

# Grace Notes

Friday, May 28, 2021



Dear friends:

As we anticipate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity on Sunday, and the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Monday, May is certainly going out with a fanfare. <sup>1</sup>

The prayers dedicated to the Holy Trinity came into being as a response to the Arian Heresy which held that the Son of God was not eternal with the Father, but rather created by the Father in Time and therefore had to be subordinate. The Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 formally confirmed the doctrine of the Trinity and this is reflected in the Nicene Creed, where we state: I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father... In response to the continuation of Arianism, the Church Fathers introduced an Office for the Holy Trinity, and the Sacramentary of St Gregory the Great (590 – 604) included such an Office and the Preface of the Trinity. In the early fourteenth century, Pope John XXII designated the Sunday after Pentecost as the feast of the Holy Trinity and we continue that practice today. Until the decision was made to move the



celebration of Corpus Christi to the following Sunday, that Solemnity would have been celebrated on the Thursday following Trinity Sunday. In the home, Trinity Sunday has been celebrated with triangular pastries or rolls shaped like clover leaves or shamrocks. You can find a liturgy for use at

home while we wait out our Covid-19 separation from our churches at <https://aleteia.org/2020/06/06/how-to-celebrate-trinity-sunday-at-home/> <sup>2</sup>

On Monday we celebrate the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, remembering the story of a newly pregnant Mary making a journey into the hill country to visit her older cousin, Elizabeth, who, after many years of longing, is in her sixth month of pregnancy with the child who will be John the Baptist. The gospel reading for this day (Luke 1:39–56) gives us the origin of two special prayers, the Hail Mary and the



<sup>1</sup> *The Blessed Trinity with Crown*, oil on panel, Max Fürst (1846–1917))

<sup>2</sup> Statue of the Visitation at Church of the Visitation in Ein Karem, Israel



Magnificat. Although this celebration only dates back reliably to the twelfth or thirteenth century, it is one with a strong attachment. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0yzZZ4e87c> Many people associate this month with beautiful May crowning celebrations and some very beautiful, traditional pieces of music.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWMEsCT8xZw&t=48s>

Even though our public health restrictions during Covid-19 prevent us from having a school or parish crowning, we can do a version of this in our own homes. Whether we use flowers from the garden or the field, or make colourful flowers for the purpose, we can create a beautiful crown for our Blessed Lady and celebrate her day at home. If there is a statue of Our Lady – even a small one – in the home the flowers can be laid before it; otherwise, the crown may be given a place of honour on a table or prayer corner. A liturgy which can be led by a lay person can be found at <https://www.rcan.org/sites/default/files/files/bvmpresider.pdf>



A fairly easy sweet treat for this day can be made by pressing rice crispie square mixture into a tube pan or jelly mould, letting it cool and harden. It is then turned out on a plate and decorated with candy ‘flowers’, much as one would decorate a gingerbread house. Some other family activities can be found at <https://www.mqpwg.org/portals/mqpchurch/CMAdmin/May%20Crowning%20Service%20at%20Home%202020.pdf>

When we remember that the strength of our faith comes from the triad of home, school and parish, simple celebrations like this at home do much to reinforce with our children the connections between what they learn at school and the community with which they worship in the parish. They also create precious memories.

There is a lot being said about “Covid fatigue” these days and we need inspiration to find the silver linings. It has been said that “we are all in the same storm but we are not all in the same boat”. It is worth taking a few moments to think of something we can be thankful for – perhaps something we might not have experienced without the challenges of the pandemic. I am increasingly impressed by the virtual choirs which have formed, bringing people together from around the globe to sing together. Here is one such example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gpoJNv5dlQ&list=RD6gpoJNv5dlQ&index=1>

With every blessing,

Gillian