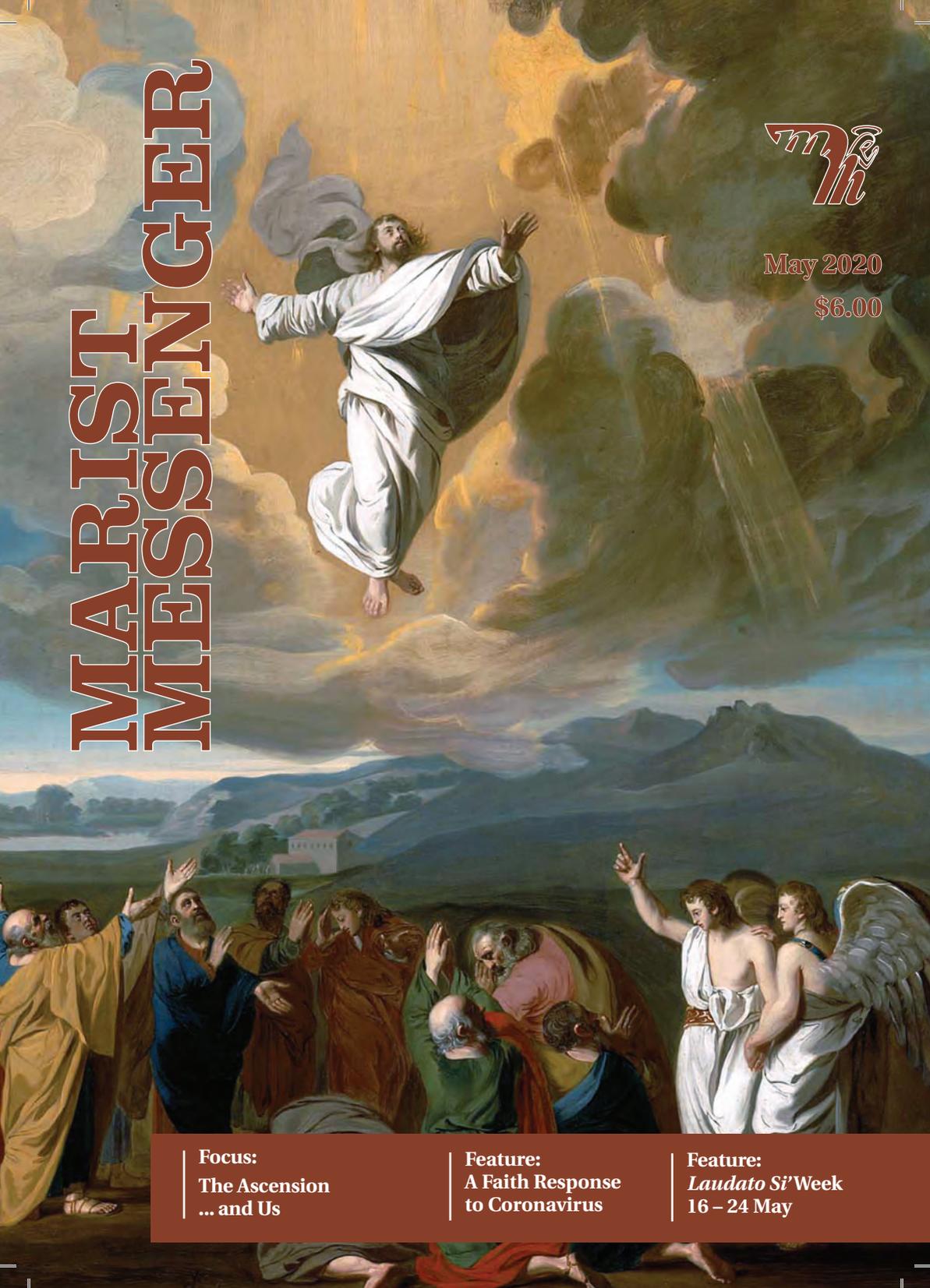


MARIAN MESSENGER



May 2020

\$6.00



Focus:
The Ascension
... and Us

Feature:
A Faith Response
to Coronavirus

Feature:
Laudato Si' Week
16 - 24 May



Marist Messenger

ISSUE: 91 MAY 2020

NATIONAL CATHOLIC MONTHLY
ESTABLISHED 1929

PUBLISHER:
Marist Messenger Ltd
Registered Charity # CC51215

EDITOR:
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SUBSCRIBER RATES:
Cover price \$6.00
Within New Zealand:
\$50 per year (incl GST)
Australia:
\$60.00 (includes airmail)
Pacific and elsewhere overseas:
\$65.00 (includes airmail)

**PLEASE ALLOW 6 WEEKS
FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS.**

PRINTER:
Central Design and Print Ltd
Waipukurau

Cover:

Ascension

John Singleton Copley, 1775



The Rock of the Ascension

In the Chapel of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem, this is the spot from where tradition holds that Jesus ascended to heaven.

Source: Yoav Dothan, Wikipedia

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Lord was celebrated on a Thursday, forty days after Easter. There was a solemn moment after the Gospel reading when the flame of the Easter candle was extinguished. I think the putting out of the candle symbolised that Jesus had left the earth. Nowadays it might seem a bit strange to put the candle out – the Lord’s Ascension does not mean that Jesus is no longer with us. Instead, it signifies that time and space no longer hold or limit him, which means that he can be present to us at every moment of our lives.

The Lord is with us, always. He empowers us to work with him for the good of his people, which is how we live his command to “make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19).

In the time between Easter and the Ascension, the Gospels do not record any miracles except for Our Lord’s sudden appearances here, there and everywhere. He spoke to his friends about what they would do, and about sending the Holy Spirit upon them. It’s as though he were saying to them, “It’s over to you now. You are to continue the work that I began”. It was a bit like passing on the baton in a relay race. Jesus gives the baton to his disciples for them – and us – to complete his work.

We are to speak his words of love and to be his presence and his love wherever we are. And he is always with us, working in us, his people. 



Messenger Briefs

The Month of May

3 : 57th World Day of Prayer for Vocations

3 – 10 : Vocations Awareness Week

16 – 24 : *Laudato Si’* Week

24 : Ascension Day;

World Communications Day

25 – 31 : Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

31 : Pentecost Sunday

Pope Francis’ Prayer for Vocations

Lord of the Harvest,
 bless young people with the gift of
 courage to respond to your call.
 Open their hearts to great ideals,
 to great things.
 Inspire all of your disciples to mutual
 love and giving,
 for vocations blossom in the good soil
 of faithful people.
 Instil those in religious life,
 parish ministries,
 and families with the confidence
 and grace to invite others to embrace
 the bold and noble path of a life
 consecrated to you.
 Unite us to Jesus
 through prayer and sacrament,
 so that we may cooperate with you
 in building your reign of mercy and
 truth, of justice and peace.
 Amen. 

plan of love, in a relationship of mutual exchange of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This intergenerational sharing obliges us to change our gaze towards older people, to learn to look to the future together with them.

The elderly as the present and future of the Church

When we think of the elderly and talk about them, we must learn to change the tenses of verbs a little. There is not only the past, as if, for the elderly, there were only a life behind them and a mouldy archive. No. The Lord can and wants to write with them also new pages, pages of holiness, of service, of prayer... Today I would like to tell you that the elderly are also the present and the future of the Church. Yes, they are also the future of a Church that, together with the young, prophesies and dreams! This is why it is so important that the elderly and the young speak to each other, it is so important.

Seek out the elderly

The prophecy of the elderly is fulfilled when the light of the Gospel enters fully into their lives; when, like Simeon and Anna, they take Jesus in their arms and announce the revolution of tenderness, the Good News of the one who came into the world to bring the light of the Father. That is why I ask you not to spare yourselves in proclaiming the Gospel to grandparents and elders. Go to them with a smile on your



face and the Gospel in your hands. Go out into the streets of your parishes and seek out the elderly who live alone. Old age is not an illness, it is a privilege!

God has a large population of grandparents throughout the world. Nowadays, in secularised societies in many countries, current generations of parents do not have, for the most part, the Christian formation and living faith that grandparents can pass on to their grandchildren. They are the indispensable link in educating children and young people in the faith.

Do not be afraid, take initiatives, help your bishops and your dioceses to promote pastoral service to and with older people. Do not be discouraged, keep going!

I too accompany you with my prayer and my blessing. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you! 🙏

Source: *Libreria Editrice Vatican*, 31 January, 2020

Discerning Together

Paths for Marists to Walk Confidently into the Future



By Fr John
Larsen SM

Part 1 of 3

Introduction

What is a Lay Marist? There are so many descriptions that at the end of the day we could be quite baffled. My own experience has exposed me to many forms of Marist Lay life. As a 13-year-old schoolboy in New Zealand I signed up as a Lay Marist along with many of my classmates. I was living in a Marist boarding school and signing up as a Lay Marist assured me of a late supper every couple of weeks after study and before going to the dormitory as our mentor, Father Craig Larkin, explained what was expected of us – mercifully, very little, in fact. From memory, Fr Craig suggested just a decade of the rosary every day.

