

St. Joseph's Family Activities

June Saints and Celebrations



<https://www.theannunciation.org.uk/resources/>

June, the month of the Sacred Heart

In June, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Out of His Sacred Heart, blood and water poured forth, indicating Christ as the source of the sacraments, especially Eucharist and Baptism. The solemnity of the Sacred Heart cannot be separated from “*Corpus Christi*” celebrated on the preceding Sunday. Both solemnities enable us to reflect on Jesus’ loving gift of Himself in the Eucharist. As *Corpus Christi* is now celebrated on Sundays (in England and Wales) it will be covered in the Sunday liturgy edition but do keep in mind that these two celebrations are different sides of the same coin.

We have St. Peter and St Paul at the end of this so there is a Children's Liturgy of the Word for this solemnity for when it falls on a Sunday, and a picture to colour in as well as some quotes to learn.

In the UK we celebrate Father's Day on the third Sunday of June, and so there is a feature at the end on Father's Day. Finally, I wish you a most blessed June and prayers for all those celebrating their First Holy Communion this month.

These activities still reflect the four dimensions of our faith, as in everything we do, we are either learning or proclaiming the faith, celebrating it in the liturgy and the sacraments, living it in the context of the family and community and praying it.



The Sacred Heart window at Maryvale House Kingstanding, Birmingham.

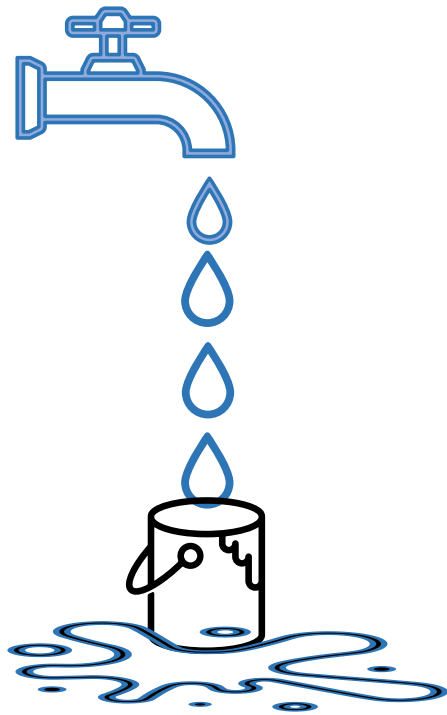
There are three states of the Church: those of us here on earth, journeying to the Father in Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit; those in purgatory whose lives on earth have finished and who are being purified, and those in heaven, sharing in the divine life, for which we have all been created. For them, their joy is complete but because of that, they are eager for us to join them. Close to Our Lord, they intercede (pray) for us. The saints in heaven are more than the canonised saints the Church knows of, as the author of the Book of Revelation says, “I looked and saw a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, tribe and peoples and tongues...” (Rev.7:9).

The saints are our heroes. They come from all walks of life, from all around the world and all ages. We can always find a saint who inspires us and ask him or her to pray for us. So, celebrate your own saints' days, go to Mass if you can as there, the whole Church is united! We can't see the saints, but we join in with their praise in the Holy Holy Holy. Have something special to eat, light your baptism candle or another one if you don't have it, and regard the saints as special members of the family.

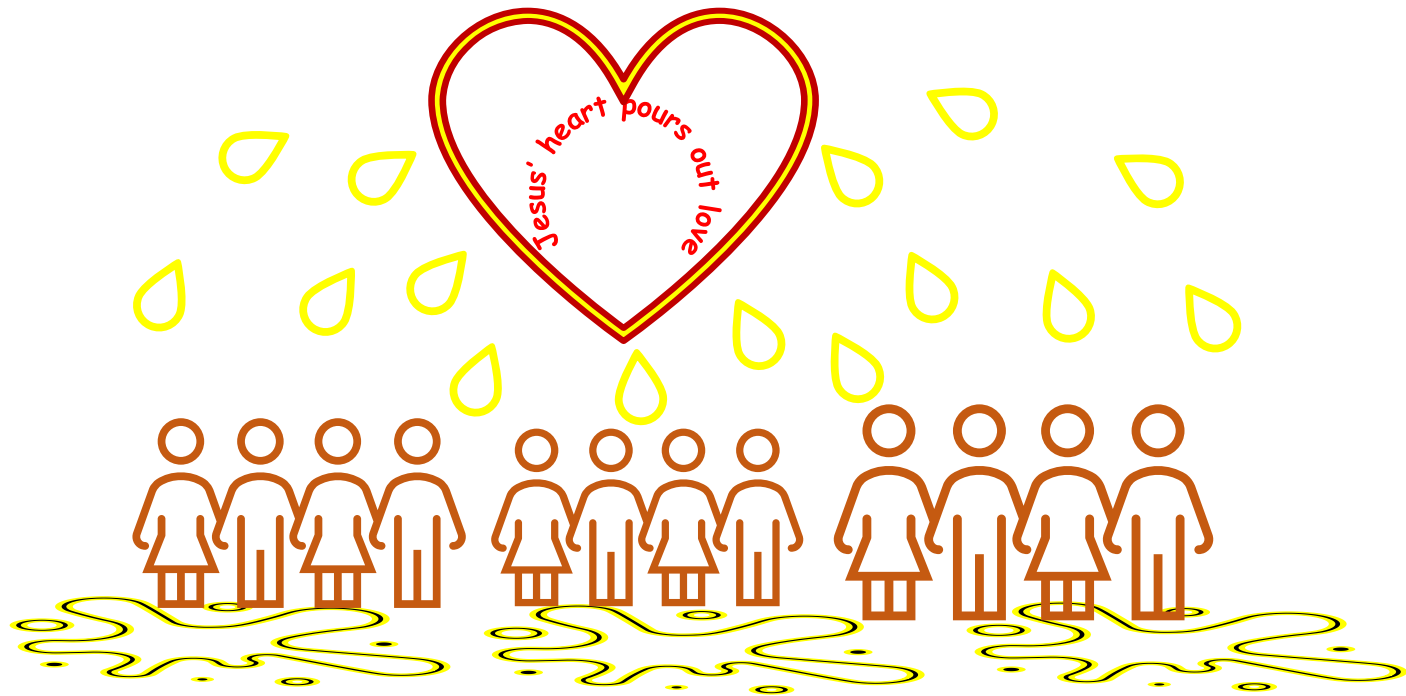
Friday after Corpus Christi: the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Jesus is holy because He is God, and the love comes from Him (His heart, the seat of love) is the holiest love here is. Jesus' love never stops being poured out, like a tap that cannot be turned off. If we put a container under the tap, it will fill with water and then overflow. If we allow Jesus' love to fill our hearts, we are like containers filled with His love and overflowing with Jesus' love.

