



Prayers for the Week Ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 18TH MAY

Monday 18th May

OFFICIAL



Pope John I inherited the Arian heresy, which denied the divinity of Christ. Italy had been ruled for 30 years by an emperor who espoused the heresy, though he treated the empire's Catholics with toleration. His policy changed at about the time the young John was elected pope. When the eastern emperor began imposing severe measures on the Arians of his area, the western emperor forced John to head a delegation to the East to soften the measures against the heretics. Little is known of the manner or outcome of the negotiations—designed to secure continued toleration of Catholics in the West. On his way home, John was imprisoned at Ravenna because the emperor had begun to suspect that John's friendship with his eastern rival might lead to a conspiracy against his throne. Shortly after his imprisonment, John died, apparently from the treatment he received in prison. John's body was transported to Rome and he was buried in the Basilica of St. Peter.

Reflection:

We cannot choose the issues for which we have to suffer and perhaps die. John I suffered because of a power-conscious emperor. Jesus suffered because of the suspicions of those who were threatened by his freedom, openness, and powerlessness. "If you find that the world hates you, know it has hated me before you" (John 15:18).

Hail Mary...

St Pope John 1st

Tuesday 19th May

OFFICIAL



St. Celestine V, was born Pietro Angelerio. He was a monk and hermit who founded the order of the Celestines. In 1294, he was elected Pope in the Catholic Church's last non-conclave Papal election, ending a two year impasse. Among the only surviving edicts he issued as Pope, was the confirmation of the right of the Pope to abdicate. All of his other official acts were annulled by his successor, Pope Boniface VIII. Celestine resigned stating his desire to return to his humble, pre-papal life. On December 13, 1294, he announced his resignation. He was then imprisoned by Pope Boniface VIII, in the castle of Fumone in the Campagna region, where he died after nine months of being held prisoner. He was canonized in 1313, and no other Pope has taken the name "Celestine".

.Hail Mary...

St Celestine V, Pope

Wednesday 20th
May

OFFICIAL



Mary the Mother of the
Church

Little is said about the most glorious Mother of God in the Scriptures. In many ways, she lived a quiet and hidden life. Since her Assumption into Heaven, the Church has prayerfully pondered her life and role in the mystery of salvation. Little by little, saint after saint and pope after pope have shed greater light upon her singularly unique and glorious role in the Father's eternal plan. As the Church's understanding of the Blessed Mother has deepened, new titles and new dogmas have been proclaimed about Mary. In 2018, a new liturgical memorial honored her with the title "Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church."

Today, the Mother of the Church reigns in Heaven next to her Son; from there, she continues to nurture the Church as a loving mother. She not only intercedes for us but also mediates her Son's saving grace, making her the ongoing instrument of grace and mother of all.

Most glorious Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, to you I entrust myself just as Jesus entrusted John to your care. Receive me as your spiritual child, and nurture me with your Son's divine grace. Thank you for your "Yes" to the Father's plan, for your life, and for your continuous "Yes" through time and eternity. May my "Yes" echo yours as I surrender fully to God's plan. Mother Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.

Thursday 21st May



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Like Blessed Miguel Agustín Pro, SJ, 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 did not die as a single group but over 22 years time in eight Mexican states, with Jalisco and Zacatecas having the largest number. They were beatified in 1992 and canonized eight years later.

Reflection:

Every martyr realizes how to avoid execution, but refuses to pay the high price of doing so. A clear conscience was more valuable than a long life. We may be tempted to compromise our faith while telling ourselves that we are simply being realistic, dealing with situations as we find them. Is survival really the ultimate value? Do our concrete, daily choices reflect our deepest values, the ones that allow us to “tick” the way we do? Anyone can imagine situations in which being a follower of Jesus is easier than the present situation. Saints remind us that our daily choices, especially in adverse circumstances, form the pattern of our lives.

*Saint Cristobal Magallanes
and his companions*

Friday 22nd May

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St. Rita was a female saint living during the 14th and 15th century in Italy. Although she was married at any early age to an abusive husband, with whom her relationship lasted for more than 18 years, she was a model wife who prayed constantly for her husband. Even after her husband died in a feud, she discouraged her sons from trying to seek revenge. Following their death, Rita entered the convent in Cascia.

Today, St. Rita is known as the patron saint for abused women, mourning wives and impossible causes. Many women turn to her during times of despair, after a death in the family or even after a divorce. She is often depicted in artwork and on medals in a religious sister's habit, with roses or a rose crown.

Reflection:

- *Holy Patroness of those in need, Saint Rita, so humble, pure and patient, whose pleadings with thy Divine Spouse are irresistible, obtain for me from thy Crucified Christ my request (mention it here). Be kind to me, for the greater glory of God, and I promise to honor thee and to sing thy praises forever.*
- *Oh glorious St. Rita, who didst miraculously participate in the sorrowful Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, obtain for me the grace to suffer with resignation the troubles of this life, and*
- *protect me in all my needs. Amen*



St Rita of Cascia