As a young priest at the very same college twelve years later I was assigned to be chaplain to a Third Order group of elderly people, many of whom were friends of my parents. This chaplaincy assignment was seen by my confrères at the college as an unwelcome Sunday

afternoon chore best left to the most newly ordained who in turn could hand it on to the next fresh recruit from the seminary one year later. In fact, those women, and they were mostly women, who asked for the chaplain to lead the rosary, give Benediction and a little spiritual talk and stay for afternoon tea, were a tower of strength and wisdom for a young priest. They had kept the faith in a Marist way while bringing up families and enduring a Depression and at least one World War. They knew a thing or two and gently encouraged a brash but rather naïve young Marist priest.

At the same time, some were saying that all the lay staff in the college where I was teaching were really Marists, too. Some of the teachers would not have taken kindly to being called 'Marist', but mostly they just smiled and nodded. Were all our lay staff really Marists?

Later, as a missionary in the Philippines, there were any number of groups, all claiming to be Lay Marists – Marist student groups, Marist Mission Companions, Marist visitors of the jail and of the psychiatric hospital, Marist Young Professionals, Marist Prayer companions, Marist Interested College Students (who were more or less seminarians). Were they really all Lay Marists?

My most intense experience of living with a Lay Marist was when four of us were in Burma (or Myanmar) as missionaries in very remote and demanding places. Two of us were priests. One was a seminarian. One was a “Lay Marist Missionary” called Ronald. He stayed living and working with us in Myanmar and Thailand for more than

ten years and if anyone deserved to be called a Marist it was Ronald. While he was with us he married Carolyn and they had a child called JP. This was a real Marist Family working and living with us. Now they have gone their own way. Are they still really Lay Marists?

Also, we had many volunteers sharing our lives as Lay Marists in Thailand. Some of them would have claimed to be Lay Marists but, as far as I know, very few, if any, persevered in the Lay Marist vocation when they returned home.

This is just my limited experience. So many ways of being a Lay Marist that, at the end of it all, I am not sure how to describe a Lay Marist and I am not sure if being a Lay Marist is just for a time, or a reason, or a season.



Delegates at the International Lay Marist Conference, Ireland, 2019

The call

Father Colin famously said that he wanted “the whole world Marist”. This is the basis of much of the belief that we Marists are called to show forth the Marian face of the Church. It is often contrasted with the Petrine face of the Church. More exactly, they are two dimensions of the same Church, which has both a masculine side and a feminine side and would be unhealthy without a strong relationship between the two.

In this sense, Fr Colin was foreshadowing the words of Pope Francis, who has pointed out many times that Mary’s call to give flesh to the Word preceded the call of Peter to be the rock on which the Church was built. We can say “the whole world Marist”, because Marists share with all baptised Christians the

call to give a particular tone to the whole Church, which has a Marian dimension complementing the Petrine one.

However, if we too glibly quote Father Colin’s call for “the whole world to be Marist”, then we risk saying that everyone is Marist, and before long, if everyone is Marist, there is no particular identity to the Lay Marist vocation. Perhaps this summons for the “the whole world to be Marist” is best understood as a Utopian Vision of Fr Jean-Claude when the whole world will be united around Mary at the end of time, just as she unified the vision of the early Church after Pentecost. That is how Father Justin Taylor explains the theme.

Nevertheless, the danger remains that the phrase could diminish the sense that the Marist call is personal, indeed unique, to each individual Marist.

Mary herself was called by God to a special vocation at the time of the Annunciation. She was called to give flesh to the Word, to bring the bearer of the Good News into our world. We Marists believe we share this call of Mary’s and so we take on her Name.

Perhaps we have become too quick to say everyone is Marist – all the teachers in our schools, all who work with us in ministries, all our parishioners, all our families and friends. In one sense, we are indeed all Marist, in that we are all called by



Delegates from Vanuatu

our Baptism to express the Marian face of the Church. However, some people have received a personal call and make a personal response.

The clearest examples of such people are those who make Religious Vows as Marists – Sisters, Brothers and Priests. These people commit themselves to live their priestly and/or religious vocations specifically as men and women who know they have been called by God to live as Marists – to do the Work of Mary and bear her Name.

However, from the beginnings there are Lay People who are also Marists, who also know that they have been called by God to live their lay vocation as Marists – to do the Work of Mary and bear her Name. Lay Marists are people who know they have been called to a particular way of living the Gospel, such as Mary lived it herself. Not everyone has this vocation, and if we think everyone is called to it, then it loses its particular focus.

This was borne home to me recently when I met a woman who had volunteered to work with Professed Marists for several years in voluntary ministry. She still does wonderful work running an education program for the poorest children. She is

committed, generous and competent, and full of praise for the work that the Marists are doing.

However, when I asked her if she considered that she herself was a Lay Marist she said: “No. I do not find much appealing in the Marist spirituality. I find my direction with John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. I relate better to the Carmelite spirituality than to the Marist spirituality”. She is a wonderful co-worker with the Marists – volunteering several years of her life to work with Marists – but she knows she is not a Lay Marist.

So, an essential dimension of being a Lay Marist is the strong certainty that God has called this or that lay person to live the Gospel Way with Mary and in accordance with the Marist tradition and spirituality. 🙏



Delegates from New Zealand and Australia:
Beverley McDonald, Penelope Van der Lee, Tutangata Ama,
Margaret Woods

Photos: thanks to Bev McDonald
bev@maristlaitynz.org

A Faith Response to Coronavirus

At this time when the whole world is preoccupied with the Corona Virus Covid-19, how are we, as People of Faith, called to think, pray, and act?

God's name, and nature, is revealed to us as "I am with you". This is the name of the God who began the unfolding of creation some 13.8 billion years ago; who formed our planet some 4 billion years ago, brought about the human emergence some 200,000 years ago, revealed this name to Moses some 3,500 years ago, to Isaiah some 2,700 years ago, and married himself to us and his creation some 2000 years ago in the person in Jesus - the eternal, generative Word, become flesh. Our God is with us in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. God honours us and loves us all the days of



By Fr Ben
McKenna SM

our lives, and brings us, through death, to the fullness of life with all those who have entered into covenant fidelity with God and with one another.

God, who has been with our planet as it has passed through 5 mass extinctions; and is with us as we face what significant scientists are saying could be a possible sixth, unless we simplify our lifestyle. Each resurrection of the planet, each new beginning, has been more beautiful and wonderful than what preceded it. The paschal mystery of suffering, death, and resurrection – which we celebrate each Lent and Easter, is written into the fabric of the unfolding of the universe. We are called to be part of it, and we do this by being the heart and mind, body and presence of Christ in our world.

We are being called by Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*, to slow down from the 'rapidification' of our intense way of life, which contrasts with the naturally slow pace of biological evolution [18]. We are called to ponder, to wonder,



to re-discover the reality of “universal fraternity” [228], to set before the world the ideal of “a civilization of love” [231], to engage ourselves in one or more of “a countless array of organisations which work to promote the common good” [232], to experience “the intimate connection between God and all beings” [234], to experience our body “in its inner nature as a temple of the Holy Spirit, united with the Lord Jesus, who himself took a body for the world’s salvation [235], whom we find in the Eucharist as “the living centre of the universe, the overflowing core of love and of inexhaustible life [236].

With this faith we are enabled to face the Coronavirus, which since last December, has impacted on millions of people globally, and which has become a pandemic. The ‘rapidificaton’ of our civilisation has been forced to slow down. Flights have been cancelled, many cities and towns are in ‘lockdown’, major sporting events have been suspended, universities and schools have been closed for a time, pilgrimages have been banned, people are being called to self-isolate.

This is an opportunity for us to rediscover the fundamental virtue of humility. We are utterly dependent on the mystery of God’s gift of life, manifested through our inter-dependence on one another and all living and non-living creatures given to us to support and maintain our life.

When one part of the body suffers, all suffer (1 Corinthians 12.26). The whole world is now suffering; but this is also a call to greatness. Doctors, nurses, and medical staff are stepping up, working long hours, at the front line, in danger of being contaminated themselves. With the wounded healer [Isaiah 53], they take others’ sufferings on themselves. Administrators at all levels, in countries, cities, villages, towns, and as parents and guardians in families, are making decisions on how to protect their citizens, and families. May each of us, through information, conversation, awareness, prayer, and commitment find a way to make our personal and communal contribution to those who are most at risk at this time. Mary, mother of the new creation, pray for us. 🙏

Fr Bernard (Ben) McKenna SM is a Society of Mary Assistant General based in Rome. This article first appeared in the Marist JPIC blog, and is used with permission. Photos: National Geographic



The Town of Le Puy in Early Marist History

Part 1 of 2

Text and photos by the editor

The Cathedral town of Le Puy, with a population of about 19,000, is 140 km south-west of Lyons. The town is built in the crater of a volcano. Two volcanic plugs -- *puy*, in French – rise over it. The chapel of Saint Michel D’Aguilhe, almost 1100 years old and 630 metres high, is on top of one of these peaks; and on top of the other, there is a 16-metre tall statue of Mary, Notre Dame de France.

