

May 2022

Evergreen News

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Thriving in God's Peace

"In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety" Psalm 4:8.

Peace does not come easily in this life and sleep, well, if we don't have peace, we do not have sleep. Our verse assures us that we will **BOTH lie down and sleep when we dwell in the safety of the Lord.**

Psalm 4 is an expression of David's confidence and trust in the Lord. David is running for his life while being pursued by his conniving and manipulative son Absalom (2 Samuel 15)! I would imagine David was afraid and yet, because of his close relationship with the Lord, David let go of his fear and focused on the Lord. David begins by asking for God's grace (vs. 1) and urging his enemies to stop rebelling against God (vs. 2). David is assured that, as a faithful servant, God hears when he calls to him (vs.3). Then David says, 'do not sin' think about what you are doing, search your heart, offer righteous sacrifices (this means do not repay evil for evil, rather offer a blessing) and trust in the Lord (a key word to peace and safety). David seeks God's face shining in favor (vs.6) causing David's heart to be filled with joy, like the joy of an abundant harvest of grain and new wine!

At last, with David's strong trust in the Lord, he was able to both lie down and sleep, not toss and turn, dwelling in the safety of the Lord. What a blessing that must have been for David.

I encourage you to read Psalm 4 once a day, it is only eight verses, and notice if your confidence and trust in the Lord bring you peace. May it deepen and enrich your relationship with him. Write down what changes come into your life. I believe you will be pleasantly surprised.

So tonight, when you lay your head down, remember, God is taking care of everything. Trust him. Be confident in him, for you are dwelling in the safety of his presence.

Peace,
Chaplain Val

Follow the Clues

It is no mystery why mystery novels consistently top bestseller lists and why the genre reliably rakes in hundreds of millions of dollars each year. Curiosity, after all, is one of the most powerful attributes of the human psyche. A good mystery grabs onto our curiosity and doesn't let it go until the wrongs have been righted. Lose yourself in a good mystery during the month of May, which is Mystery Month.



The wonderful thing about a mystery is that it can take place in any setting. Sherlock Holmes chases Moriarty through the streets of London during the Victorian Era. Nancy Drew embodies the Depression Era mindset that all able-bodied people, no matter the age or the gender, have a chance to pitch in and solve problems. There are plenty of science-fiction mysteries that take place in worlds both dominated by new technology or decimated by it. However, at the crux of every mystery are two reliable and familiar tropes: the detective and the mystery itself. In many ways, our love of mysteries stems from our familiarity with the genre. No matter the setting, the stakes are always the same—our protagonist must decode the puzzle before it's too late.

This doesn't mean that every sleuth is working from a place of altruism. In fact, some of the genre's most beloved detectives are seriously flawed, which makes them feel reassuringly human. Sherlock Holmes often lacks empathy and is addicted to opium. Bob Arctor of Phillip K. Dick's novel *A Scanner Darkly* suffers from such severe mental illness that he must both solve the mystery and figure out who he is. Even Agatha Christie's beloved Miss Marple is a nosy gossip despised by friends and neighbors.

Despite their character flaws, these detectives still seek justice and truth. This is what makes even a flawed detective so heroic. We accompany them on a journey from fear and criminality to justice and reassurance. That might be the thing humans desire most of all—the unambiguous reassurance that a wrong has been righted.

Princess Power

International Tiara Day falls on May 24, the same day as Queen Victoria's birthday. How many parents have watched their young kids don a frilly pink ballgown and tiara and play princess? Some might blame the corrupting influence of Disney. Others, though, consider the tiara a potent symbol of feminine power and majesty. Some experts argue that so-called "princess play" offers children a window into feminine power. After all, princesses are born to rule.

Ironically, the word *tiara* was first used by the Greeks to describe the high headdresses worn by ancient Persian kings, not queens. It wasn't until the late 18th century that tiaras, as worn by female royals, surged in popularity. Unlike a crown, which is circular, a tiara is only semi-circular, designed to cover half the head. That does not mean it is half as valuable. The Greville Emerald Kokoshnik tiara, valued at \$18 million, was made by French jeweler Boucheron in 1919 for Dame Margaret Greville, who bequeathed it to Queen Elizabeth in 1942.

Animal Attraction



The first week of May is Pet Week, a week for humans to shower their animal companions with love and attention. Such a celebration of the human-animal bond might sound strange to those who do not have or want a pet, but some scientists argue that keeping a pet is an intrinsic part of human nature. Plenty of headlines tout the health benefits of pet ownership, but scientists suggest that our real attraction to animals might be a deep genetic predisposition for social grooming. Social grooming, the physical combing of hair, was one of the first and most powerful forms of social bonding. Petting animals stimulates the release of powerful "love hormones" such as oxytocin. In fact, studies show that some animal lovers possess a genetic variation that produces more oxytocin, making them even more likely to feel bonded to others, including pets.

Meditate on This

Take a deep breath and relax. May is Meditation Month. Meditation might have gone mainstream thanks to popular practices like yoga and tai chi, but meditation is a practice that dates back many millennia.

While some archaeologists date meditation back to 5000 BC, and some anthropologists speculate that even our Neanderthal ancestors might have meditated, the earliest written records referencing meditation date to around 1500 BC in India. The Hindu tradition of Vedantism included the practice of *Dyana*, a pursuit of enlightenment that emphasized “the training of the mind.” The word *meditation* comes from the Latin *meditatum*, meaning “to ponder.” The notion that meditation is closely linked to the mind has persisted across various cultures for thousands of years.