Colour in the picture below and either learn the prayer below by heart or write out your own prayer to Jesus' Sacred Heart.



Jesus' Sacred Heart



O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you, (say 3 times)

Amen.

1st June: St Justin Martyr (-165)

St. Justin was born at the beginning of the second century into a pagan Greek family. As he grew up he kept asking questions and was not happy with the answers he was given by the wise people of his day. Eventually he discovered Christianity and realised that in Jesus he had found the truth and answers to his questions. He did not become a priest, but travelled around Greece, telling people that Jesus is the truth and that He is the answer to all their questions. In AD 151 he went to Rome, where he opened a school of philosophy and wrote texts defending Christianity, some of which have survived to this day. They are the earliest known writings of their kind arguing for the logic of a belief in Jesus. In other words, He says that belief in Jesus makes sense. In the persecution of 165, in the reign of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, he was arrested and beheaded.

St. Justin was not a Jew and at first did not know about God's promise to send Jesus Christ, but once he came across the Good News of Salvation which starts in what we call the Old Testament, and is fulfilled (in Christ) in the New Testament, it all made sense to him. He recognised that he and those who were not Jews were like the soil receiving the seed that the Sower sowed at random (Mt. chapter 13) and that he has been able to come to know Jesus because God is so generous. St. Justin wrote a beautiful answer to the emperor's question "What do Christians' do?" - note, this is not explaining what Christians believe! St. Justin recognised that the most important thing that Christians do is to go to Mass! See what he said in the box opposite.

In the banner below, write out what is so special about Mass.

St. Justin Martyr explaining what Christians do

On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits. When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things. Then we all rise together and offer prayers* for ourselves . . . and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation. When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss. Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren. He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: *eucharistian*) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts. When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: 'Amen.' When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the "eucharisted" bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.

Text taken from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1345.

2nd June St. Erasmus/St. Elmo (-303)

St. Elmo, or St. Erasmus, was bishop of Formiae, in Italy. When the emperor Diocletian started to persecute the Christians (because they would not worship him as a god) he escaped to Mount Lebanon and lived all on his own, reputedly being fed by a raven. He seems to have had a vision of an angel telling him to go back to his diocese, which he started to do. On the way, he met some soldiers who, as soon as they discovered he was a Christian, tortured him and threw him into prison. He escaped and continued on his way home, often falling into the hands of the Romans and being tortured. Eventually he was martyred by being stabbed with hot irons in his stomach.

There is a legend that when sailors saw a blue light at the top of the mast during thunderstorms, they said that it was St. Elmo's fire and that he was protecting them. St. Elmo is also patron of children with colic, women in labour and people with other stomach complaints.

3rd June Saint Charles Lwanga and his companions (- 1885/7)

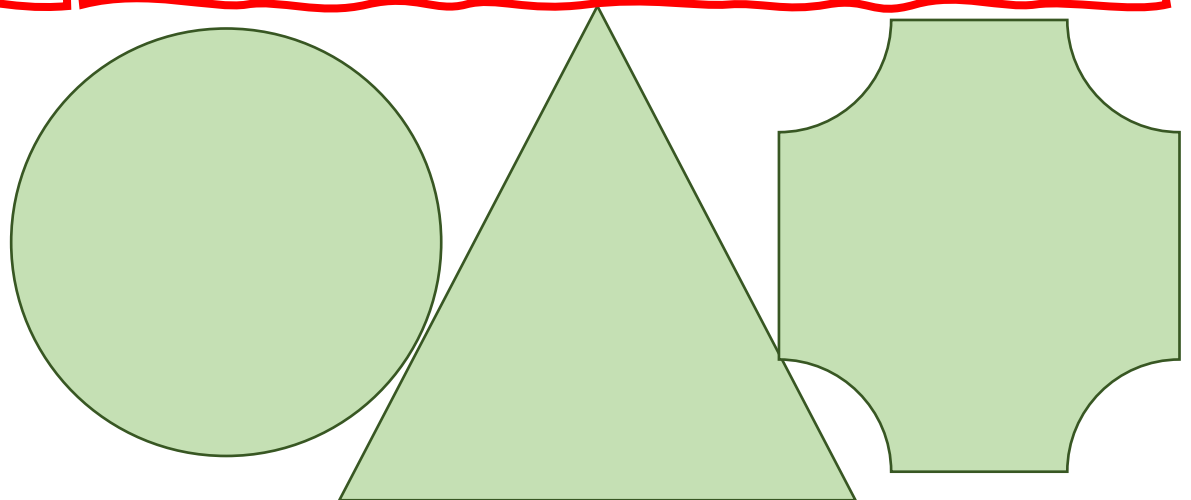
In the nineteenth century, the King of Uganda, Mwanga, hated all Christians because they realised (and bravely told the king) that he was not living according to God's plans. The king was so angry and refused to change his ways and decided to execute Christians as an example to others thinking that they would change. St. Charles Lwanga had been a catechist and he and 13 others were executed on the same day - the youngest was aged only 13. The king continued to treat his Christian servants very badly and even ordered that an Anglican missionary was to be killed because he prayed using a book! Between 1885 and 1887, the king tortured and killed many young men, but every day instead of people being afraid to become Christian, the numbers grew and grew! Very quickly it was realised that Charles Lwanga was praying for them all in heaven and so he was made the patron of Catholic action and of black African youth.

