



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
**DIOCESE**  
**OF CHARLESTON**

SECRETARIAT OF COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## July Toolkit – *Homily Helps*

### 1. Month of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus — JULY

- “Blood that but one drop of has the world to win all the world forgiveness of its world of sin” (*Adoro te Devote*, St. Thomas Aquinas).
- Eucharistic miracles help to encourage eucharistic faith and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Many have involved the Precious Blood, but two occurred in Buenos Aires, Argentina, when Jorge Bergoglio (now Pope Francis) was an auxiliary bishop. In 1996, the Body of Christ was dropped during Mass and placed into a container of water to dissolve, according to Church guidance. Ten days later, the host appeared to be blood. It was sent for testing and shown to contain human tissue and white blood cells. The tissue was from the left ventricle of a human heart and, more specifically, of a person who had suffered tremendously and was on the brink of death. The left ventricle purifies blood, just as Christ purifies his Church. ([Catholic News Agency](#))
- “The precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb” (1 Pet 1:17-19).
- Christians have received the redemption through the spotless lamb (Is 53:7) as prophesied by the prophet Isaiah (Is 52:3).
- St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage around 249 A.D., wrote, “The cup of the Lord is not water only, or wine only, but the two are mixed... To signify the union between Christ and his faithful people; for if one offer wine only, the blood of Christ begins to be without us; if water only, the people begin to be without Christ” (*Gratian. de Cons ii. 7*) ([St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea](#))
- Similarly, St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan in the fourth century, said of the composition of the wine: “If Melchizedek offered bread and wine, what means this mixing of water? Hear the reason. Moses struck the rock, and the rock gave forth abundance of water, but that rock was Christ. Also, one of the soldiers with his spear pierced Christ’s side, and out of his side flowed water and blood, the water to cleanse, the blood to redeem.” ([St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea](#))

### 2. The Gift of Freedom — *Saint and Scripture Quotes*

- “For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery ... For you were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love” (Gal 5:1,13).
- “The exercise of freedom does not imply a right to say or do everything. It is false to maintain that man, the subject of this freedom, is an individual who is fully self-sufficient and whose finality is the satisfaction of his own interests in the enjoyment of earthly goods... By deviating from the moral law man violates his own freedom,

becomes imprisoned within himself, disrupts neighborly fellowship, and rebels against divine truth” (CCC 1740).

- “Every generation of Americans needs to know that freedom consists not in doing what we like but in having the right to do what we ought” (St. John Paul II).
- “The only person who is free is the one who lives for Christ” (St. John Chrysostom).
- “But now that you have been freed from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit that you have leads to sanctification, and its end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:22-23).

### 3. St. Thomas the Apostle — JULY 3

- St. Thomas, the one who doubted the resurrection of Christ. He said, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” After he had touched the wounds of Jesus and believed, Christ said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed” (Jn 20:24-29).
- St. Gregory writes, “It was not an accident that that particular disciple was not present. The Divine mercy ordained that a doubting disciple should, by feeling in his Master the wounds of the flesh heal in us the wounds of unbelief. The unbelief of Thomas is more profitable to our faith, than the belief of the other disciples; for, the touch by which he is brought to believe, confirming our minds in belief, beyond all question” ([St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea](#))
- St. Thomas was the one who told the Lord that the Apostles did not understand what he was saying. Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn 14:5-6).
- After Pentecost, St. Thomas is said to have gone to India to spread the Gospel.
- It is believed that he was martyred in Tamil Nadu, India.

### 4. St. Maria Goretti — JULY 6

- St. Maria Goretti was born on Oct. 16, 1890, to very poor yet devout Catholic farmers in Italy. When her father died, Maria's mother struggled to provide for her family. Maria's siblings farmed and helped their mother while the girl was left to take care of the household and her younger sister.
- When Maria was 12, she was sitting outside of the home sewing when a man named Alessandro, a trusted family friend, surprised her and tried to sexually assault her. She resisted with all her might, screaming that it was a mortal sin and God would not be pleased. Alessandro then stabbed her 14 times and ran away.
- Her family found her and rushed her to the nearest doctor, where she endured surgery without anesthesia. During this ordeal, she was very thirsty and said so; she was not allowed to have water during the procedure, so someone reminded her of Christ's thirst on the cross. From that point on, she did not complain once, but offered her suffering in union with that of Christ. The surgery was futile, and her life could not be saved.

