APRIL – JUNE 2023

Stella Maris

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS AROUND THE WORLD



**Lectio Divina** Easter and Pentecost

**Port Focus** Marseilles, France

**The Good Life** Ambition

The Church Year at Sea April to June

Learning the faith Why Pray the Rosary?

# Stella Maris is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 332 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world. We also run 53 seafarers' centres all over the world.

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

To support Stella Maris with a donation visit www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate

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# **NEED HELP?**



Please scan the QR code to get in touch, or contact us via WhatsApp or SMS on +44 7883 303529 Stella Maris provides seafarers with practical support, information and a listening ear

# MARSEILLES FRANCE

The G.P.M.M. (Grand Port Maritime de Marseilles) is the biggest port in France and the fourth oldest in the Mediterranean. In 2022, it welcomed three million passengers in 573 ships and over 1.5 million containers.

The port is divided into two parts 40 km apart: the eastern port in the historic port of Marseilles is mainly used for local trade, ferries to Corsica and the Maghreb, cruise ships, and ship repair. The western basins are located in the Gulf of Fos. The port facilities, inaugurated in 1968, were made to accommodate larger container ships, gas and oil tankers, ore carriers and bulk carriers.

Historically, La Mission de la Mer was very active in Marseilles thanks to the presence of seafaring priests residing there. In the western part, a very welcoming seamen's club was inaugurated in 1989 by Princess Anne of the United Kingdom.

In the Eastern part the centre is located inside the port and near the cruise ship terminal. In this room, the seafarers find a warm welcome, drinks, soup and biscuits, and souvenirs from Marseilles and France. The foyer is very popular with the crews of ships that are under repair and stay at the quay for a long time. We offer wifi and video games, billiards, table football, karaoke and we recently installed a halfsize basketball court. Visiting teams visit the ships daily to meet the crews and offer their services.

A team of priests and deacons provide spiritual support if necessary including a Filipino priest and a Ukrainian Greek-Catholic priest.

It can be said that each port chaplain is the pastor of all the seafarers in the world while each seafarer is accompanied by all the chaplains in the world.

In Marseilles, each sailor on a stopover is a member of our diocese as long as his boat is present.

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# THE CHURCH YEAR AT SEA



April is the month traditionally dedicated to the Eucharist and the Holy Spirit – although if we find ourselves at sea and unable to get to Mass regularly, let us especially on Sundays spend some time in prayer and make an act of faith that we believe Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist, and commit to visit him in the Mass or the tabernacle as soon as we can!

Let us also pray to the Holy Spirit to inspire us always in all our thoughts and actions.



# **6TH APRIL**

# MAUNDY THURSDAY

On this Thursday we remember Jesus's command (mandatum in Latin) to love one another as he has loved us. Jesus said this to his disciples, a group of men who had lived in close proximity for several years. His message is just as important for us living with our shipmates. Jesus gave us an example of service as he washed his disciples' feet and they ate together, commanding us to remember his Sacrifice forever, something we do every time we go to Mass.

Let us pray for all priests and those who serve the Church.

# **2ND APRIL**

## PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

On this great feast we remember Jesus entering Jerusalem in triumph. He was welcomed with cheering and great honour by the same people who would clamour for his crucifixion less than a week later. On this Sunday the whole Passion is read at Mass in churches around the world as we begin Holy Week.

Let us make some time each day to think on the sufferings of Jesus and his love for us. Let us pray that we may be firm and steadfast in praising Jesus and never to reject him.

# APRIL AT SEA 5

# 7TH APRIL

## **GOOD FRIDAY**

Jesus suffered and died on the cross – let us take a moment at 3pm if possible (the traditional hour of Jesus's death) to remember his great sacrifice for us. The days of the triduum (the three days between Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday) are the holiest days of our year as Christians. Jesus took upon himself every sin ever committed and offered us the chance of new life.

Let us pray for ourselves and all who suffer that we may look at Jesus on the Cross and recognise our saviour.

# **8TH APRIL**

#### **HOLY SATURDAY**

"What is happening? Today there is a great silence over the earth, a great silence, and stillness, a great silence because the King sleeps; the earth was in terror and was still, because God slept in the flesh and raised up those who were sleeping from the ages. God has died in the flesh, and the underworld has trembled.

