

THE EPISTLE

Saint James' Episcopal Church
Livingston, Alabama

Volume XXVI, Number 5

May 2019



May 2019

This Month's Cover

Since at least the late 17th century the month of May has been dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, one of whose titles is the Queen of May. Our cover painting this month is *Madonna of Foligno* (pron. fo-leen'-yo) by Raphael, completed in 1512. Its medium is *tempura grassa*, painted on wood and transferred to canvas. It measures 10'1"x6'6" and is on display in the Vatican Museum in Rome. Originally commissioned for the high altar of the Church of Santa Maria de Aracoeli in Rome, it was moved in 1565 to the Church of Santa Anna in Foligno. In 1797 it was moved to France as part of the agreement of the Treaty of Tolentino. In 1816 it was returned to Rome and placed in the Vatican Museum, where it still resides. Sigismondo de' Conti, a noted humanist of Foligno, commissioned the painting. He is seen kneeling in prayer on the right. Saint Jerome is presenting him to the Blessed Virgin. On the left is Saint John the Baptist, indicating the celestial nature of the scene. Kneeling by him is Saint Francis of Assisi, who was Sigismondo's patron. Sigismondo's house had been miraculously saved when struck by lightning. He attributed this to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and commissioned the painting in thanksgiving. The *putto* ("baby angel") in the center holds a plaque with no inscription. *Putti* were common devices in paintings during the Italian Renaissance. It is believed that Sigismondo intended to have an inscription placed on the plaque when the Blessed Virgin communicated her wishes to him.

Rafaello Sanzio da Urbino, generally known as Raphael, is called the architect of the High Renaissance. He set the standards observed by most of the High Renaissance masters. He was born on Good Friday, 1483 in the Italian Marches in the

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small town of Urbino. Urbino was insignificant politically, but because of the patronage of the arts by Duke Federico Montefeltro it came to be famous as the home of many masters of art, music and literature. Raphael was orphaned at the age of eleven, and came under the care of his paternal uncle Bartolomeo, a priest. His extraordinary artistic talent had been recognized early in his life. His father arranged good instruction when he was quite young, and Bartolomeo used his contacts to get excellent training for him. He moved around a great deal through northern Italy, but spent more time in Florence than elsewhere. He was strongly influenced by Leonardo, who was thirty years older than he. He met his contemporary Michelangelo Buonarroti while working in Rome. Michelangelo despised Leonardo, and also clearly disliked Raphael.

A review of Raphael's teachers, accomplishments and famous students is so extensive that it is well beyond the scope of this article, but suffice it to say the list is impressive. One little known fact is that he was selected to be the Chief Architect of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome after Bramante's death in 1514, but after he died most of his works were altered or destroyed in favor of Michelangelo's plans. This may have been a blessing, because Michelangelo's designs are much brighter and more open than Raphael's rather gloomy and austere plans. Fortunately, a few of his drawings have survived.

In 1520 Raphael contracted a brief but critical illness whose nature is unclear. He died on Good Friday at the age of 37. He was born and died on Good Friday. His funeral was grand, attended by huge crowds. He is buried in the Pantheon in Rome.

Richard R. Losch+

A Word from the Editor

Easter is over (or is it?), and now we can get back to the routine of our lives (or can we?). No, Easter is not over. We are now preparing for Pentecost, that great feast of revelation, consolation and promise. Pentecost is the festival of the giving of the Church, without which the story of Jesus of Nazareth is nothing more than an interesting piece of history and a lovely

inspiring tale. We have been given the Church, and through it we not only have the presence of the Holy Spirit to lead us to all truth, but we also have the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and his presence in the Church itself, the Body of Christ, of which we are a part. Through our continued unity with him we prepare for our own resurrection to eternal life with him, so Easter is not over. The calendar day of the commemoration of the Resurrection may have passed until next year, but the Resurrection itself is a timeless event that pervades all of creation, past, present and future. We celebrate it annually, and we also celebrate it weekly—every Sunday is an observance of Easter. And if we are baptized members of the Body of Christ we celebrate it every moment of our existence, because Christ, of whom we as Christians are an integral part, is the Resurrection and the Life (Jn. 11:25).