In honour of St. Charles Lwanga, what good actions can you do this week that help other people? Think about some things that you don't normally do, so something extra. Write them in the shapes below.

In many parts of the world, Christians are still tortured and martyred for their faith. Despite the threat of this, they bravely continue to worship Jesus Christ and tell other people about Him. Why don't you say a prayer for people who are brave enough to continue to be Christians in these countries. You can find out more about them by clicking on this link:



<https://acnuk.org/acn-news/>



5th June St. Boniface (675? - 754)

Born in Devon and baptised as Wynfrith, he was educated by the monks of Exeter, before finally becoming a Benedictine monk himself at Nursling, near Southampton. Wynfrith was a talented teacher and preacher, but he felt that God was calling him to go to a foreign land to take the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ there. He wrote to Pope Gregory II to ask where he would be most needed, and in 718 he was commissioned by the pope to go to Germany. The pope also gave him the new name of "Boniface."

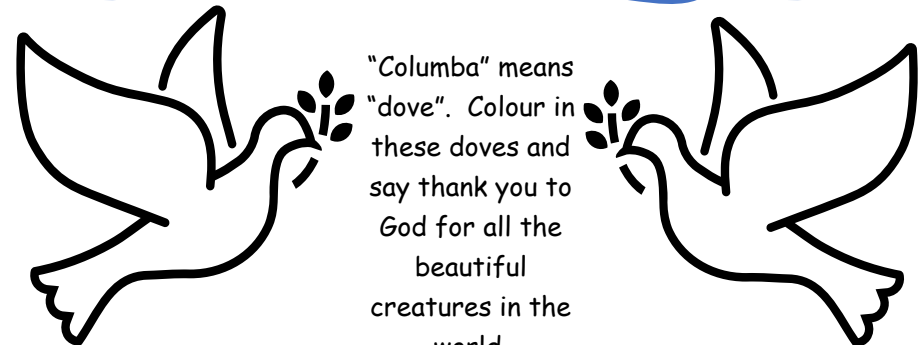
At this time the Church in Germany was not well run and lots of people had abandoned the faith. Boniface was well received as he supported other priests there, joyfully helping them serve the people. Boniface was created Bishop of Mainz, as a bishop he was able to give support to other bishops and priests the German provinces. When he was over seventy years old, set out on foot to evangelize Friesland (part of modern Holland). Here he was not so welcome, and the locals ambushed him and murdered him, on 5 June 754. He never returned to England and his body was buried at Fulda, near Frankfurt, in a monastery which he had founded. He is honoured as the apostle of Germany.

"Boniface" means "fortunate",
"auspicious", "promising". Why don't you
find out what your name means?

9th June St Columba (521? - 597)

St. Columba (in Gaelic he's known as Colmcille) was born into a royal family in County Donegal, Ireland. After finishing his studies, he founded some monasteries, probably at Derry, Durrow, and may be even at Kells. In Ireland some of the local tribes became annoyed at the preaching of St. Columba and so he decided to go to other lands to take the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. So he headed across the sea for Scotland where he founded more monasteries. The most famous one he founded was at Iona, which continues to be an ecumenical Christian centre. From here, he and his fellow monks spread the news of Jesus Christ to much of western Scotland, and even to the north of England. However, his spiritual home had become the monastery at Iona and this is where he returned to in his old age and where he died in 597.

St. Columba was a well-known poet and his poetry describes how the beautiful countryside leads him to worship God, the King and creator of all. After St. Patrick and St. Brigid, he is Ireland's most loved saint.



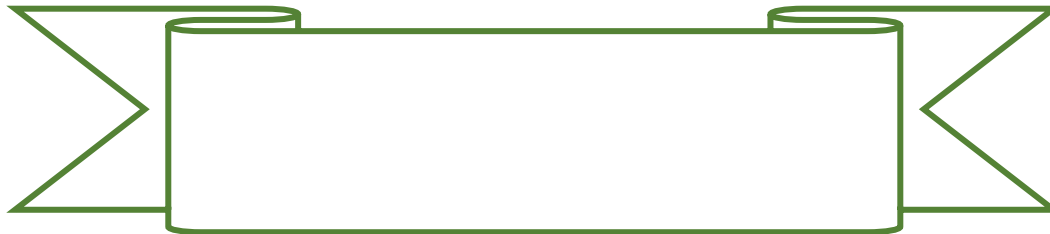
"Columba" means
"dove". Colour in
these doves and
say thank you to
God for all the
beautiful
creatures in the
world.

11th June Saint Barnabas the Apostle

Saint Barnabas was born in Cyprus of Jewish parents. He was originally called "Joseph" but because he encouraged the Apostles in their early work of spreading the Good News of Jesus, the other Apostles called him "Barnabas" which means "son of encouragement." He was one of the early converts in Jerusalem and supported St Paul when he appeared before the church there. He was commissioned by the Church in Antioch to go with St. Paul on his first missionary journey. On one of his missionary journeys with St Paul, the Greeks thought that Barnabas was the Greek god Zeus, so presumably Barnabas was a large strong man. Later, Barnabas went to Cyprus with his cousin John Mark (known to us as Mark the evangelist) to preach the gospel there. He was probably martyred at Salamis in Cyprus, some time before the year 61.