Specifically, meditation is a technique used to calm and clear the mind. The Buddha, although he did not invent meditation, used it as a means to achieve enlightenment. Lao Tzu, the Chinese sage and author of the

Tao Te Ching, wrote, “Be still. Stillness reveals the secrets of eternity.” Meditation has long served as a valuable tool during humanity’s relentless search for the meaning of life.

Today, modern science shows us that meditation benefits the body just as much as it benefits the mind. In 1967, Dr. Herbert Benson of Harvard’s Medical School found that people who meditated used 17% less oxygen, lowered their heart rates, and increased brain waves that aided sleep. He called these effects “the relaxation response.” Studies now confirm that meditation reduces anxiety, promotes emotional health, enhances self-awareness, improves sleep, controls pain, and can even make you more kind. Meditation isn’t a miracle or magic. All it takes is deliberate practice. Dr. Benson might have put it best when he said, “All I’ve done is put a biological explanation on techniques that people have been utilizing for thousands of years.”

Punny Business

The O. Henry Museum in Austin, Texas, holds one of the punniest events of the year on May 22. The O. Henry Pun-Off gathers 32 of the country’s mightiest “punslingers” and challenges them to a competition sure to elicit plenty of good-hearted groans. The Pun-Off showcases two main events. The first is “Punniest of Show,” where contestants deliver a 90-second pun-filled monologue that judges rate on a scale of 1–10. The showstopper comes in the afternoon with a no-holds-barred, one-on-one competition in which punslingers must barrage each other with puns. The slightest tongue-tied slip-up or strike (a failed pun attempt) leaves a punslinger disqualified.

Would O. Henry be proud of such a competition held in his name? O. Henry, born William Sydney Porter, was a prolific short story writer at the turn of the 20th century. He was known for his wit, humor, and love of language, and his stories often ended with a surprise twist. The fact that O. Henry has inspired such a competition might be the biggest twist ending of all.

The Sky Is Falling!



In May of 2009, NASA identified an asteroid known as JF1. Much has been made of JF1, especially the news that it will hit Earth on May 6. Some people are claiming

that the asteroid is the size of an Egyptian pyramid, and, on impact, it will destroy mankind. Luckily, these are crazy exaggerations. NASA’s Center for Near-Earth Object Studies is tasked with monitoring any cosmic debris that could impact Earth. It estimates that JF1 has a 1-in-3,984 chance of hitting the planet (or a 99.974% chance it will miss). Moreover, the size of JF1 is just 13 to 20 meters in diameter, hardly a threat to human civilization. It could, however, burn up in the atmosphere and explode in a massive ball of fire, releasing the equivalent of 400 kilotons of TNT, a blast large enough for people on Earth to notice.

Going Wild

The old nursery rhyme reminds us, “April showers bring May flowers.” What it doesn’t mention is that those flowers will bloom only if you plant them! Wildflowers delight our senses with their colorful blooms and delicate fragrances, but they also play valuable roles in nature. The first full week in May is Wildflower Week, a good reminder to plant wildflowers for all to enjoy.



The term *wildflower* is not scientific but refers to flowers that have evolved to thrive in their native habitats. They require less water and fertilizer than non-native species and are naturally resistant to local pests and diseases. Most importantly, wildflowers make critical contributions to their local ecosystems. They improve soil health, prevent erosion, and improve water quality. The flowers themselves also provide habitat to native insects and wildlife that act as pollinators. Pollinators facilitate the reproduction of 87.5% of the world’s flowering plants, including 35% of the crops that we eat. Non-native species, on the other hand, often disrupt communities of pollinators. Some non-native flower species even outcompete local wildflowers, decreasing their habitat and adversely affecting the insect and animal species that rely on native flowers for survival.

World Bee Day on May 20 honors one of the world’s most prolific pollinators. Birds, bats, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, wasps, and rabbits all make vital contributions to an ecosystem as pollinators. But no animal on Earth is as vital a pollinator as the bee. A 2018 study on pollinating habits conducted by the Royal Society of London concluded that not only do honeybees do the most pollinating, but they are also the most effective and efficient pollinators. Since 2006, colony collapse disorder has decimated honeybee populations around the world. One of the best ways to support honeybees is to plant native wildflowers. These flowers reliably produce the nectar and pollen that honeybees depend on and support the honeybee colonies that we rely on to pollinate so many of our favorite crops.

May Birthdays

Residents:

Till – May 25th

Staff:

Kandy – May 10th
Rachel – May 19th



Motherhood: Priceless



How will you show Mom that you care on this Mother’s Day, May 8? In its early days, Mother’s Day was celebrated by attending church and sending mom a handwritten letter. Today, Mother’s Day is a \$28 billion industry. As well it should be! After all, if we were to pay Mom for the various tasks she performs, that salary would be over \$116,000 a year. The least we can do is shower her with gifts! Mothers aren’t the only ones who look forward to the holiday. It is the busiest day of the year for restaurants, with 80 million people dining out. Jewelry stores make out big, too. Shoppers spend \$5 billion on new bling for Mom. When Mother’s Day began in 1914, the floral industry declared that carnations were the best way to honor mothers: red carnations for moms still living, and white for those who had passed. Today, the tradition of gifting flowers lives on. Mother’s Day is the number one day for floral sales, which total \$2.66 billion.