

HOLY REDEEMER



GRACE NOTES

May 2024

Introduction...

Welcome to the Merry Month of May. According to Gallup, May is America's favorite month. College students get out of school, summer starts. We buy sandals and sunblock and sit on patios with our friends and enjoy Sunday brunch.

Researchers have begun to quantify this feeling -- it's when the winter blues, and associated clinical conditions like seasonal affective disorder, finally lift. Our brains are more focused and efficient. We perceive spring to be eternal -- more than twice as long as winter. We become more positive as the days grow longer. And babies are more likely to have an "excessively positive outlook on life" if they're born in the month of May.



Holy Redeemer parishioners have a couple of other reasons to be especially happy this month. The first is our annual May Crowning, which this year will take place on Sunday, May 5th. We will be conducting the May Crowning ceremony outside this year since we will still be holding mass at Our Lady of Grace Chapel, and the statue of Mary is on the side lawn. Hopefully we will have a large number of children at mass to help with the crowning.

The second reason to be especially joyous this month is that Wednesday, May 1st will be the official kickoff date for Holy Redeemer's small faith-sharing groups. At Holy Redeemer Parish, small faith-sharing groups of 8-10 members will meet every Wednesday afternoon from 3 to 5 pm at Our Lady of Grace Chapel. We believe that our relationship with Jesus Christ can be transformative and that small groups can provide connections with others who are seeking to cultivate a closer relationship to Jesus. Through prayer, scripture and faith-sharing conversations, members grow together and in so doing enhance the community of our parish. Please join us. You can call the Parish Office at 508 945-0677 or email us at parish@holyredeemerchatham.org



We are especially grateful to the following individuals who have volunteered to serve as facilitators for the small groups: Jeffrey Bernard, Joanne Bradley, Richard Brothers, Linore Dudik, Peter Gibson, Janene Goudreault, George Lane, Pat Lim, Teresa Lim, Cecile Maranhas, Judy McDonald, Evemarie McNeil, Dee Tripp, and Jean Zilliox.

On the Shoulders of Giants – The Apostles

Isaac Newton said that all he had accomplished in life was due to “standing on the shoulders of the giants” who came before him. Each month we will remember one of the giants upon whose shoulders the parishioners of Holy Redeemer are perched.

For the past year Grace Notes has focused on the Apostles and endeavored to illuminate each of their life stories. So far we’ve profiled all of the original Apostles -- Andrew, Simon Peter, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the Lesser, Jude Thaddeus, Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot – plus Mathias, who was added to the original twelve following the death of Jesus. This month we conclude our series on the Apostles with Paul, the other Apostle who was added after Jesus was crucified.

After Jesus, Paul is often considered to be one most important persons in the history of Christianity. However, he also had many enemies and detractors, and his contemporaries probably did not accord him as much respect as they gave Peter and James. However, he was a prolific writer and his surviving letters have had enormous influence on the Church. His first letter to the Corinthians – “Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, is not pompous...” – is undoubtedly the most frequent reading at wedding ceremonies. Of the 27 books in the New Testament, 13 are attributed to Paul, and approximately half of the Acts of the Apostles deals with Paul’s life and works.



Paul was born around 4 BC in Tarsus, which was a major city in a region that was part of the Roman province of Syria. Two of the main cities of Syria -- Damascus and Antioch -- played a prominent part in Paul’s life and letters. Paul was a descendant of the tribe of Benjamin, a Greek-speaking Jew, and his Jewish name was Saul. It was not uncommon in those days to have two names.

In his childhood and youth, Paul learned how to “work with [his] own hands” (1 Corinthians 4:12), and his trade was tent making. His letters are written in Koine, or “common” Greek, rather than in the elegant literary Greek of his wealthy contemporary, which suggests that he was not an aristocrat. Paul was a member of the Pharisees. Pharisees were very careful students of the Hebrew Bible, and he was able to quote extensively from the Greek translation. He spent much of the first half of his life persecuting the nascent Christian movement, an activity to which he refers several times. Paul’s motivations are unknown but it is possible that Paul believed that Jewish converts to the new movement were not sufficiently observant of the Jewish law.



Paul's conversion to Christianity is one of the most important events in history. He was on the road to Damascus when suddenly he had a vision that changed his life, his views, and his reason for being. He saw the Lord who came to him in a brilliant and overpowering light. He was temporarily blinded by this light, and when he recovered he believed that the event was a sign that he had been chosen by God to preach to the Gentiles.