The answer to the second question is yes, we can get back to the routine of our daily lives, but we had better not, at least if it means putting Easter in the back closet until next year. If we turn our backs on the Resurrection and all it means for our salvation, either by plainly rejecting it or by simply ignoring it, we deny ourselves its benefits. We maintain our unity with Christ in his Church through regular prayer, study and reception of the Sacraments. We can do these things in the course of living out our daily lives, but if we let them fade to the background then we are also letting Christ fade from our lives.

So even though the calendar Day of the Resurrection was last month, Easter is eternal. Let me wish you all a happy Easter—“as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.”

Father Rick Losch+

The Epistle is Online

The last six years' copies of *The Epistle*, including this issue, are online. Go to <http://rlosch.com> and click on the “Epistle” tab at the top. You can read it online or download it as a .pdf file. This is an easy way to share articles with others.

Richard R. Losch+

Altar Flower Volunteers

Lent is over, and we now have flowers on the altar every Sunday. Volunteers are needed to provide altar flowers. A sign-up chart is located in the sacristy. You may use flowers from your yard or, if you wish, make arrangements with the florist to provide them. Most florist's arrangements can be used for two or more Sundays. For more information, please speak with Carolyn Patrenos.

Hiram Patrenos

2017-2018 Parochial Report Statistics for St. James'

	2017	2018
Total Active Baptized Members	24	24
Total Communicants in Good Standing	23	22
Average Sunday Attendance	20	16
Easter Sunday Attendance	35	23
Total Sunday Holy Communion	48	49
Total Weekday Holy Communion	4	3
Private Holy Communion	0	0
Daily Offices held on Sunday	0	0
Daily Offices & other services on Weekdays	4	3
Burials conducted	1	0
Marriages conducted	0	0
Baptisms under 16 years of age	0	1
Confirmations 16 years & older	1	0
Confirmations under 16 years of age	0	0

2017-2018 Parochial Report Statistics for St. Alban's

	2017	2018
Total Active Baptized Members	4	4
Total Communicants in Good Standing	4	4
Others who are active whose baptisms are not recorded in the Parish Register	7	8
Average Sunday Attendance	12	9
Easter Sunday Attendance	49	n/a

My people skills are just fine. It's my tolerance of idiots that needs work.

Forward Day by Day

The new *Forward Day by Day* daily devotional booklets for May, June and July are available on the table in the vestibule and in the tract rack in the parish house. In addition to the small booklets we have large print editions available. Please feel free to take either size.

Hiram Patrenos

Be Wordly Wise

Temptation

This word comes to us directly from the Medieval French *temptaçion*, which comes from the Latin *temptatio*, test or trial. That in turn derives from *temptare*, to feel or touch something experimentally. Late Latin elided *temptare* into *tentare*, from which we get the words tentative and tentacle (as in a lower life-form's feeler). To be tempted is to be moved to feel something out, although in modern usage it means to be drawn to do something that we know we should not do. The Church teaches that there is no sin in temptation—the sin is in yielding to it.

The Greek *peirasmon* (πειρασμόν), which we translate as temptation, means something more like “worldly experience” (with not-so-good implications) than “temptation” as we normally use the word. Modern translations of the Lord’s Prayer, instead of “Lead us not into temptation,” render the phrase “Do not put us to the test,” or “Save us from the time of trial.” This is an interpretation rather than a literal translation, but it captures more accurately the sense of the original Greek.¹ Pope Francis has suggested that we should use a more modern translation, but the King James translation is so universally used in English liturgy, even in the Roman Catholic tradition, that it will probably prevail.

Richard R. Losch+

¹ *Mē eisenenkēs hēmas eis peirasmon* (μη εισενέγκης ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν), which Saint Jerome translated as *Ne nos inducas in tentationem*. In English, Jerome’s translation literally means “Lead us not into temptation.”

Pi in the Bible

Every schoolchild has learned the value of π as 3.14. This is the holy grail of mathematics, and has been for millennia before any of the other critical mathematical constants were discovered. π is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter, and is an irrational number, meaning that it has an infinite number of decimal places. Calculating it was a major challenge for mathematicians for thousands of years. It wasn't until Newton and Leibnitz developed calculus that it could be calculated with great accuracy, and not until the supercomputers of the late 20th century could it be calculated to billions of decimal places.¹ The Sumerians first calculates π in about 4,000 BC. They found it to be $3^{23}/_{216}$ or 3.106, which is amazingly accurate for the time. In about 1650 BC the Egyptians calculated π at 3.16. In the 3rd century BC the Greek Archimedes calculated it at between 3.14084 and 3.14286 (extremely accurate—its actual value is 3.14159265...).

