



The Cathedral of
ST. EUGENE

PASTORAL STAFF

Rev. Frank Epperson, Rector
Fr. Gabriel Sanchez, Parochial Vicar
Rev. Jeffrey Keyes, In Residence
Rev. Bala Putchakayala, In Residence
Deacon Mike Heinzelman
Deacon Gary Moore
Deacon Russ Bowden

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Email Comments/Suggestions to:
Office@steugenes.com

Parish Office Phone	542-6984
Parish Office Fax	542-1621
Religious Education	326-3408
Finance Council – Marty McCormick	526-1700
Choir Directress – Pam Zieminski	578-8848
School Office	545-7252
Preschool Office – Sharry Caesare	528-9133
Homeschool Academy– Jessica Warner	206-5579

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday – 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Entrance is located at SW corner of Rectory

WEBSITES

Parish: www.steugenes.com
School: www.steugenesch.org

REGISTRATION IN THE PARISH

Our warmest welcome to all who worship in our community. If you are not registered in the parish, please complete a registration card. Cards are available at church entrances or at the parish office.

MARRIAGES & BAPTISMS

Please contact the office at least 12 months in advance for weddings and 3 months in advance for baptisms. Check the parish website for more information.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Please call the parish office when a parishioner is home bound or hospitalized to arrange for Holy Communion and Anointing of the Sick.

2323 Montgomery Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95405
(707) 542-6984



MASS TIMES

Daily Mass: 6:45 and 8:00 a.m.
Saturday: 8:00 a.m.; 4:30 p.m. & Sp.6:30 p. m.
Sunday: 7:30, 9:00 & 10:30 a.m.
12:00 noon and 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday Latin Mass: 5:30 p.m.
Sunday Latin Mass: 1:30 p.m.

CONFESSIONS

3:30 – 4:30 p.m. Saturday or by appointment

PERPETUAL ADORATION

Perpetual Adoration is in the Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. To sign up for your hour with our Lord, call Annette (English) at: 542-3635 or Maria Vega (Spanish) at: 710-5094

Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament is held in the chapel every First Friday following 8:00 a.m. Mass. *During this time of Covid-19, Benediction is not being held.*

DEVOTIONS

Recitation of the Rosary is Monday – Saturday at 7:25 a.m. in the Cathedral

Chaplet of Divine Mercy is Saturday after the 8:00 a.m. Mass in the Cathedral

CATHEDRAL SHOPS

Cathedral Thrift Shop Hours: Tues & Wed. 9:30 am – 2:30 pm

Cathedral Books & Gifts Hours: Wed-Sat 8:30-4:30 & Sun 8:30-1:30, Closed Mon/Tues - Phone: 542-0250

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – JANUARY 15, 2023

PARISH CALENDAR

SUNDAY JANUARY 15

Masses – Cathedral – 7:30 am, 9:00 am, 10:30 am, 12:00,
1:30 pm (Latin) & 5:30 pm
RCIA – PLC – 10:30 am
Coffee Social – PLC – 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

MONDAY JANUARY 16

Morning Masses – Cathedral – 6:45 & 8:00 am

TUESDAY JANUARY 17

Morning Masses – Cathedral – 6:45 & 8:00 am
Women of the Word – PLC – 9:00 am
PSR – School – 3:45 pm
Latin Mass – Cathedral – 5:30 pm

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 18

Morning Masses – Cathedral – 6:45 & 8:00 am
Outdoor Rosary – Fatima Grotto – 6:00 pm
Bible Study – PLC – 7:00 pm

THURSDAY JANUARY 19

Morning Masses – Cathedral – 6:45 & 8:00 am

FRIDAY JANUARY 20

Morning Masses – Cathedral – 6:45 & 8:00 am

SATURDAY JANUARY 21

Morning Mass – Cathedral – 8:00 am
Confession – Cathedral 3:30 – 4:30 pm
Sunday Vigil Masses – Cathedral – 4:30 pm & 6:30 pm
(Spanish)

SECOND COLLECTION INFORMATION

~ TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ~

This weekend, January 14 & 15, our Second Collection will be for our Tuition Assistance Program. Next weekend, January 21 & 22, the Second Collection will be for the Church in Latin America. This money helps fund Catholic education and foster religious vocations from Mexico to the Caribbean to the Southern tip of South America.

