

SUNDAY *to* SUNDAY

SAINT OF THE WEEK BERNARDINE OF SIENA

1380-1444

Feast Day—May 20



This renowned Italian preacher was canonized only six years after he died. He was born near Siena and studied at the university there. He was ordained a Franciscan priest in 1404. From 1417 until his death 27 years later, he criss-crossed northern and central Italy as an itinerant preacher who drew enormous crowds by focusing on honest and penitential living and on reverence for the holy name of Jesus which led to the spread of this devotion. He

also preached against gambling and materialism and turned down three requests to become a bishop.



PRAYER FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? (Rom 10:13-15)

Heavenly Father,

Pour forth your Holy Spirit to inspire me with these words from Holy Scripture.

Stir in my soul the desire to renew my faith and deepen my relationship with your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, so that I might truly believe in and live the Good News.

Open my heart to hear the Gospel, and grant me the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others.

Pour out your Spirit, so that I might be strengthened to go forth and witness to the Gospel in my everyday life through my words and actions.

In moments of hesitation, remind me:

If not me, then who will proclaim the Gospel?

If not now, then when will the Gospel be proclaimed?

If not the truth of the Gospel, then what shall I proclaim?

God, our Father, I pray that through the Holy Spirit I might hear the call of the New Evangelization to deepen my faith, grow in confidence to proclaim the Gospel, and boldly witness to the saving grace of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FACT OF FAITH PENTECOST

Pentecost marks the occasion of God sending the Holy Spirit upon Jesus’ disciples after his Resurrection. The book of Acts describes how the disciples were gathered together in one place on the day of Pentecost. The Jewish feast of Pentecost (Shavuot or the Feast of Weeks) was a day that commemorated the giving of the law to Moses, a day soon to be marked as well by the giving of the Holy Spirit. The day of Pentecost was a turning point for the disciples:

Before Pentecost, the disciples were unsure of what they were to do next and spent most of their time in hiding. After Pentecost and [receiving] the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they understood their mission to spread the Good News of Jesus, and they had the courage to come out of hiding and speak openly about who Jesus was and what he had accomplished by his dying and rising.¹

On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit gave the disciples the strength to fulfill their commission to spread the Good News of Jesus. The Church marks this day through a special liturgical celebration:

The Solemnity of Pentecost, on the fiftieth day of Easter, concludes the Easter season. In recent years, the Church has restored the extended vigil for this solemnity. Similar to Easter, the vigil of Pentecost includes four readings from the Old Testament, each with a proper Psalm and prayer, along with the Epistle and Gospel. At the conclusion of the Mass during the Day, the Paschal Candle is extinguished and moved to its permanent location near the baptismal font.²

The Solemnity of Pentecost, which crowns and fulfills the Easter season, is a good time to pray for a deeper in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit.

NOTES

- 1 Fact of Faith by Fr. Larry Rice, featured in This Week in Ministry, no. 26.
- 2 *Essential Guide to Seasons and Saints*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2013, 35.