The sculptor Jean-Marie Bonnassieux designed the iron statue, cast from 213 Russian cannons captured in the Siege of Sevastopol in the Crimean War. The statue was displayed to an audience of 120,000 people for the first time on 12 September 1860.

The Cathedral sits on top of a massive volcanic rock. It dates mostly from the first



Chapel of Saint Michel



Notre Dame de France



A typical alley in Le Puy,
leading to the Cathedral



Black Madonna and Child

half of the 12th century, when the existing church was enlarged to accommodate the increasing number of pilgrims. Restoration work took place in the 18th century, and again in the 19th.

Its status as a site for the veneration of the Virgin Mary dates from the 4th century, and it has been an episcopal see since the 7th century.

Late in the 10th century, the town became famous for its statue of Our Lady of Le Puy, as well as for being a starting point for pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela, some 1,400 km away. In the year 951, one of the first pilgrims from Le Puy was the bishop of the town, Godescalc.

It is believed that Godescalc also promoted devotion to Our Lady, venerated in the form of a Black Madonna and Child. The figure of the Madonna and Child seen in the Cathedral today above the main altar is a re-creation of an older version burned in 1794 during the French Revolution. It is reputed to be a very exact copy of the original.

St Marcellin Champagnat's aunt belonged to the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph, which had begun in Le Puy in 1650. She became Marcellin's first instructor in the Catholic faith when the Revolution drove her to live in the Champagnat home. Jean François Régis, a Jesuit saint, was based in Le Puy for his

missions in parishes from 1633 until 1640. During tough economic times, he encouraged the town's women to manufacture lace, for which Le Puy is still well-known.

Jean-Claude Courveille

Jean-Claude Courveille, seventh of thirteen children of Margaret and Claude Courveille, was born on 15 March 1787. Smallpox caused him to go almost completely blind when he was ten. In 1809, he bathed his eyes with oil from the votive lamps at the shrine of the Black Madonna in the Cathedral in Le Puy. His blindness



Votive lamps surrounding the shrine of the Madonna of Le Puy

was instantly cured: “Suddenly, his sight was restored. He found that he could distinguish even the most distant objects: the pipes of the organ far back in the apse and the dim squinches supporting the dome. His bursting heart immediately vowed a life of service and thanksgiving to God and to the Mother of God whose prayer had cured him” (Hosie, p. 38).

On the Feast of the Assumption each year, thousands of pilgrims arrived in Le Puy, at that time with a population of 10,000, to venerate the Black Madonna.

On 15 August 1812, Courveille returned to the site of his healing. There he heard, “not with the ears of the body, but with those of the heart, interiorly but very distinctly”, the call of Our Lady to form a group “which will call itself the Society of Mary, whose members will call themselves Marists” (*Origines Maristes II*, Doc 718). 



The view from the Cathedral's main doors

Disciple of Her Son: Mary in the Life of the Church

The Society of Mary Part 1 of 2

By Fr Edwin L Keel SM

In the early morning hours of 23 July 1816, twelve young men made their way on foot from the diocesan seminary of St Irenaeus across the Saône River and up the Montée Saint-Barthélemy to the top of the hill of Fourvière which overlooks the city of Lyon, France, and into the small chapel of Our Lady of Fourvière. Some of them had been ordained priests the day before; the rest of them would be ordained within the year. They had come so that the leader of the group, Fr. Jean-Claude Courveille, could celebrate his first Mass, assisted by the others, and so that they could all sign a pledge and place it under the corporal on the altar during the Mass. It was a pledge to work for the foundation of a new religious congregation, the Society of Mary, whose members would call themselves Marists.

They mounted the hill in darkness that morning, but dawn was breaking upon them. So also was dawn breaking on the times they were living through. The French Revolution with its reign of terror, its persecution of the Church, the split in the Church between those loyal to the Pope

and those who threw their lot in with the Revolution, the dissolution of the religious orders, and the Napoleonic dictatorship, had all come to an end during the previous months. There was hope for the restoration of a French monarchy friendly to the Church, and a restoration of the Church itself to its former position of influence.



Photo: WeiCom, July 2016

The Fourvière chapel before the Basilica was built, and before the steeple was replaced by the tower with a golden statue on top

How much hope the twelve young men placed in these political prospects we do not know, although they expressed in their pledge the expectation that their project would come to fruition in a political atmosphere that was friendlier to religion than the Revolution and Napoleon had been. Nevertheless, their hopes that morning were grounded in a more secure foundation: some years before, Jean-Claude Courveille had heard in his heart what he took as a message from Mary, the mother of Jesus, asking for the foundation of a religious congregation that would bear her name, the Society of Mary, and that its purpose would be to serve the Church during those difficult times.

Convinced that this was what Mary was calling them to do, they had no doubt that the project would succeed, and that through them Mary would bring peace, reconciliation, and consolation to God's suffering people. Their hope was grounded entirely in Christ in whom we can do all things (*see* Philippians 4:13), and in Mary, who was calling them to this work.

It would take twenty years for their project to come to fruition with papal approval for the Society of Mary in 1836. During those twenty years, all but four of the twelve abandoned the project, including even Fr Courveille, who proved unsuited for the leadership of such an undertaking.

But many others joined the project, and a new leader emerged, one of the

original twelve who had climbed the hill of Fourvière in 1816: Fr Jean-Claude Colin. He seems to have been particularly graced and inspired with insights into the spirit that must characterise the new Society, the spirit of Mary herself. Already in 1816, in the town of Cerdon in France, where he was assigned as assistant to his older brother Fr Pierre Colin, the pastor of the parish, Jean-Claude Colin began to jot down some ideas for a Rule for the group. He also worked with Courveille in the first attempts to seek approval for the project from the Pope. Eventually, after Courveille had left the project, Colin was chosen to lead the group and to spearhead the efforts to obtain papal approbation. In 1836, when Pope Gregory XVI finally gave approval to the Society, Colin was elected Superior General.

It was Jean-Claude Colin, then, who shaped the Society of Mary, and who communicated to the Society its spirit, its spirituality, and an approach to ministry inspired by the example of Mary.

Colin could see quite clearly that it was not possible to turn back the clock. There was no going back to the way things were before the Revolution. A new world was coming into being, and it required a new approach to ministry. In fact, Colin perceived that the condition of the Church during the nineteenth century was in many ways similar to that of the earliest days of the Church.

After seventeen hundred years during which the Church had held a position of power in the world, it now found itself once again living in a world hostile to the faith. Atheism and radical secularisation were in the ascendancy. But far from bemoaning the situation, Colin saw it as an opportunity to give the Church a fresh new start.

But what was to guide the Marists in their endeavours to help the Church make this new start? Colin looked to the early Church and to Mary's presence there. He said that it had been revealed that the Marists should take the early Church as their only model.

When he looked to the early Church, especially as depicted in the Acts of the Apostles, Colin was impressed by the fresh, vibrant faith of the first believers. He noted that those first Christians were of one mind and heart (Acts 4:32). He saw much collaboration and little competition or conflict. He observed that the apostles were poor men who neither sought wealth for themselves nor hoped to impress people with the wealth and prestige of the Church, which unfortunately came to characterise the Church in later centuries.

Thus, Marists were to reject every form of greed and ostentation. When possible, they were to work without recompense. They were to collaborate with other religious, and with lay people, and were

so to cooperate with the bishops that the latter might consider the Marists as "their own". 

This article first appeared in Forum Novum www.maristsm.org/en/forum-novum.aspx

It is used with the permission of the editor, Fr Alois Greiler SM who notes, For a long time, Fr Keel worked on a manuscript combining his work with Scriptures and his expertise in Marist studies. This is Chapter 14 of the manuscript, a work intended for a general audience.



Madonna and Child above the altar, Fourvière chapel

I believe ...

For me, one of the most moving moments at Mass is hearing my neighbour in the pews recite the Creed. Whether or not this is someone that I know personally, it is always a very emotional moment. We are all publicly proclaiming our faith – something that we do not often do in other circumstances. We would rarely ask each other, “What do you believe?”, and the convention that we should not discuss politics, money or religion in social conversation usually seems to apply.

The Creed offers us a unique moment to connect with God. As well as a statement of faith, it is a message of love for our God and thanks for all that he has done and is doing for us. Bishop Gumbleton from Michigan, USA, spoke on this topic on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. He pointed out that it is easy to say, “I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God”, but do we act on that belief by trying to follow faithfully what he teaches?

What are the consequences of acknowledging our faith – are they just empty words, or do they translate into action? When we say “I believe”, is that just an academic or theoretical statement of fact, akin to believing in a scientific theory,



By **Bridget Taumoepeau**

or is it life changing? If a stranger asks you, “What does it mean to believe in God? How are you different from unbelievers?”, what would your answer be?

St Ignatius teaches that “love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than words”. If we translated our belief into actions there would probably be no need for anyone to ask us about what our belief means. It would become an unwritten form of evangelisation. Pope Francis often says that we will draw people to God, not by proselytising, but by attraction. He, himself, is an excellent example of this – a man who, in his actions and attitudes to people, demonstrates his belief in, and love of our God, and draws people to him, and thus to the merciful and forgiving God who loves us all unconditionally.