~ K of C TO HONOR MILITARY ~

Are you currently, or were you in the past, a member of our Armed Forces? If so, the Knights of Columbus would like to honor you! Our latest project is to update the sign in the PLC that honors our veterans. We would like to include all St. Eugene's parishioners who serve, or have served, our country. Forms are available for you to fill out in the Parish Office and in our Gift Shop/Bookstore. Please return the form to either of those locations by February 15th. For more information, please call Dan Ramos at: 707-217-1858.

Hearing Aid Users, Switch to T-Coil

ADMINISTRATION

For the Week of 01/01/23

Sunday Donations Received:	\$18,627,
Second Collection: Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God	\$3,795

~ CATHEDRAL BOOKS & GIFTS ~

January is the month of the Holy Name of Jesus. The mystery and beauty of the Name of Jesus should be shrouded in silence and reverence, therefore, to respect this reverence, in January, our modest and beautiful veils are on sale at 25% off all month. They are all breathtaking in their colors, softness, and intricate patterns. Start the New Year with the understated beauty and modesty of a veil and buy the one that you've always wanted. The shop hours are: Wed-Sat from 8:30 am-4:30 pm & Sun 8:30 am-1:30 pm. We are closed Mon./Tues. Call us at: 542-0250.

~ 2022 CHARITABLE DONATION LIST ~

St. Eugene's greatly appreciates your donations to the Cathedral. A year-end list of donations suitable for tax purposes is provided to registered parishioners. Please note that year-end donation lists are sent **upon request only**. Email your requests to bookkeeper@steugenes.com, leave a message at 707-852-0376, or come to the parish office. Let us know if you want your statement mailed or emailed.

NEW ROOF FUNDRAISER

~ NEW ROOF NEEDED ~

Several weeks ago, many of you may have read the flyer that we inserted in our bulletin. For those who did not see it, our latest challenge is to have a new roof installed on the Cathedral. The one that we have now is quite old and is failing fast! One thing about these old buildings is that things eventually wear out. (Most of the buildings on our campus are 70 years old.) Last year, you may remember, we raised money to renovate the old kitchen and bathrooms in the Msgr. Becker. It looks like this year, it'll be the roof. We have been given an estimate of \$100,000 for this job. If, after prayerful reflection, you are able to help us raise the funds to make this happen, we would greatly appreciate it. If you donate by check, simply make the check payable to: "St. Eugene's" and on the Memo Line, please write: "For New Roof" Feel free to drop the check into the collection basket on a Sunday of your choice or drop it by/ send it to the Parish Office (Cathedral of St. Eugene, 2323 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95403). As always, we are so very grateful for your generosity!

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday	January 14
8:00 am	Pisenti & Mazzetta Families, living & deceased
4:30 pm	Rondelle Cagwin, living
6:30 pm (Sp)	Familia Jimenez Garcia, living
Sunday	January 15
7:30 am	People of St. Eugene's
9:00 am	George & Chris Schirle, deceased
10:30 am	Wynn Hayes, deceased
12:00 pm	Luis Roberto Monterroso, deceased
1:30 pm (EF)	Jim Pfaff, deceased
5:30 pm	Nancy Hoyer, living
6:00pm Newman Ctr.	Lorna Cruz Juico, deceased
Monday	January 16
6:45 am	Paul Song Cao, deceased
8:00 am	Ana Sue Dang, deceased
Tuesday	January 17
6:45 am	Christopher Rodriguez, deceased
8:00 am	Elsa Cortez Gomez & Fernando Franco Sandoval, deceased
5:30 pm (EF)	Gerald Jose Jauregui, deceased
Wednesday	January 18
6:45 am	Lina & Chris Young, living
8:00 am	McShane & Stronge Families, living & deceased
9:20 am (Sch)	Fr. Alan Acevedo, living
Thursday	January 19
6:45 am	James J. Haberkorn, Jr., deceased
8:00 am	Theresa Stronge & Family, living
Friday	January 20
6:45 am	Graham B. Mann & Family, deceased
8:00 am	Robert Cook Family, living & deceased
12:00 pm (Hosp)	Mary Tran, living
Saturday	January 21
8:00 am	William Avilla, deceased
4:30 pm	Thomas Patrick, deceased
6:30 (Sp)	Familia Jimenez Garcia, living

