

May 17

2020

SIXTH SUNDAY OF

Easter

JESUS SAID,
"I WILL ASK THE FATHER, AND HE WILL
GIVE YOU ANOTHER ADVOCATE
TO BE WITH YOU ALWAYS,
THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH."

John 14:16-17

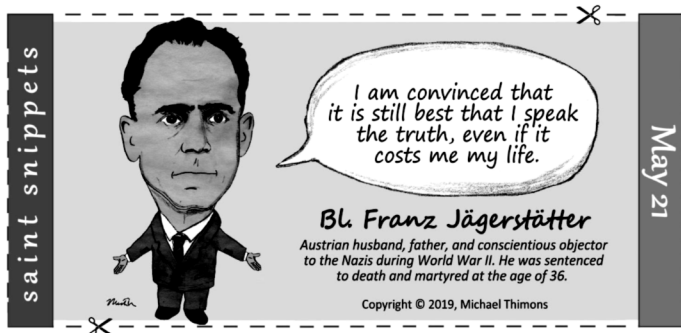


Saint Rita Of Cascia (1381-1457)

May 22

If you're ever in Philadelphia on May 22, forget parking anywhere near Saint Rita's shrine. Cars line streets and fill medians as throngs pack a candlelight vigil and six Masses, honoring this patroness of lost causes, hopeless situations, and—as her statue in countless churches built by twentieth-century immigrants testifies—difficult marriages, troubled homes, and alienated children. Wise people warn, be careful what you pray for. “Divine Savior,” Rita prayed, “let me suffer like you!” Obedient to parents who refused her wish to become a nun, Rita married a man who returned her devotion with twenty years of abuse. When enemies murdered him, Rita's two sons swore revenge. Paintings depict her pointing the angry boys toward Christ crucified, whom she begged to restrain them. Within the year, both sons died. Alone now, Rita went to the convent but was refused. The nuns feared violence, since one of them was related to the murderer. Rita arranged peace between the families, made vows, and became much sought after as a counselor and intercessor for forty years on earth—and ever since in heaven.

—Peter Scagnelli, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



“What is the reason for your hope?” Imagine somebody coming up to you and asking you that question. Not “What are you hoping for?” or “What are you hoping to do?” No, this isn't about our desires for possessions or aspirations for life, it's “Why do you hope?” Peter today tells us that we ought to be ready to give an answer to this question. Truth be told, few of us spend much time thinking about why we hope. Luckily, the scriptures today give us our answers. We hope because Christ suffered for us, in order that we might come to God. We hope because we know that, in the Spirit, God grants us another Advocate through Christ to remain with us always. No matter what we might hope for, whatever we might hope to do, we must always first know and proclaim the reason for our hope: the presence of God in Christ, with us through the power of the Spirit. Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co

Readings for the Week

Monday:	Acts 16:11-15; Ps 149:1b-6a, 9b; Jn 15:26 — 16:4a
Tuesday:	Acts 16:22-34; Ps 138:1-3, 7c-8; Jn 16:5-11
Wednesday:	Acts 17:15, 22 — 18:1; Ps 148:1-2, 11-14; Jn 16:12-15
Thursday:	Acts 1:1-11; Ps 47:2-3, 6-9; Eph 1:17-23; Mt 28:16-20 (for Ascension); otherwise Acts 18:1-8; Ps 98:1-4; Jn 16:16-20
Friday:	Acts 18:9-18; Ps 47:2-7; Jn 16:20-23
Saturday:	Acts 18:23-28; Ps 47:2-3, 8-10; Jn 16:23b-28
Sunday:	Acts 1:12-14; Ps 27:1, 4, 7-8; 1 Pt 4:13-16; Jn 17:1-11a; or (for Ascension) Acts 1:1-11; Ps 47:2-3, 6-9; Eph 1:17-23; Mt 28:16-20

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Sixth Sunday of Easter
Monday:	St. John I
Wednesday:	St. Bernardine of Siena
Thursday:	The Ascension of the Lord (unless transferred to Sunday); St. Christopher Magallanes and Companions
Friday:	St. Rita of Cascia

Light Of Belief

Every believer in this world must become a spark of light.
—Pope Saint John XXIII

Today's Readings

First Reading — The people of Samaria accepted the word of God preached by Philip; they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:5-8, 14-17).

