

## **May 21: St. Eugene de Mazenod (1782-1861)**

Born into a noble family in Aix (Provence), Eugene spent part of his childhood in Italy because of the French Revolution. Although he grew up with the privileges and luxuries of wealth, his family life was far from ideal. His parents came from very different backgrounds and they eventually divorced, a rarity for Catholics in the 18th century. From an early age, Eugene was troubled by the living conditions of the poor and their degraded status in society. After years of struggling to find his place in life, Eugene experienced a conversion at the age of 25 and entered the seminary. Ordained a priest at Amiens in 1811, Eugene was not satisfied to accept the traditional role of a pastor serving a large, affluent parish. Instead, he sought out the poor labourers and preached the message of God's love -- a message they had not heard before. He soon organized missionaries to go to rural parts of Provence, instructing the people whose religious training had been disrupted for many years by the French Revolution.

Eugene began the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1816, obtaining papal approval for them 10 years later. From rural preaching, they soon moved into running seminaries to improve the quality of the clergy. Their first foreign mission was in Canada in 1841; soon they were in Africa, Asia, Australia and Latin America. Since they were founded, thousands of Oblate priests and brothers have dedicated their lives to serving those most in need. His congregation has grown to become one of the largest in the Church, serving in over 50 countries, especially in northern and western Canada. Many of its members have become missionary bishops.

In 1851, Eugene followed his uncle as archbishop of Marseilles; Eugene died in that city 10 years later. He had focused his energies on Church renewal and reform while vigorously defending the Church's right to spread the Good News.

Efforts to have him canonized began in 1926 and were rewarded with his beatification in 1975. On December 3, 1995, Pope John Paul II canonized Eugene De Mazenod a saint and recognized his example of untiring dedication to the poor, praising his vision, perseverance and conformity to God's will.

MAY 2021

## **Prayer from Taizé**

Christ Jesus, you gave your life so as to open for us a way to God. In order to be fully with us, you endured suffering; and now you share with us the joy of your resurrection. You assure us: we will never be alone, for the Holy Spirit lives in us and supports and inspires us to live in your footsteps. In the joys of life as in its sorrows, you are there, and you walk alongside every human being. You love is for ever.

## **Prayers of Intercession for our parish**

- Let us pray that the joy of new life we receive from Christ's resurrection at Easter will flow through us to others so that they too may experience God's mercy and love.
- Let us pray for our newly-emerging Acorn groups, that they will encourage mutual support and nurture faith-based friendships in our community.

## **Some tweets by Pope Francis**

- God overcomes the world's evil by taking it upon himself. This is also how we can lift others up: not by judging, not by suggesting what to do, but by becoming neighbours, empathizing, sharing God's love.
- We are always on a journey in life. Let us choose the path of God! We will discover that there are no unexpected events, no uphill path, and no night that cannot be faced with Jesus.
- The Lord does not call us to be soloists, but to be part of a choir that can sometimes miss a note or two, but must always try to sing in unison.
- The person who prays is like someone in love with the beloved in his or her heart wherever they go. So we can pray at any moment, and during whatever happens every day; on the street, in the office, on public transport, through words and in the silence of our hearts.

## **May 30: St. Joan of Arc 1412-1431**

Burned at the stake as a heretic after a politically-motivated trial, Joan was centuries later beatified in 1909 and canonized in 1920.

She was born of a fairly well-to-do peasant couple in Domremy-Greux (southeast of Paris), Joan was only 12 when she experienced a vision and heard voices that she later identified as Sts. Michael the Archangel, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and St. Margaret of Antioch.

During the Hundred Years War, she led French troops against the English and recaptured the cities of Orléans and Troyes. This enabled Charles VII to be crowned as king in Reims in 1429. Captured near Compiègne the following year, she was sold to the English and placed on trial for heresy and witchcraft. Professors at the University of Paris supported Bishop Pierre Cauchon of Beauvais, the judge at her trial; Cardinal Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, participated in the questioning of Joan in prison. In the end, she was condemned for wearing men's clothes. Her trial took place during the 100 Year's War between France and England; the English resented France's military success, to which Joan had contributed.

On 30th May 1431, she was burned at the stake in Rouen, and her ashes were scattered in the River Seine. A second Church trial 25 years later nullified the earlier verdict, which was reached under political pressure.

Remembered by most people for her later military exploits, Joan had a great love for the sacraments, which strengthened her compassion toward the poor. Popular devotion to her increased greatly in 19th-century France and later among French soldiers during World War I. Theologian George Tavard writes that her life "offers a perfect example of the conjunction of contemplation and action" because her spiritual insight is that there should be a "unity of heaven and earth."

## **Pope Francis' prayer intention for April: 'For fundamental human rights'**

Defending fundamental human rights demands courage and determination. I'm referring to actively combating poverty, inequality, the lack of work, land and housing, and the denial of social and labour rights. Often, in practice, fundamental human rights are not equal for all. There are first-, second-, and third-class people, and those who are disposable.

No. They must be equal for all. In some places, defending people's dignity can mean going to prison, even without a trial. Or it might mean slander. Every human being has the right to develop fully, and this fundamental right cannot be denied by any country.

Let us pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis, that they may see their sacrifice and their work bear abundant fruit.

## **Prayers of Comfort: For Others - Anon**

Lord, help me live from day to day  
In such a self-forgetful way,  
That even when I kneel to pray,  
My prayer shall be for others.

Help me in all the work I do  
To ever be sincere and true,  
And know, that all I do for you  
Must needs be done for others.

And when my work on earth is done,  
And my new work in Heaven begun,  
May I forget the crown I've won  
While thinking still of others.

Others, Lord, yes others,  
Let this my motto be,  
Help me to live for others  
That I may live for Thee.