~ICF SCHOLARSHIPS~

The Italian Catholic Federation (ICF) is offering scholarships to high school graduates (class of 2023). You are eligible to apply if you are a Catholic, have any Italian ancestry and a GPA of at least 3.20. See your school counselor for an application or go to www.ICF.org.

SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY

~NEW BIBLE STUDY CLASS~

Start 2023 off right by studying the Word of God! We began our class, *James: Pearls for Wise Living*, on **January 11, but if you were unable to attend on that day, you may still join us on the 18th!** Meant to help a fledgling Church live out its faith in the face of persecution and a worldview opposed to the gospel, the practical book of James will help you discover wisdom you can apply to the present. The group will meet for eleven Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:30 in the Parish Life Center. There is no fee, but each person must purchase the course workbook for \$30 from Ascension Press and supply their own bible. For more info contact: Tony Nelson at opsmanager@steugenes.com.

SOCIAL ACTIVITY

~SINGLES POTLUCK~

Please join us as we hold our first potluck for Singles! Starting on Saturday, Feb. 4th, and on the first Saturday evening of every month thereafter, we will meet in the Parish Life Center immediately following the 4:30 pm Mass (5:30 pm). Each meeting will begin with us praying the Rosary. We will then discuss the Faith, marriage and the importance of discerning one's vocation. Then, we'll enjoy a potluck dinner and mingle! We will likely end our meeting by or before 7:30 pm. *For more information and to sign up for a dish/drink/dessert to share, please call Deborah Jones at: 310-600-2359.*

RESPECT LIFE

~WALK FOR LIFE~

The Knights of Columbus is organizing a bus trip to the 2023 "Walk for Life" in San Francisco on Saturday, January 21st. Two buses will leave St. Eugene's at 8:00am and drop us off at St. Mary's Cathedral for 9:30am Mass celebrated by Archbishop Cordileone. After Mass we will walk to the SF Civic Center for the rally. The Rally begins at 12:30pm, followed by "The Walk for Life" down Market Street at 1:30pm. We will board our bus at the end of "The Walk" around 3:30pm and we will arrive back at St. Eugene's before 5pm. Bus Tickets can be purchased at the Parish Office and will be sold on a first come/first served basis. The cost is \$28.

~PLEASE PRAY FOR~

Those who are ill need your support and prayers: Tristan Humble, Samuel Agius, Marjorie Miles, Amelia Lansangan, Gail Brown, Leo Del Santo, Emeline Jane Smith, Rosalind Britto, Ken Davis, Rita Wyatt, Karen Mills, Eileen Carol, Nancy Amador, Patrick Welter, Cristeta Marentes, Jesus Navarro, Michael Boland, Stephen Warner, Aida Catapang, Bob Goldman, Pat Davenport, Paulita Castro, Jean L. Alfano, Theresa Pham, Rainey Olson, Michele Otten, Pauline Goslovich, Mary Gonzales, Nick Sidjakov, Sandi Picconi, Margaret Keifer, Joan Cosgrove and Denise Ealy.

MY CATHOLIC FAITH

THE THIRD PERSON OF THE TRINITY

~FROM THE PASTOR~

In our Gospel reading today, John the Baptist said, in regard to the baptism of Jesus, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him." This dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit, leads us to explore a bit more, the role of the Holy Spirit, including an answer to "what is the unforgiveable sin against the Holy Spirit? We will also take a look at some of the lesser known saints whose feast days are in January.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

~COMMON MYTHS~

The Holy Spirit is probably the most misunderstood of the three persons of the Trinity. Don't believe any of these myths, and help spread the truth!

