



I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

CHOOSE TO FOCUS ON CHRIST'S PROMISE!

Today we celebrate a significant day in the history of the Church. Ascension Sunday, a celebration of the day Jesus ascended into heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father.

Christ appeared to his apostles, reassuring them that He will always be with us until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20).

When we are stubborn or impatient, it can be hard to clearly see Jesus strengthening His will on earth as it is in heaven, but we need to take accountability - God wants us to look in the mirror. Jesus directed his disciples to carry on His ministry, proclaiming the good news to the whole world.

We are now those disciples. Let it be crystal clear that we now have that responsibility - in our homes, in our work, and in our community. We need to share the good news and teach others about God by our words and actions.

Pope Francis encourages us to look toward heaven and fix our eyes on the joys of eternal life.

"We are all capable of bearing joy," he said during a Catechesis on prayer, "This life is the gift that God has given us: and it is too short to be consumed in sadness, in bitterness. Let us praise God, content simply to exist. Let us look at the universe, let us look at the beauty and let us also look at our crosses and say: 'But, you exist, you



have made us this way, for you.' It is necessary to feel that restlessness in the heart that leads us to thank and to praise God. We are the children of the great King, of the Creator, capable of reading His signature in all creation; that creation that today we do not protect, but in that creation,

there is the signature of God who made it out of love. May the Lord make us understand this ever more deeply, and lead us to say, 'Thank you;' and that 'thank you' is a beautiful prayer."

Do not let negative thoughts, hateful words, or ugly bantering disturb your focus.

Choose to get back on track.

Choose to find the good.

Choose to show mercy.

Choose to remain in Christ.

Choose to pray in all circumstances.

Look to heaven for answers and guidance, and pray -
THANK YOU, LORD!

Editor's note: the image complimenting this article is the stained glass from the sanctuary behind the altar at Ascension Parish in Hurricane.



EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS IN CHARLESTON IS FOR YOU!

Jesus is waiting for you in the Eucharist!

Planned just for you, Bishop Mark Brennan invites you to Charleston to celebrate Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist. Reserve your spot today to attend this final WV Eucharistic Congress set for June 2-3 in Charleston to get closer to God.

What are you waiting for?

MAKE TIME to Come into His Presence! Spend time with Him at Adoration. Hold him in the Eucharist.

Hundreds of faithful in WV have already experienced the previous two Spring Congresses held in Charles Town and Wheeling as part of the Diocesan Year for the Eucharistic Revival by enjoying breathtaking Taizé prayer services, fellowship, dynamic speakers, inspirational break out presenters, Adoration, Mass, and more.

The whole family is encouraged to attend along with our seminarians, clergy, religious, Catholic organizations,

students, and teachers from our PSR programs and schools – our breakouts are for kindergartners through adults.

Count on inspiring prayer as a community, celebratory music, an impressive display of Blessed Carlo Acutis' Miracles of the Eucharist, Adoration, the sacrament of reconciliation, and the opportunity to grow in faith as the Body of Christ!

The Congress will conclude with Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark Brennan at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

Admission is free. Registration is required in order to prepare for our reception, morning coffee/donuts, lunch, and materials.

Go to our homepage (DWC.ORG) and click on the Regional Eucharistic Congresses banner to access the schedule, promotions, and a video invitation from our keynote speaker Fr. Joe Freedy.

FAITHFUL INVITED TO SEMINARIAN MEET & GREET THEN JOIN THEM AT THE EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS

The Serra Club of Charleston invites all Catholic families to the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart to meet our seminarians in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston on Friday, June 2, at 5:30 p.m., right before the final diocesan Eucharistic Congress of 2023 begins.

The evening will be casual and truly a fellowship gathering to get to know and support the men who are working hard on their journey towards becoming a diocesan priest for the faithful of West Virginia.

The Serrans and Office of Vocations for the Diocese hope

you take part in this welcome reception as a great way for our seminarians to start off their summer assignments.

While three of the men are already on assignment for Priestly Formation, Rome, or Guatemala for a Spanish immersion

program; the rest are eager to meet you.

Further, our seminarians will have an important presence at the final Diocesan Eucharistic Congress which begins at 7pm the same evening with a Taizé Prayer service and concludes with Mass at 5:30 pm June 3 with Bishop Mark as celebrant and the seminarians present to serve. During the day on Saturday, the seminarians will participate in session one of the breakouts in a moderated FaithInWV-style presentation. Let them inspire you to more deeply celebrate Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist.

