

NOTRE DAME PARISH

Pentecost Sunday

"There appeared to them tongues as of fire."



Like the wind, the Spirit moves us in different ways, sending us to other places and nesting us into other ground. To experience Pentecost it is necessary to search for change and to allow ourselves to be changed. Changes mean new forms of consciousness, awareness, commitments, and agency. What is it in

your life that needs to be changed? Like seeds, we must learn to let go and die so we can sprout into life! Be uprooted from ways of thinking and believing and be taken by the Spirit, flowing with God's grace to more expansive and necessary ways of living our faith in our world today.

MASS INTENTIONS

- Saturday, May 22, 4PM
Greg Alberding
- Sunday, May 23, 9:30AM
Norine Binder
- Monday, May 24, 8AM
Cheri Hruskoci
- Tuesday, May 25, 8AM
Maloney Family
- Wednesday, May 26, 8:30AM
Mary Lou Linnen
- Thursday, May 27, 8:30AM
Gloria Godfrey
- Friday, May 28, 8AM
Andy Rice
- Saturday, May 29, 4PM
Gloria Godfrey

Let Us Pray

- For students Morgan McCarthy and Anne Wadle, to be confirmed on Sunday
- For the sick of our parish, especially those with chronic illness, and for their caregivers
- For the cease-fire in Gaza; for a return to serious peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis
- For the humility to seek truth rather than clinging to what we want to be true
- For protection from the violent weather that often accompanies springtime
- For those preparing to graduate
- For those who resist the COVID-19 vaccination for no good reason

A Nativity Project

Most churches have some kind of exterior decorations at Christmastime. Some years ago, the large evergreen tree on Moore Road was decorated with lights by the Men's Club. As the tree grew taller, it became harder to decorate and the growth choked the electric cords.

In recent years, some parishioners have experimented with various floodlights, light projectors, and light show systems, with professional consultation, but these approaches have repeatedly been ineffective.

Last March a self-organized parish group proposed to me the production of a Nativity set for the coming Christmas season and beyond. It applies vinyl illustrations of the manger scene

to stainless steel cutouts of the figures. Saint Joseph is 8 feet tall! The Nativity Project Group has already done many of the materials and much of the work. But there is much more to be done.

I stalled the group for a couple of months because I didn't want us to be thinking of Christmas during the Easter season. However, next Sunday, Memorial Day Weekend, representatives of the group will speak at both masses about the project and enlist your support for funding. The cost of the project is about \$6500, with construction, labor, setup and more being provided by volunteers from the parish.

I fully support this project



and hope you will, too. Hopefully, the pandemic vaccinations and herd immunity will put us in a good place by Christmas, ready to rejoice in the lights, sights, and sounds of Christmas with family and community once again.

Father Keith & Rocco

Saint Philip Neri: The Saint Who Laughed His Way to Heaven



This article, by Philip C. Fenton, S.J. first appeared in the May 1958 issue of Extension magazine. Neri's feast day is May 26.

It is the nature of the human mind to search into the essence of things and then put its searchings into a formula. Philosophers for centuries have been trying to fit the subject of humor into such a formula. Skeptics say humor is entirely subjective; agnostics say humor cannot be explained; Freudians say humor is simplicity itself. Kant put the essence of humor in the emotion born of sudden reduction to nothing of an intense expectation. Plato was wary of humor, while Aristotle accepted it as a virtue. Just what is humor, then? Can it be defined? A man has been asked by someone whether he "sees the point" of a joke, or not. If he did, then he has a sense of humor. If he lacked comprehension, and didn't, well . . .

Now everything in the universe has a point, too.

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Divine revelation leads to revolution

As long as the work of justice is incomplete, our faith drives us to revolutions large and small.

By Alice Camille

Thomas Jefferson promoted a rather surprising idea: the need for a healthy society to make generous room for ongoing dissatisfaction. A nation's Founding Father might be expected to champion docile compliance among its citizenry, but Jefferson wasn't that kind of dad.

In a 1787 letter to John Adam's son-in-law, Jefferson observed that people too often confused revolution with anarchy. The British, to be precise, had persisted in calling the revolution in the Colonies by this more scandalous name, deceiving much of Europe and even many New World citizens still loyal to the throne of England. "Wonderful is the effect of impudent and persevering lying," Jefferson observed.

It was in this same letter that Jefferson made his much-quoted assertion: "God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion." He wasn't advocating rebellion for rebellion's sake. Even in the 18th century, Jefferson appreciated that fake news can derail a society, which could lead to

the urgent need for dramatic action: "The people cannot be all, and always, well informed. The part which is wrong will be discontented in proportion to the importance of the facts they misconceive." This sounds prophetic after a year of pandemic, in which misinterpreting and misrepresenting the role of science has led to such tragic results.