Myth 1: The Holy Spirit is a "force." **Truth:** The Holy Spirit is actually a *person*, just like the Father and the Son. The fact he is called "Spirit," rather than a term we're used to using for people (like Father and Son), might make this confusing, but he is a person nonetheless.

Myth 2: The Holy Spirit didn't exist in the Old Testament. **Truth:** The Holy Spirit has *always* been the third person of the Trinity from all eternity, including during the Old Testament. Whenever God does something in the Old Testament, that's the Holy Spirit at work!

Myth 3: The Holy Spirit is of a lesser status than the Father and the Son. **Truth:** Yes, we call the Holy Spirit the *third* person of the Trinity. But this refers to relations between the divine persons and does not indicate any lesser status. All three persons are co-equal, as is confessed in the Athanasian Creed.

Myth 4: The Holy Spirit is just a part of God. **Truth:** Actually all three persons of the Trinity are *all* of God. This might be confusing, but God has no parts. Anything God does, all three persons do, including the Holy Spirit.

Myth 5: A true Christian with the Holy Spirit will "speak in tongues." **Truth:** First, there is a great deal of controversy over what "speaking in tongues" even means. Though many modern Christians believe it refers to a Christian speaking what sounds like gibberish, traditionally it was understood as the gift to speak in multiple real human languages, as the Apostles did at Pentecost. In any case, the Church teaches that a person receives the Holy Spirit and becomes a Christian at Baptism, and is strengthened in the gifts of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation, regardless of whether one evidences "speaking in tongues." <https://churchpop.com/2017/06/03/5-myths-about-the-holy-spirit-that-too-many-people-still-believe-may-be-even-you/>



BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

~WHAT IS THIS?~

"The Church is crystal clear that there are "no limits to the mercy of God." (CCC 1864) Jesus Christ died for everyone's sins, and anyone who repents of his sins and follows Christ can receive forgiveness and new life. So then, why does Jesus say in the Gospels that "whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"? (Mark 3.29) Is this some sort of exception that we must be wary of? Yes, but not in the way you might expect. And here's why. But first, let's look at what Christ says exactly. Our Lord's teaching on "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit" is recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels. In Mark, Jesus says: "Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but **whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.**" (Mark 3.28-29) Matthew and Luke have something similar. How are Christians to understand this? Thankfully, the *Catechism* addresses this teaching directly:

“There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss.” (CCC 1864)

~A REJECTION OF FORGIVENESS~

“In other words, the *Catechism* says that “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit” is **rejecting the forgiveness of God all the way to the end of one’s life**. It’s blasphemy of the Holy Spirit because salvation is offered to every person by the Holy Spirit. (But don’t all three persons of the Trinity offer salvation? See the [Principle of Appropriation](#).) Pope St. John Paul II explains this in his encyclical on the Holy Spirit, *Dominum et vivificantem*: “Why is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit unforgivable? [...] St. Thomas Aquinas replies that it is a question of a sin that is ‘unforgivable by its very nature, insofar as it excludes the elements through which the forgiveness of sin takes place.’”

~HUMILITY, REPENTENCE, ACCEPTANCE~

“According to such an exegesis, “blasphemy” does not properly consist in offending against the Holy Spirit in words; it consists rather in the refusal to accept the salvation which God offers to man through the Holy Spirit, working through the power of the Cross.” So should we all be wary of committing the sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? Not in the sense that we should be worried about committing a sin so bad that God can’t forgive it *if we repent*. No such sin exists. But we should be wary about refusing God’s forgiveness. After we die, there will be no second chances. In his loving kindness, God has offered us a chance for salvation. We should humbly, and speedily, repent of our sins and accept God’s gratuitous gift of grace.”
<https://churchpop.com/2016/08/23/the-eternal-sin-the-true-meaning-of-blasphemy-against-the-holy-spirit/>