In roughly 950 BC Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem. The Bible tells us, “Then [Hiram of Tyre] made the molten sea; it was round, ten cubits from brim to brim, and five cubits high. A line of thirty cubits would encircle it completely” (1 Kg. 7:23). They thus calculated the value of π at $^{30}/_{10}$, or 3. Why they were unaware of the Sumerians' calculation of 3,000 years earlier we do not know. In fact, since Hiram was a Phoenician master builder and the Phoenicians were the best builders in the world at the time, it is almost certain that he did know it. The explanation is probably that the story was told by a historian who knew little of mathematics and that value seemed reasonable.

Richard R. Losch+

¹ This is a useless exercise except for the intellectual curiosity of it, since if we used π to 30 decimal places to calculate the circumference of the universe, we would be off by less than a millimeter.

Whom Did Cain Marry?

Scoffers of the Bible often try to present it literally in order to emphasize its contradictions. They love to point out that if the Genesis creation story is true, then when Cain killed his brother Abel he reduced the entire world's human population from four to three. Cain was then sent into exile, and his first concern was that "anyone who meets me may kill me" (Gen. 4:14)—but who was there to kill him except his own parents? Then "Cain went away from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch" (Gen. 4:16-17).¹ If the only living humans were Adam, Eve and Cain, who was Cain's wife? There are countless inane explanations that have never borne any serious credibility, such as that he married an ape or that his wife was a demon—it has even been postulated that he married the demoness Lilith, who was allegedly Adam's first wife before Eve. These explanations merit little consideration.

In ancient times there were many rabbinical attempts to resolve this problem. One widely held belief was that Cain married his sister. There were several variations of this. The simplest was based on the fact that while male children were always enumerated, females often were not. We see this in Genesis 5:3-4: "When Adam had lived one hundred thirty years, he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth ... and he had other sons and daughters." We see in many Biblical passages comments such as "He was the father of So-and-So, and he also had daughters." It was postulated that Cain and Abel had sisters, one of whom Cain had married, and that when he was exiled she went with him. This ancient hypothesis was then refined in a 5th century AD

¹ This is not Enoch the son of Jared, a descendant of Adam's son Seth (Gen. 5:3-18), who is extolled in both the Old and New Testaments as a righteous man. There is a genealogy of Enoch the son of Cain in Gen. 4:17-24, but after that there is no further mention of him or his descendants. The similarities of names in the genealogies of Enoch the son of Cain and Enoch the Son of Jared indicate that they are two variations of the same story. We see the same in the two stories of creation in Genesis 1 and 2.

Midrash to say that Cain had a twin sister and Abel was a triplet with two sisters. Cain wanted to marry one of Abel's sisters and Abel objected, which is why Cain killed him. There is nothing in the Bible to substantiate this tale, but there is also nothing to refute it. In an era when these stories were taken literally, the sister hypothesis at least satisfied what would otherwise have been a troubling contradiction.

Today, with a very few exceptions, Biblical scholars do not take these stories literally, but rather allegorically. It is also important to remember that the stories were passed on orally for many centuries before they were written down after the Exile in the 6th century BC. If we study them today as allegories in the light of modern sociological and anthropological understanding, we come up with a much more credible explanation that in no way weakens their moral and theological points.

When the Genesis stories were originally told the Hebrew people were not monotheistic. In fact, in the earliest stages they were polytheistic. When Abraham first came to understand God, his faith was not monotheistic, but henotheistic. He believed that there are many gods, but God (Yahweh or Elohim) is the supreme God, and thus none of the others matter and are to be completely rejected. The Israelites did not become firmly monotheistic until well after the time of King David, and even then they frequently backslid to henotheism and occasionally even to idolatry. One aspect of henotheism is that each tribe, nation or geographic region has its own god. "When the Most High apportioned the nations, when he divided mankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the gods; the Lord's own portion was his people, Jacob his allotted share" (Deut. 32:8-9). When Naaman returned to Syria after having accepted God and having renounced his pagan Syrian gods, he carried with him soil from Israel so that God could be with him in Syria (2 Kg. 5:17). After the return from the Exile, however, the Jews were solidly monotheistic, believing that only one God exists. Through the prophet Isaiah God pronounced to Cyrus, the Persian Emperor, "I arm you, though you do not know me, so that they may know, from the rising of

the sun and from the west, that there is no one besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other” (Is. 45:5f).¹