JOHN SOPLINSKI Sacred Heart of Mary, Weirton	DOMINIC RE Sts. Peter and Paul, Oak Hill	BRYAN TEDESCHI St. James the Greater, Charles Town	TIMOTHY KAWASH Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral, Charleston
NATHAN SCHMIDT Our Lady of Peace, Wheeling	MICHAEL J. TUPTA Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral, Charleston	JOSEPH DERICO St. Patrick, Weston	DONVITO CORTESE St. James the Greater, Charles Town

SEMINARIAN TOUR 2023
WVPRIESTS.ORG

For information and to register for the free Eucharistic Congress go to: DWC.ORG/EUCCHARISTIC-CONGRESSES Registration for the Congress is necessary in order to plan for refreshments, morning coffee/donuts, lunch, and materials.



NATIONAL Eucharistic Revival



Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Christ is Present! Will you be?

June 2-3 at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral
of the Sacred Heart, Charleston

Eucharistic
Congress
Grow in Faith
Exercise
your Spirit!

Friday:

7 pm - Taizé Prayer Service & Reception

Saturday:

9 am - Registration/Coffee and Donuts

10 am - Morning Prayer Service

- Keynote Address (immediately following prayer service)
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament begins (concludes before closing Mass)
- Tours of the church
- Lunch and Q/A session with Keynote

Afternoon - Two Breakout Presentations (10-12 sessions to choose from all to inspire our recognition of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist and our lives)

5:30 pm Closing Mass with Bishop Mark Brennan as presider

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Fr. Joe Freedy



DIOCESE OF
WHEELING-CHARLESTON

www.dwc.org



It's FREE!

RSVP & more info:



LET THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDE YOU

LOOK TO THE SAINTS TO STAY ON TRACK

As we prepare to celebrate Pentecost on Sunday, May 28, we are reassured that God is always with us for he has given us the Holy Spirit to dwell within us to be our advocate, intercessor, and comforter.

Jesus told his disciples the Holy Spirit will direct their steps and give peace to all troubled hearts who believe. His promises are also for us who love Him and live by His word.

We received the Holy Spirit at Baptism to shape us, accept God's love, and show love to others. Just as Jesus told the apostles, "The Holy Spirit will guide you and remind you all I taught you."

At Confirmation our relationship with the Holy Spirit intensifies.

However, in the course of life's journey we inevitably become confused and lose sight of the Spirit within us.

Thankfully, we don't have to look far to get back on track to be reminded of the fruits of the spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – they are evident in the saints. The Holy Spirit flourishes in the saints' wisdom, words, writing, and works. The saints had their fair share of shortcomings and faults like us, but they let the fruits of the Holy Spirit grow within them and inspire them in their vocations.

As Pope Francis said on All Saints Day a few years back, "The saints are not superman, nor were they born perfect. They are like us, like each one of us. They are people who, before reaching the glory of heaven, lived normal lives with joys and sorrows, struggles and hopes. What changed their lives? When they recognized God's love, they followed it with all their heart without reserve or hypocrisy. They spent their lives serving others, they endured suffering and adversity without hatred and responded to evil with good, spreading joy and peace. This is the life of a Saint."

Let the saints help us get back on track on our journey towards heaven. A few of the saints to honor this week include St. Rita of Cascia, St. Bede the Venerable, and St. Philip Neri.

On May 23rd we honor the life of St. Rita of Cascia (1381-1457)– the great peacemaker. Hers is a story of great love, horrific loss, profound forgiveness, and strong faith. She lost her husband to murder, her two young sons to illness, but remained



faithful to God even to extend mercy to her husband's killers. She even convinced her family not to take revenge against the families of the murderers, which was expected in those days. She was eventually welcomed to join the Augustinian sisters. Her story holds many more impressive and truly awesome details you can read online at: WWW.SAINTRITASHRINE.ORG/SAINT-RITA-OF-CASCIA.



On May 25th we honor St. Bede the Venerable, who lived in the 7th and 8th century. He was a Benedictine monk and priest and an early Doctor of the Church for his many writings, translations, and homilies.

Of his works, two quotes stand out to help us today as we renew the Holy Spirit in us. "I was no longer the center of my life, and therefore, I could see God in everything," he wrote. And giving advice to all the faithful he penned, "Unfurl the sails, and let God steer us where He will."

