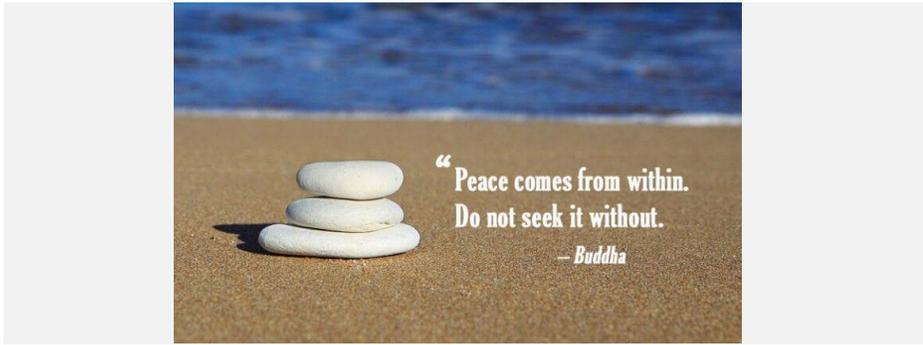




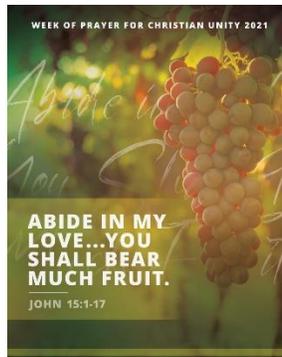
Coloma Catholic Life.



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - 18th – 25th January

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from the 18th to the 25th January – the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul. However, some areas observe it at Pentecost or some other time.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland. The theme that was chosen, “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit”, is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family.



Today, the community has fifty sisters, all women from different generations, Church traditions, countries and continents. In their diversity the sisters are a living parable of communion. They remain faithful to a life of prayer, life in community and the welcoming of guests. The sisters share the grace of their monastic life with visitors and volunteers who go to Grandchamp for a time of retreat, silence, healing or in search of meaning. For 2021, the sisters are inviting churches across the world to enter into their tradition of prayer and silence that is rooted in the ancient traditions of the Church catholic.

Resources can be found here: <https://ctbi.org.uk/resources-for-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2021/>



Pope Francis

Prayer Intention for January:

Human Fraternity.

‘May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.’

Video:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-01/pope-s-january-prayer-intention-at-the-service-of-fraternity.html>

Tweet: ‘The design that God has for us is always a design of love. And the greatest joy for every believer is to respond to that call, offering one’s entire being to the service of God and the brothers and sisters.’

Liturgical Year

Week: 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Colour: Green

Columban Missionary Society Image and Writing Competition



'Let's Create a World Without Racism' is the theme for a schools' competition launched by the Columban Missionary Society. It is open to young people aged 14-18. You can learn more about the competition, closing date: 20th February 2021) and the Columbans here:

<https://columbans.co.uk/education/4919/columbans-launch-schools-media-competition-endracism/>

Religious Festivals This Week

World Religion Day 17th January - Bahai



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.

Saints of the Week

Saint Wulstan, Bishop, Religious - 19th January



Wulstan was born in 1008 at Long Itchington in Warwickshire. His early studies were at the monasteries in Evesham and Peterborough. After some time as a clerk at Worcester he then studied for the priesthood and was ordained in 1038. He became a Benedictine monk at Worcester Cathedral Priory and Bishop of Worcester in 1062.

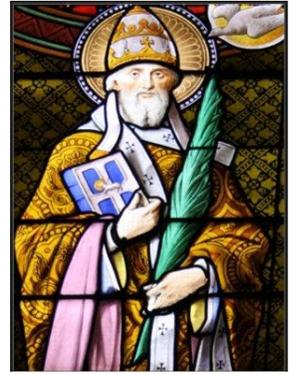
Many of the church rebuilding works in the three counties area are attributed to him together with large scale work at Worcester and Hereford cathedrals as well as the founding of Great Malvern Priory.