"Truly he goes to seek out our first parent like a lost sheep; he wishes to visit those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. He goes to free the prisoner Adam and his fellow-prisoner Eve from their pains, he who is God, and Adam's son. The Lord goes into them holding his victorious weapon, his cross." From an ancient homily for Holy Saturday



# **9TH APRIL**

## EASTER SUNDAY

Christ is risen! – he is risen indeed – as he said! This is the holiest and most joyful day of the Church's year, when Jesus rose triumphant over death and sin and he offers this triumph to us as well. All over the world people celebrate in different ways: with special food, chocolate eggs family gatherings.

Let us pray for our families that the joy of the resurrection will stay with them and us on this and every Sunday of the year!

# **16TH APRIL**

## **DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY**

God is Mercy itself, and we are called to practice the ABC's of mercy (Ask for his mercy, Be merciful to others, Completely trust in Jesus). Trust in Jesus is the vital ingredient. We do not simply ask for mercy, nor do we simply try to be good to other people. We ask with complete trust, and Our Lord fills us with grace so that we can be merciful as our Heavenly Father is merciful.



May is the month traditionally dedicated to Our Lady. She is the Mother of all Christians and has always been associated with seafarers under the title Our Lady Star of the Sea. Let us pray for her protection especially in this month.

# **1ST MAY**

#### SAINT JOSEPH THE WORKER

This feast was instituted in 1955 by Pope Pius XII on a day when labour was celebrated in many countries. Jesus was himself 'the son of the carpenter' and St Joseph presents a wonderful example of how even the most seemingly menial work can be sanctified.

Let us pray that we may work conscientiously and well and for all those we know who are unemployed and looking for work.





# 13TH MAY

## **OUR LADY OF FATIMA**

The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three shepherd children at Fatima (Portugal) on the thirteenth day for six consecutive months in 1917. She brought a message of peace and reparation for sin, encouraging devotion to her Immaculate Heart and the recitation of the Holy Rosary.

Let us pray a decade of the Rosary in reparation for our sins!

# 24TH MAY

## OUR LADY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Our Lady has proved herself to be the help of Christians over the centuries, both individually and collectively. The title 'Help of Christians' is an ancient one and was especially linked by St Pius V to the Christian victory at Lepanto (1571). The Feast was instituted by Pius VII to commemorate his entry into Rome on 24 May 1814, following release from captivity under Napoleon. St John Bosco had a great devotion to Our Lady, Help of Christians, who is also patron of Australia.

# 28TH MAY

# PENTECOST

On this Sunday the season of Easter comes to an end with the feast when the Holy Spirit came down on Mary and the Apostles in the upper room in Jerusalem. The disciples were afraid and had hidden but when they received the Spirit they went into the streets and proclaimed to everyone the good news of Jesus's death and resurrection. They spoke to people from every country and in every language and baptized over three thousand people. On that day the Church was born and we are members of that very same Church.

Let us pray for the same courage to proclaim the Gospel and let us pray for the Church that she will continue to witness to the love of God for every human being of every language and culture.



# JUNE

June is the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart. In images of the Sacred Heart, Jesus's heart is shown aflame with love for humanity, surrounded by a crown of thorns showing that Jesus's suffering in the Passion was not just physical but was endured with heartfelt passion and all for us.

Let us pray in this month for the grace to experience Jesus's love and to have our heart become like his on fire with love for everyone we meet.





# **3RD JUNE**

# SAINT CHARLES LWANGA AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

The Ugandan martyrs suffered under King Mwanga of the Baganda in 1885-1886. They included St Joseph Mkasa, master of the pages at court, who had criticised Mwanga's sexual abuse of the young boys at court and was beheaded on 15 November 1885, his successor St Charles Lwanga, who was burned alive with other Christians for refusing the King's advances on 3 June 1886 at Namugongo. The martyrs were canonised in 1964 by Paul VI, who visited the shrine at Namugongo five years later.

Let us pray for the gift of purity and courage.

# **13TH JUNE**

# SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA - PRIEST AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

St Anthony of Padua (1195-1231) was born in Lisbon (Portugal) and joined the Canons Regular of St Augustine and then the Franciscans at Coimbra. He became famous as a learned theologian, eloquent preacher and worker of miracles – he is still popularly invoked for finding lost objects. He is known as the 'Evangelical Doctor' and was canonised the year after his death.

St Anthony is always shown holding the child Jesus – let us pray for a love of humility and care for the little ones entrusted to us.