What can we learn from St. Barnabas?

He was not one of the original Twelve Apostles, but he played a very important role in the early Church. His name means "son of encouragement," so maybe we can think about how we can encourage other people. It is much better to look for the good things in other people rather than the things they do wrong. Write in the ribbon below some things you can say that are encouraging.



13th June Saint Anthony of Padua (1195-1231)

Saint Anthony was baptised Ferdinand in the cathedral in Lisbon where he was born. Although now known as "of Padua" the city where he finally settled, he is still much loved in Lisbon and every year on his feast day they have a great festival and street party.

When he became a Franciscan monk, Ferdinand changed his name to "Anthony" and that is how we all know him now. Anthony was a brilliant preacher and travelled constantly, telling people about Jesus. He was able to explain Church teaching in a clear and simple way. On one occasion at a joint meeting of Dominicans and Franciscans, the main speaker had not arrived, and so St. Anthony was asked to speak instead. He hadn't had time to prepare anything, but the Holy Spirit gave him the words to say, and everyone was amazed!

Eventually, worn out with his travels and teaching, he asked if he could be taken back to Padua, to die, but he did not make it. He finally went to the Lord on the outskirts of Padua aged only 36.

Why is St. Anthony the patron saint of lost things?

The story goes, that he had a very precious prayer book that went missing and after searching everywhere without finding it, he prayed and suddenly a fellow monk knocked on his door and brought it to him saying that he just found it.

Another answer is that St. Anthony is the patron saint of lost souls, and that it's more important for us to pray for lost souls than lost things... May be when we are asking him to help us to find some THING (like the car keys) we have lost, we should also pray for someone who doesn't know Jesus.

16th June, St. Richard of Wyche/Chichester

St. Richard was born in Droitwich (then known as Wyche) in about 1197. Despite his parents dying when he was young and nearly becoming destitute, he was able to go to Oxford and afterwards to study in Paris and Bologna. He returned to England and worked as a lay administrator in the Archdiocese of Canterbury. Eventually, in his forties, he realised that God was calling him to be a priest and was at first a parish priest in Kent before being made Bishop of Chichester. He had a lot of work to do as the diocese had not been run properly and so St. Richard organised the proper celebration of Mass and the sacraments. He also did a lot of fundraising for the Cathedral which had only just been rebuilt after a fire and needed funds. St. Richard died on 3rd April 1253 aged only 56. (3rd April is his feast day in the Anglican calendar.) He was buried in his cathedral which became a place of pilgrimage until his tomb and shrine were destroyed at the Reformation. A candle now marks the spot where his shrine was, and it is once more a place of prayer. One of St. Richard's legacies is this beautiful prayer which is worth learning by heart:

St Richard's Prayer

Thanks be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ
for all the benefits which you have given me,
for all the pains and insults
which you have borne for me:
O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may we know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly. Amen.

Chichester Cathedral as it is today. Inside, the main part (nave) is Norman, and would be recognised by St. Richard, but there have been many alterations since. If you are near Chichester this summer, it's worth visiting (and entry is free).



20th June: St. Alban

St Alban was the first British martyr. Almost nothing about him is known for certain - even the date of his martyrdom is unknown, and historians suggests that it was in the mid-3rd century. Alban was a Roman who lived in Verulamium and one day he sheltered a Christian who was escaping from persecution. (What does "persecution" mean? - it means being imprisoned, fined or killed for one's faith). Alban was converted and became a Christian and was himself martyred (killed) for being a Christian. Some stories say that he pretended to be the Christian who was escaping, and so was put to death in his place.

His example so caught the imagination of the local people that they built an abbey where he lived, and this abbey was so great that the town was named after it - St. Albans.

Although we don't know a lot of detail about St. Alban, we do know that he suddenly had to make a simple, straightforward decision, and he made the right choice. Easy, we think - obvious what to do. However, we need to practice making good quick decisions. So, when we have a choice, think "what would Jesus do? The more we practice choosing as Jesus would, then the more likely we are to make the right decision at the most important moments.

Biography and reflection adapted from, www.universalis.com

Holy Spirit, give me the grace to always choose to act as Jesus would so that when the important decisions come, I will know how to respond.

Amen.

St. Alban, pray for us.

All the holy martyrs of England, pray for us.



22nd June: Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher

Two more saints who had to make big decisions:

St. Thomas More was a lawyer who was a very important person in King Henry VIII's government. When Henry VIII's wife, Catherine of Aragon was too old to have any more children and she had only had a daughter, King Henry wanted to divorce her to marry someone else so that he could have a son to be king after him. However, the Pope said that Catherine and Henry were legally married and could not be divorced. As a result, King Henry VIII said that the Pope could not control decisions in England anymore and he made Himself the head of the Church in England. St. Thomas More said that could not be done as the Pope was appointed by Jesus through the Apostles, and he refused to sign the document agreeing with King Henry. For this he was locked up in the Tower of London and eventually, when the king realised that Thomas was not going to change his mind, he had him executed!

St. John Fisher was also in the Tower with St. Thomas More. John Fisher was the Bishop of Rochester and also chancellor of Cambridge university, a very important position. He was the only Bishop in England to disagree with Henry VIII, and like Thomas More, refused to sign the document. Like him, he had his head chopped off! Just before he was executed, the Pope had made John Fisher a Cardinal, to show his support for him.

Both men show us that sometimes we have to be brave and stand up for our faith. Most of us are unlikely to be in the same position as St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher but we are often tempted to hide our faith so that we can appear to be the same as everyone else.

Here are some quotes from Psalms to help us be strong in our faith. Choose one to cut out and put up this week and try to learn by heart.