Psalm — Let all the earth cry out to God with joy (Psalm 66)

Second Reading — Act with gentleness and reverence toward all, so that when you are maligned those who defame you will be the ones put to shame (1 Peter 3:15-18) or 1 Peter 4:13-16.

Gospel — I will not leave you orphans, but will come to you (John 14:15-21) or Jn 17:1-11a.

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Treasures From Our Tradition

There is a geography to the liturgy of baptism that distills the journey of faith. Each part of the liturgy is assigned to a distinct part of the church building. Baptism, whether of infants carried to church by their parents or of adults following the paschal candle into a darkened church at Easter, starts at the door. First, a threshold must be crossed and a new community of meaning and memory encountered for the first time. Then, the celebration moves to the place for God's Word. Next, as the litany of the saints is sung, there is a procession to the font. Finally, the movement is to the table, the altar of the Eucharist. There, newly baptized adults are brought to the sacred meal, or the parents of infants are blessed and reminded that their child will one day share fully in the table's banquet.

Many Catholic churches honor this geography by placing the font near the door, or at least small vessels with water. The doorway of our church is a place of memory, and a passageway to a new way of living.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

As Jesus prepared the apostles for the time when he would no longer be with them physically, and knowing that they would face hardship, trials, and persecution in the future, he promised them an Advocate, the Holy Spirit. Through baptism that same Spirit dwells within us, always with us to guide us in the truth of God's love and strengthen us so that we may know Christ and live as Christ's people. Now, as in every time, God knows it is not always easy to live as a Christian. With the assurance of the Holy Spirit's presence, we find the grace to love Jesus and to keep the Lord's commandments.

Strengthened To Live As Christ's Own

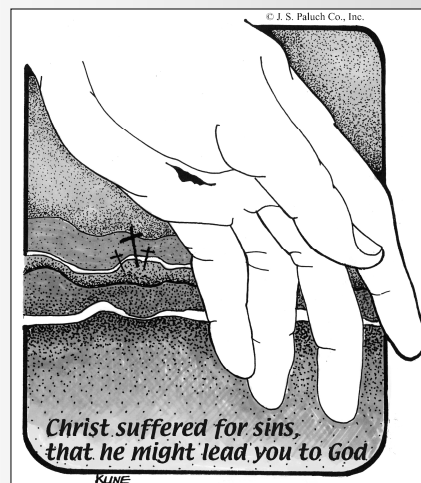
We might look at the world around us and conclude that this is the most challenging time in history during which to live as a person of faith. Yet we know this is not so. Throughout the ages, people of faith have faced mockery, persecution, and even death as a result of their commitment to Christ. Still, it is important for us to acknowledge the challenge of living as a Christian today, when faith is viewed with ambivalence at best, and often with antagonism. Some do not understand how faith and reason can sit side by side, even though many of the world's greatest scientific discoveries have been made by people of faith. Others see the failures of the Church or its leaders and discount faith as a result. We rely on the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit to be with us when we are mocked or simply misunderstood on account of our faith in Jesus Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, we will find the grace to live with conviction as Christian people.

The Reason For Our Hope

Saint Peter admonishes us, "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope." One of the greatest gifts of faith in our lives is our hope in Christ Jesus. Through Christ, we keep our eyes on the wider view of life here on earth and everlasting life with God. We know that the trials and challenges of today do not have the final word, and do not have power over us. With the presence of the Advocate, we have the help we need to live as God directs and desires, so that the world might come to know Christ through the witness of our lives. This is a hope-filled, meaningful way of life. When so much of our surrounding culture speaks of impermanence and momentary distractions, we have the hope of meaning and purpose today and the promise of eternal life to come.

Today's Readings: Acts 8:5–8, 14–17; Ps 66:1–3, 4–5, 6–7, 16, 20; 1 Peter 3:15–18; John 14:15–21

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If you have experienced abuse by someone representing the Catholic Church, you may contact the Office for Healing and Pastoral Care of the Diocese of Manchester:
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