# **29TH JUNE**

## SAINTS PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES

St Peter (+ c.64) was the brother of St Andrew and a Galilean fisherman. He was called by the Lord and, despite his obvious human weaknesses, eventually chosen as the leader of the Twelve, the 'rock' on which the Church was built. After Pentecost, he became particularly associated with Antioch and then Rome. He was crucified under Nero and buried at the Vatican.

St Paul (+ c.64/67) was a tent-maker from Tarsus (then capital of the Roman province of Cilicia, now in Turkey), a Pharisee and a Roman citizen. He was initially a persecutor of Christians but was converted by the Lord on his way to Damascus. He became the Apostle of the Gentiles, preaching the Gospel to the uncircumcised, reaching Greece, Italy, Malta and possibly even Spain. He was beheaded along the Via Ostiense and buried nearby, on the site where the basilica bearing his name now stands.

St Peter's mission was to those who already knew God, while St Paul preached to the pagans. Let us pray for those inside the Church to grow in faith and for those outside to hear the good news and welcome it.

# Lectio Divina – a short introduction

How to link up with Jesus and with God if you can't get to Mass? Read the Word of God in scripture. It is like a letter from home, written specially for you – and God is writing to you. Perhaps light a candle to show God's presence.

Take a short passage, perhaps the Sunday gospel. Put yourself in the presence of God, open yourself to God, for God is all around you.

What is God writing to you about? What is Jesus saying to you? Imagine the scene. You are one of the disciples, listening and watching. Ask Jesus what he means for you.

Read the passage again, until it enters your heart. It may help to do this with others, to share with them and learn from them what Jesus is saying to them. Always end with a blessing, a sign of real friendship for your brothers and sisters and a prayer for each one's needs.

# **10 LECTIO DIVINA – EASTER AND PENTECOST**

# Easter

#### GOSPEL

Mary was standing outside at the tomb, weeping. Turning round she saw Jesus standing there, though she did not realise that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?' Supposing hm to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have taken him away, tell us where you have put him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!'. (John 20.11, 14-16)

## REFLECTION

Easter is the greatest feast in the Church's year. St Paul writes, 'if Christ is not risen then there is no point to our faith'. It is a matter of life and death. Jesus put up with the most agonizing form of torture and execution that could be devised at the time, the deliberate infliction of pain, confident that God, his Father, would somehow rescue him. For this faith and obedience. God raised him from death to new life: not just restoring him to the old human life, but raising him to a new and active life, charged with new power and new love of fellow men and women. So for Christians death is something to look forward to, a radical change for the better. We are already on our way to

join friends and loved ones of a previous generation who are already in God's firm and comforting embrace, clinging to God and hugged by God and Christ himself.

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It is not just a matter of life after death. We can be confident that whatever goes wrong in our life now, whatever has gone wrong in our life now, will be put right by Christ's resurrection. We, too, are charged from a different sort of battery. By our baptism we joined Christ in his new life. Because of that new source of life we now have the power to do great things, to overcome difficulties, to spread a new love, new generosity, new forgiveness, new generosity to our families, friends and all we meet.

TELLA MARIS MAGAZINE APRIL - JUNE

# LECTIO DIVINA – EASTER AND PENTECOST 11

# Pentecost

## **SCRIPTURE**

When Pentecost day had come, they were all together, when suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a rushing wind, filling the entire house in which they were sitting, and there appeared to them tongues as of fire; there separated and came to rest on the heads of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak different languages. (Acts 2:1-4)



#### REFLECTION

Pentecost is the feast of the birthday of the Church, and so the birthday of us all. Happy birthday to you! Why is it the birthday? Because on that day, fifty days after Easter and ten days after Jesus had left his disciples, he came to them again in the Spirit. Depressed and puzzled, they had slunk back into Jerusalem to wait for the help he had promised them. Suddenly there was a great wind, and it looked as though there was flickering fire on each of them. The sign that they had new power was that each of them began to speak in new languages, all the languages of the world, to bring the Good News

of Christ's new life to all the world, wherever that might lead them.

This was only the start. They now had power to heal all those around them, power to bring peace to those around them, to heal the wounded, to quieten quarrels, to be eager to help not harm, to spread the peace of Christ over all the world, really to trust in Christ's power to bring harmony where there had been only discord, love where there had been only hate. Each of us in Christ's body, the Church, now has that power to bring Christ's healing and love.

# **Should Christians be ambitious?** – Inspiration from St John the Baptist

Is ambition a worldly quality that Christians should reject? Discover how the life of St John the Baptist offers insight to Christians, revealing how ambition and Christian faith can be reconciled.