Paul eventually journeyed to Jerusalem to become acquainted with the leading apostles there and to study the scriptures. He then journeyed to Antioch to begin his mission of converting the Gentiles, an effort that would fundamentally change the character of the early Christian movement, eventually turning it into a new religion. It was in Antioch that the followers of Jesus were first called "Christians."



St. Paul in Prison

Paul then began his famous missions to the west, eventually establishing several churches in Asia Minor and at least three in Europe. In his late 50s Paul returned to Jerusalem, where he was arrested, and after a series of trials, he was sent to Rome. There he was eventually executed – together with Peter -- perhaps as part of the executions of Christians ordered by the Roman emperor Nero following the great fire in the city.

According to the "*Liber Pontificalis*," Paul's body was buried outside the walls of Rome, on the estate owned by a Christian woman named Lucina. It was there, in the fourth century, that the Emperor Constantine the Great built a first church. In 2002, a marble sarcophagus, inscribed with the words "*PAULO APOSTOLO MART*", which translates as "Paul Apostle Martyr", was discovered during excavations. The unopened sarcophagus was examined using a probe, which revealed pieces of incense, purple, and blue linen, and small bone fragments. The bone was radiocarbon dated to the 1st or 2nd century AD. According to the Vatican, these findings support the conclusion that the tomb is Paul's.

allegedly does not examine the issues or is revelatory of cockeyed optimism." *Ouch!* Journalist Michael Ross observed that "Derision of the song and its emotional foundation has become a required sign of toughness and pragmatism in American politics today."

And unfortunately the criticism of "Kumbaya" is coming from both sides of the political aisle.

In November 2004, on the day that the William J. Clinton Presidential Library opened in Little Rock, Ark., Fox News commentator Bill O'Reilly interviewed Geraldo Rivera. "It was a wonderful day, Bill, and I think we should put aside these issues of what was in, what was left out," Rivera said. "The fact of the matter is you had President Carter, first President Bush, the current president, all of the first ladies ..."

"Now did you sing 'Kumbaya'?" O'Reilly asked sarcastically.



In October 2007, in a bid to clearly delineate differences between his own policies and those of Senator Hillary Clinton, Presidential candidate Barack Obama said the idea that he and Clinton were "holding hands and singing 'Kumbaya'" on political issues was wrong.

Michael Ross also noted that perhaps the corruption of "Kumbaya" is a sign of the rudeness at the root of the current political discourse. Or maybe it's an indication that without the personal compass we lost on the trail years ago ... we can't find that campfire anywhere. And perhaps getting along with each other is hopeless.

But if the country is not about everyone getting along, what is it about?

As the election season heats up, and we are bombarded with accusations and threats and vitriol, it might not be a bad idea to close our eyes, take a deep breath, and sing a few verses of "Kumbaya." Perhaps think about ways that we can all lower the temperature of the debate. And look for ways that everyone can all get along.



And if that doesn't work there's always "Michael Row the Boat Ashore."

Jeopardy for Catholics

Here's the way this works. We will give you an important aspect of Catholicism as noted in the "The Mary Knoll Catholic Dictionary," and ask you to name it. As always, your answer must be worded in the form of a question. Since we're wrapping up our series on the Apostles this month, we're asking you to search your memory banks to remember the occupations for several of the apostles that we profiled in earlier issues of Grace Notes.

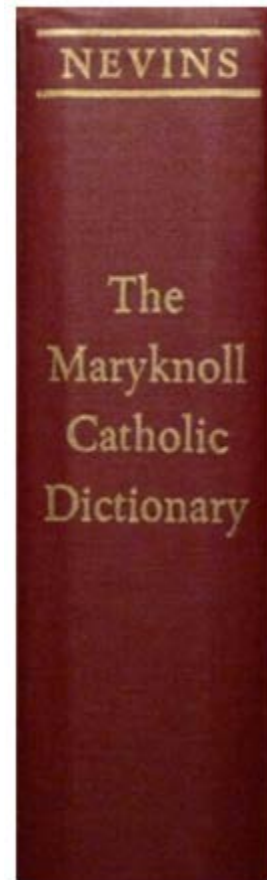
Here goes.

Number 1: He was a fisherman. (This is an easy one, since four of the apostles were fisherman. Extra credit if you can name all four.)

Number 2: He was a tent maker. (Also easy if you carefully read this month's issue of Grace Notes.)

Number 3: He was a tax collector.

The answers are provided on the final page of Grace Notes.



Why Do We Do That?

Anyone who has gone to mass for a number of years, or participated in another devotional practice, has occasionally wondered "why do we do that?" as they kneel or stand or make a particular gesture. Therefore we are adding a new addition to Grace Notes entitled "Why Do We Do That?", which will appear from time to time.

