death on the cross was a passover from death to life for himself and for all of us. By his blood we are saved from death. Jesus made it possible for us to break out of the slavery of sin and death. He gave us the hope of reaching our promised land, heaven. The Gospel of John clearly compares Jesus to the Passover lamb by saying that Jesus was crucified the same day that the Passover lambs were being killed in the Temple (John 19:31).

### Ordinary Time



Ordinary time begins after the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. It continues until Shrove Tuesday, when it is 'interrupted' by Lent and Eastertide and resumes after the solemnity of Pentecost. It concludes on the afternoon before the First Sunday of Advent. The phrase in Latin is **Tempus per annum**, which literally means "through the year season." It is the longest season in the liturgical year in the Catholic Church.

Another Latin word **ordinalis** which refers to numbers in a series, stems from the Latin word **Ordo**, from which we get the English word **order**. Therefore, the numbered weeks of Ordinary Time represent the ordered life of the Church – the period of time in which we live our lives neither in feasting or in penance (fasting), but in watchfulness and expectation of the Second Coming of Christ. For Catholics, Ordinary Time is the part of the year in which Christ, the Lamb of God, walks among us and transforms our lives. The colour is green as it is a time of growth and development.

### The God Who Speaks – Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

The focus for January is on the role of Scripture in Education and Catechesis.

The third focus is [Teaching Scripture: What we need to remember](https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/the-god-who-speaks/focus/teaching-scripture-what-we-need-to-remember/). This time Margaret Carswell takes us on an exciting biblical journey. She signposts what we need to know when we read scripture, its genres, forms and various meanings. <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/the-god-who-speaks/focus/teaching-scripture-what-we-need-to-remember/>

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> January

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> January – the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul. The materials for the 2020 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity have been prepared by the Christian churches in Malta and Gozo (Christians Together in Malta). The theme this year is **Unusual Kindness**.



On 10<sup>th</sup> February many Christians in Malta celebrate the Feast of the Shipwreck of St Paul, marking and giving thanks for the arrival of Christian faith on these islands. The reading from the Acts of the Apostles used for the feast is the text chosen for this year's Week of Prayer.

Hospitality is a much needed virtue in our search for Christian unity. It calls us to a greater generosity to those in need. The people who showed unusual kindness to Paul and his companions did not yet know Christ, and yet it is through their unusual kindness that a divided people were drawn closer together. Our own Christian unity will be discovered not only through showing hospitality to one another, but also through loving encounters with those who do not share our language, culture or faith. In such tempestuous journeys and chance encounters, God's will for his Church and all people comes to fulfilment. As Paul will proclaim in Rome, this salvation of God has been sent to all peoples (see Acts 28:28). Resources are available at the link below: <https://ctbi.org.uk/resources-for-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2020/>

## World Religion Day – Baha'i and other faiths 19<sup>th</sup> January



The aim of World Religion Day, held on the third Sunday in January every year, is to promote inter-faith understanding and harmony. Through a variety of events held around the globe, followers of every religion are encouraged to acknowledge the similarities that different faiths have. It was first initiated in 1950 by the National assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and is now celebrated worldwide and is a day to 'build

bridges among the various faith communities.

## Chinese New Year 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> January

Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar New Year or Spring Festival, is China's most important festival. It is also the most important celebration for families and a week of an official public holiday. This year it falls on Saturday, January 25, 2020, beginning a year of the **Rat**. The date of the Chinese New Year is determined by the lunar calendar: the holiday falls on the second new moon after the winter solstice on December 21. Thus, each time the New Year in China falls on different dates of the usual Gregorian calendar, between January 21 and February 20.





### Honen Memorial Day - Buddhist 25<sup>th</sup> January

Honen Bo Genku (1133-1212 CE), more familiarly known as **Honen**, was part of the movement—along that resulted in the uniquely Japanese forms of Buddhism. Born in 1133 CE, Honen Bo Genku entered monastic life at age 13, and for the next thirty years he underwent intensive training in Tendai Buddhism.