- She forgave Alessandro for his crimes the next day and expressed her wish that he would go to heaven. She died that day embracing a crucifix and looking at a photo of the Blessed Mother.
- While imprisoned, Alessandro had a dream of Maria. He repented and after he was released from prison became a lay brother. He asked Maria's mother for forgiveness. She replied, "If my daughter can forgive him, who am I to withhold forgiveness?"
- Alessandro and Maria's mother were present at her beatification.
- Maria Goretti offers us a truly Christ-like image of forgiveness. Just as Christ forgave his murderers from the cross, Maria forgave her murderer from hers. She harbored no bitterness but only charity and a desire for those around her to go to heaven. She died a martyr, witnessing to her faith until the end. She is an example of virtue and strength that can inspire us today.

## 5. St. Benedict — JULY 11

- St. Benedict was born in the Kingdom of Nursia in Italy around 480. His sister is St. Scholastica. He was sent to Rome to be educated, and at 20 years old, he decided to leave Rome to pursue a life of simplicity.
- He met a monk that showed him a cave where he could be in complete solitude and live the life of a hermit. This cave was in the side of a mountain and very difficult to enter. Furthermore, the cave was rocky, and there was nothing for him to eat. The monk would save parts of his meals and drop them down to St. Benedict in a little basket.
- A beloved story of St. Benedict was told by St. Gregory the Great, who said the first outsider to find St. Benedict's cave was a priest. As he was preparing a feast for Easter, he heard a voice ask him: "Thou art preparing thyself a savory dish while my servant Benedict is afflicted with hunger." The priest immediately set out to find St. Benedict. Having found him, he invited him to eat with him. Even in his solitude, St. Benedict was tempted by sins of the flesh. Once he had lustful thoughts that were so strong that he considered leaving his isolation. However, realizing this, he removed his habit and threw himself into thorn bushes and rolled around so that he was covered in cuts. "Thus, through those wounds of the body, he cured the wounds of the soul," St. Gregory said.
- His strict way of life led others to dislike him. Once, a group of monks sought him out to be their new abbot. However, after some time under his leadership, they grew tired of the strict and demanding rule and tried to poison the saint. He made the sign of the cross over the poisoned drink (as he always did) and the glass shattered. He left this group and started his own monasteries using a rule based on the way he lived. Pope Gregory said, "the holy man could not possibly teach otherwise than as he lived."
- The rule of the Benedictine life is based on work and prayer, "ora et labora." He believed that work was not only dignified and honorable, but that it was conducive to sanctity.

## **6. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel — JULY 16**

- Mount Carmel is a site in the Holy Land (modern day Haifa, Israel) that has been an important place of prayer since the time of the Prophet Elijah, around the 10th century B.C. The order of the Carmelites was founded here.
- In the Old Testament, Elijah challenged King Ahab to a demonstration of his deity, Baal, versus the God of Elijah at Mount Carmel. The challenge was to offer sacrifices to their respective gods and see which proved divinity by starting a fire. Ahab's prophets prayed for hours to Baal, but nothing happened. When it was Elijah's turn, he boldly drenched the altar with water to display his supreme trust in God, and it burst into flame. The people of Israel rejoiced and followed Elijah's guidance in trusting and recognizing God's sovereignty.
- Mount Carmel is also known for the apparition of the Blessed Mother to St. Simon Stock. The brown scapular was given to St. Simon on July 16, 1251. Our Lady promised, "This shall be a privilege for you and all Carmelites, that anyone dying in this habit shall not suffer eternal fire."
- The tradition was later extended to the laity. Those who wear the scapular practice some special devotion to Mary, such as praying the rosary daily, saying the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin or fasting from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays.
- We are reminded to continue to grow our relationship with the Blessed Virgin, mediatrix of all graces, and ask her to bring us closer to her son.

## **7. St. Ignatius of Loyola — JULY 31**

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