

From the Pastor
April 26, 2020
The Third Sunday of Easter
The Second Sunday After Easter

The Holy and Great Martyr St. George

Christ is Risen! He is Truly Risen! We continue to glory in Our Lord's Holy Resurrection as we stand in the shadow of the Easter candle. The Holy and Glorious season of Easter will reach its culmination and wondrous conclusion on the Solemnity of Pentecost – May 31st. And Easter is made more joyous as we celebrate the liturgical commemorations of the saints. Last week we kept on Thursday, April 23rd, the Feast of St. George, on April 25th the Feast of St. Mark, and today on April 26th the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel. For our meditation of today I would like to turn our attention to St. George.

Before I do so, however, may I once again express sincere gratitude to all of you who have been so generous to our parish at the time of Easter. Many of you know that it is not my strong point to speak of finances. That is why it was difficult for me to have written that appeal letter in Easter week. Nonetheless, you have responded with the generosity for which St. Paul's is well known. There is an old saying that Man proposes, and God disposes. Just a few short weeks ago I wrote thanking you for your overwhelming generosity at Christmas. I wrote to you that our Christmas collection was the largest we have ever had in the history of the parish. Yet in an instant everything changed. And so, we must put our trust in Our Lord. After all, if we cannot trust one who died and rose again, whom can we trust? Jesus, I trust in You! I never have anxiety about finances, because as my confessor and mentor, the late Msgr. McDonald always said to me, God will take care of your parish financially. You just do everything for His glory. Our finances will be as God wants them to be. May I humbly ask that you return the Mother's Day envelopes either in the mail or by putting them in the basket in the narthex of the Church. May God reward you in these unprecedented times.

St. George is one of the most important saints in the life of the Church. He is the patron of England, of Russia, of Greece, and of Turkey. He is one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers. The Fourteen Holy Helpers are a group of saints who are renowned for their powerful intercession. St. Christopher is among them as is St. Blaise, invoked for ailments of the throat, and St. Erasmus, invoked for disease of the liver. St. George is invoked for deliverance from plague and is therefore a great intercessor in these days. In fact a great plague devastated Europe from 1346 to 1349. It is called the Black Death. And among its symptoms were the turning black of the tongue,, parching of the throat, violent headache, fever, and boils on the abdomen The malady attacked its victims suddenly, bereft them of reason, and caused death in a few hours, so that many died without the last Sacraments. Fear caused many attacks and disrupted family and social life. To all appearances the disease was incurable. But eh great St. George was invoked and soon healing, and health returned. We must invoke his powerful protection in these times. God is wonderful in His saints: the God of Israel is He who will give power and strength to His people. Blessed be God. – Psalm 67:36

St. George is the patron of the Spanish province of Aragon and to this day it is the custom for

children to make First Holy Communion on his Feastday in that province. The Cross of St. George is a red cross on a white field and it is the flag of England. We see it in the Union Jack. There are more Churches named for St. George than for any other saint. He is the patron of the Order of the Garter and of the Constantinian Order of St. George. He is the patron of all soldiers, and all scouts. George was a soldier of the Imperial Roman Army and was martyred at the beginning of the fourth century. This was the period right before the conversion of the Emperor Constantine and, ironically, was the time of fiercest persecution of the Church. In Rome this day would normally be a holiday with all employees having a day off because it is the Name Day of the Pope, Jorge Mario Bergoglio.

George is always pictured riding a white horse and slaying a dragon while a maiden is in the corner whom he rescues. Actually, this is a symbolic depiction of our great martyr. Through his martyrdom he slays the dragon who is, of course, satan, the ancient enemy of our race. The Empress Theodosia was so impressed with George's courage that she herself sought baptism. She is the maiden in the picture.

You fought the good fight with faith,
O Martyr of Christ, George.
You exposed the perversion of the persecutors
And offered an acceptable sacrifice to God.
Therefore you also received a crown of victory
And through your prayers O Holy One,
Obtained the forgiveness of sins for all.

-from the Byzantine Liturgy Ironically, I am writing this article on Saturday April 25th. In these days we do not have deadlines since the bulletin is published online only. Today would have been First Holy Communion Day for our little ones. What a beautiful day it would have been for First Holy Communion. But our faith tells us that God permits evil, only to bring forth greater good

Dear Little Ones who would have made First Holy Communion today at St. Paul's. Do not be sad, for our tears will be turned into joy. And soon you will receive Our Lord with the purity, humility, love and devotion with which His Most Holy Mother received Him, with the spirit and the fervor of the saints!

We remind you that until the state is reopened we will have exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament from 9AM until 12Noon each Sunday and then again at 3PM with the singing of the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy.

In Jesus and Mary,
Monsignor James F. Pereda