SAINTS OF JANUARY

~ST. BERNARD & COMPANIONS~

Preaching the gospel is often dangerous work. Leaving one’s homeland and adjusting to new cultures, governments and languages is difficult enough; but martyrdom caps all the other sacrifices. In 1219, with the blessing of Saint Francis, Bernard left Italy with Peter, Adjute, Accurs, Odo and Vitalis to preach in Morocco. En route in Spain, Vitalis became sick and commanded the other friars to

continue their mission without him. They tried preaching in Seville, then in Muslim hands, but made no converts. They went on to Morocco where they preached in the marketplace. The friars were immediately apprehended and ordered to leave the country; they refused. When they began preaching again, an exasperated sultan ordered them executed. After enduring severe beatings and declining various bribes to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ, the friars were beheaded by the sultan himself on January 16, 1220. These were the first Franciscan martyrs. When Francis heard of their deaths, he exclaimed, “Now I can truly say that I have five Friars Minor!” Their relics were brought to Portugal where they prompted a young Augustinian canon to join the Franciscans and set off for Morocco the next year. That young man was Anthony of Padua. These five martyrs were canonized in 1481.” Their feast day is January 16.

~ST. EMERENTIANA~

“In the account of the martyrdom of St. Emerentiana we find confirmed the Church’s constant teaching on the Baptism of Blood. Raised to the altar and included in the Liturgical Calendar, this Roman girl (circa 304 A.D.), daughter of a slave of the wealthy noble family of Agnes, was still a catechumen and not yet baptized when Agnes was martyred. Emerentiana’s mother was the wet nurse and nanny of St. Agnes. The influence of the Christian patrician parents and the example of their virtuous daughter, Agnes, had a profound effect on the servant and her daughter, Emerentiana. A slave by birth but a “milk-sibling” [to Agnes], Emerentiana was inspired by her mistress Agnes, who was teaching her the holy Faith so that she might be baptized a Christian. The prefect ordered St. Agnes’ throat be slit before a large crowd. Her course of study was abruptly ended with the glorious death of Agnes. Several days after Agnes was publicly martyred, which Emerentiana probably witnessed, she went to the tomb to pray. Mocked by a group of pagans who saw her there grieving, she courageously defended her mistress. This brave rebuttal raised the fury of a group of pagans and they stoned Emerentiana to death on the very tomb of her dear mistress Agnes. The tomb of the teacher became the throne of martyrdom for the disciple.” St. Emerentiana’s feast day is on January 23rd.
<http://www.catholictradition.org/Saints/feast-days.htm>

MI FE CATOLICA

~DEL PASTOR~

~LA TERCERA PERSONA DE LA TRINIDAD~

En nuestra lectura del Evangelio de hoy, Juan el Bautista dijo, a propósito del bautismo de Jesús: "Vi al Espíritu descender del cielo como una paloma y permanecer sobre él. "Esta paloma, símbolo del Espíritu Santo, nos lleva a explorar un poco más, el papel del Espíritu Santo, incluyendo una respuesta a "¿cuál es el pecado imperdonable contra el Espíritu Santo? También echaremos un vistazo a algunos de los santos menos conocidos cuya fiesta se celebra en enero.

EL EPIRITU SANTO

~MITOS COMUNES~

El Espíritu Santo es probablemente la más incomprendida de las tres personas de la Trinidad. No creas ninguno de estos mitos, ¡y ayuda a difundir la verdad!

Mito 1: El Espíritu Santo es una "fuerza". Verdad:

El Espíritu Santo es en realidad una persona, igual que el Padre y el Hijo. El hecho de que se le llame "Espíritu", en lugar de un término que estamos acostumbrados a usar para las personas (como Padre e Hijo), puede hacer que esto sea confuso, pero de todos modos es una persona.

Mito 2: El Espíritu Santo no existía en el Antiguo Testamento. Verdad:

El Espíritu Santo siempre ha sido la tercera persona de la Trinidad desde toda la eternidad, incluso durante el Antiguo Testamento. Siempre que Dios hace algo en el Antiguo Testamento, ¡es el Espíritu Santo actuando!