God of hosts...

May your hand be on the one you have chosen,
The one you have given your strength;
And we shall never forsake (leave) you again
Give us life that we may call on your name. (from Ps. 80)

God is king of all the earth,
Sing praise with all your skill.
God is king over the nations;
God reigns enthroned in holiness....
The rulers of the earth belong to God,
to God who reigns over all. (from Ps. 47)

They are happy who are helped by ... God,
Whose hope is in the Lord their God,
Who alone made heaven and earth,
The seas and all they contain....
It is the Lord who loves the just
But thwarts the path of the wicked.
The Lord will reign for ever,
Sion's God from age to age. (from Ps. 146)

24th June: Birthday of St. John the Baptist

Today we celebrate the birthday of the one Jesus called "the greatest of men" (Lk. 7:28). Most saints have only one feast day and that is normally the day they died. But John the Baptist is different. Do you remember reading about the Visitation (celebrated on 31st May, Lk. 1:41)? What did Elizabeth say about the baby in her womb? (A. That he leaped at the sound of Mary's voice). St. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit at that moment; he was effectively baptised and cleaned of all original sin then. So, he was born "clean" from all stain of sin (unlike everyone else, apart from Mary and Jesus) and so that is why we celebrate John the Baptist' birthday as well as his death.

When John the Baptist's father, Zechariah, had been told by the Angel Gabriel that his elderly wife, Elizabeth, would finally get pregnant, he was so astonished that he didn't believe him. Because of his lack of faith, Zechariah was struck dumb and could not speak. However, when his son, (John the Baptist), was born, suddenly he opened his mouth and praised God with a wonderful prayer.

This prayer is called "The Benedictus." It is prayed every day by people who pray the Church's official prayers (called the Liturgy of the Hours, or the Divine Office).

The Benedictus is a wonderful prayer of praise which starts off by praising God for the work of salvation which Jesus was going to do (remember, at that moment, Jesus was still in Mary's womb), and then goes on to address the infant John the Baptist. However, this part of the prayer we can hear as being addressed to each one of us. How can we go ahead of the Lord (go ahead of Jesus) and prepare them to hear about Jesus?

The Benedictus

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel!
He has visited his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up for us a mighty saviour
in the house of David his servant,
as he promised by the lips of holy men,
those who were his prophets from of old.

A saviour who would free us from our foes,
from the hands of all who hate us.
So his love for our fathers is fulfilled
and his holy covenant remembered.

He swore to Abraham our father to grant us,
that free from fear, and saved from the hands of our foes,
we might serve him in holiness and justice
all the days of our life in his presence.

As for you, little child,
you shall be called a prophet of God, the Most
High.

You shall go ahead of the Lord
to prepare his ways before him,

To make known to his people their salvation
through forgiveness of all their sins,
the loving-kindness of the heart of our God
who visits us like the dawn from on high.

He will give light to those in darkness,
those who dwell in the shadow of death,
and guide us into the way of peace.

How can I be prepared to meet Jesus every day?

27th June: Two saints who stood up for what they believed in.

St. Cyril of Alexandria (370-444)

St. Cyril was Bishop of Alexandria, which was an important city in Egypt, where people of different cultures and backgrounds lived, like many of the cities in our modern world. At that time, a lot of Christians did not really "get" that Jesus is both human and divine. Some people, like a famous bishop called Nestorius, said that Jesus was a created being and that He was not God, and other people said that Jesus is actually only God and looked like a man. However, Cyril knew that Jesus is both God and man. He explained that Jesus is God because the Angel Gabriel told Mary that she would have a baby who would be the "Son of the Most High" [Lk. 1:32]. (The Most High, was a way of saying "God") And he explained that Jesus is a human being because He was born as all people are. Because Jesus is both human and God it means that we are joined to Him in our Baptism and only He can lead us to His Father in heaven.

Cyril was adamant that we can call Mary "Mother of God" as Jesus is truly God. The Church held a big Council at Ephesus in 431 when all the bishops of the world were invited (like the Vatican II council in the 1960s). The council agreed that Mary was to be called the "Mother of God." This title speaks more about Jesus than Mary as it reminds us that Jesus is both God and man.

Every time we say the "Hail Mary", we address Mary by this title when we say, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death." **St. Cyril, pray for us.**

St John Southworth (1592 - 1654)

St. John Southworth's feast day is normally only celebrated in the diocese of Westminster and His body is to be found in Westminster Cathedral. He was one of the last martyrs in England, and was living during the time when England was ruled by the Puritans. These very pious people were very strict in their religion and thought that art, beauty, singing, colour, joy, dancing, parties etc were a distraction from Christ. It was at this time that the celebration of Christmas was cancelled!

John Southworth, like Catholic priests for a hundred years before him ministered in secret, serving people, celebrating Mass, secretly in people's homes and anointing the sick and the dying. He was spotted one day going into a home during an outbreak of the plague and that could only mean one thing, he was a priest about to celebrate the Last Rites. He was arrested and eventually brought to trial. The Judge could see that John Southworth was a good and holy man and was really upset when he was forced to sentence him to death. However, it took 24 years for the sentence to be carried out!

If you are in London, go to Westminster cathedral (entry is free, unlike Westminster Abbey) and visit the tomb of St. John Southworth. Ask for his prayers for all persecuted Christians today. May we be as strong and loving in our faith as he was.

St. John Southworth, pray for us.

28th June: St. Irenaeus (130-202)

Irenaeus was born in Smyrna, which is now in Turkey. He eventually became Bishop of Lyons in France. He was famous for two things:

1. He was the first person to collect together and systematically read all the letters and writings which became the New Testament. He went through each one and explained why some writings could not have been inspired by the Holy Spirit, and so these were not included in the "canon" of the New Testament.
2. He wrote an important document called "Against the Heresies" and here he explained why the teaching of the Church made sense and that the world was essentially good - he explained that people's wrong choices made life difficult! He emphasised that Jesus has restored us to His Father through His Passion, death, Resurrection and Ascension. He wrote:

"God became a human person in Jesus so that human people could become like God!"