Next time I say the creed, I will try to reflect on how I am demonstrating that faith in my daily life. 

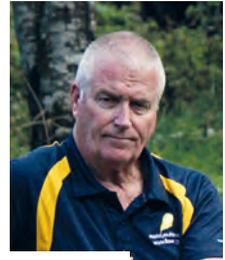
The Way of St James: France

**Le Puy-en-Velay to the Pyrénées,
2 September - 8 October 2019**

On the afternoon of the second day of this journey, I was sitting with the owner of a little pub in Monistrol d'Allier where I was staying, watching him peel enormous mushrooms that were the local delicacy, but which looked to me more like the stuff in New Zealand forests we were taught as kids to avoid.



Roman road, pre-dating the birth of Christ,



By Fr Mark
Walls SM

Peter is an Englishman, a former teacher, who came here twenty years ago. He lives and loves the Camino, and knows every inch of it. He literally serves the pilgrims, making their rooms ready, cooking their meals, drying out their wet clothes, binding up blisters. However, even though they are his bread and butter, he has little time for the 'holiday-makers'. He thinks eighty per cent of those who come through his pub in the 'season' are now holiday-makers. "They walk a week each year, they make a lot of noise, but they miss the point. They don't ever go long enough, or hard enough, to self-reflect. You have to be on the trail long enough, and sweat your way up the steepest hills day after day, to realise that other people in your life aren't the nasty ones. You're the nasty one ... and once you realise that, you can tune into the Almighty because the Almighty can tune into you. Write to me, will you, and tell me how long it takes for you to get to that point".

Peter's homespun wisdom probably wouldn't make it into any camino guide-books, but he does capture some of the essence of the pilgrimage. It is physically challenging. The hills, especially in the first half of this French section, are very steep and often quite relentless, some descents are like almost vertical river beds, and the weather conditions mean constant adaptation. The self-reflection comes because you know you are testing yourself, and you have to wonder, constantly, if you will be up to the test. There's over a month of this ahead of you, there's silence and solitude, and even with other people on the trail, the usual distractions of life just aren't there anymore, and ultimately the inevitable happens. Peter reckoned it would take about ten days. It didn't.

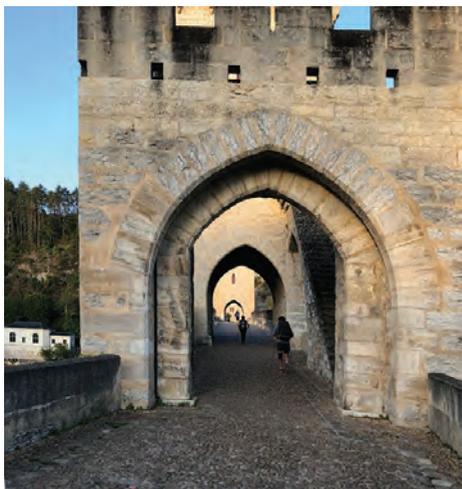


The trail at Golinhac, part of the original 9th century Way of St James

You can think of yourself as just another pilgrim, or you can be awed by the fact that millions of others have passed this way since the first pilgrims did so sometime in the ninth century. You can wander the cobbled streets of Figeac and St-Côme-d'Olt and Estaing and remember that villagers have been smoothing these stones since the Middle Ages. You can sit in the cathedral at Conques, a mediaeval village that clings precariously to the side of a hill above the river Lot, and listen to the Norbertine monks chanting the Prayer of the Church as they sit in choir. Even the tourists from the buses are hushed by the sounds of this ancient liturgy. You can walk along the Cami Ferat, the Iron Road, built by the Romans between Limogne-en-Quercy and Lalbenque over two thousand



A Pilgrim Cross, more than twelve hundred years old

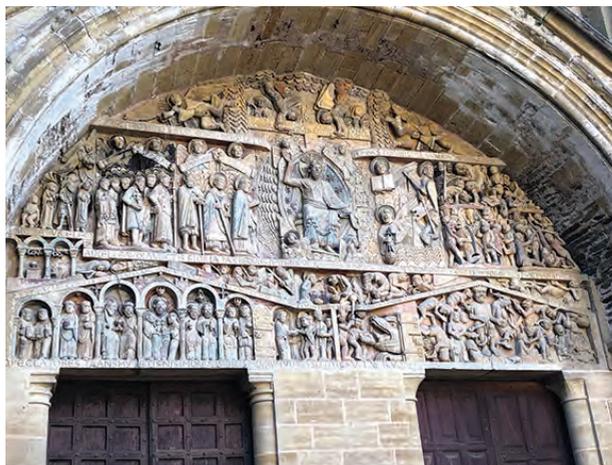


Medieval bridge, Cahors

years ago. You can sit in the scores of tiny chapels along the pilgrim route that commemorate this local saint and that, and reflect that people like you have done this for the last eleven hundred years. You can be just another pilgrim, or you can become a part of this history.

We often tell the students on our programmes that God speaks to us through the people and events of our lives. From the early days of this pilgrimage I felt that God was shouting. I could hear, loud and clear. The challenge, now, was to listen.

Apart from the very personal aspect of walking the Camino, there is so much of human interest as well. The French countryside is beautiful. As I expected, it changed over the period of five weeks as I came closer to the Pyrénées. The steep hills and deep gullies of the Lot Valley gave



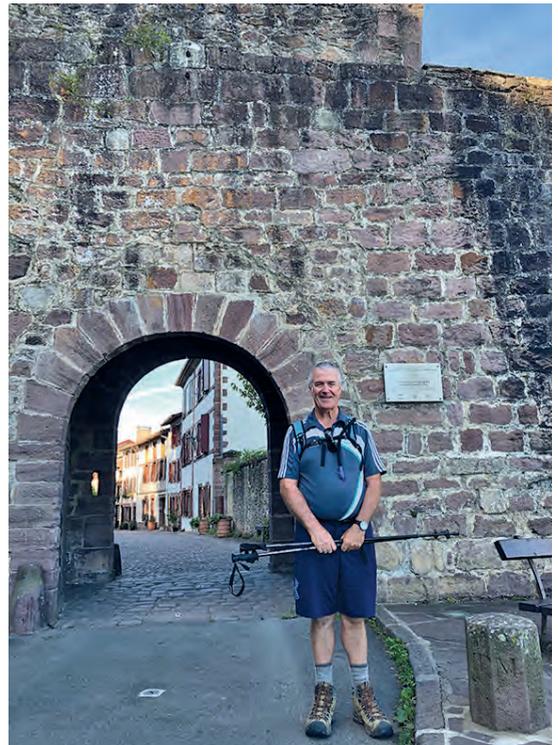
Stone-carved tympanum
on the Cathedral in Conques

way to rolling countryside, corn fields, vineyards and small cattle holdings. Villages and hamlets are often close to each other but fiercely independent. Most have their own church, often magnificent structures that once served much bigger populations. Every town has its war memorial, often recording the death of five and six members of the same family. Castelnaud-sur-l'Auvignon, a tiny, single-street village, has its own proud history as a home of the French Resistance. Display boards along the roadside tell the story, especially of Jeanne Robert, the nineteen-year old school teacher who was the local organiser. As I stood reading her extraordinary story, an old local man materialised beside me, his finger stabbing at her picture: "She was my teacher over there in the school". The school is named in her honour.

Everywhere, throughout the countryside and in the villages, overt signs of a past, vibrant faith abound. There are the ubiquitous wayside crosses, the churches and chapels, but especially statues of the Virgin Mary. The history of many in the countryside does not seem to be part of the public record, but many statues in the villages recall parish missions, or forty-hour devotions, of some past years and a different era of religious observance. The churches are well looked after and often have fresh-cut flowers at the altar, but most now see Mass only infrequently. Inside the porch of the huge church in Navarrenx there is a graphic showing the twenty-five churches that make up the parish of Navarrenx. All are within a twenty-kilometre radius. There is at least one Mass in each of them sometime in every two months. The majority of priests serving in these relatively remote places are French-speaking Africans.