# **ST JOHN THE BAPTIST**

John the Baptist is often called the bridge between the Old and the New Testament. He was a cousin of lesus: his mother Elizabeth and Mary were related (Lk 1:36). The way in which he was conceived and born shows that he was chosen by God for a very special mission (Lk 1,5-66). He prepared the people for accepting that Jesus was the Saviour whose coming had been announced throughout the ages in the Old Testament. John was called the Baptist because of his desire to baptise people as a sign of their conversion. One day, Jesus came up to him and asked to be baptised. That was the beginning of Jesus's public life, during which he spoke about God and preached the gospel. John's end was

rather sad, as if his role was over when he had baptised Jesus. He was arrested by Herod, the local ruler. Because of a whim of Herod's wife and daughter, John was beheaded, and buried by his disciples.

# THE GREATEST

John was the greatest of all people on earth, Jesus said (Mt 11:11). He was chosen by God to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus, a mission that was announced in the Old Testament (Isa. 40:3; Mal 3:1). He was the greatest...but Jesus relativised this, by saying that the least in heaven was greater than John (Mt 11:11). That is because people in heaven have arrived at their final destination, where they are gathered around God and spend their time with him forever. John had not yet arrived at that destination and his ambition was to get there! He is so great and important for our destiny as Christians that we celebrate both his birth and his death.

# **AMBITION AND HUMILITY**

Ambition is a strong desire and determination to achieve something. As long as it is not directed only to your own advancement in life, ambition can be very good and very different from careerism. John the Baptist was very ambitious. He had a strong determination in his preaching and building up of his small community of followers. He was ambitious in his plan to bring them together, to baptise them, to instruct them. At the same time, he was very humble in his willingness to give it all up for Jesus. He had put a lot of effort into building up his community. Still, he did not wish to claim ownership and keep the result for himself as we often do with our projects. As soon as Jesus passed by, he told his disciples to follow him. He did not want



to keep anything for himself and gave it all to Jesus.

# **IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU**

John shows how you too can be ambitious in a good way. He was very well aware that his task was not to be important himself, but to prepare the heart of people to recognise Jesus. That was his only ambition. Without a hint of careerism, he said that he was not even worthy to do the work of a simple slave for Jesus, for example by undoing his shoe-laces (Mk 1:7). As long as vour ultimate desire is to follow Jesus, vour ambition can do a lot of good! But be aware that whatever you manage to build up or achieve is not yours, but belongs to God. If you have such an ambition, you can give it all up when asked, and say about Jesus, just as John the Baptist did: 'He must become greater, but I must become less' (Jn 3:30). What is your greatest ambition?

# **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

'John the Baptist...had the profound humility to hold up Jesus as the One sent by God, drawing back so that he might take the lead, and be heard and followed... Precisely for love of the truth he did not stoop to compromises and did not fear to address strong words to anyone who had strayed from God's path... He understands that the only steadfast reference point is God himself. John the Baptist, however, is not only a man of prayer, in permanent contact with God, but also a quide in this relationship... Prayer is not time wasted, it does not take away time from our activities, even apostolic activities, but exactly the opposite is true: only if we are able to have a faithful, constant and trusting life of prayer will God himself give us the ability and strength to live happily and serenely, to surmount difficulties and to witness courageously to him.' [Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 29 August 2012]

# by Fr Michel Remery

# Why Pray the Rosary?

To recite the Rosary is nothing other than to contemplate with Mary the face of Christ. The Rosary, reclaimed in its full meaning, goes to the very heart of Christian life. Rediscover the importance of the Rosary and the many benefits from praying it.

The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a prayer with Christ at the centre. It contains all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety. With the Rosary we sit at the school of Mary and are led to contemplate the beauty of the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer.

To recite the Rosary is nothing other than to contemplate with Mary the face of Christ. The Rosary, reclaimed in its full meaning, goes to the very heart of Christian life; it offers a familiar yet fruitful spiritual and educational opportunity for personal contemplation, the formation of the People of God, and the new evangelisation. A prayer so easy and yet so rich truly deserves to be rediscovered by the Christian community – may we confidently take up the Rosary again, rediscover it in the light of Scripture, in harmony with the Liturgy, and in the context of our daily lives.