Mito 3: El Espíritu Santo es de menor rango que el Padre y el Hijo. Verdad:

Sí, llamamos al Espíritu Santo la tercera persona de la Trinidad. Pero esto se refiere a las relaciones entre las personas divinas y no indica ningún estatus inferior. Las tres personas son co-iguales, como se confiesa en el Credo Atanasiano.

Mito 4: El Espíritu Santo es sólo una parte de Dios. Verdad:

En realidad, las tres personas de la Trinidad son todas Dios. Esto puede ser confuso, pero Dios no tiene partes. Todo lo que Dios hace, lo hacen las tres personas, incluido el Espíritu Santo.

Mito 5: Un verdadero cristiano con el Espíritu Santo "hablará en lenguas". Verdad:

Primero, hay mucha controversia sobre lo que significa "hablar en lenguas". Aunque muchos cristianos modernos creen que se refiere a un cristiano hablando lo que suena como un galimatías, tradicionalmente se entendía como el don de hablar en múltiples lenguas humanas reales, como lo hicieron los Apóstoles en Pentecostés. En cualquier caso, la Iglesia enseña que una persona recibe el Espíritu Santo y se convierte en cristiano en el Bautismo, y es fortalecido en los dones del Espíritu Santo en la Confirmación, independientemente de si uno evidencia "hablar en lenguas".



BLASFEMIA CONTRA EL ESPÍRITU SANTO

~¿QUÉ ES ESTO?~

"La Iglesia tiene muy claro que "no hay límites a la misericordia de Dios". (CIC 1864) Jesucristo murió por los pecados de todos, y cualquiera que se arrepienta de sus pecados y siga a Cristo puede recibir el perdón y una vida nueva. Entonces, ¿por qué dice Jesús en los Evangelios que "quien blasfeme contra el Espíritu Santo no tiene perdón, sino que es culpable de un pecado eterno"? (Marcos 3.29) ¿Se trata de una especie de excepción de la que debemos cuidarnos? Sí, pero no de la forma que cabría esperar. Y he aquí por qué. Pero primero, veamos lo que Cristo dice exactamente. La enseñanza de Nuestro Señor sobre la "blasfemia del Espíritu Santo" se recoge en los tres Evangelios Sinópticos. En Marcos, Jesús dice: "En verdad os digo que a los hijos de los hombres se les perdonarán todos los pecados y todas las blasfemias que profieran, pero **quien blasfeme contra el Espíritu Santo nunca tendrá perdón, sino que será culpable de un pecado eterno.**" (Marcos 3.28-29) Mateo y Lucas dicen algo parecido. ¿Cómo deben entender esto los cristianos? Afortunadamente, el Catecismo aborda directamente esta enseñanza:

"No hay límites para la misericordia de Dios, pero quien se niega deliberadamente a aceptar su misericordia arrepintiéndose, rechaza el perdón de sus pecados y la salvación ofrecida por el Espíritu Santo. Tal dureza de corazón puede conducir a la impenitencia definitiva y a la pérdida eterna". (CIC 1864)

~UN RECHAZO DEL PERDÓN~

"En otras palabras, el *Catecismo* dice que la "blasfemia del Espíritu Santo" es rechazar el perdón de Dios hasta el final de la vida. Es blasfemia del Espíritu Santo porque la salvación es ofrecida a cada persona por el Espíritu Santo. (¿Pero no ofrecen la salvación las tres personas de la Trinidad? Véase el Principio de Apropiación). El Papa San Juan Pablo II lo explica en su encíclica sobre el Espíritu Santo, *Dominum et vivificantem*: "¿Por qué es imperdonable la blasfemia contra el Espíritu Santo? [...] Santo Tomás de Aquino responde que se trata de un pecado 'imperdonable por su propia naturaleza, en cuanto excluye los elementos por los que tiene lugar el perdón del pecado'".