The ancient trail of the Camino Frances provided a wonderful context for an extended period of prayer and reflection. Setting out from Le Puy-en-Velay, with its Marist connection, was something of added significance for me. Having even limited French was a help, and I found my French hosts in each village so friendly and accommodating. One host even told me over the phone the code to the front door of the hostel,

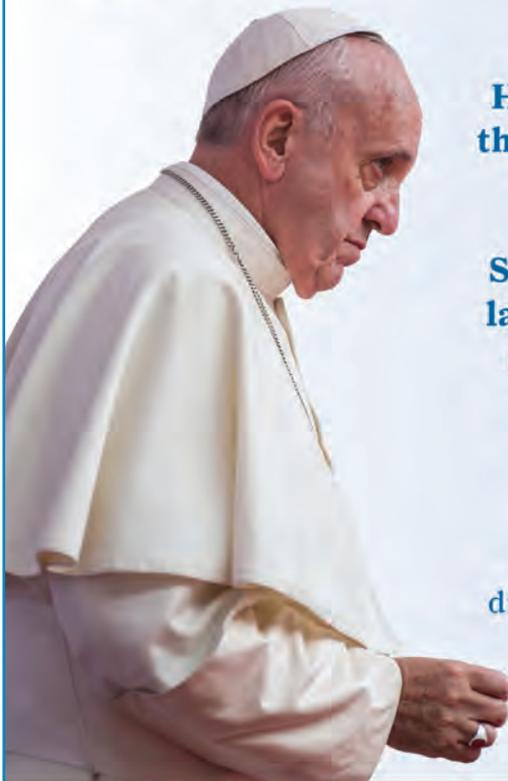
how to find the register to check my room number, and where to find the key. He was out picking mushrooms for dinner. And, of course, food is an art form for the French. The local speciality was always on the menu, and I ate many things I might not have otherwise chosen. But over all it was the silence, the solitude, the sense of history, the time to reflect, to pray, to remember, to anticipate, that made this experience what it was, the journey rather than the destination. 🍄



St Jean-Pied-de-Port: end of the French Camino and beginning of the Spanish

“I see the Church as a field hospital after battle.”

POPE FRANCIS



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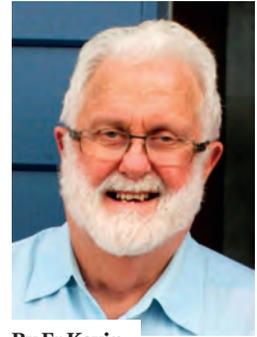


Too Much Excess!

Comedian and sometimes quirky social commentator H.G. Nelson had as one of his mantras: “When too much fun is never enough”. In his own way, he was taking the mickey out of a restless culture that is never satisfied with what it has. The longing for what is around the next corner shapes so much of our society, and we all run the risk of taking it as a given.

The boot’s been on the other foot these past months as this restless culture has been subjected to the restlessness of nature with its own version of excess.

Huge bushfires, some lasting for 174 and 204 days among many others, gave us a fearsome taste of nature’s own excess. There were lives lost, properties destroyed, communities decimated, and wildlife



**By Fr Kevin
Bates SM**

destroyed by the unimaginable power of the raging fires.

Smoke covered Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane and parts in-between, causing health concerns and making life very uncomfortable even for people not involved directly in battling the fires. Nature’s excess made us all shrink in size!

Then came the longed-for rain, not in gentle showers but in the form of catastrophic wind and storms. It filled up our dams, flooded our neighbourhoods and disrupted our power supplies. Once again, nature’s excessive force had its way with us.

While grateful for the rain, we didn’t enjoy the excessive power of nature much, which rendered us powerless and out of control. Nature’s expressions of excess didn’t sit well with us. We didn’t own or control them, and we were not comfortable.

In times more normal for us, we are in the driver's seat, and we are the ones who develop our own culture of excess. We think of this as good and satisfactory and sometimes with little thought for the consequences.

One woman writer, whose name escapes me, noted recently that if everyone lived at the standard that she was enjoying, we would need four and a half earths.

Just as we felt overwhelmed by the fire, smoke and storms, we can well imagine how most people in the world feel when they look at our wealth and our 'lifestyle', as we like to call it. Our excessive wealth creates confusion, fear, envy and a feeling of powerlessness from which there seems no escape.

Before we bash ourselves up too much about this, the world has probably always been pretty much this way.

Here are a couple of great saints from the early Church to bring our reflection to a close:

"The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry man, the coat hanging unused in your closet belongs to the man who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the man who has no shoes, the money which you put in the bank belongs to the poor. You do wrong to everyone you could help but fail to help".

St Basil, 330-379

"Do you wish to honour the body of Christ? Do not despise him when he is

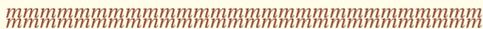
naked. Do not honour him here in the church building with silks, only to neglect him outside, when he is suffering from cold and from nakedness. For he who said, 'This is my Body' is the same who said 'you saw me, a hungry man, and you did not give me to eat'. Of what use is it to load the table of Christ? Feed the hungry and then come and decorate the table. You are making a golden chalice, and you do not give a cup of cold water? The Temple of your afflicted brother's body is more precious than this Temple (the church building). The Body of Christ becomes for you an altar. It is more holy than the altar of stone on which you celebrate the holy sacrifice. You are able to contemplate this altar everywhere, in the markets and in the open squares".

St. John Chrysostom, 349-407

May our excess be one of love, justice and abundant grace. 🍷



called not to lose our sense of integrity, even when harshly or falsely treated or abused; and in the Gospel we are called to recognise the voice of Jesus above all others. Sometimes we struggle to be as authentic as we know we should be, but we find the encouragement we need in Jesus: “I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full”.

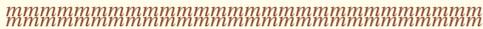


Monday 4 May

Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 42; John 10:11-18

What's the 'right thing'?

The problem Peter gets into in the first reading today is one we can readily identify with: trying so hard to do the 'right thing' that he loses sight of the bigger picture. Peter is preoccupied with 'keeping the rules' and so misses the meaning behind the rules – namely, that what God wants us to do is much more important than what we think we're supposed to do. That can lead us into strife sometimes – but provided we keep our eyes fixed on God, we will make the right decision.



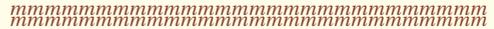
Tuesday 5 May

Acts 11:19-26; Psalm 87; John 10:22-30

Of woods and trees

It's not difficult to feel some sympathy for the Jews gathered round Jesus – they really would like a straightforward, simple answer. But as Jesus points out, they are the ones with the problem, not him – he has given them the answer to their question, but because it's not the one they were expecting or looking for, they've missed it. That can happen to us, too:

Jesus always answers our prayers, but not necessarily in the way we want or expect. And so, the question is: can we be open to whatever the answer is?



Wednesday 6 May

Acts 12:24-13:5; Psalm 67; John 12:44-50

Letting go

Sometimes we value people – and what they do – so much, that we can find it very hard to let them go. They literally become 'irreplaceable' – at least in our own minds. There's no doubt that Saul and Barnabas were valued and needed in the church at Antioch – but God had other plans for them. And those plans required openness on everyone's part – Barnabas and Saul to respond to the call; the rest of the group to let them go. Being able to say 'yes' is both a challenge and a gift.



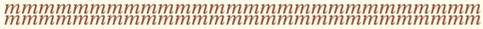
Thursday 7 May

Acts 13:13-25; Psalm 89; John 13:16-20

Offering encouragement

The invitation offered to Paul and his friends by the leaders of the synagogue in Antioch is significant: “Brothers, if you would like to address some words of encouragement to the congregation, please do so”. ‘Encouragement’ is the key guideline – the disciples were not given an open invitation to say whatever they liked. So often people are criticised, blamed, put down, marginalised, ignored. Whenever possible, we should seek to speak encouragingly rather than critically when we engage with others.

listen; if we don't like them, we pay little or no attention to what is being said.

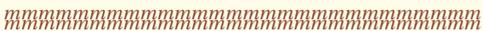


Tuesday 12 May

Acts 14:19-28; Psalm 145; John 14:27-31

Realities of life

Paul, as his opponents continually discovered, was not an easy man to get rid of. He experienced physical attacks and numerous journeys but always appeared again to offer encouragement to the disciples in various places and to explain how God had been at work through them. We, too, as Paul and Barnabas explained, "have to experience many hardships before we enter the kingdom of God". These aren't easy or insignificant, but if we remain focused in faith then we will see how God is at work in our lives.

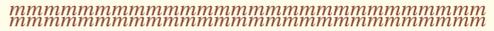


Wednesday 13 May

Acts 15:1-6; Psalm 122; John 15:1-8

Group-think

As we know from experience, it can be difficult to get a group to be unanimous in its opinions and beliefs. Sometimes it can become a case of the dominant voice persuading everyone else to their point of view or the stubborn type who simply won't change their perspective. At other times, it is a case of sincerely-held views which a person believes they need to maintain, even at the risk of being unpopular. Before moving to judgement on why someone won't agree with everyone else, it is important to take time to reflect and ask why they believe what they do.



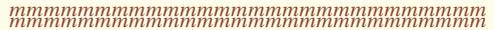
Thursday 14 May

ST MATTHIAS, APOSTLE (F)

Acts 1:15-17,20-26; Psalm 113; John 15:9-17

A relationship of love

Matthias was not one of the original twelve apostles, but was chosen by lot to replace Judas. Selection in such a way can seem random and haphazard, but it serves to emphasise that Matthias did not 'earn' selection solely through his own abilities but because of the gifts and talents God had given him. And so it is with us too – our relationship with God is not something we have earned either, but comes out of love: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you".



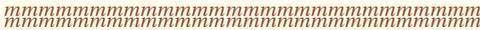
Friday 15 May

Acts 18:9-18; Psalm 47; John 16:20-23

Moving forward together

The force of Jesus' commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you", is seen in the way in which the apostles and elders in Jerusalem responded to the church in Antioch. By highlighting what the churches had in common rather than what divided them, they sought to find a way to move forward together. Rather than lay down a series of commands and edicts, they offered as much freedom as possible and focused on encouragement and unity. When faced with apparent division and disunity, we too should focus on what brings us together rather than on what separates us.

growth and to increasing understanding. We need to be prepared to let go of what gives us security precisely so that God can give us even greater gifts.