Most people associate a coat of arms with the Knights of the Round Table, or jousting contests, or even characters from the Lord of the Rings. Indeed, the art of heraldry developed in the Middle Ages as a means of identification in battle. In close fighting, an easily recognizable shield was essential for telling friend from foe. So why does the Catholic Church still employ a wide variety of coats of arms. The answer is actually quite simple. Coats of Arms are employed as a means of identifying documents and official publications associated with individual dioceses. In addition, each bishop possesses a unique coat of arms that is emblazoned on his personal letterhead, his mitre, and his ring. The symbols also afford each diocese and each bishop opportunities to reveal "visual clues" about what is most important to them.

The coat of arms for the Fall River diocese actually includes a “heraldic pun” of sorts. The wavy blue line that crosses the shield from the upper left to the lower right depicts a river that “falls” on its journey from one side to the other, thus revealing the name of the diocese in a visual manner. The overall design is simple and uncluttered: the cross is a sign of the faith and the grace of God and the six-pointed silver star honors the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (often referred to as “the morning star”), which is the title of the cathedral. The coat of arms is capped with a bishop’s mitre.



The coat of arms for our current bishop -- Edgar Moreira da Cunha – combines his personal coat of arms (on the right-hand side of the shield) and that of the Diocese of Fall River (on the left-hand side). This “joining in arms” signifies Bishop da Cunha’s goal of creating a close union between the diocese and its chief shepherd.



The “personal side” of Bishop da Cunha’s coat of arms represents where he comes from and the influences which have shaped his life and ministry. The lower right-hand side of the shield echoes the flag of Brazil and represents the bishop’s life in the country where he was born and where he received the foundation for his faith from his family and through the sacraments of the Church.

The upper right-hand side of the shield depicts the Society of Divine Vocations, the religious order to which Bishop da Cunha belongs. The circle represents the world and the triangle represents the trinity; they are interlaced which indicates the Vocationist mission to bring the world to God and God to the world. The symbol is placed on a blue field which is the color of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a reminder that Bishop da Cunha’s vocation began with his baptism in Immaculate Conception Church in Gavião, Bahia, and that he studied for the priesthood in Immaculate Conception Seminary.

The shield sets beneath the episcopal hat and cross and is bordered by tassels. The color and number of tassels indicate the rank of the wearer. The color for bishops is green and there are six tassels on each side.

Finally, Bishop da Cunha chose as his motto “Sufficit tibi gratia mea,” which translates to “My grace is enough for you.” The words remind Bishop da Cunha that God’s grace will see him through the challenges that all Christians face in the modern world, especially as he addresses his ministry as the chief shepherd of the Diocese of Fall River.

Getting to Know the Members of the Parish – Dana Cook

Vocations Sunday was a couple of weeks ago. And while the event's intention was to focus on religious vocations, it's important to realize that we all have a vocation, whether or not it involves devoting our life to God. Some vocations come quickly: Julie Andrews made her singing debut at the age of 12, showcasing her perfect pitch and four-octave vocal range before a packed house at the London Hippodrome. She was a late bloomer compared to Mozart, who was composing symphonies when he was eight.



The manner by which our vocation is revealed can also vary. Sometimes our calling hits us in the face, as in the case when Yankee Manager Miller Huggins shoved Lou Gehrig into a game to replace Wally Pipp at first base when Pipp complained of a headache, marking the beginning of Gehrig's Hall of Fame career and record for most consecutive games played. Other times our calling is less obvious, like the college student who fails to get into grad school and instead goes onto become an inspirational high school teacher.

Dana Cook has experienced both types of calling – the obvious and the less so -- and he has thrived regardless of how his path was illuminated.

The most important thing to know about Dana is that he has a gift that makes him the envy of nearly everyone on the planet: he can fix anything. And that probably includes the jet engines on a 747. He even has the hat to prove it. And better still, he can ply his talent with a winning smile, a humorous anecdote, and an infectious laugh.



Dana came by his talent with a tool chest quite naturally: his father was a mechanical engineer. Although he also had a similar skill set, Dana originally hoped to make a career in mathematics. However, timing was not on his side, and when he graduated from Framingham State College with his math degree it was at the height of a recession, and there were no jobs to be had. He managed to find some stop-gap work with the Town of Chatham, and then a friend offered Dana a job that played right into his wheelhouse: fixing vending machines for the Breaktime Vending Company.

Those were the days when vending machines were everywhere on the Cape, which brought Dana into close contact with some of the area's most interesting "characters," and also took him to some places where he'd rather not go, including a facility with the dubious name of "Mashpee Center for the Performing Arts" which turned out to be home to a troupe of exotic dancers.