~HUMILDAD, ARREPENTIMIENTO, ACEPTACIÓN~
"Según tal exégesis, la "blasfemia" no consiste propiamente en ofender al Espíritu Santo con palabras; consiste más bien en la negativa a aceptar la salvación que Dios ofrece al hombre por medio del Espíritu Santo, obrando mediante el poder de la Cruz." Entonces, ¿debemos todos guardarnos de cometer el pecado de blasfemia contra el Espíritu Santo? No en el sentido de que debemos preocuparnos por cometer un pecado tan grave que Dios no pueda perdonarlo si nos arrepentimos. No existe tal pecado. Pero debemos tener cuidado con rechazar el perdón de Dios. Después de la muerte, no habrá segundas oportunidades. En su amorosa bondad, Dios nos ha ofrecido una oportunidad de salvación. Debemos arrepentirnos humilde y rápidamente de nuestros pecados y aceptar el don gratuito de la gracia de Dios."

SANTOS DE ENERO

~SAN BERNARDO Y COMPAÑEROS~

Predicar el Evangelio es a menudo un trabajo peligroso. Abandonar la patria y adaptarse a nuevas culturas, gobiernos e idiomas ya es bastante difícil; pero el martirio supera todos los demás sacrificios. En 1219, con la bendición de San Francisco, Bérard partió de Italia con Pedro, Adjute, Accurs, Odo y Vitalis para predicar en Marruecos.

De camino a España, Vitalis enfermó y ordenó a los demás frailes que continuar su misión sin él. Intentaron predicar en Sevilla, entonces en manos musulmanas, pero no consiguieron conversos. Fueron a Marruecos, donde predicaron en el mercado. Los frailes fueron detenidos inmediatamente y se les ordenó abandonar el país; se negaron. Cuando volvieron a predicar, un sultán exasperado ordenó ejecutarlos. Tras soportar duras palizas y rechazar varios sobornos para que renunciaran a su fe en Jesucristo, los frailes fueron decapitados por el propio sultán el 16 de enero de 1220. Fueron los primeros mártires franciscanos. Cuando Francisco se enteró de sus muertes, exclamó: "¡Ahora sí que puedo decir que tengo cinco frailes menores!". Sus reliquias fueron llevadas a Portugal, donde incitaron a un joven canónigo agustino a unirse a los franciscanos y partir hacia Marruecos al año siguiente. Aquel joven era Antonio de Padua. Estos cinco mártires fueron canonizados en 1481". Su fiesta se celebra el 16 de enero.

~SAN EMERENCIANA~

"En el relato del martirio de Santa Emerenciana encontramos confirmada la constante enseñanza de la Iglesia sobre el Bautismo de Sangre. Elevada a los altares e incluida en el Calendario Litúrgico, esta muchacha romana (hacia 304 d.C.), hija de un esclavo de la rica familia noble de Inés, era aún catecúmena y no estaba todavía bautizada cuando Inés fue martirizada. La madre de Emerenciana era la nodriza y niñera de Santa Inés. La influencia de los padres patricios cristianos y el ejemplo de su virtuosa hija, Inés, tuvieron un profundo efecto en la sirvienta y en su hija, Emerenciana. Esclava de nacimiento, pero "hermana de leche" [de Inés], Emerenciana se sintió inspirada por su ama Inés, que le enseñaba la santa fe para que pudiera bautizarse como cristiana. El prefecto ordenó degollar a Santa Inés ante una gran multitud. Su curso de estudios terminó abruptamente con la gloriosa muerte de Inés. Varios días después del martirio público de Inés, del que Emerenciana probablemente fue testigo, fue a la tumba a rezar. Burlada por un grupo de paganos que la vieron allí afligida, defendió valientemente a su señora. Esta valiente refutación levantó la furia de un grupo de paganos y apedrearon a Emerenciana hasta la muerte sobre la misma tumba de su querida ama Inés. La tumba de la maestra se convirtió en el trono del martirio para la discípula". La fiesta de Santa Emerenciana es el 23 de enero.

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