Read more about him at: WWW.STBEDEABBAY.ORG/OUR-COMMUNITY.



On May 26th we honor St. Philip Neri (1515-1595) a priest and founder of the Oratorians – a community of priests and lay brothers. He is known for his sense of humor and compassionate spiritual direction. He was often a spectacle wearing goofy clothes, shoes, or even sporting a half shaven beard to teach lessons in humility and the importance of not taking yourself too seriously. Today we share a few quotes from the book Maxims and Sayings of Philip Neri.

- "There is no surer or clearer proof of the love of God than adversity."
- "He who continues in anger, strife, and a bitter spirit, has a taste of the air of hell."
- "Our enemy the devil, who fights with us in order to vanquish us, seeks to disunite us in our houses, and to breed quarrels, dislikes, contests, and rivalries, because while we are fighting with each other, he comes and conquers us, and makes us more securely his own."

Editor's Note: the images in this article are by Tracy L. Christianson – you can see and purchase her works at: WWW.PORTRAITSOFSAINTS.COM

STEP INTO THE SCENE WITH JOANNA

LET THIS SAINT INTERCEDE TO HEAL US

On May 24th the Church honors Joanna mentioned in Luke's Gospel twice by name as a loyal disciple of Christ. Her name in Hebrew means "Yahweh has been gracious."

Jesus healed her and others of sickness and evil spirits. Luke's Gospel (8:1-3) also reveals she traveled with the apostles and Christ in his missionary life from village to village; and was with the women who encountered the angel at the tomb on the day of the Resurrection (Luke 24:9-11).

Many believe Luke's other references of the "women" who were loyal disciples, Joanna was among them (Luke 9:7-9; 23:6-12, 49, 55-56; and Luke 24: 1-12).

We don't know much about her, but in season three of the popular televised series *The Chosen*, Luke's Gospel story with her in it comes to life.

So, who was she?

She was the wife of Chuza, mentioned in the bible as the steward of Herod Antipas, who was the son of the power hungry and paranoid King Herod the Great, who wanted to kill the infant Jesus. Herod Antipas was ruler of Galilee and Perea (to the east of the Jordan River). He was mentioned in Matthew's Gospel (14:1) and Mark's Gospel (6:14-29). In today's world we can picture Chuza as a very trusted personal assistant to the royal, so with that he and Joanna had a privileged life and luxuries not afforded to the mainstream people.

Further, being a loyal, intelligent, and important servant, Chuza - and thus Joanna - would have been privy to any

threats to Jesus and the apostles. It is in Luke:31-33 we learn of this Herod's desire to kill Christ to which Christ calls Herod a "fox" and continues to do his missionary work, healing, casting out demons, and heading toward Jerusalem, the city of destiny for Jesus.

Joanna is often called the myrrh bearer, because she was with the women who were going to care for the body of

Jesus in the tomb with the holy ointment, oils, and spices.

Let us be confident, fearless, bold, and assured like, Joanna in our faith in Christ. Moreover, let us be a loyal to Christ and serve Him by serving and loving others, letting our faith shine through as the center of our life.



*Saint Joanna portrayed by actress Amy Bailey in *The Chosen* (Season 3)*

We first hear about Saint

Joanna because he was healed by Christ. Think of all the times Christ has healed us - whether it be of a challenge, anxiety, loneliness, injury, sickness, or selfishness - like her let us be grateful to Him, and not grow tired of sharing and teaching the love of God.

Pray that she intercedes for us so God will cast away evil and depression, healing our minds, bodies, and souls.

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Berkeley Springs	FM	107.9
Clarksburg-Bridgeport	FM	97.5
Dunbar - Charleston	AM	1450
Eastern Panhandle - coming soon	FM	88.5
Grafton - Clarksburg	AM	1190
Montgomery - Beckley	FM	89.7
Purgitsville	FM	98.7
St. Marys - Parkersburg	FM	105.3
Star City - Morgantown	FM	89.7
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THE ORIGINS OF THE HAIL MARY PRAYER

BY MICHAEL KAWASH, CANDIDATE FOR DEACON, DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

The “Hail Mary” has been one of the most well-known prayers in the Catholic Church’s history and culture. Second only to the Our Father, it might be the most recited prayer by Catholics throughout the entire world. Even our non-Catholic brothers and sisters have incorporated it in the culture-at-large in one form or another, despite not knowing how to recite it. Most commonly, we hear its secular employment as part of football parlance as a play designed to produce a miraculous result for a team whose outlook in a game is bleak and marked by desperation.