Notice that this was before St. Cyril of Alexandria (yesterday's feast) was teaching that Jesus is both God and man. It took a long time for the Church to really understand who Jesus is. We also sometime have to stop and think, and answer for ourselves the question Jesus put to the disciples, "who do you say I am?" (Mk. 8:29).

Opposite there is a double-sided bookmark to cut out and colour in, and complete the sentence as to whom Jesus is. Then fold along the dotted line and stick together to make it firmer.

Jesus, I believe
that you are...

.....



Jesus, I believe
that you are...

.....



29th June; St. Peter and St Paul, giants of the early Church

We are all too familiar with **St. Peter** (originally called Simon) "putting his mouth in it," but this shows us that Jesus sees right into our hearts. He knew that St. Peter was in fact a dedicated and loyal person and even if he did tell Jesus that He must not be crucified (Mt. 16:22) and worse still, deny Jesus at the hour of His crucifixion (Jn. 18:17,25,27). St. Peter was the one who first took the Gospel to the Roman Centurion, Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:34-48) and from this learned that Jesus had not come just for the Jews, but for the whole world.

In the list of the Apostles, it is always St. Peter, who comes first - He is the first among equals, just as the Pope is today.

Tradition teaches us that St. Peter was crucified in Rome. So as not to be the same as His Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, He was crucified upside down, where St. Peter's square is now outside the Basilica that is dedicated to Him.

What can we learn from these two amazing men?

Fill in the sentences on the right with the words from the list below:

Jesus; Simon; faithful; crucified; Saul; determined

St Paul, originally called Saul, was a strict pharisee, a type of Jew that thought that he could earn heaven by being good and working hard at his faith. He hated the followers of Jesus. He thought that they were making a very big mistake and were going to cause trouble. He even supported the stoning of St. Stephen (Acts 7:58-8:1). In his eagerness to destroy the new faith, he asked to go to Damascus, a town in Syria, to round up all the followers of Jesus there, and famously on the way there, Jesus appeared to him asking him why he was persecuting Him (Acts 9:4-7). As we know, Saul (Paul) had an instant conversion and then spent the rest of his life constantly preaching the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ, mainly to the "pagans" (those who were not Jews).

Tradition says that St Paul was executed by a sword in Rome.

Jesus does not judge by appearances as He saw that in fact St. Peter was f_____ and loved Him a lot. St Paul was always d_____. First he wanted to get rid of the followers of Jesus, and then he was d_____ to teach everyone about J____. St. Peter was C_____ upside down. St Paul was originally called S____ and St. Peter was originally called S_____.

Quotes by St. Peter and St Paul, to decorate and learn

"Love one another
completely,
from your heart
because you have
been born anew
(in Jesus Christ in
Baptism)."

(from the First letter of St. Peter 1:23)

"Blessed be the God and
Father of Our Lord
Jesus Christ who has
blessed us with every
spiritual blessing in the
heavenly places... He
chose us before the
world began to be holy
and blameless before
Him."

Children's liturgy of the word for this solemnity



Gospel for the solemnity of St. Peter and St Paul

Matthew 16:13-19

At that time:

When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?'

And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'

He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?'

Simon Peter replied,

'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

And Jesus answered him,

'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah!

For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And I tell you,

you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church,

and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven,

and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Introduce the Gospel liturgically

Q: What did Jesus ask the Apostles at first? (A: Who people said that He was.)

Q: What was their answer? (A: John the Baptist or Elijah, Jeremiah.)

Q: What did then ask the Apostles? (A: Who they say that He is.)

Q: What was Simon's answer? (A: That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.)

Q: Jesus realises that Simon (Peter) has understood something very deep about Jesus. So He gives Simon a new name. What is the new name? (A: Peter.)

Q: "Peter" means "rock". What is a rock like? (A: Open. May be show a rock for the children to describe.)

Q: So, Jesus says that St. Peter is going to be like a hard and solid rock for Him (Jesus) to build His Church on. Jesus also says that the Church will never fall down. Ever since St. Peter we have had a person to lead the Church on earth. Who is that? (A: The Pope.)

Q: Who is the current Pope? (A: Pope Leo IV – at time of going to press.)