At age 43, following exposure to the Pure Land teachings of the Chinese Master Shan-Tao, Honen broke with the centres of Buddhism patronized by the royal court and military authorities to pursue his own spiritual vision. In the spring of 1175, he founded *Jodo Shu* in Japan, the way of salvation by a power beyond the individual. Honen taught that rebirth in the Pure Land was certain for anyone who recited the name with complete trust and sincerity. He believed that most people, himself included, could not achieve liberation on their own. He eliminated the intellectual difficulties and complex meditation practices used by other schools of Buddhism, teaching that the only way to achieve buddhahood was with the help of Amida. The result was a form of Buddhism accessible to anyone. Honen's teachings attracted many, including not only priests and nobles, but also warriors, fishermen, prostitutes and other social outcasts. Those who followed *Jodo-Shu* believed that constant repetition of the nembutsu would lead to their salvation.

### Losar - Buddhist 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> January

The most important holiday in Tibet is Losar, which celebrates the Tibetan New Year.

It's celebrated in February, but the exact date varies each year according to the lunar calendar.

Losar is a three-day festival. On the first day celebrations are usually restricted to the family, with the second and third days being the time to visit and exchange gifts with friends and more distant relatives. This is also a time for Tibetans to visit monasteries and make offerings.



Losar is marked with activities that symbolise purification and welcoming in the new. Buildings are whitewashed and thoroughly cleaned, people wear new clothes and special food is prepared. Buddhist monks adorn the monasteries with the finest decorations and conduct religious ceremonies. Rituals are performed to drive away evil spirits, and people celebrate with feasts and dancing. The festival of Losar can be traced back to the pre-Buddhist period in Tibet.

### Saints of the Week

**20<sup>th</sup> January** - St Fabian – Pope & Martyr.



Fabian was a Roman layman who came into the city from his farm one day as clergy and people were preparing to elect a new pope.

Eusebius, a Church historian, says a dove flew in and settled on the head of Fabian. This sign united the votes of clergy and laity, and he was chosen unanimously.

He led the Church for 14 years and died a martyr's death during the persecution of Decius in 250 A.D. Saint Cyprian wrote to his successor that Fabian was an "incomparable" man whose glory in death matched the holiness and purity of his life.

In the catacombs of Saint Callistus, the stone that covered Fabian's grave may still be seen, broken into four pieces, bearing the Greek words, "Fabian, bishop, martyr."

### 20<sup>th</sup> January - St Sebastian – Martyr

Nothing is known about St. Sebastian's youth other than the fact he may have come from southern France and he was educated in Milan. He joined the Roman Army in 283 AD, ostensibly to be of service to other Christians who were being persecuted by the Romans. St. Sebastian distinguished himself and for his excellent service, he was promoted to serve in the Praetorian Guard to protect Emperor Diocletian. While serving as a Praetorian Guard, Marcus and Marcellian, twin brothers, were imprisoned for refusing to make public sacrifices to the Roman gods. The brothers were deacons of the Christian Church. During their imprisonment, their parents visited them to implore them to renounce Christianity. However, St. Sebastian convinced both parents to convert to Christianity. St. Sebastian also converted several other prominent individuals, including the local prefect.



This led to his discovery and he was reported as a Christian to Emperor Diocletian in 286. The Emperor, who was already infamous for ordering the deaths of hundreds of Christians, scolded Sebastian and ordered him to be killed by having him tied to a stake on a training field and used as target practice. Archers riddled his body with arrows, his body was described as, "full of arrows as an urchin." Believed to be dead, the archers left his body for retrieval and burial. He was recovered by Irene of Rome; whose Christian husband was a servant to Diocletian and also martyred. Irene discovered that Sebastian was still alive, so she hid him and nursed him back to health.

Once well, Sebastian went in search of Diocletian to surprise him. He managed to catch Diocletian by a stairwell and proceeded to criticize him loudly and publicly for his persecution of the Christians. Diocletian, surprised that Sebastian was still alive, was immediately taken aback, but recovered his composure. This time, he would not permit Sebastian to escape with his life. He ordered his former guard to be beaten to death with clubs, then thrown into the sewers.

His body was recovered by a Christian woman, named Lucina, and she secretly buried him in the catacombs beneath Rome. Nearly 80 years after his death, around 367, his remains were moved to a basilica in Rome, built by Pope Damasus I. His body, or at least some relics from his body were reportedly removed and shared with a community of monks in France. His cranium was sent to a German monastery where it was placed in a special silver case in 934. The relic remains in its case today in a special reliquary in Ebersberg.

