



*Prayers for the Week Ahead*

WEEK BEGINNING 23<sup>RD</sup> MAY

# Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May



## **Today's Gospel (Jn. 15:26:16:4):**

Jesus said to the disciples, "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning. I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling.

## **Reflection:**

Jesus asks me to testify on his behalf, to announce the good news. Pope Francis has reminded us of this in his Apostolic Exhortation "the Joy of the Gospel". He tells us that "every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization." Am I engaged in spreading the Good News, either by my words or by my actions? If not, is there some way in which I can do this?

Perhaps, over the coming days, I can reflect on ways in which I might be able to take on this challenge. I can avail myself of the help of the Holy Spirit in finding a way suitable for my situation in life.

*Hail Mary...*

## Sixth Week of Eastertide

# Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May



Where are  
you going?

Sixth Week of Eastertide

## Today's Gospel (Jn. 16:5-11):

Jesus said, 'Now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?" But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgement, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.'

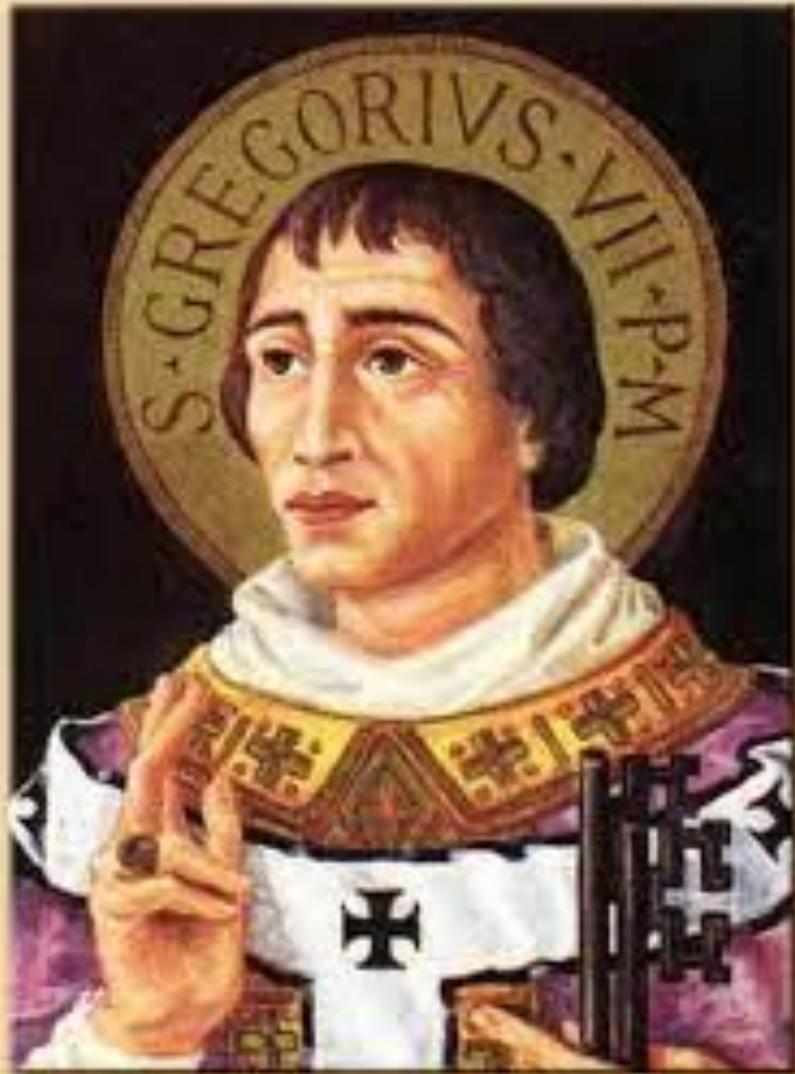
## Reflection:

The coming of the Spirit of Truth to us is clearly of great importance to Jesus. How important is it to me? Do I consciously rely on the grace of my confirmation, and recognise the reality of the Holy Spirit in my life?

Yesterday, I saw that Jesus wants me to bear witness to him. Perhaps I think I don't know how to do this. But, as Pope Francis says, we are a holy people because of the anointing of the Spirit, and we can rely on the truth of what we believe. The Holy Spirit guides me in the truth. I can rely on the Spirit when proclaiming the Good News, in whatever form my witnessing takes. I ask God for faith and for courage.

*Hail Mary...*

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May



St Pope Gregory VII

The 10th century and the first half of the 11th were dark days for the Church, partly because the papacy was the pawn of various Roman families. In 1049, things began to change when Pope Leo IX, a reformer, was elected. He brought a young monk named Hildebrand to Rome as his counselor and special representative on important missions. Hildebrand was to become Gregory VII. Three evils plagued the Church then: simony—the buying and selling of sacred offices and things; the unlawful marriage of the clergy; and lay investiture—kings and nobles controlling the appointment of Church officials. To all of these Hildebrand directed his reformer’s attention, first as counselor to the popes and later as pope himself. Gregory’s papal letters stress the role of the bishop of Rome as the vicar of Christ and the visible center of unity in the Church. He is well known for his long dispute with Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV over who should control the selection of bishops and abbots. Gregory fiercely resisted any attack on the liberty of the Church. For this he suffered and finally died in exile. He said, “I have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore, I die in exile.” Thirty years later the Church finally won its struggle against lay investiture. The liturgical feast of Saint Gregory VII is celebrated on May 25.

**Reflection:**

The Gregorian Reform, a milestone in the history of Christ’s Church, was named after this man who tried to extricate the papacy and the whole Church from undue control by civil rulers. Against an unhealthy Church nationalism in some areas, Gregory reasserted the unity of the whole Church based on Christ, and expressed in the bishop of Rome, the successor of Saint Peter.

# Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May



Forty Days after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Acts of the Apostles records Jesus' ascension into heaven. The ascension is an important Christian feast attesting and celebrating the reality of the God-Man Jesus Christ's returning to the Father, to return again in the future parousia. The Ascension is the final component of the paschal mystery, which consists also of Jesus' Passion, Crucifixion, Death, Burial, Descent Among the Dead, and Resurrection. Along with the resurrection, the ascension functioned as a proof of Jesus' claim that he was the Messiah. The Ascension is also the event whereby humanity was taken into heaven. Finally, the ascension was also the "final blow" so-to-speak against Satan's power, and thus the lion (Jesus) conquering the dragon (Satan) is a symbol of the ascension. Early Christian art and iconography portrayed the ascension frequently, showing its importance to the early Church.

## **Prayer:**

Let us pray

[on this day of Ascension

as we watch and wait for Jesus' return] Father in heaven,

our minds were prepared

for the coming of your kingdom

when you took Christ beyond our sight

so that we might seek him in glory.

May we follow where he has led

and find our hope in his glory,

for he is Lord forever. Amen

## *The Ascension of the Lord*