Regular rebellions keep a democracy on its toes, Jefferson argued: "What country can preserve its liberties if their rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? . . . The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

The problem with Jefferson's approach to watering the tree of liberty is that it revolves around several key discernments. Who determines who's lying when opposing sides present alternative facts? What's the distinction between a patriot and an

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insurrectionist – and who gets to make the call?

Your tyrant may be my admired hero; your spirit of resistance may be criminal behavior to me. Unless we can agree on the reality behind the terms we use, the call to rebellion can be taken up by any group to justify nearly any objection to an authority that's unwelcome.

The lack of a shared platform from which to view social realities is nothing new, of course. The Founding Fathers, Jefferson included, were slaveholders who didn't pause to consider that the enslaved members of their household saw the "tree of liberty" watered daily with their own bitter servitude. Native peoples, chronically displaced and casually slaughtered, learned that their attempts at rebellion were not perceived as part of the virtuous struggle toward the ideal of freedom. Uprisings by Mexicans in the Southwest were not seen as necessary aspects of liberty's refreshment. When suffragettes committed civil disobedience in demanding that women be given the right to vote, not everyone recognized this as a distinctly American way to seek redress for social wrongdoing.

This makes it no surprise that contemporary rebellions are rarely welcomed in a Jeffersonian embrace of much-required political course correction either. The white suffragettes themselves didn't

fight for the rights of their Black sisters, who had to wait several more generations for privileges won by their white counterparts. Meanwhile our society has ever been skeptical of the patriotism of war protesters and civil rights advocates of every kind. It's simpler to sweep all forms of protest into the common dustbin of anarchy and leave it to law enforcement to stop the unrest by whatever means necessary. Jefferson would be pleased to learn that his nation hasn't enjoyed a respite that long since the country's founding. But would he evaluate all episodes of rebellion as created equal?

Would Jefferson view Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter in the same light as the storming of the Capitol building by those who rejected the 2020 election results as invalid or simply unacceptable? More important, what criteria should you and I use to determine when rebellion is justified? Or when the absence of a spirit of rebellion may be the greatest injustice of all?

The Catholic tradition offers clear tools for discernment in these instances and more. Let's admit up front that the church hasn't always been on the side of the angels early enough when history required a prophetic voice to speak out. Clergy lined up comfortably on both sides of the Abolitionist movement, priests and bishops arguing passionately the biblical support for enslavement. Church teaching is still often awkward in its appreciation of women in

2021
DIOCESE OF
GARY
CATHOLIC
SERVICES
APPEAL
Notre Dame
Parish Goal:
\$37,796
YTD: \$8,130



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THE FOLLOWING APPLIES TO ALL THE
DIOCESES OF INDIANA, INCLUDING GARY,
AND ITS FAITHFUL.

Roman Catholic Province of Indianapolis

LIFTING OF THE DISPENSATION FROM THE OBLIGATION OF MASS

Effective 11 June 2021

The celebration of the Eucharist at Mass is the source and summit of our life and mission as Catholics.

As of March 2020, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, all Roman Catholics throughout the entire Province of Indianapolis, which comprises all five dioceses of Indiana, have been dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.

However, with the decrease of cases in our state, the widespread availability of vaccines and following the guidance of public health officials, we are now able to safely accommodate more parishioners for Masses.

Therefore, **effective June 11**, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass is hereby lifted throughout the state of Indiana.

Except for the unique situations as described below, those who are otherwise healthy are obliged to return to Sunday Mass by the weekend of June 12-13, 2021:

- Those who are seriously ill, exhibit flu-like symptoms and/or may have a contagious disease (including quarantine due to exposure).
- Those who are unable to attend Mass through no fault of their own (e.g. transportation issue).
- Those who are homebound and/or incapacitated due to age, infirmity and/or medical restrictions.
- Those who have compromised health conditions and/or at high risk of contracting the virus.
- Those who are caretakers of person who are sick or of persons at high-risk of serious illness if they contract Covid virus.

If you have any questions about any specific needs, concerns or protocols, you are advised to contact your parish directly. Your pastor, who has the authority to dispense in individual cases, may be helpful in addressing individual fears and concerns.

The obligation to attend Mass is a joyful one, reflecting the very character of who we are as Catholics.

Continued from page 2, SAINT PHILIP NERI

“Nothing in this world is to be taken seriously, nothing except the salvation of a soul.” Bishop Sheen once said, “A divine sense of humor belongs to poets and saints because they have been richly endowed with a sense of the invisible, and can look out upon the same phenomena that other mortals take seriously and see in them something of the divine.” And so, sanctity is related to humor. That is why the saints laughed at themselves, knowing that this universe is only a stepping-off place to their eternal goal, and to take this world seriously is utter foolishness.