He is the first English bishop known to have made systematic visitations of his diocese; he was anxious that country people should have the chance of going to Mass, and encouraged the building of churches on rural manors. An outstanding success of his episcopate was the abolition of the trade in slaves from Bristol to Viking Ireland. He survived the Norman Conquest to become a trusted adviser of William the Conqueror and died in 1095 at the age of 87.

The crypt of Worcester Cathedral dates from his rebuilding. Saint Wulstan was canonised in 1203 and is the patron saint of vegetarians.

Saint Fabian, Pope, Martyr - 20th January

Saint Fabian was the twentieth pope. He succeeded Pope St. Anterus who was in office only six weeks before dying of natural causes. An assembly was called to elect the new pope, and both clergy and laity were in attendance. Eusebius, a historian from Caesarea, reported that during the proceedings a dove mysteriously appeared and alighted on Fabian's head. The voters took this to be a sign from the Holy Spirit that Fabian should be chosen, even though he was not well known to them, a layman, a farmer who had come into Rome, and happened to be in the audience. Fabian was elected on January 10, 236.



Pope Fabian had a fourteen-year pontificate (236-250), and he is considered one of the most effective popes of the early Church. He was a gifted administrator. He directed a reorganization of the local clergy. He also subdivided the Roman church into seven ecclesiastical districts, placed a deacon in charge of each district, provided a subdeacon to support each deacon, and appointed six additional junior assistants for each district.

Pope Fabian led a number of building and restoration projects for the Christian cemeteries or catacombs in and around Rome. Not only were they burial places for Christians, but they also served as worship sites, and it was customary for Masses to be offered on the tombs of the martyrs. He also arranged for a papal burial crypt in the catacomb of St. Callistus on the Appian Way, and his predecessor, Pope St. Anterus, was the first to be buried there. He also arranged for the body of Pope St. Pontian, the pope from 230 to 235, to be returned from Sardinia, where he had been in exile and martyred, and he, too, was entombed in the papal crypt.

Pope Fabian wisely appointed a number of holy and gifted bishops to preach the gospel in Gaul. He also was forced to condemn Bishop Privatus of Lambaesa, Africa, who was teaching heresy. The Church was free of persecution during the first thirteen years of his pontificate. The Roman emperors during that time, Gordian III and Philip the Arab, both tolerated Christians. This changed abruptly and dramatically when the emperor Decius rose to power in 249. He immediately unleashed a ferocious persecution against Christians, and Pope Fabian was one of the first to be arrested and imprisoned. He was treated with extreme cruelty during his confinement, and finally tortured and executed on January 20, 250. He was buried in the papal crypt in the catacombs of St. Callistus, and sometime later his remains were transferred to the basilica of St. Sebastian (San Sebastiano) in Rome.

Shortly after his death St. Cyprian of Carthage, one of the highest-ranking bishops of the Church, wrote that Pope Fabian was "an incomparable man, the glory of whose death corresponds to his holiness of life," and that "it is encouraging when a bishop offers himself as a model for his brothers by the constancy of his faith."

Saint Sebastian, Martyr - 20th January

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.

Saint Agnes, Virgin, Martyr – 21st January



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.

Saint Vincent, Deacon, Martyr – 22nd January



Born at Huesca, Spain, he became a deacon and served St. Valerius at Saragossa until their martyrdom at Valencia during the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian (r. 284-305). St. Valerius was exiled, but Vincent was cruelly tortured because he would not surrender the holy books. He converted the warden of the prison and then died. He was honoured by Sts. Augustine, Pope Leo I, and Prudentius, and is considered the patron saint of vinedressers in some regions of Spain. As well as the patron saint of Lisbon and Valencia.

*Make me a channel of your peace,
Where there is hatred let me bring your love,
Where there is injury your pardon Lord,
And where there's doubt true faith in you.*

*Make me a channel of your peace,
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope,
Where there is darkness, only light,
And where there's sadness, ever joy.*

*O Master grant that I may never seek,
So much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love with all my soul.*

*Make me a channel of your peace,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving to all men that we receive
And in dying that we are born to eternal life.*