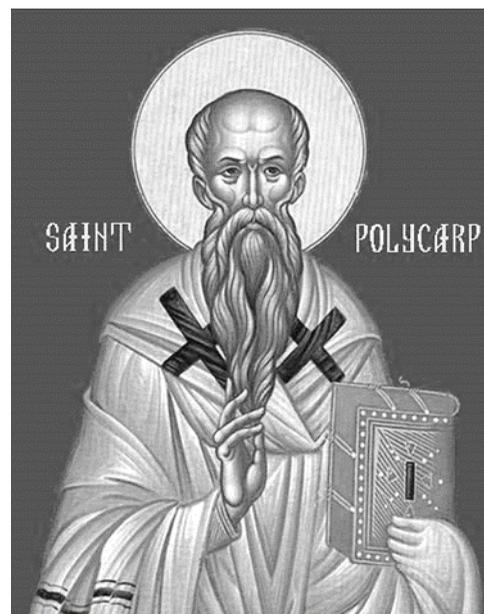


Sunday, February 22: Chair of Saint Peter

Early Roman Christians celebrated on this day a feast in honour of their departed loved ones, including their predecessors in the faith, Peter and Paul. In the 4th century, when the feast of these two saints was moved to June 29th, the emphasis of this day shifted to celebrating Peter and his successors as bishops of Rome, and expressing gratitude for their service.

“The ‘cathedra’ is literally the seat of the bishop,” Pope Benedict XVI said on this day in 2006. “It is the symbol of his authority and, particularly, of his ‘Magisterium’, in other words of the evangelical teaching that he, as successor to the Apostles, is called to protect and transmit to the Christian community.”

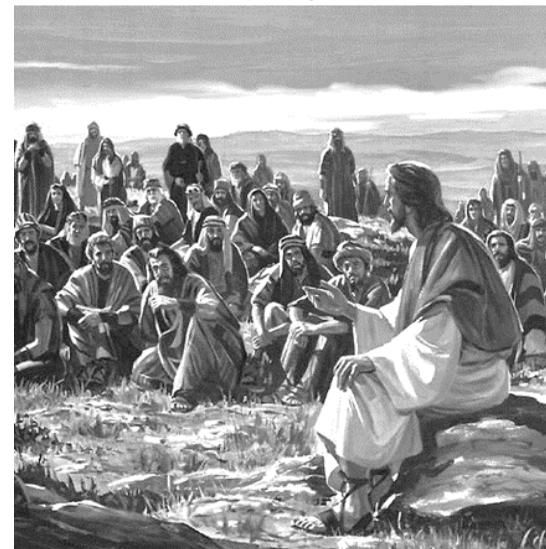
To celebrate the ‘Chair’ of Peter means, then, giving it a strong spiritual significance, and recognizing therein a privileged sign of the love of God.



Saturday, February 23: Saint Polycarp

Polycarp is one of the Fathers of the early Church, and his letter to the Philippians is one of the early pieces of Christian writing in existence today. A disciple of the apostle John, he was a leader of the second generation of Christians, the first Christians who were not eyewitnesses to the death and resurrection of Our Lord. Extremely influential in the catechesis and initiation of new Christians, he was named bishop of Smyrna, located in modern-day Turkey. Polycarp was martyred for his faith about the year 155, at the age of 86. He is a patron of those suffering from earaches.

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Gospel-Luke 6:17,20-26

Jesus came down with the twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground with a great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.”

ST. JOSEPH'S NEWSLETTER

17 February 2019

ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH 37 GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG

T: (852) 2522-3992 F: (852) 2537-7463 W: <http://www.stjosephs.hk> E: saintjoseph@gmail.com

Eucharistic Celebrations

Weekdays: 7:45 a.m., 12 noon & 6:00 p.m.

Anticipated Sunday Masses: Saturday 6:00 p.m.

Sundays: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

Tagalog Masses: 1, 2:30 & 4:00 p.m.

Sunday School Mass at St. Joseph's College, 7 Kennedy Road, Hong Kong 9 a.m.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MASS

In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches us that those who count for nothing in the world — the poor, the meek, the pure of heart, the persecuted — are the truly blessed. God chooses to be on their side and they are the most precious ones in His eyes. Do we see blessedness only in terms of richness, power, and being honored? Do we see the poor and hungry as blessed like Jesus does? Let us ask God for forgiveness... *I confess...*

HEADINGS FOR READINGS

Jeremiah 17: 5-8 - The prophet teaches us that blessedness lies in trusting God.

1 Corinthians 15: 12, 16-20 - Our hope is in the Lord who prepares us for eternal life.

Luke 6: 17, 20-26 - Blessed are the poor .

SCRIPTURE NOTE

The blessings and woes we hear in today's Gospel mark the perfection of all the wisdom of the Old Testament.

That wisdom is summed up with marvelous symmetry in today's First Reading and Psalm: Each declares that the righteous — those who hope in the Lord and delight in His Law — will prosper like a tree planted near living waters. The wicked, who put their “trust in human beings,” are cursed to wither and die.

Jesus is saying the same thing in the Gospel. The rich and poor are, for Him, more than members of literal economic classes. Their material state symbolizes their spiritual state.

The rich are “the insolent” of today's Psalm, boasting of their self-sufficiency, the strength of their flesh, as Jeremiah says in the First Reading. The poor are the humble, who put all their hope and trust in the Lord.

We've already seen today's dramatic imagery of reversal in Mary's “Magnificat.” There, too, the rich are cast down while the hungry are filled and the lowly exalted.

That's the upside-down world of the Gospel: in poverty we gain spiritual treasure unimaginable; in suffering and even dying “on account of the Son of Man,” we find everlasting life.

The promises of the Old Testament were promises of power and prosperity — in the here and now. The promise of the New Covenant is joy and true freedom even amid the misery and toil of this life. But not only that. As Paul says in today's Epistle, we're to be pitied if our hope is “for this life only.”

The blessings of God mean that we'll laugh with the thanksgiving of captives released from exile, feast at the heavenly table of the Lord, “leap for joy” as John the Baptist leapt in his mother's womb, and rise with Christ, “the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

(Scott Hann)

The
WORD
by name
is
Jesus Christ

Calendars

Thursday, February 21: Saint Peter Damian

Saint Peter Damian is a Doctor of the Church, so honoured for his writings, as well as his work for reform and renewal of the Church. Peter was born in 1007 into a large family in Ravenna, Italy. He was orphaned at a very young age, and the first brother to care for him treated him very badly. Another brother, however, a priest in Ravenna, recognized Peter's brilliance and arranged for schooling. Peter appreciated this so much that he took on his brother's name and called himself Peter Damian. He became a hermit monk and was eventually chosen as the superior of his community. In 1057 he was appointed the bishop of Ostia. Throughout his life he fought for clerical reform and against the laxness and immorality of the clergy of his day. Eventually, he received permission from Pope Alexander to return to the simple life of a monk. He died in 1072.

