

April 15: Blessed Caesar de Bus (1544-1607)

Like so many of us, Caesar de Bus struggled with the decision about what to do with his life. After completing his Jesuit education he had difficulty settling between a military and a literary career. He wrote some plays but ultimately settled for life in the army and at court.

For a time life was going rather smoothly for the engaging, well-to-do young Frenchman. He was confident he had made the right choice. That was until he saw firsthand the realities of battle, including the St. Bartholomew's Day massacres of French Protestants in 1572.

He fell seriously ill and found himself reviewing his priorities, including his spiritual life. By the time he had recovered, Caesar had resolved to become a priest. Following his ordination in 1582, he undertook special pastoral work: teaching the catechism to ordinary people living in neglected, rural, out-of-the-way places. His efforts were badly needed and well received.

Working with his cousin, Caesar developed a program of family catechesis. The goal—to ward off heresy among the people—met the approval of local bishops. Out of these efforts grew a new religious congregation: the Fathers of Christian Doctrine.

One of Caesar's works, Instructions for the Family on the Four Parts of the Roman Catechism, was published 60 years after his death.

“Family catechesis” is a familiar term in parish life today. Grounded in the certainty that children learn their faith first from their parents, programs that deepen parental involvement in religious education multiply everywhere. There were no such programs in Caesar's day until he saw a need and created them. Other needs abound in our parishes, and it's up to us to respond by finding ways to fill them or by joining in already established efforts.

Caesar was beatified in 1975.

A prayer from Taizé

Christ Jesus, even when we can feel nothing of your presence, you are always there. Your Holy Spirit remains continually active in us, opening little ways forward to escape from our dead ends and to move towards the essential of faith, of trust.

Prayers of Intercession for our parish

- Let us pray for our school – a vital part of our Parish and our community, that we will listen and learn from each other, helping us all to draw closer to Christ in hope and joy.
- Let us pray that our participation in the Belong and Believe Lenten Spiritual Campaign is helping us find the time to slow down so that we are able to see God's glory and to recognise the needs of others.
- For our parish ministry to those who feel trapped in some way, let us pray that our efforts will help and support them to find freedom in God's consolation, bringing them closer to Christ in hope and joy.

Recent tweets by Pope Francis

- Prophecy makes us capable of putting the Beatitudes into practice in everyday situations, meekly, yet resolutely, building God's kingdom in which love, justice and peace are opposed to every form of selfishness, violence and degradation.
- God conceals himself in the most ordinary situations of our lives. He does not come in extraordinary events, but in everyday things: our daily work, a chance encounter, someone in need... That's where the Lord is, who calls to us and inspires our actions.
- Let us place our trust in the Lord of the universe, who loves us immensely and knows that we can build something wonderful, something eternal with Him. The lives of the saints show us this in a most beautiful way.

April 30: St. Pius V (1504-1572)

This is the pope whose job was to implement the work of the Council of Trent. If we think popes had difficulties after Vatican Council II, Pius V had even greater problems after Trent.

During his papacy (1566-1572), Pius V was faced with the almost overwhelming responsibility of getting a shattered and scattered Church back on its feet. The family of God had been shaken by corruption, by the Reformation, by the constant threat of Turkish invasion and by the bloody bickering of the young nation-states. In 1545 a previous pope convened the Council of Trent in an attempt to deal with all these problems. Off and on over 18 years, the Church Fathers discussed, condemned, affirmed and decided upon a course of action. The Council closed in 1563.

Pius V was elected in 1566 and was charged with the task of implementing the sweeping reforms called for by the Council. He ordered the founding of seminaries for the proper training of priests. He published a new missal, a new breviary, a new catechism and established the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) classes for the young. Pius zealously enforced legislation against abuses in the Church. He patiently served the sick and the poor by building hospitals, providing food for the hungry and giving money customarily used for the papal banquets to poor Roman converts. His decision to keep wearing his Dominican habit led to the custom of the pope wearing a white cassock.

In striving to reform both Church and state, Pius encountered vehement opposition from England's Queen Elizabeth and the Roman Emperor Maximilian II. Problems in France and in the Netherlands also hindered Pius's hopes for a Europe united against the Turks. Only at the last minute was he able to organize a fleet which won a decisive victory in the Gulf of Lepanto, off Greece, on October 7, 1571.

Pius's ceaseless papal quest for a renewal of the Church was grounded in his personal life as a Dominican friar. He spent long hours with his God in prayer, fasted rigorously, deprived himself of many customary papal luxuries and faithfully observed the spirit of the Dominican Rule that he had professed.

For Easter Sunday

Born in a grave

Your tomb they say is empty.

Christ is risen, they say.

You are risen indeed, I reply,

Lord, deepen my faith in the new man "born in a grave".

Deepen my faith in myself to burst forth from the tomb within, that is so carefully sealed and guarded.

Deepen my faith, optimism, hope in life.

Deepen our faith in each other, so that we, the church, so carefully sealed and guarded against the Spirit, may burst open with new life.

Rex Chapman

FRESH SPRINGS

That perfect balance between agony and joy

Given

Through His Cross and Resurrection.

The loving touch of His hands

Heals

Our wounded hearts and spirits

Making them whole.

His loving patience with us,

His compassion for us

Blesses us

With fresh springs of love;

Unutterable joy.

Society of the Sacred Cross

Lord Jesus,

because you rose from the dead,

a new life is made possible for us.

You have conquered hatred and jealousy.

You have conquered sin and death.

Now you are alive for ever, You live to give us your life.

Thank you for the certainty of belief in your resurrection.

Help us to know your transforming power in our daily lives,

Amen.

William N. Richard and James Richardson