# THE ROSARY IS UNDERVALUED

There is in our time a great risk that the Rosary is undervalued and no longer taught to the younger generation. Some erroneously think that the centrality of the Liturgy necessarily entails giving less importance to the Rosary. But this prayer does not conflict with the Liturgy, but rather sustains it, serving as an excellent introduction to and echo of the Liturgy, enabling people



to participate fully and interiorly in it and to reap its fruits in their daily lives. Nor is such a devotion, so clearly directed to the Christological centre of the Christian faith, to be considered as unecumenical – properly revitalised it is an aid and no hindrance to ecumenism.

# A SCHOOL OF PRAYER

The most important reason for strongly encouraging the practice of the Rosary is that it represents a most effective means of fostering among the faithful that commitment to the contemplation of the Christian mystery, a genuine 'training in holiness': what is needed in a Christian life distinguished above all in 'the art of praver'. The West is now experiencing a renewed demand for meditation, and in effect the Rosary is simply a method of contemplation. it serves as a means to an end and cannot become an end in itself, though never undervalued all the same. The Rosary is one of the finest traditions to have grown out of Christian contemplative prayer in the Christian West, comparable to the famous 'praver of the heart' or 'Jesus praver' of the Christian East.

# PRAYING FOR PEACE AND THE FAMILY

Reviving the Rosary is important because of the great contemporary need to implore God for peace, by looking on Christ 'who broke down the dividing wall of hostility'. Anyone who assimilates the mystery of Christ – and this is clearly the goal of the Rosary – learns the secret of peace and makes it his life's project, giving birth to fruits of charity. The Rosary also makes of us peacemakers.

Such a revival in Christian families will also be an effective aid to countering the devastating effects of the menacing forces of disintegration playing on the institution of the family – so indispensable to the future of society. The family that prays together stays together. This is so true of the Rosary, which keeps alive lines of communication within families, where Jesus is placed at the centre. Even Mary herself, in the apparitions at Lourdes and Fatima, exhorts us to make recourse to this prayer.

It is also beautiful and fruitful to entrust to this prayer the growth and development of children. Given the great range and gravity of seductions to be resisted by children today, the spiritual aid of praying the Rosary for children and even more with children, should not be underestimated.

# **LEARNING FROM MARY**

The aim of the Rosary is to contemplate the face of Christ and no one has ever been devoted to contemplating the face of Christ as faithfully as Mary. Through the Rosary, we remember Christ with Mary, and 'learn Christ' from Mary. She was with Christ throughout his life, she carried him in her womb, brought him into the world in the stable, watched him grow up, preach, perform miracles, suffer and die and finally conquer death in the resurrection. She is the greatest and most perfect quide for us to the life of Jesus.

## **BEING CONFORMED TO CHRIST**

Christ is the supreme teacher, the revealer and the one revealed. It is not just a question of learning what he taught but of 'learning him'. In this regard we could have no better teacher than Mary. Contemplating the scenes of the Rosary in union with Mary is a means of learning from her to 'read' Christ, to discover his secrets and to understand his message. As we contemplate each mystery of her Son's life, she invites us to do as she did at the Annunciation; to ask humbly the questions which open us to the light, in order to end with the obedience of faith: Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.

In the spiritual journey of the Rosary, based on the constant contemplation – in Mary's company – of the face of Christ, this demanding ideal of being conformed to him is pursued through an association, which could be described in terms of friendship. We are enabled to enter naturally into Christ's life and as it were to share his deepest feelings. In this process of being conformed to Christ in the Rosary, we entrust ourselves in a special way to the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin – she who is the perfect icon of the motherhood of the Church.

If Jesus, the one Mediator, is the Way of our prayer, then Mary, his purest and most transparent reflection, shows us the Way. In the Gospel, at Cana, we see the power of Mary's intercession as she makes known to Jesus the needs of others: 'They have no wine'. The Rosary is both meditation and supplication. Insistent prayer to the Mother of God is based on confidence that her maternal intercession can obtain all things from the heart of her Son.

# **RHYTHM OF THE ROSARY**

By its nature the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life as seen through the eyes of her who was closest to the Lord. This is especially so when the Rosary is seen as an outpouring of that love which tirelessly returns to the person loved. Not only does Christ have a divine heart, rich in mercy and forgiveness, but also a human heart, capable of stirrings of affection. Although the repeated Hail Mary is addressed to Mary, it is to Jesus that the act of love is ultimately directed, with her and through her - and nourished by a desire to be conformed ever more completely to Christ.

Stella Maris is the largest ship-visiting network in the world. We improve the lives of seafarers and fishers through our network of local chaplains and seafarer centres, expert information, advocacy and spiritual support.



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