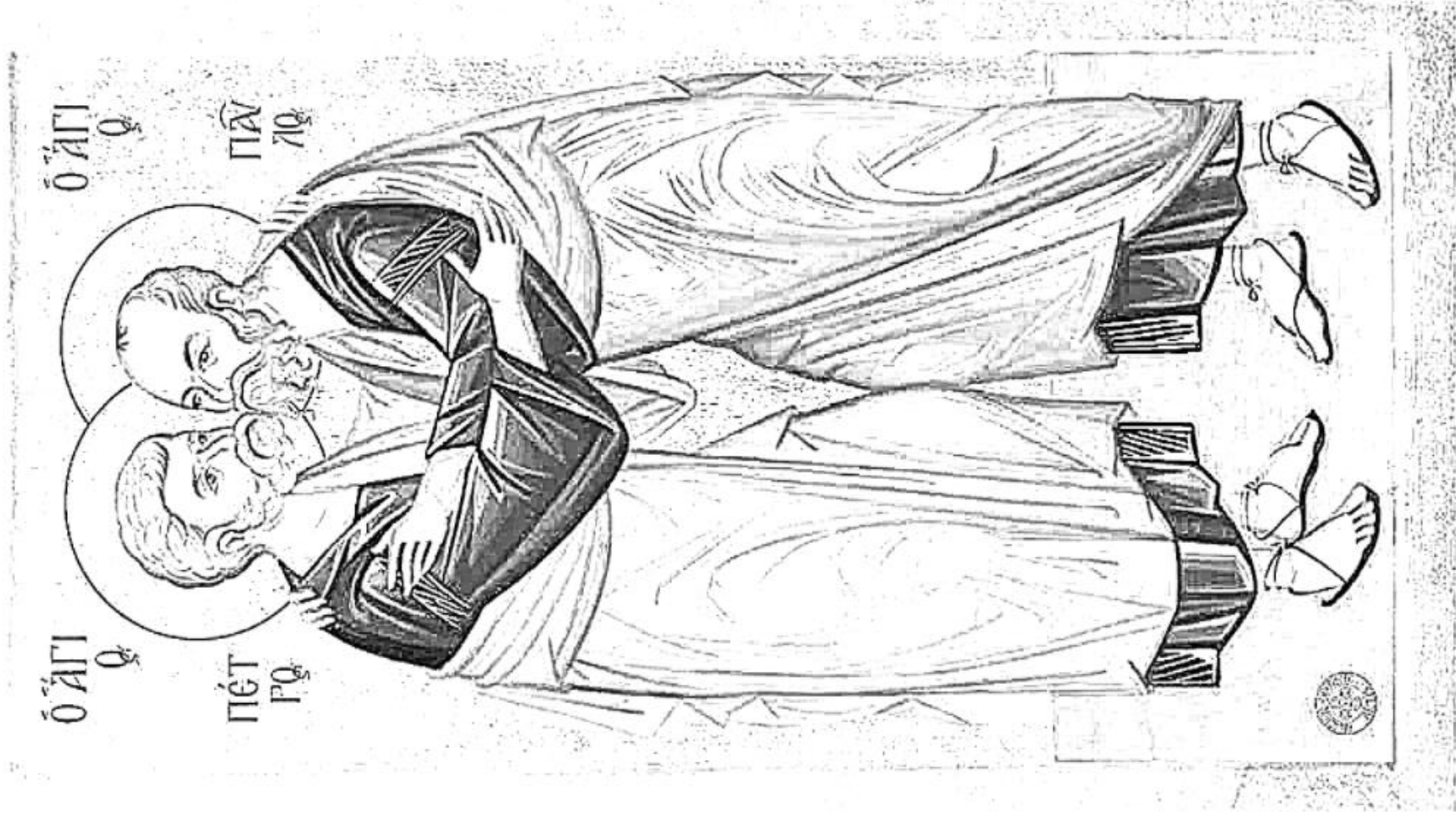
Q: How is the pope chosen? (A: All the cardinals meet and pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide them and help them choose. Then they vote and eventually the cardinal with the most votes is elected as Pope.)

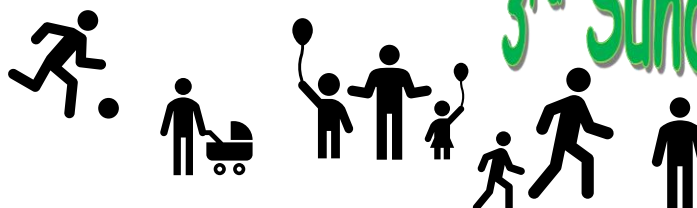
Q: Today is also the feast of St Paul. What do you know about St Paul? (A: Open – answers such as dramatic conversion, missionary journeys, letters, preached to the gentiles [non-Jews].)

Q: Both St. Peter and St Paul were martyrs – what is a martyr? (A: Someone who died for Jesus.)

St. Peter and St Paul loved Jesus so much that they would rather go and be with Him in heaven than give up their faith. Let us just experience Jesus' love right now. Close your eyes, and imagine that you can see Jesus smiling at you. See Him tell you by name that He loves you. Feel that love pouring through your hearts and your whole bodies. Open your hands to receive Jesus' love. Now say something in the silence of your heart back to Jesus. (After a pause, say)

St. Peter and St Paul, pray for us





3rd Sunday in June, Father's Day

Father's Day has long been associated with the feast of St. Joseph (19th March) when it is still celebrated in some Catholic countries, such as Spain. In Europe, in the late 14th Century, the Franciscans began to encourage prayers to St. Joseph for fathers, recognising his support for families in general and for fathers in particular.