It might come as a surprise to many Catholics, however, to learn that what we recite today, asking for our Blessed Mother’s intercession, does not go back very far in terms of Church history. When we speak of the Church and her history of 2000 years, a few centuries may be considered but a few years in the lives of most individuals.

As a prayer, the Hail Mary was not composed by any one individual, saint or pope and given to the faithful to recite as part of his or her basic Catholic prayers. Rather, the prayer has evolved into what has come to be known as one of the most familiar and comforting invocations. Its history is fascinating and possesses catechetical value in learning Mary’s role in our salvation.

In its earliest stages, the Hail Mary was an angelic salutation, a term to which it is still referred today. It actually consisted of two salutations, one angelic and the other evangelic, and both were rooted in sacred scripture. Today we know the first part of this prayer as follows:

Hail, Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women

and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

The first salutation is that of the Angel Gabriel, who

appeared to Mary, saying “Hail, favored one, the Lord is with you.” (Lk. 1:28) An angel who is a representative of God, telling a human being that she is a “favored one” was interpreted by the Church Fathers as another way of saying she is full of grace. Of course the phrase “the Lord is with you” is a reference to what Gabriel was about to tell her, specifically, that she would be carrying the Christ child, the Savior of the world.

The second salutation is delivered by Mary’s kinswoman Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. Gabriel had told Mary that Elizabeth was expecting, and Mary went in haste to see her cousin, who, when she saw Mary, excitedly proclaimed “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” (Lk. 1:42)

These two salutations came together as early as the sixth century and constituted the offertory prayer of the Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Advent. It is believed that in the thirteenth century, Jesus’ name was added to cap the prayer and of course, to name with specificity the “fruit of [Mary’s] womb.” It is also believed that this addition was due to the preaching of St. Bernardine of Siena a century later, who constantly promoted devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus.

For several centuries, this dual greeting of homage, which is what we know today as only the prayer’s first half, constituted its entirety. The conflation of several events pushed the evolution of what we know today as the prayer’s second half.

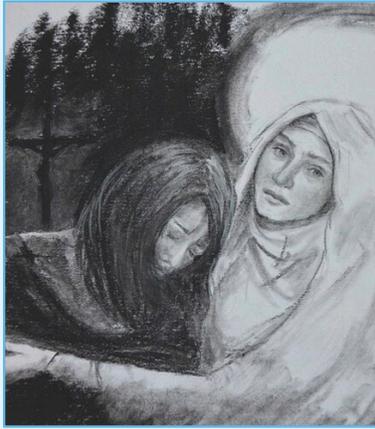
By the early sixteenth century, the breviaries of some religious orders, including most notably, Camaldolese monks, began including forms of intercession highlighting Mary’s role (and the Church’s dogma) as Mother of God,

our human nature as sinners and imploring her help when death is near. In fact, one of the more common



pleas was seeking Mary's help, not only in the present moment, but also at the hour of one's death, since the world was in the wake of the Black Death plague which had taken the lives of anywhere from 75 to 200 million people less than two centuries before.

The Protestant revolt in the sixteenth century also played a role in pushing the Church to add an intercessory dimension to the prayer. Martin Luther and his like-minded companions criticized faithful Catholics who prayed the Hail Mary, maintaining that absent a petition, it was not really a prayer, but merely a greeting. In response, those who prayed this prayer would add a sentence or two seeking Mary's intercession for various and sundry needs, including prayers for the time of one's death. The Council of Trent was called to reiterate Catholic doctrine against the Protestant reformers, and one of its most efficacious products was the publishing of the Church's first universal catechism in 1566. The *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, or shortly known as The Roman Catechism, included the Hail Mary's first part of praise and encouraged the faithful to add a second part of invocation for our needs. Two years later, the Roman Breviary of 1568 included the prayer in its entirety as we know it today. The second part, consisting of petition/intercession, is as follows:



Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.

Although by this time the Hail Mary prayer consisted of both greeting and invocation, it took a few more centuries for this second half to universally catch on. One example of this slow-paced movement is that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was common for some Catholics receiving the recitation of

Hail Mary's as a penance to ask the priest if they were also required to say the "Holy Mary's" as well.