St. Philip Neri, the most laughable and laughed at saint in Saintdom, definitely had this type of humor. A snow-white beard, sparkling blue eyes, and a rich sense of humor made the “good Pippo” one of the brightest lights during the hectic days of the Renaissance. The City of Rome was his Apostolate, and there he made acquaintance with fifteen popes, was a lifelong friend of such saints as Ignatius, Francis Xavier, Charles Borromeo, Camillus of Lellis, and such cultural notables as Palestrina, Baronius, and Bosius.

Neri first realized his vocation through contact with the sick and diseased of the Roman alleys and gutters. He visited the hospitals and brought food and gifts to the destitute patients, always joking and laughing with them to build up their morale. While wandering the streets of Rome aiding the poor, Philip met Francis Xavier, and it was probably he who introduced Philip to Ignatius, the first General of the Jesuits. Up to this time Philip considered himself a freelancer in the Lord’s vineyard. Not caring to join any of the Orders, he resolved to live and die a layman. Ignatius’ influence probably channeled the power of Philip’s vocation into a more regular life. But this was to be a gradual process, and Philip went about his “merry” way for another dozen years – and then it happened.

Neri often visited the Catacombs to pray and meditate, and it was there in the month of May or June, 1544, that he was mysteriously thrown to the floor and a ball of fire “entered his mouth and lodged in his chest.” Soon recovering from the shock, he put his hand to his left side and found a swelling as large as his fist. St. Philip Neri was definitely a mystic even before this, but at this time in his life his mystical experiences reached a climax,

and left the visible mark he carried to his grave. It wasn’t like the marks given to Theresa Neumann or Padre Pio, but rather a heart so inflamed with the love of God that it forced two ribs into an arch over his heart to give the appearance of a tumor. Doctors learned this only at an autopsy on the day of his death. “There have been at least a hundred cases of stigmata, but there has never been more than one case of a heart so inflamed with the love of God as to break the ribs of the encasing body.”

Neri was now a marked man, and it was partially on account of this that for the rest of his life he engaged in ludicrous pranks, read joke books, and played the “clown” in general. His sanctity was so noticed that he had to spend most of his time trying to tear down his own reputation in people’s eyes. His joviality prevented people from discovering how holy he was, and even toned down his own sense of God so that he could get through his external religious duties. He never knew when he would be rapt into an ecstasy, and feared that it would take hold of him while in the presence of others.

Philip went to incredible lengths to prevent these good opinions of himself. He walked around in large white shoes; dressed in bizarre “get-ups” whenever he thought he would meet any of the Cardinals; wore all his clothes turned inside out; often wore a fur cloak through the streets of Rome to make people think he was vain; carried a pack of brooms and stopped every once in awhile and smelled them, as though they were scented flowers; shaved his beard on one side only; wore his biretta cocked sideways. He wanted to be the fool for Christ.

Later on, when Philip founded the Congregation of the Oratory, he made his confreres do the same. A certain Father was a pet victim; Philip often sent him out with purple taffeta and gold lace around his hat. One of the lay brothers was sent into the dining hall one night during a meal carrying on his shoulders a monkey holding a gun and wearing a biretta, with a visiting Cardinal present!

One of Neri’s followers asked permission to wear a hairshirt. “Sure,” was Neri’s reply, “only inside out, and over your cassock,” -a type of mortification the subject hadn’t bargained for.

People never lost their respect for this saintly jester, though he tried everything imaginable to destroy their esteem. No harm was ever done by his

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fantasticity: it only made them venerate him all the more. He knew just how far to go.

His clowning even reached to high dignitaries. Charles Borromeo, one of the high-ranking Cardinals, often told Neri that he would grant anything he ever requested, but Neri never relied on high offices for special favors. Every time the Cardinal met Philip in a gathering, he would remind him of his promise, but Philip always refused.

One time Neri thought he would have some fun. Strolling up to the Cardinal, he reminded him of his promise. "I'd like to ask a favor of your Most Illustrious Lordship," he said, "only I know that you will not grant it."

"Why not?" the Cardinal asked.

"Oh, no, you won't," Philip insisted.

This went on for a few minutes until finally the Cardinal said, "Tell me what it is, and I will do it for you."

Then came the joke. "Well, I would like your Most Illustrious Lordship to give me the secret of making my beard black."

Maynard, in his book on Philip, defined humor as "a special kind of sense of proportion which is delighted rather than distressed by the inappropriateness in things. It is a form of judgment. Chesterton perceived in St. Thomas Aquinas that instantaneous presence of mind which alone deserves the name of wit. And that sort of wit-as distinguished from mere talent for making small retorts-cannot be valued enough. All the same, humor is something still higher. It is also more practical, for it is a species of common sense." Philip's main object in being the "clown" and playing practical jokes, though at times he must have naturally taken pleasure in doing so, was to draw men to God with jests and humor. Philip once remarked, "A cheerful and glad spirit attains to perfection much more readily than a melancholy spirit."

