

Your Holy Friend of the Month

Saint Pedro Calungsod

Saint Pedro Calungsod, student, catechist, young migrant, missionary, faithful friend, martyr, you inspire us by your fidelity in time of adversity; by your courage in teaching the Faith in the midst of hostility; and by your love in shedding your blood for the sake of the Gospel. Make our prayers your own.

(pause to mention your intentions)

and intercede for us before the throne of Mercy and Grace so that, as we experience the help of Heaven, we may be encouraged to live and proclaim the Gospel here on earth. Amen.

Pedro Calungsod was a young Roman Catholic martyr and saint who lived in the early 17th century. He was born in the Visayan region of the Philippines, and at a young age, he joined the Jesuit order as a lay catechist. Calungsod's mission was to spread the Christian faith to the native Chamorro people on the island of Guam.

At this time, the Chamorro people were predominantly animist and resisted the efforts of the Jesuit missionaries to convert them. Calungsod and his fellow missionaries faced much persecution and hostility, but they remained determined to spread the Gospel. In 1672, Calungsod and his fellow missionary, Diego Luis de San Vitores, were brutally murdered by a group of angry Chamorros while trying to baptize a baby.

Calungsod was only in his early 20s when he died, but he is remembered for his bravery and devotion to his faith. Calungsod's story is a reminder of the power of love and forgiveness, and the importance of standing up for what we believe in, even in the face of great adversity. He was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012. Today, Calungsod is venerated as a patron saint of young people, catechists, and the Philippines.

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If you are passionate about your education and wish to continue your academic journey post-release, Ignacio House offers transitional supportive housing along with a holistic suite of services for formerly incarcerated students. Find a sense of purpose and overcome barriers to employment, housing, and education.

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- Full name & DIN number •
- Current college you are enrolled in and/or where you will study post-release •
- Contact information for college/university where you will study •

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Thrive For Life

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Out of Chaos into His Image

By P. Jiménez, Thrive For Life Spiritual Mentor

When I read the news or hear the tragedies taking place in people's lives, I can't help asking, "Where's God in all this?" My heart tells me that God is always present, guiding each one of us, holding our hands in times of adversity, but pain and suffering challenge my faith sometimes. Yet, the parable of the weeds reminds me that God has not promised a world without pain, but to be with us in our suffering. God has promised to remain faithful and be our consolation. I look at the chaos around me and I look at the chaos inside of me. In all honesty, my inner chaos isn't any prettier than the world outside, but God reminds me that He only planted seeds of good wheat. Regardless of our mistakes and sins, we are wheat, we are the fruit of the good seed that God planted before all times, because we are His children.

If God has planted wheat and we are the fruit of that good seed, what about all the weeds? It is a mystery that there is good and evil in the world, that both wheat and weeds grow all around us. However, out of that chaos, God is building a better world, His kingdom. Out of our inner chaos, God is making the good wheat grow. The parable of the wheat and weeds invites us to be patient with ourselves and the world, while focusing on what is good, while working on becoming better every day, following God's will.

Weeds among the Wheat

Matthew 13: 24-30

Jesus put before the crowd another parable:

"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well.

And the workers of the householder came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?'

He answered, 'An enemy has done this.'

The workers said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?'

But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

Questions for Reflection

- 1 What word, phrase or image caught your attention?
- 2 What feelings/thoughts do you have after reading the text?
- 3 What good has grown in my life? Where has fruit sprouted?
- 4 Who has sown weeds in my life, destroying something?
- 5 What helps me to integrate the weeds of my life?
- 6 What helps me to preserve the wheat in my life, to conserve the good?



Daily Ignatian Examen

We invite you to prayerfully reflect:

Presence

Become aware that God's presence is active at each moment of your life, looking at you with love, desirous of speaking directly to your heart. How do you feel at this moment?

Ask

Ask God for the grace to see the ways God is working in your life.

Gratitude

Be grateful. Thank God for the gifts, both big and small of the day. What are you most grateful for today?

Review

Trust that God is with you at each moment of day, during the good and challenging moments. God never abandons you. What were the good moments of today? What were the greatest challenges of today?

Respond

You are not stuck. Tomorrow is a new day. Ask God to give you the grace to be the loving and generous person you were created to be. What can you do tomorrow to be more generous and loving?

Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.

The Fruit of the Spirit is Love...

Galatians 5: 16-26

Be guided by the Spirit, and you will no longer yield to self-indulgence.

The desires of self-indulgence are always in opposition to the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are in opposition to self-indulgence: they are opposites, one against the other; that is how you are prevented from doing the things that you want to.

But when you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. When self-indulgence is at work the results are obvious: sexual vice, impurity, and sensuality, the worship of false gods and sorcery; antagonisms and rivalry, jealousy, bad temper and quarrels, disagreements, factions and malice, drunkenness, orgies and all such things. And about these, I tell you now as I have told you in the past, that people who behave in these ways will not inherit the kingdom of God.

On the other hand, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, and self-control; no law can touch such things as these. All who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified self with all its passions and its desires. Since we are living by the Spirit, let our behavior be guided by the Spirit and let us not be conceited or provocative and envious of one another.

Questions for Reflection

- 1 In what areas of my life do I feel the tension between the Spirit and self-indulgence?
- 2 In what areas of my life do I see self-indulgence? Am I ready to make changes in one or more of those areas?
- 3 In what areas of my life do I see the fruits of the Holy Spirit?
- 4 Who are the people who bring joy and peace in my life?
- 5 Who are the people who show patience, kindness, and trustfulness to me?
- 6 Who are my role models of trustfulness, gentleness, and self-control?



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Thy Kingdom Come

God's kingdom has not yet been wholly fulfilled on this earth. Thus, "Thy kingdom come" expresses our prayerful desire as Christ's disciples to see God's kingdom become increasingly established in the here and now. First and foremost, God's kingdom becomes evident in the lives of His sons and daughters. Praying, "Thy Kingdom come," means asking the heavenly Father to help us in our own lives to be faithful, obedient, and authentic Christians. After all, we spread God's kingdom not only with words but also through our actions.

Naturally, we may ask, "What kind of kingdom is this?" Jesus revealed what the kingdom of God is through his life and teachings. Jesus asked many times, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?" He compared it to a mustard seed, which is smaller than a grain of rice! "Although it is the smallest of all seeds, it grows larger than any garden plant and becomes a tree. Birds even come and nest on its branches" (Mt 13:32). The kingdom of God is like a loving and forgiving father, who "saw his son and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (Lk 15:20).

The kingdom of God is not a tyranny, but a kingdom of love, service, salvation, and true freedom. Jesus, who is the Son of God, washed the feet of his disciples, healed the sick, fed the hungry by the thousands. Most importantly, Jesus gave his life on the Cross for you and me to set us free from sin and death. Do you think this is a kingdom worth praying for? Do you think this is a kingdom worth being part of?