Most importantly, the Hail Mary prayer is focused on Jesus. When examining this prayer, it is indeed Jesus' Holy Name that is the hinge, holding together the two parts that comprise it. This is appropriate since the prayer is about Him. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: "Beginning with Mary's unique cooperation with the working of the Holy Spirit, the [East and West] Churches developed their prayer to the holy Mother of God, centering it on the person of Christ manifested in his mysteries." (CCC 2675, in part)

May we all look to Mary in this great prayer of the Church in giving praise to Jesus.

Editor's note: the artworks complimenting this column are all by Nichole Lanthier of Lake Charles, Louisiana, and can be purchased at: www.etsy.com/shop/NicholeLanthier.

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

First Reading: Acts of the Apostles 1:1-11

Before the Apostles watch Jesus ascending into heaven, He tells them the Holy Spirit will come upon them and they will be His witnesses throughout the earth.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 47

"God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord."

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:17-23

St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, blesses us with a Spirit of wisdom, revelation of knowledge of Jesus Christ, and an enlightened heart of God's greatness and power.

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

As the disciples gathered on the mountain in Galilee, they worshiped God and some doubted, but then Jesus appeared and told them to baptize all nations in the name of the Trinity.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT](http://BIBLE.USCCB.ORG/BIBLE/READINGS/052123.CFM)

BIBLE.USCCB.ORG/BIBLE/READINGS/052123.CFM

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we live and serve others like Christ did when He walked among us, knowing that the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts to guide us, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That as we pray that all leaders permit their citizens to freely practice their faith, that we too be respectful to others and free of the temptation to persecute, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That the faithful make a concentrated effort to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life in order to further fulfill Christ's command to evangelize, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That the Holy Spirit may dispel our doubts and give each of us courage to live out and teach the messages of Christ without hesitation in our families, our workplaces, and our communities, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer



HOSPITAL TRANSITION PROGRAM EXPANDS TO HUNTINGTON

After being admitted to the hospital and receiving excellent care, Stanley was ready to go home. Unfortunately, he was returning to a home where he lived alone with very little social support.

Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) stepped in at this critical moment. Sister Jen, one of our Hospital Transition Program (HTP) case managers, met with Stanley while he was still in the hospital to identify and help to overcome any challenges Stanley would face when returning home.

For the next six weeks, Sister Jen visited Stanley at home. She worked with him to get a cell phone and a LifeAlert system, and together they practiced using these tools. She coordinated transportation assistance so Stanley could get around town. And she connected him with free home-delivered meals through an internal referral to the Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center.

Stanley's story is one of many where our HTP case managers created comfort, safety and peace as patients transitioned from hospital to home.

"Many West Virginians are facing complex challenges – layers of chronic disease, poverty, unemployment, lack of access to fresh produce, transportation issues, social isolation, etc.," said Sara Lindsay, CCWVa Chief Program Officer. "At Catholic Charities, we have a unique capacity to work toward alleviating some of that community-level suffering."

The CCWVa Hospital Transition Program takes a "dual service" approach to its collaborative design, serving both the client and the partner hospital. Through this program, the hospital sees lower readmission rates for patients served.

"When hiring HTP case managers, we look to round out what is already provided through the healthcare system," said Lindsay. "Our team's collective areas of expertise include counseling, social work, mental health and substance use disorder – and working extensively with people living in poverty."

The expertise and compassion of the CCWVa HTP staff have proven to be very effective in Wheeling at WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital, where the program launched.

CCWVa has now replicated the program in Huntington. The Hospital Transition Program has expanded to both Cabell Huntington Hospital and St. Mary's Medical Center.

"Whether recovering from acute injury or dealing with chronic illness, the Hospital Transition Program provides hope and support beyond the hospital doors," said Lindsay.

To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, visit www.CATHOLICCHARITIESWV.ORG.



Catholic Charities case managers meet with patients before they are discharged from the hospital to develop a plan of care

Liturgy of the Hours
LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Pray the prayer for this day, this hour!

EBREVIARY.COM LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Scan the QR code or visit the link below to view a PDF version of the Liturgy of the Hours.



MASS ONLINE

Saturday 6pm Masses will continue to be livestreamed from the Cathedral of St. Joseph, and will be available on our website each Sunday at DWC.ORG.