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CHURCHES MATTER

# Connect!

Uniting Word & World

For Sunday, May 24, 2015

Our Surging Life Force

## This Sunday's Scripture Readings

Pentecost Sunday

<http://new.usccb.org/bible/readings/052415-pentecost-day.cfm>

Acts 2:1-11

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13 or Galatians 5:16-25

John 20:19-23 or 15:26-27; 16:12-15



It's spring in the Northern Hemisphere. New life is surging up all around! Male birds in all their colorful finery are dancing and prancing to attract mates. Turkey tails are fanned. Rich melodies permeate the morning breezes. Farm animals are fat with soon-to-be-borns. Yes, even the maternity wards in our hospitals are full. Life! Life!

Our Jewish brothers and sisters believe that our human life force is in our blood. That really makes sense. When our blood is

gone, so is our life. In the film *The Passion of the Christ* there is a very poignant scene following Jesus' scourging. Mary, his mother, knelt and gathered the blood of her son so tenderly, so quietly. Was she attempting to gather his life force? That life that was so precious to her? But that blood needed further shedding. Despite her motherly drives, Mary knew she had to let go for an entirely new life to burst forth! Through the fog of her grief and unbelievable pain, the Holy Spirit again moved within this great woman. In an incomprehensible way, Mary was going through a second labor ... the labor of birthing the church. This birthing was also accompanied with pain and blood. In her heart, Mary again said, "fiat!" And new life began bursting forth!

Let's hold that image for a moment and look at another image that has been in our Sunday Gospels lately. The image of the vine and the branches. This too, is a springtime image. Grapevines are sending out their curling tendrils, connecting to supports so they are able to bring forth fruit. Could we think about that life as the strength and force of the Holy Spirit? The poetry of the Pentecost sequence petitions, "Come, source of all our store!" The Spirit is the source of the life within the vine, our store of life! How marvelous!

Right now, I'm sitting in the airport in Newark. Planes are leaving for points all over our world. In all of those places, Shanghai, London, Paris, Delhi, Cape Town, San Francisco, the vine and

the branches exist. The church that was birthed through the blood of Jesus, through the repeated consent of Mary, lives today. The disciples have gone forth as commanded by Jesus for over two thousand years, “speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.” The Spirit has strengthened and guided and nourished all disciples, including us, to nurture that life force! How can we help but to say, “Alleluia”? How can we help but be joyful as life surges through us!

Soon, we are celebrating Memorial Day. We remember our dead. Their life blood no longer surges through their bodies. As Catholics we believe that after death, life continues forever. We believe in the Resurrection and life everlasting. The life force of the Holy Spirit continues to flow in the spirits of those who have moved into eternity. As we commemorate the lives of our loved ones, there is that connection ... the connection of the Holy Spirit. That Spirit flows through the church militant, the church suffering and the church triumphant. We are all one! This calls for gladness, and banishes sadness!

May God be praised for being our Father, for being the Son, and especially, for being the Holy Spirit, our surging life force!

Patricia DeGroot, ObISB

## PRAYER

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God of power and mercy,  
you destroy war and put down earthly pride.  
Banish violence from our midst and wipe away our tears,  
that we may all deserve to be called your sons and daughters.  
Keep in your mercy those men and women  
who have died in the cause of freedom  
and bring them safely  
into your kingdom of justice and peace.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

—*Prayer for Memorial Day from Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers.*

## NOTICES

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### **CATHOLIC NEW MEDIA CELEBRATION, Atlanta, June 7, 2015**

Join Catholic new media producers, clergy and religious, lay workers, and faithful of all walks of life at the Catholic New Media Celebration in Atlanta, Georgia on June 7, 2015. The CNMC provides opportunities for networking and professional development for diocesan communicators, new media producers, and Catholic laypeople interested in the New Evangelization. For more information and to register, visit <http://sqpn.com/cnmc2015/>.

### **CRS RESPONDS TO EARTHQUAKE IN NEPAL**

As the official overseas relief and development agency of the USCCB and a member of Caritas International and the National Catholic Development Conference, CRS is leading relief efforts for victims of the recent earthquake in Nepal. To donate to CRS' efforts, click [here](#). LPi has also created a bulletin cover to promote these efforts. LPi customers can find the cover by searching Art & Media Portal for keyword “Nepal”; the cover is also available to other parishes via [www.4LPi.com](http://www.4LPi.com).

## **VISIT TO A CEMETERY, MEMORIAL DAY**

Many parishes will commemorate those who died in the armed forces on Monday, May 25. You may want to offer prayer cards or flyers to parish members to use on their own on that day. The LPi Art & Media Portal offers prayers and clip art that can be easily used to design a prayer card for Memorial Day. Use your parish's LPi Art & Media Portal account, or register for a free sample account at [www.Portal.4LPi.com](http://www.Portal.4LPi.com), using promo code **Memorial**.

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