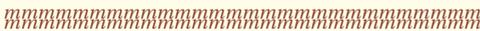


Wednesday 20 May

Acts 17:15,22-18:1; Psalm 148; John 16:12-15

Building altars

Perhaps the Greeks aren't the only ones with an altar inscribed: "To an Unknown God". Sometimes we can build a similar one in our own hearts – an altar we have created to a God who is made in our own image and likeness rather than the other way around. It can be a very subtle thing – we mould God to suit our preferences and desires and then we can live a life of self-satisfaction without any sense of guilt. That is why we need to be open to the Spirit of truth and to be able to reflect honestly on what is in our hearts.



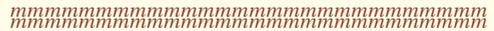
Thursday 21 May

Acts 18:9-18; Psalm 98; John 16:16-20

The courage to ask questions

Once again, the disciples are plunged into confusion by what Jesus says to them - and that's not something that they have on their own! We too can be confused by what we hear in our prayer; what we read; what we see in our world - and like the disciples we can be reluctant to voice our confusion to the Lord, perhaps for fear of causing offence. There is nothing we cannot ask God – we don't have to understand everything (and we won't) but simply by

putting our questions and doubts to God we show our willingness to enter into the mystery that is God's love for us.

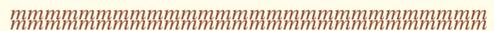


Friday 22 May

Acts 18:9-18; Psalm 47; John 16:20-23

On a journey

Today's Gospel reminds us that, as disciples, we are still on a journey while we are on this earth. And like any journey, the faith journey has its ups and downs; its moments of challenge and frustration; its sense that we are out of step with everyone else and that, perhaps, we've lost our way. But there is also the promise of 'arriving', of reaching our destination – and that the journey has been worthwhile. And once that moment is reached, then we have the promise that we shall share in a joy that no one can take from us.

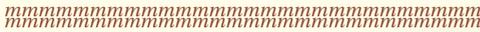


Saturday 23 May

Acts 18:23-28; Psalm 47; John 16:23-28

Knowing our desires

Jesus offers an extraordinary promise to his disciples: "Anything you ask for from the Father he will grant in my name". It can seem almost too good to be true – at least in human terms. But if we take it seriously, then the question arises: "What shall I ask for?" And that is a real challenge to discern because it takes us into the realm of our desires. At my deepest level, what do I need to ask God for at this point in my life?



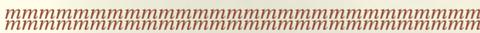
Sunday 24 May

ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47; Ephesians 1:17-23; Matthew 28:16-20

Room for everyone

If the eleven disciples thought that their coming together with Jesus on the mountain was a reunion of sorts, they were soon disabused. The command Jesus gives them is huge – “make disciples of all nations”. Clearly, they have work to do - and so do we. Our faith can never be about ‘me and Jesus’. We cannot take Jesus into our hearts and leave everyone else to fend for themselves. Every day, in different ways, by word and by example, we have the opportunity to “make disciples”, and we can have the confidence to take up that challenge because we know that we are not on our own.



Monday 25 May

ST BEDE THE VENERABLE, PRIEST AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH (OM)

Acts 19:1-8; Psalm 68; John 16:29-33

Mercy and choice

It’s easy to sense the relief amongst the disciples in today’s Gospel when they tell Jesus, “At last you’re making sense”. It’s quite possible that from time to time we’d also like to be able to say the same! The writings of today’s saint, Bede the Venerable, add a lot to our understanding but aren’t particularly well known today. However, one phrase has become famous in our time - “by having mercy he chose

him” – which is the motto of Pope Francis. The phrase refers to the call of Matthew, the tax collector – but it could equally well apply to each of us.



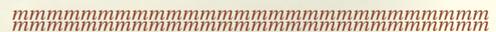
Tuesday 26 May

ST PHILIP NERI, PRIEST (M)

Acts 20:17-27; Psalm 68; John 17:1-11

Knowing who we are

St Philip Neri had many outstanding attributes, including being famous as a confessor - and he also had a very healthy sense both of his own imperfections and of the fact that God worked through him. As a result, he was free to do whatever God asked of him without worrying about his own reputation. If we, too, pray for the grace of good self-knowledge, then we, in turn, will be free to do whatever God asks of us without being concerned about what others may think of us.



Wednesday 27 May

Acts 20:28-38; Psalm 68; John 17:11-19

We’re not on our own

Both readings today carry a sense of warning – things are going to get difficult for the followers of Jesus: both from outside the church and, as Paul indicates, from within. But both readings also stress that it’s not going to be a case of “everyone for themselves”. God is with us to protect us. That does not mean we can sit back and leave everything to God – but it does mean that we do not, and should not, aim to rely totally on our own resources to cope with all the challenges we will face.

Mary was walking in her village and was suddenly astounded to see before her a large building with a courtyard and many girls playing and laughing. A voice said to her, "I entrust them to you". At the same time. St John Bosco had a similar experience and the same voice said to him, "These are my daughters; take care of them".

Fifteen young women, now comprising the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, under the direction of their founder, Fr Pestarino, took in a few young girls and housed them, schooling them in the faith and handing down to them their knowledge of dressmaking.

Don Bosco was told of the Daughters by Fr Pestarino and went to Mornese to investigate the possibility of founding, from the Daughters, a female counterpart of the Salesian Fathers. The women responded enthusiastically, and in 1867 had their first rule of life drawn up, with Mary as their first superior. They professed their vows as religious women five years later.

The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians sought to do for girls what the priests and brothers were doing in Turin for boys -- nurturing, teaching, and encouraging the young along the way of salvation and personal growth.

She died in Mornese in 1881.

Saint Mary, obtain for us true dedication to our vocation.

Source: <https://saintnook.com/life-of-st-mary-mazzarello>

Sts Cristóbal Magallanes and Companions (1869-1927)



Feast: 21 May

Cristóbal and his 24 companion martyrs lived under a very anti-Catholic government in Mexico, one determined to weaken the Catholic faith of its people. Churches, schools, and seminaries were closed; foreign clergy were expelled. Cristóbal established a clandestine seminary at Totatiche, Jalisco. He and the other priests were forced to minister secretly to Catholics during the presidency of Plutarco Calles (1924-28).

All of these martyrs, except three, were diocesan priests. David, Manuel and Salvador were laymen who died with their parish priest, Luis Batis. They all belonged to the Cristero movement, pledging their allegiance to Christ and to the Church that he established, to spread the Good News in society - even if Mexico's leaders had made it a crime to receive baptism or celebrate the Mass.

These martyrs were killed over 22 years in eight Mexican states. They were beatified in 1992 and canonised eight years later.

Saint Cristóbal, inspire us to give our all for Christ. 🙏

Source: <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-crisaint-oacute-bal-magallanes-and-companions/>

The Ascension in Stained Glass



By Glen
McCullough

At the end of Luke's and Mark's Gospels, they describe how Jesus gave them the great commission to go and tell everyone the Good News, and then he ascended to Heaven. The eleven apostles were there, in Luke's account, at Bethany.

This window **[1]** is from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Randwick, Sydney. Although it is very colourful, I find it a bit fanciful, with Jesus on a strange looking cloud. There are only nine apostles, and Mary is present. As she probably stayed with the Apostle John after the Resurrection, and John is probably depicted in the window (4th from left), she was probably there, although she is not specifically mentioned in the Gospels.

I have seen over 40 windows showing the Ascension, and most of them are very large. They have to be, in order to show the eleven apostles and Jesus rising to the sky. Here is just one example opposite **[2]**, from St Stephen's Church, Ashburton. It is very similar to beautiful windows I have seen in St Andrew's, New Plymouth; All Souls, Leichardt, Sydney; St Mary's Cathedral, Perth and St Barnabas, Khandallah. They all have the Holy Spirit





as a dove, the eleven Apostles and angels worshipping. Over the page are three very different windows - all of which I have truncated in some way for publication.

The first, from St Matthew's in the City, Auckland [3] is very stylised and modern. But it is very colourful and I stood taking it all in for quite some time.



The one at right [4] is in St Pius X, Tokoroa, and has a uniquely Māori flavour.

The last one, from St Andrew's Wesley, Vancouver BC [5], is my favourite, because it shows the apostles looking upwards to an empty sky with lost expressions on their faces. They didn't fully understand what had happened until they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. For me, these wonderful windows enhance my understanding and appreciation of the Ascension. 🙏



St Dymphna



By Tricia
O'Donnell

The Belgian city of Geel is renowned for its care for the mentally ill. The modern psychiatric facility that the town now boasts belies the unconventional origins of this care, back in the 13th century. However, we need to go back even further to a young Irish girl who was the catalyst for the reputation Geel holds today.