During his tenure with Breaktime Dana also answered another calling of sorts, becoming an all-star at darts. Dana's team – which operated out of the former "Royal Palace" in Dennis and was known as the "Masters of the Royal Palace" -- was one of 64 teams that competed throughout the state. Dana rose to the level of a Double A player and also managed to supplement his salary repairing vending machines with his expertise at darts. If you'd like to see how Dana did it, check out the Ted Lasso Darts Scene on YouTube. Just insert the following link into the YouTube search engine:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3S16b-x5mRA>

After a 20-year run with Breaktime, Dana could see that changes in the industry would make it difficult to hold onto his job, and he took a position keeping Cape Cod courthouses in Barnstable, Orleans, and Wareham in proper working order. As was the case with fixing vending machines, Dana continued to run into an assortment of characters in the different courthouses, and also got a bird's eye view of the Cape's infamous Christa Worthington murder trial.

After retiring from the courthouse work Dana immediately felt the itch to be fixing things and started handing out his business card, eventually taking on a variety of odd jobs, helping friends who were "tool challenged," and also working part-time as a maintenance man at Northside Village, an independent living facility in Dennis.



There came a Friday when Dana finally decided “I’m officially retired.” And after a career where Dana’s callings were not always so obvious, two days later -- just before the start of the 8 am Sunday mass -- Dana received an unmistakable, totally unambiguous calling. A firm hand clasped Dana on the shoulder as he sat in this traditional last pew in church. Looking up Dana saw Father Sullivan’s face hovering above him. “I heard you finally retired,” Father Sullivan beamed, “now you’ve got time to be Holy Redeemer’s Handyman!”



It was a calling that Dana gladly accepted, and one for which all of Holy Redeemer’s parishioners are the beneficiaries.

We can’t end this brief sketch of without mentioning two of Dana’s other callings, both of which are more important than any noted above. The first is to be a good and loving spouse for his wife Pierrette (the feminine form of the French name “Pierre.”) The pair recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. Congratulations.

And the other calling is Dana’s unbreakable devotion to his Catholic faith. “It gives me strength.” Well put, Dana.

...Conclusion

On Monday, May 27 Holy Redeemer Parish and the rest of the country will celebrate Memorial Day. Unfortunately Memorial Day has become something of a forgotten holiday, lost among back-yard barbeques and trips to the beach. A few years ago a group of high school seniors were touring the Capitol in Washington D.C. on Memorial Day. The guide posed the question, “What is the meaning of Memorial Day?”

They thought about it, and together they said, “It’s the day that the pool opens.”

Memorial Day honors the nearly 1.5 million brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives in service to our country. The courageous individuals have given everything they had to defend our freedoms, including the freedom of religion. Memorial Day also reminds us of the high price of freedom and the debt of gratitude we owe to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. It is a day to reflect on their sacrifice and to honor their memory with gratitude.





The notion of a special day for fallen soldiers started during the Civil War when women began decorating the graves of those who died in that war. On May 30, 1868, the day was designated as “Decoration Day” – a day for placing flowers on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers throughout the United States.

“Decoration Day” gradually became known as Memorial Day, and soldiers who died in other wars were also honored. It quickly became a day to remember all those who had died in defense of our country. In 1971, the United States Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be observed on the last Monday of May.

On April 25, 2024, parishioner and veteran Wayne Griffith (brother of Ginny Forgeron) celebrated his 100th birthday. Father Sullivan called attention to the event at the 10 am mass and the congregation toasted Wayne with a rousing rendition of “Happy Birthday.” Wayne was a Technical Sargent in the Army Signal Corps during World War II, serving in China, Burma, and India. Interestingly, he had not been confirmed prior to shipping out, and was confirmed while on duty in Burma. Following the war Wayne met up with a former colleague from the Signal Corps and together they found work at a radio station in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. He remained at the station for 65 years, serving as an announcer and managing the station’s finances.

Every day, memories of World War II are disappearing as the men and women who fought and won the war are leave us. According to US Department of Veterans Affairs statistics, less than 1 percent of the 16.4 million Americans who served during World War II are still with us today. It’s a privilege for us to have a man like Wayne in our midst, and a wonderful opportunity for us to tell him how much we appreciate his service to the country.

Thank you Wayne.



Answers to Jeopardy for Catholics

Answer to Number 1: Who were Andrew, Simon Peter, James, and John?



Answer to Number 2: Who was Paul?



Answer to Number 3: Who was Matthew?