As a result of his constant contact with the Vatican, he repeatedly had to refuse the Cardinalate. On his first visit to the newly elected Gregory XIV, as the Holy Father embraced Philip, he snatched the red biretta which he had worn as Cardinal, put it on Philip and said, "Now We create you Cardinal." Philip laughed it off as a big joke, but the red biretta

was sent the next morning to his apartment, and Neri had to do some quick thinking. He did so, quietly, as always, and escaped the honor. Visiting the Vatican, as he so often did, was something of a trial for Neri. He always had to fight down the impulse to go up and stroke the beard of one of the Swiss Guards standing stiffly at attention. The impulse was too great. Some say he actually did this as he and the Cardinals strolled the Vatican corridors one day.

His activities in and about the environs of the city were numerous. When Pope Julius III allowed the Italian Cardinal to resume in 1533, Neri foresaw the many temptations it would present for his youths, and so planned a counter-attraction. He organized spectacular picnics for teenagers of Rome, and created a healthy atmosphere with music, song, and tons of food, as they pilgrimaged to the many Roman churches and parks.

Nor did he escape criticism for his activities. Eyebrows were raised, and some of his hecklers chuckled, "how many cold chickens did Father Philip eat today?" Always abstemious, and taking just enough food to sustain himself, Neri laughed with them for he knew that to be a Fool for Christ meant also be criticized and laughed at while doing things that he knew were to be for God's greater glory.

St. Philip Neri, Apostle of Rome, is always to be found in the pages of history during the Renaissance as adviser to saints and popes, friend of teenagers and Jews, promoter of good Catholic music, and instigator of a momentous history of the Church. As a teenager, he danced and played ball in the city streets of Rom, but today he stands with Ignatius, Xavier, Teresa of Avila, and Isidore in the City Celestial. These were the five who were declared saint of the Church in the general Canonizations ceremony in 1622.

There is only one place in sacred scripture where God is said to laugh. The Psalmist, in relating that the rulers and people of the world conspire against the Lord and His anointed, says: "He who dwells in Heaven is laughing at their threats; the Lord makes light of them" (Ps. 2:4). But God must have greeted Philip Neri at the Gates of Heaven with a hearty chuckle, for he truly was a the saint who "laughed his way to heaven."+

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leadership roles within its own structures. And although we have a pope who dares to ask “who am I to judge” the relationship of homosexual people to their Maker, that’s far from a complete acknowledgment that all people bear the image of God, just as they are. Liberation theology, meanwhile, still awaits its reassessment as a credible response to oppression.

Yet in the long arc that Martin Luther King Jr. insisted bends toward justice, the church has produced strong teachings affirming the rights of the oppressed to form unions, to organize, and to seek systemic change.

Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (On Capital and Labor) championed the rights of workers. St. Pope John XXIII’s 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (On Peace) summoned peacemakers and justice seekers to work together for the world they hoped to see. The U.S. bishops produced astounding documents like “The Challenge of Peace,” “Brothers and Sisters to Us,” and “Economic Justice for All,” arguing for a society that shuns the reflexive use of violence, accepts the dignity of all people regardless of

sexual orientation, and actively seeks the common good for its most forgotten citizens. Pope Francis embraces a fierce advocacy for the rights of creation in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si’* (On Care for Our Common Home) and pleads for “neighbors without borders” and “open societies that integrate everyone” as he re-envision the global community in last year’s *Fratelli Tutti* (On Fraternity and Social Friendship).

It would seem protesting the deep imperfections of the status quo is an acceptable, even vital, component within the job description of religious leadership. The Christian spirit of revolution comes from revelation: the descent of the Holy Spirit, no less. Divine revelation leads inevitably to revolution, as the Jewish followers of a Jewish Lord are unable, after Pentecost, to continue comfortably in religion as usual.

The “lifting of the veil” that revelation implies permits the visionary to see a more cosmic perspective than before. How can such a vision not lead to an impassioned advocacy for a world more in keeping with the divine plan for universal happiness? As long as the work of justice is incomplete, we will require revolutions large and small to harmonize the values of heaven and earth.

The tree of liberty does need constant attention – watering, nurturing, pruning, protecting from the elements –

to achieve its full fruitfulness. Jefferson was prescient in saying that a misinformed and misguided society can reap a horrific amount of injustice. This forms an argument for the widest and best possible education and values formation for all of its members. It argues as well for the solemnest protection of truth against “impudent and persevering lying” – from government, media sources, celebrities, and especially church leaders. The tree of liberty can only grow straight when firmly rooted in the soil of truth. Time to turn down the chatter and tune in to the revelation.

This article appears in the [May 2021](#) issue of U.S. Catholic (Vol. 86, No. 5, pages 47-49). [Click here](#) to subscribe to the magazine.

Alice Camille is the author of Working Toward Sainthood (Twenty-Third Publications) and other titles.