### 21<sup>st</sup> January - St Agnes Virgin & Martyr.



St. Agnes of Rome was born in 291 AD and raised in a Christian family. Agnes was very beautiful and belonged to a wealthy family. Her hand in marriage was highly sought after, and she had many high-ranking men chasing after her. However, Agnes made a promise to God never to stain her purity. Her love for the Lord was great and she hated sin even more than death! Whenever a man wished to marry Agnes, she would always say, "Jesus Christ is my only Spouse." According to legend, the young men she turned away became so angry, and insulted by her devotion to God and purity, that they began to submit her name to authorities as a Christian follower.

In one incident, Procop, the Governor's son, became very angry when she

refused him. He tried to win her for his wife with rich gifts and promises, but the beautiful young girl kept saying, "I am already promised to the Lord of the Universe. He is more splendid than the sun and the stars, and He has said He will never leave me!" In great anger, Procop accused her of being a Christian and brought her to his father, the Governor. The Governor promised Agnes wonderful gifts if she would only deny God, but Agnes refused. He tried to change her mind by putting her in chains, but her lovely face shone with joy. Next, he sent her to a place of sin, but an Angel protected her. At last, she was condemned to death. Even the pagans cried to see such a young and beautiful girl going to death. Yet, Agnes was as happy as a bride on her wedding day. She did not pay attention to those who begged her to save herself. "I would offend my Spouse," she said, "if I were to try to please you. He chose me first and He shall have me!" Then she prayed and bowed her head for the death-stroke of the sword. She died a virgin-martyr at the age of 12 or 13 on 21 January 304.

Agnes was buried beside the Via Nomentana in Rome. Her bones are currently conserved beneath the high altar in the church of Sant'Angese fuori le mura in Rome, which was built over the catacomb that held her tomb. Her skull is preserved in the church of Sant'Agnese in Agone in Rome's Piazza Navona. St. Agnes is widely known as the patron saint of young girls. She is also the patron saint of chastity, rape survivors and the Children of Mary. She is often represented with a lamb, the symbol of her virgin innocence, and a palm branch, like other martyrs. She is shown as a young girl in robes holding a palm branch with the lamb either at her feet or in her arms. On her feast day, it is customary for two lambs to be brought in to be blessed by the pope. On Holy Thursday the lambs' wool is removed and woven into the pallium the pope gives to a newly consecrated archbishop as a sign of his power and union with the pope.

#### **22nd January - St Vincent Deacon & Martyr.**



He was born in Huesca and became a deacon of the church of Saragossa (Zaragoza). He was tortured to death in Valencia, in the persecution of Diocletian.

#### **24th January - St Frances de Sales Bishop & Doctor**



He was born near Annecy, in Savoy, studied the law, and was ordained to the priesthood despite the opposition of his father. His first mission was to re-evangelize the people of his home district (the Chablais), who had gone over to Calvinism. Always in danger of his life from hostile Calvinists, he preached with such effectiveness that after four years most of the people had returned to the Church. He was then appointed bishop of Geneva and spent the rest of his life reforming and reorganising the diocese, and in caring for the souls of his people by preaching and spiritual guidance.

St Francis taught that we can all attain a devout and spiritual life, whatever our position in society: holiness is not reserved for monks and hermits alone. He wrote that "religious devotion does not destroy it perfects," and his spiritual counsel is dedicated to making people more holy by making them more themselves. In his preaching against Calvinism he was driven by love rather than a

desire to win: so much so, that it was a Calvinist minister who said "if we honoured anyone as a saint, I know of no-one since the days of the Apostles more worthy of it than this man."

St Francis is the patron saint of writers and journalists.

### 25th January - Conversion of St Paul - Apostle



Paul, the "Apostle of the Gentiles," was born in Tarsus, capital city of the Roman province of Cilicia, in southeast Asia Minor. A strict Pharisee who was educated at the feet of Gamaliel, we first find him in Jerusalem, where he was present at and consented to the death of the Christian martyr Stephen. He then began a vicious campaign of persecution against Christians. As Paul – who before his Christian conversion was known as Saul – was on the road to Damascus to extend his ravages, he suddenly saw a blinding light and fell to the ground, hearing Jesus speak to him. He was then led by hand, blind, to Damascus, where a Christian named Ananias met him. Paul was cured of his blindness, believed in Jesus, and was baptized.

