

The FIAT

Faith In Action Team Newsletter

May 2010

Family Celebration of Pentecost



This day is truly an occasion for a celebration! And there has been a long tradition of special celebrations and feasting on Pentecost (which falls this year on Sunday, May 23).

"Arthur, the good King of Britain...held a rich and royal court upon that precious feast day which is always known by the name of Pentecost."

Yvain, Chrétien de Troyes (trans. W.W.Comfort)

Although festive observance of this "precious feast day" (other than at Mass) has nearly disappeared in our culture, it is a tradition that is long overdue for revival in Catholic homes today.

Unlike Christmas or Easter, however, with their familiar narratives and many customs and symbols from many cultures and regions—and perhaps because it is not really possible to visualize the Holy Spirit—Pentecost is not as easy to explain to young children as holidays like Christmas and Easter.

The great liturgist and pastor Monsignor Martin Hellriegel (1890-1981) told of the customs for celebrating the feast of Pentecost in his family in Heppenheim, Germany when he was growing up. This practice could easily be imitated by Catholic families today.

"Pentecost was another special occasion for the Hellriegel family. As on each major feast day, the family dinner was served with the best linen and silverware. The centerpiece for this day was a large candle as a symbol of the Spirit with red streamers going to each place at the table. The streamer going to the place of the father was of double width, indicating his role as head of the family. Seven large rosebuds represented the seven gifts of the Spirit."

Martin B. Hellriegel: Pastoral Liturgist, Noel Hackmann Barrett. St. Louis, 1990. Bureau of the Catholic Central Union of America



The Hellriegel family's celebration of Pentecost can be an inspiration for our own festivities. Pentecost is really the birth day of the Church. Children do understand birthdays—and birthday cakes! Why not ask them to help make a special cake for Pentecost? Candles and decorations can represent the seven gifts and the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit

A bouquet of a dozen red roses (representing the twelve apostles and the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit) would be a lovely centerpiece. Surround the bouquet with twelve votive candles or tea lights, if possible. A red tablecloth could be used, with seven flame-shapes cut from white paper, each labeled with one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, written with red marker and placed around the centerpiece.

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful,
and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.*

Women for Faith & Family—www.wf-f.org



**At a
Glance**

Covenant of Love:

Retreat Planning Meeting and Potluck

Wednesday, May 5

6:00pm in Marian Hall

Help plan the couples retreat to be held Oct 22– 24

St. Mary School May Crowning

Friday, May 7

After 8:15am Mass in the Church

Family Holy Hour

Friday, May 7

6:00pm—Holy Hour in the church followed by a potluck in Marian Hall. Contact Fr. Javier at 303-798-8506

Lakeside Night

Thursday, May 13

5:30pm—10:00pm

Pack a cooler and join the fun! (rain date: May 27)

Covenant of Love:

BBQ and the "Not" So Newlywed Game

Friday, May 14

6:00pm in Marian Hall

Childcare available

RSVP to Dora 720-283-4737

Family Scavenger Hunt

Sunday, May 16

2:30pm—5:00pm

Meet in the Youth Room.

The hunt will benefit the parish food bank. Contact Anthony at 720-283-4729.

Honoring Mary in the Month of May



The month of May is such an appropriate time of year to focus on Mary, the Mother of Jesus. During this time, the darkness of winter fades and new life sprouts all around us, reminding us of how Mary brought new life into this world for us all. The church celebrates several

Marian feast days in May, including Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament and the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which afford us the opportunities to honor and thank Mary for her love, devotion and protection.

One of the more well known May Marian devotions is the crowning of a statue of Mary with flowers. This tradition was particularly popular in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, however it seems to have been lost or downplayed in recent decades. My mother recounts growing up in a largely Italian populated area in North Denver where the May Crowning was one of the highlights of the year, aside from Easter and Christmas of course. It was a major event for both the parish and the school (K-12).

My mom was given the honor of May Queen her senior year of high school. The ceremony included a procession, Benediction, rosary and crowning. It was held on a Friday evening so all could attend. The women wore formals and the men wore their Sunday best. My mother wore a beautiful white wedding gown and was accompanied by attendants, flower girls and pages. Everyone placed fresh flowers at the feet of Mary and the ceremony concluded with the song "Bring Flowers of the Rarest." It truly was a beautiful evening dedicated to Mary, clearly evident from family pictures.

Perhaps a ceremony like this is no longer possible or sadly not wanted, but we can still show our children the importance of recognizing Mary as Queen of Heaven. In addition to attending our school's May crowning (Friday, May 7 after the 8:15am school Mass), we can have our own ceremonies at home. This can be done by crowning a statue of Mary with flowers or placing flowers next to a picture if a statue is unavailable. Involve the whole family by having them make the crown, choose hymns to sing or say the rosary together. What a wonderful way to start the month of May and to continue a beautiful tradition in honor of Mary. In the words of Mary, Queen of Heaven, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

- by Jen Hehn

Saint Philip Neri (1515 -1595)

Feast Day May 26



If one had to choose a Saint who showed the humorous side of holiness, that would be Philip Neri.

Born in 1515 in Florence, he showed the impulsiveness and spontaneity of his character from the time he was a boy. He considered a cheerful temper to be more Christian than a melancholy one, and carried this spirit into his whole life:

"A joyful heart is more easily made perfect than a downcast one."

His father was not successful financially and at eighteen Philip was sent to work with an older cousin who was a successful businessman. During this time, Philip found a favorite place to pray up in the fissure of a mountain that had been turned into a chapel. We don't know anything specific about his conversion during these hours of prayer, but he decided to leave worldly success behind and dedicate his life to God.

In the year 1551 at the age of 36 Philip was ordained a Priest. Through his apostolate in the confessional and his spiritual conferences, he attracted a group of followers who ultimately formed the Congregation of the Oratory. To fill the people of Rome with new ardor, to re-evangelize the city, became Philip Neri's life work. By his warm, personal approach he gradually prevailed on many to give up their careless way of life. His customary question, "Well, brothers, when shall we begin to do good?" soon brought a response among those he encountered on street corners and in the public squares.

The three prayers of the Mass describe very well the Spiritual traits of Philip Neri, who deliberately cultivated some eccentricities in order not to fall victim to the admiration of the people. He also declined all ecclesiastical honors.

The confidence that St. Philip had in supernatural means, and especially in the Sacrament of reconciliation, was one of his outstanding characteristics. Moreover, his insistence on chastity based on humility and lived in joy was prompted by the ardor with which his heart was inflamed by the Holy Spirit. The motto of his Congregation of the Oratory is *Sola Caritas* (Love Alone).

- by Meg D'Costa

What is FIAT? FIAT (Faith In Action Team) is a school organization sharing spirituality in daily living and in becoming leaders that follow Christ. Fiat is a Latin word that means, "let it be." Just as Mary, Joseph and Jesus said "yes" and accepted their earthly missions, let us strive each day to accept God's calling for us in our lives. FIAT is a group for all parents of St. Mary's School! Read this newsletter aloud with family, use the suggested resources and spread the faith! Any questions or comments can be e-mailed to Meg D'Costa at odc234@aol.com.