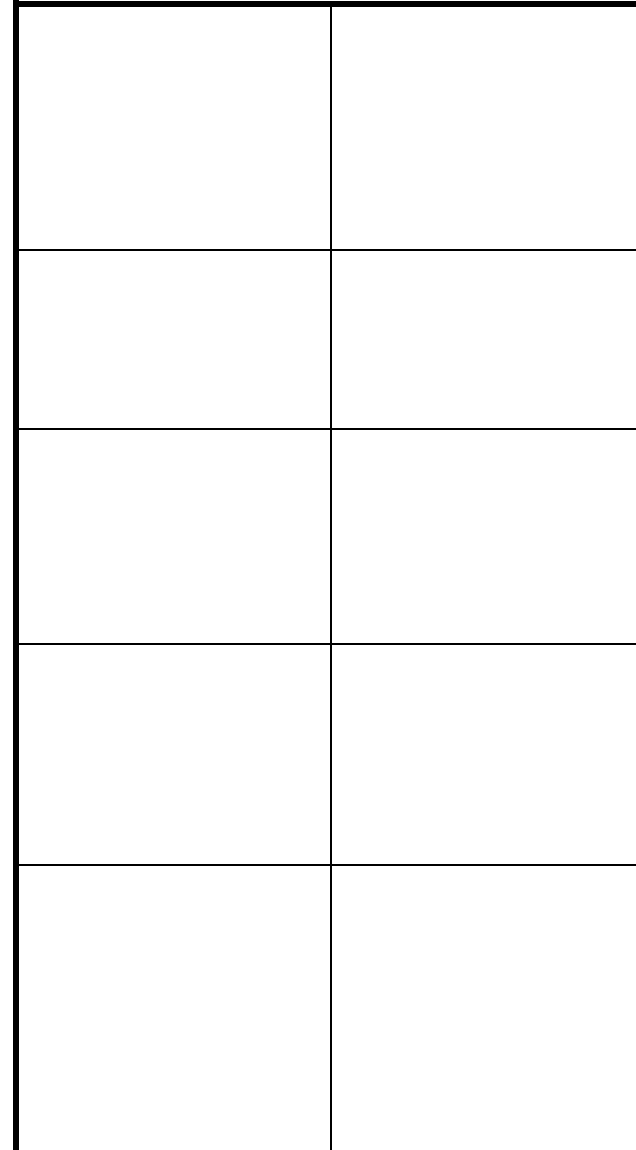
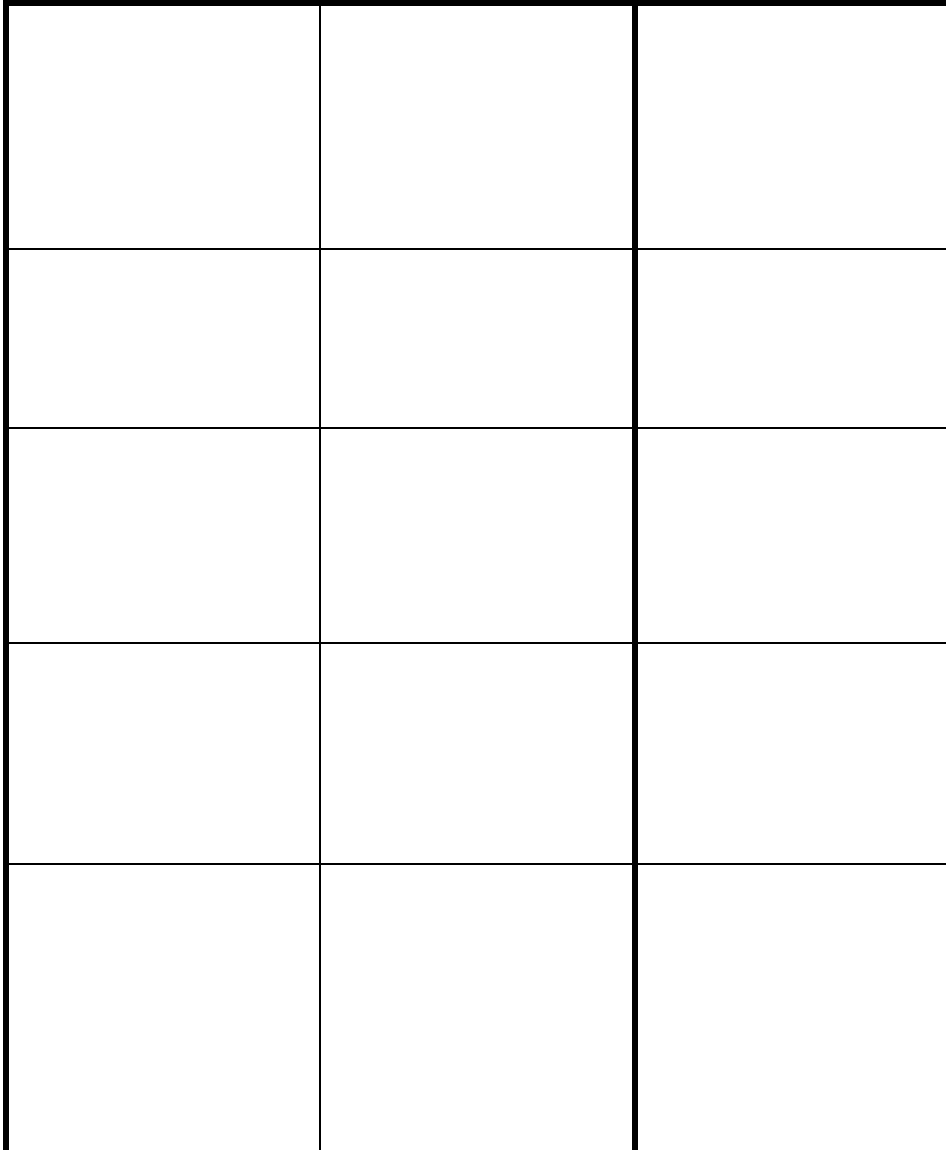
The secular celebration in June is a more recent invention, where in the USA at the beginning of the 20th Century, the third Sunday in June was set aside as a day to recognise and honour the work of fathers. Many countries, including the UK, have adopted this date, although Australia and New Zealand celebrate Father's Day in early September.

In our celebrations this weekend, let us not forget the role of St. Joseph; as head of the Holy Family, he is patron of each, and every Christian family. For families without fathers, St. Joseph is a lovely saint to honour.

Write your own prayer to St. Joseph for your Dad or Grandad

A prayer to St. Joseph for fathers:

St. Joseph, guardian of Jesus and husband of Mary, you passed your life in loving fulfilment of duty. You supported the holy family of Nazareth with the work of your hands. Kindly protect those who come to you, trusting in your prayers. We especially pray for all fathers and ask that you watch over them and protect them. Teach them to find Jesus near them and to recognise that by his grace alone can they fulfil their duties of being a loving parent. Amen.



Enlarge the stained-glass picture of St. Joseph in the grid on the right.

Draw a "stained glass" picture of your Dad in the left-hand grid. If you don't have a Dad, draw a picture of Jesus, who loves you very much.