Dymphna lived in the 7th century. She was the daughter of a devoutly Christian mother and pagan father, Damon, who ruled the small kingdom of Oriel in Ireland. Dymphna was brought up Catholic, was as devout as her mother, and dedicated her life to Christ. Among the household staff was a priest, Father Gerebran, who nurtured the young girl's faith and taught her daily lessons. When Dymphna was fifteen, her mother died. Her grief-stricken father was inconsolable for a long time. Despite their differences in faith, Damon deeply loved his wife, and it took him over a year before he would consider remarrying.

However, how could he replace his beautiful wife? Only by finding someone equally attractive, which proved an



The Beheading of St Dymphna, Godfried Maes, 1688

impossible task for the messengers Damon sent out to search. They travelled all over Ireland and abroad but came back in despair – no one came close to the standard he required.

Whether Damon was advised or decided for himself that his daughter, who looked so much like her mother, was the answer, is not known. Dymphna, of course, was horrified when her father put the proposition to her. He gave her forty days to think about it, and she went immediately to Father Gerebran, who surmised that Damon was on the verge of insanity. He decided, with the help of other household staff, to arrange for Dymphna to leave the country.

After several days of travelling, the little party reached the port and managed to travel to the continent. They landed on the coast not far from Antwerp. From there, they eventually reached Geel, where the locals welcomed them warmly, and decided to settle.

Dymphna's father was furious when he found out about his daughter's disappearance and immediately sent his men to find her. They soon discovered that she and her helpers had crossed the sea to Belgium and reported back to Damon, who set out with his entourage to bring her home. When they found Dymphna and Father Gerebran in Geel, Damon demanded she return with him to Ireland,

but she refused. When the priest intervened on her behalf, the king ordered his men to kill him, which they duly did.

If he thought Dymphna would have second thoughts and go with him, he was wrong: she stood firm, which enraged him even more. She knew she was no match for him and that he could force her to return with him, and made it very clear that she would never become his wife. Her father's response was to take out his sword and cut off his daughter's head. It seems that she was only fifteen years old.



Photo: JH-man, Wikipedia

Church of St Dymphna, Geel, Belgium

The people of Geel took the bodies of Dymphna and Father Gerebran and buried them in a cave where they remained for several years. Eventually, they were moved to another location, thought to be a small church. Later, a church dedicated to her was built on the site of the original burial place. St Dymphna's church in Geel holds relics of her although a shrine to the saint in Massilon, Ohio, also has some of her remains. Father Gerebran's body was moved to Xanten in Germany.

Soon after Dymphna's burial place was discovered, there were reports of miracles occurring, particularly among those who were mentally ill and those with epilepsy. Devotion to the saint grew, and in the 13th century *The Life of St Dymphna (Vita Sanctae Dimpnae)* by the Canon of Cambrai, Petrus Cameracensis, was published, and veneration increased. More and more people settled in Geel, and pilgrims travelled from all over Europe seeking cures for mental illness. A newly-built hospital was unable to cope with the sheer volume of patients, so the townspeople stepped in. Such was their regard for St Dymphna that they took the mentally ill people into their own homes.

That people did this was remarkable in an age when there was little understanding of mental illness and when most people were prey to superstition and fear. The effect of this treatment was startling, as the patients responded positively to living

within the day-to-day routines of the families. In many cases, they became part of the family and went on to become part of the broader community. The tradition continues today. The most severe cases stay in the modern psychiatric facility, but when it is possible and appropriate, local people take in 'boarders', rather than patients, and help them to adapt to life in the outside world.

De-institutionalisation exists today in the form of half-way houses and other temporary accommodation for psychiatric patients. Geel discovered many years ago that it was the inclusion within family and community life that brought about the best outcomes for those who needed care.

The discovery changed the approach to caring for the mentally ill in that small corner of Belgium. This may never have happened but for the arrival of a young Irish girl whom they took to their hearts all those centuries ago.

St Dymphna is the patron saint of those suffering mental illness, anxiety, abuse and depression. Her feast day is on the 15th of May. 



Laudato Si' Week

16 – 24 May

The material in this article is drawn mostly from <https://laudatosiweek.org/>

Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home

Pope Francis' encyclical on climate change and ecology was signed on 24 May 2015, the Solemnity of Pentecost. Its title means *Praise be to You* in the Umbrian dialect spoken by St. Francis.

The encyclical is a reflection on how to practice the essential Catholic principle of valuing life in the midst of the unimaginable devastation of our planet. *Laudato Si'* responds to a world that is daily growing hotter, more polluted, and more devoid of life. It frames the urgent need to solve these challenges within the long history of Catholic teaching about ecology, and draws from statements made

by St John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and bishops and scholars from around the world.

Building on these foundations, *Laudato Si'* asks us to consider the deep connections between how we treat God, each other, and all creation. The encyclical proposes a lens of 'integral ecology', through which we see that the environmental catastrophe -- in all its dimensions -- is one symptom of a greater social catastrophe (137).

As *Laudato Si'* says, we don't face "two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather, one





complex crisis which is both social and environmental” (139). In the economy, policy, and technology, in biodiversity, resource management, and global warming, and even in our theology, we see that broken relationships have dire consequences for our world.

Hope is possible. We are called to assess our mode of living sincerely and to renew the bonds that tie us to each other and our Creator. As *Laudato Si'* says, “If the present ecological crisis is one small sign of the ethical, cultural and spiritual crisis of modernity, we cannot presume to heal our relationship with nature and the environment without healing all fundamental human relationships” (119).

Laudato Si' is a rich and moving document that offers new perspectives and opens new areas of inquiry in the body of Catholic teaching. It has been embraced by Catholic communities around the world -- Bishops' conferences, dioceses, parishes, religious communities, and Catholic schools and universities. Many communities have taken up its clear and coherent guidance on the roots of, and solutions to, a planet in crisis.

About *Laudato Si'*Week

*Laudato Si'*Week is a celebration of ambitious, prayerful actions to protect creation.

During *Laudato Si'*Week, we look back to celebrate the incredible actions Catholic communities have taken to date, and we look ahead with a commitment to accelerate action to protect our common home.

*Laudato Si'*Week draws not only on the encyclical, but also on other teachings that have been published in the past five years. These include *Querida Amazonía*, the apostolic exhortation on the synod for the Amazon, the intercontinental bishops' statement on climate change, and others.



Some things to do:

Save electricity

- Use the clothes line rather than the clothes dryer
- Use a drying rack near an open window to dry clothes when it's raining rather than using the clothes dryer
- Turn radios, television sets and lights off when they are not needed -- the exception is when you are not at home; leaving them on is an inexpensive security option
- Wait for a full load for the washing machine, and use the shortest cycle
- Wash clothes in cold water
- Use heaters, fans and electric blankets as little as possible
- If you use a dishwasher, choose the shortest cycle
- Turn the heater down and wear a jersey

Travel cheaply

- If possible, walk or bike
- Use public transport rather than driving
- When driving, accelerate gradually and brake gently
- To save fuel, keep the tyres on your vehicle at the correct pressure

Recycle

- Recycle as much paper and plastic as the local council allows
- If they are soiled, rinse plastics lightly before putting them in the recycling bin / bag
- Keep soft plastics (bread bags, newspaper wraps) out of the landfill -- reuse them if your local council does not accept them for recycling

In general

- Compost as many food scraps as possible -- coffee grounds and egg shells make good compost
- If it is permissible, use a 'keep-cup' for your visits to coffee takeaway shops
- Drink tap or filtered water, not bottled
- Buy from companies with eco-friendly policies
- Buy less, thus saving time and money 



The Toe and The Tooth



By Anne
Kerrigan

A Week in the Life of a Senior Citizen

My age doesn't bother me.

It's the side effects.

Anon.

It was mid-January, 2020, when I started to feel a slight ache in my left middle toe. I ignored it, because as the golden years continue, it's not advisable to pay too much attention to the small aches and pains. I save the concern for the big ones! I thought I might have stubbed my toe, but I didn't quite understand how one stubs a middle toe. No matter. But, as the days became weeks, I had to pay attention to it because it really started to hurt. I could hardly walk barefoot. The pain would just shoot up my entire leg. I couldn't believe that such a little toe could cause significant pain! When I had shoes on, the pain became tolerable. I made a 'to do' list, with calling the podiatrist at the top of it. I would have to hobble through the weekend and hope I would be able to get an appointment for Monday.

As well as my gradually increasing toe pain, I became aware of the fact that my front tooth was starting to feel less firm than normal. Actually, it was feeling a little shaky. It looked fine, but I couldn't shake the feeling (pardon the pun) that this tooth would be a problem soon. This issue really bothers me because I have always been rather fanatical about caring for my teeth. Ever since the age of sixteen, I have been to the dentist at least every six months.



Literally, every six months. I should be having no problem with my teeth. But I added the dentist to the 'to do' list. I became aware that these two doctors who had jumped to the top of my list were in addition to the regular and routine doctor visits already scheduled. Oyvey! It was promising to be a difficult week. I tried not to think about it and just move on, trying to relax and enjoy the weekend.

Then, the *pièce de résistance*. As I was brushing my teeth that Saturday evening, the front tooth just caved in. A large portion of the tooth just disappeared. As I looked in the mirror, I was horrified. There was a big gaping hole where one portion of the tooth used to be. I envisioned that



this is what a survivor from the zombie apocalypse might look like. I could hardly breathe. I called for my thirteen year old grandson to take a look.

"That's disgusting!" he said. Appropriate reaction. It was disgusting. I could hardly talk for the rest of the weekend, and I certainly could not laugh! Monday couldn't come fast enough.

On Monday, the appointment gods smiled upon me! I was able to schedule the podiatrist visit in the morning and the dental meeting in the afternoon.

The podiatrist seemed to empathise with my toe pain plight, but as he took out the scalpel, I started to wonder if the toe would hurt more or less when he finished utilising his surgical prowess. A few minutes later, as I hesitatingly stood up and walked a few steps, I realised that the pain was gone. The podiatrist, with his magical scalpel, had wielded a miracle! The plantar wart had been excised and I felt ready for a four minute mile (in my dreams!). A little tenderness was the only remnant of my tortured toe.

When I finally arrived at the dentist's office, I was walking nimbly, and filled with the hope that the tooth problem would be able to be solved as quickly and as efficiently as the toe problem. The dentist took one look at the tooth and said, "Oh". He sounded calm when he made that observation, so hope remained within me. He then numbed my mouth

and started drilling. The drills were various shapes and sizes, varying in sound, speed and intensity. I was very anxious. After what seemed like an eternity in the chair, he stated that he was all done. I was afraid to look at the finished product. Would I still look “disgusting?” He handed me a mirror. I was surprised, shocked and eternally grateful in one fell swoop! The front tooth looked as it had before the cave-in. The dentist had worked his magic and artistry. It seemed almost nonsensical that I would feel such gratitude for scalpels and drills, but I am so very grateful. It is now over fourteen days since that fateful week when the toe and the tooth became my nemeses, reminding me that many body parts frequently show their wear and tear. The tenderness in the toe has totally abated and is pain-free when I walk – just wonderful! I am still very careful about the front tooth and I treat it with lots of tender, loving care, including yogurt and soft food.

It also seems irrational that my experience of a tortured toe and a fractured tooth has, in the end, become a positive experience. I feel as if I have always tried to be a grateful person, grateful for the many gifts in my life, but I don't recall being thankful for toes that don't hurt and teeth that remain intact. This experience has reminded me to be appreciative of all the little blessings in my life, remembering that they are all gifts of a loving God.

Meister Eckhart, a 14th century theologian, once said, “If the only prayer you ever say in your life is 'thank you', that will be enough”.

Thank you, God, for your talented and gifted servants, those who dedicate their lives to helping others. I am very grateful.

Dear God, help me never to take the little things in life things for granted, such as toes and teeth. I pray that I am always ready to thank you for the many gifts in my life, and there are so many!

My cup runneth over
Psalm 23 



he could put his energies into learning Italian. Returning from Rome in 1987, he was appointed to Mt Albert Parish and then to the community at Flaxmere in 1989 and 1990. After a short time in Tokoroa with Bishop Takuira Mariu and supplying in Thames, and other parts of the North Island, he returned to Whangarei in 1992.

In 2000, Pat's generosity and openness to a variety of ministries showed itself again in his going to the Tyburn Monastery in the Bombay Hills in South Auckland, as chaplain for 14 years. It was what he called 'a retirement ministry', which allowed him to be part of the prayer and liturgical life of the monastery and attend to the spiritual needs of the nuns. Again, he was faithful and generous with his time, always preparing his homilies well.

In 2014, at 84 years of age, he retired fully from active ministry and went to live at the Marist community at Marian Court at the Home of Compassion in Upper Hutt. There he kept contact with his many friends, including Sr Frances and the Brigidine sisters.

He had a long and good life, enriched and defined by his family, friends, his faith and his Marist vocation. It took him to many parts of New Zealand and around the world, yet his real pilgrimage was about following the Lord wherever he was asked to go.

Now his earthly pilgrimage has ended. And so, today we pray that you rest in peace, Pat. 🙏

Appointments

- 1954 – 1955 : St Patrick's College, Wellington
- 1956 : St Augustine's College, Whanganui
- 1957 – 1958 : St Bede's College, Christchurch
- 1959 : St Patrick's College, Wellington
- 1960 : St Augustine's College, Whanganui
- 1961 : St Patrick's College, Wellington (full-time university)
- 1962 – 1975 : St Patrick's College, Wellington
- 1976 – 1978 : St Patrick's High School, Timaru
- 1979 – July 1980 : Whangarei Parish
- July 1980 – September 1986 : Rome, superior, SM General House
- 1987 – 1988 : Mt Albert Parish, Auckland
- 1989 – 1990 : Flaxmere and Hospital Chaplaincy
- 1991 – July : Whangarei
- July – October 1991 : Tokoroa, with Bishop Takuira Mariu SM
- October 1991 – January 1992 : supply at Thames, Coromandel Peninsula
- 1992 – 2000 Whangarei Parish
- 2001 – 2014 : Chaplain, Tyburn Monastery, Bombay, Auckland
- 2014 May – 2020 : Marian Court, Silverstream

Thanks to Fr Patrick Breeze SM for this abbreviated version of his eulogy.



Crossword by Max

The winner of the Marist Messenger prize for the **March** Crossword was **Robert Thomson of North Sydney, NSW, Australia**

Solution for April

Across: 1 Prophet, 5 Arena, 8 Utter, 9 Introit, 10 Beatification, 11 Side, 12 Pyx, 13 RCIA, 17 Excommunicate, 20 Godhead, 21 Third, 22 Nurse, 23 Yardman.

Down: 1 Plumb, 2 Outward, 3 Hermit, 4 Trinity Sunday, 5 Actual, 6 E coli, 7 Antenna, 11 Sten gun, 14 Charism, 15 Ampere, 16 Sister, 18 Cedar, 19 End on.

Clues

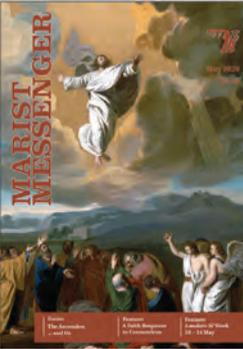
Across

- 1 The Pope lives in a sacred body of water, I hear! (4,3)
- 5 A hiccup I daresay may hide his arrows of love! (5)
- 8 Clerical office actioned a rethink! (9)
- 9 A short month near year's end! (3)
- 10 Organise vendetta without TNT to avoid capture! (5)
- 12 "Lovely was the death of Him whose life was Love! Holy with power, He on the thought-benighted Skeptic beamed Manifest ____." S T Coleridge (7)
- 13 Arranged on locations with God given comfort! (11)
- 16 "A CIA ram" badly translated from a Semitic language! (7)
- 18 Horrible motet about object with spiritual significance in indigenous societies! (5)
- 20 James Clavell's "___-Pan" (3)
- 21 Knoll figs transformed sandy course! (4,5)
- 23 Learn after a fashion of kidney-related descriptor! (5)
- 24 Worry as regenerated Eurasian medicinal plants discovered! (7)

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8									9			
10		11				12						
	13							14				
15												
16				17				18				19
20				21						22		
23						24						

Down

- 1 Characters in impoverished geopolitics create a border solution! (5)
- 2 Spill ale on field! (3)
- 3 Implements third-rate accommodation in steamship! (7)
- 4 Angelical levy restored by manner of preaching! (13)
- 5 "He that will believe only what he can fully comprehend must have a long head or a very short ____," Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (5)
- 6 Pen octets haphazardly during Christian feast! (9)
- 7 To cause disagreement, I dived awkwardly! (6)
- 11 I, a donator, amended Eucharistic veneration! (9)
- 14 Tut! Liar dissembles about formal position without authority! (7)
- 15 Able to decompose backwards while leading singing at church! (6)
- 17 North wind destroyed heavenly messenger! (8)
- 19 Prophet some confused with southern ending! (5)
- 22 Military appointment is a devious con! (3)



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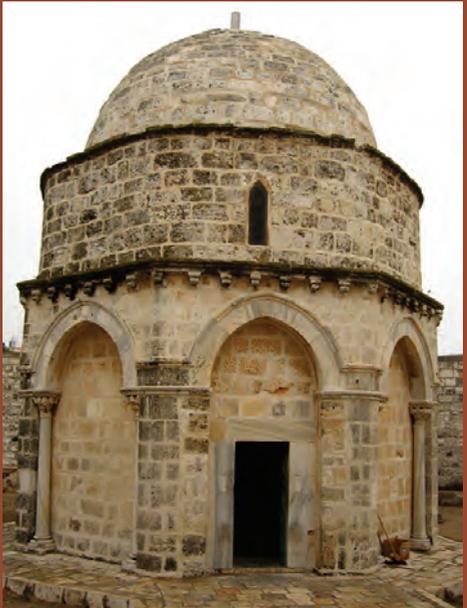
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The Chapel of the Ascension
Mount of Olives, Jerusalem

Source: Adriatikus, Wikipedia

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