All ancient cultures were fiercely tribal. It was a time when almost everyone lived his entire life within at most a few miles of where he was born, and knew little about what was beyond his own boundaries. It was a world of “us” and “them.” If you do not live, act, dress, eat, think and speak as we do then you are not one of us, which makes you “other.” That means that you are suspicious at best, possibly an enemy, and definitely inferior. In ancient Egypt the word for Egyptian was the same as the word for human. If you were not Egyptian you were not human, and that made you a threat. The names of most primitive indigenous groups such as the Amazon Basin and central African tribes mean “The Humans”—they deem all others to be subhuman. This is also true of many American Indian tribes.

The stories in Genesis were originally oral tradition passed down by people who lived in a tribal culture. They would have been thoroughly inculcated with the concept of an “us” and “them” society. In that sense they would have had no trouble with the story of Cain marrying a woman from the Land of Nod. Because of their henotheism, they believed that there were other people “out there” when God created Adam and Eve. They did not count, however, because they had been created by lesser gods and thus were “them.” Not having been created by God they were not fully human in the way that Adam’s family were. Cain’s humanity was diminished by virtue of his sin against his brother, and thus it was appropriate that he marry someone who was less than fully human.

The Book of Genesis was unquestionably the conflation of the writings of at least four authors, and was most likely written down for the first time during or shortly after the Babylonian

¹ Cyrus, although he was a pagan, was very friendly to the Jews. When he defeated the Babylonians he allowed the captive Jews to return to Judah, and even assisted them with protection and money to rebuild Jerusalem. This was not pure altruism. It was to Persia’s advantage to have a strong and grateful vassal on the western frontier. Notwithstanding, Persia and Judah were friends until both fell to Alexander the Great in 325 BC.

Exile.¹ It therefore contains both the earlier henotheistic stories and the more enlightened understanding of later monotheistic Judaism. The placing of the purely monotheistic creation story before the henotheistic story of Cain and Abel, whether or not it was done consciously, raised the now quite logical question that has been asked over the ages, “Whom did Cain marry?”

Richard R. Losch+

Fundamentalism

Most people think of fundamentalism as a literal adherence to Scripture, dismissing any historical, logical or scientific contradictions. The term is most often applied to Protestant Christians who believe that every word of the Bible was dictated directly by God,² and to Islamic extremists who believe that the Qur’an and the Hadiths³ are the words of Allah as dictated to Muhammad. In fact this is not Fundamentalism, it is Literalism, and even though some Fundamentalists are Literalists and vice versa, the two are quite different. The word derives from the Latin verb *fundare*, to found, and it refers to the basis or foundation of something. A religious Fundamentalist is one who focuses on the basic principles on which his religion was founded. While these principles are reflected in its sacred scriptures, they were not created by those scriptures.

The Protestant Fundamentalist movement began in America in the late 19th century in reaction to the rising social and political liberalism of the time. This was kicked off in particular by the rapid acceptance of Darwinist theories of evolution that left God completely out of the picture. Before the publication of

¹ Scholars call the authors J, E, D and P. The writer J always calls God Yahweh (JHVH [יהוה] in Hebrew), and is clearly monotheistic; E calls him Elohim, and leans toward henotheism; D is the Deuteronomist, who focuses on the Law and tradition; P is the Priest, a Levite, who focuses on sacrificial worship. Their writings are all mixed together in Genesis.

² Many act as if they think God dictated it in the King James Version.

³ The Hadiths are a collection of hundreds of sayings allegedly by Muhammad that were spoken in the years after the Qur’an was given.

Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, scientists had already proposed theories of evolution, but they were theories of Intelligent Design—they proposed that man had evolved from lower animals, but that the entire process was part of God's plan and that it was constantly guided by him. While the Literalists disagreed, believing in Creationism, this was not a serious source of contention because the general population was for the most part unaware of these theories. Darwinian Evolution leaves evolution completely to random chance and natural selection, and the publication of *Origin* gained widespread notice. This infuriated many Literalist religious leaders, whose vehement preaching against it fired the Fundamentalist movement. Many became almost fanatically wedded to the literal acceptance of the Bible despite its internal contradictions.¹

Fundamentalism is the acceptance and promotion of basic truth. If we believe that there is only one God, then there can be only one truth. Our responsibility is to discern that truth, and as Christians we believe that we have been given Jesus Christ to show it to us, and the Holy Spirit to guide us. "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth" (Jn. 16:13). He will not hand us the truth on a silver platter or in a written Scripture, he will *guide* us to it. We must make the effort through prayer, study and reflection to discern it.

Fundamentalism, then, is seeking the foundation of the Faith, and that is Jesus Christ. It is about living as Christ lived in this world, which is in submission to the will of God. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." He did not say that he is *a* way, but *the* way. If we believe this, then we have to believe that Christianity is the only true faith. That does not on any way

¹ Islamic Fundamentalism arose in the late 18th century as a reaction to the decay of Islamic religious, political and economic influence, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. In Judaism and Christianity, the religion produced the Bible. In Islam, the Qur'an produced the religion, which was reinforced by the Hadiths. Because of this, the Islamic Fundamentalist movement demanded literal adherence to the Qur'an and Hadiths as written in Arabic, as well as strict obedience to Sharia Law.

justify defaming or slandering any other religion, and certainly not oppressing or persecuting it. Also, we need to remember that all religions contain some truth, and many contain much.

We need to be reminded that we have no right to force our religion, our morals or our values on anyone else, and that it is a sin to try to do so. God gave all people the right to accept or reject him, and it is a sin for us to trample on their right to reject him. On the other hand, if we believe we have the truth, we have an obligation to share that truth with others. If they see fit to refuse it, so be it, but at least we have done our duty by offering what we have. The way we do this is to live as we believe Christ would have us live. There is no better way to preach the Gospel than to live it in such a way that others see it and want what we have. That is true Fundamentalism.

Richard R. Losch+

The Temple and the Colosseum

The Roman emperor Nero died in AD 68, leaving Rome insolvent and deeply in debt. He had plundered the treasury and allegedly even burned the city in order to get the land and funds to build his massive “Golden Palace.” It was one of the largest and most lavish palaces in history, making even Louis XIV’s Versailles pale in comparison. In its vast landscaped gardens stood a gilded bronze statue of Nero that is estimated to have been as much as 100’ tall.¹ Nero was the last of the Julian emperors.² After three extremely short-lived emperors he was succeeded by a commoner, Vespasian (Titus Flavius Vespasianus). Vespasian had been the commander of the Roman forces in Palestine, and when he was declared emperor he placed his son Titus in charge of Palestine. Vespasian ascended the throne in AD 69. His first official act was to dismantle Nero’s palace,

¹ It was called the Colossus of Rome, from which the Colosseum got its name. It stood outside the Colosseum until it disappeared sometime in late antiquity, probably having been melted down for its bronze.

² The Julians were all descendants of Julius Caesar by either adoption or birth. They were Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius I and Nero.

restore the land to the city, and use the treasures from it to pay off Rome's debts. Because of Nero's excesses the people had had enough of emperors, and there was a rising desire to restore the Republic. Vespasian's excellent and just leadership, however, allayed this. The people had become used to being constantly entertained at the expense of the government, and Vespasian realized that giving them a new and lavish arena with daily entertainment would help keep them under control. The only problem was that he could not afford it.

The common image, enhanced by many Hollywood "toga operas," is that Nero's spectacles of persecution of Christians took place in the Colosseum. In fact, the Colosseum did not exist in Nero's time. Most of them took place in small gladiatorial arenas and in the Circus Maximus, which was an enormous chariot racetrack that was damaged when Rome burned. Vespasian wanted to give the people an arena that would outshine any other in the world. Unfortunately, he had no money to do it after having paid off Nero's debts. A year after his accession to the throne, however, the opportunity presented itself.

For a well over century the Jews had resisted Roman occupation, and there were frequent uprisings. Rome always responded to them brutally, yet they continued. Finally in AD 66 there began a major rebellion in which the Jewish scholar/general Josephus (Yosef ben-Matityahu) played a major role.¹ Nero sent his retired generals Vespasian and Titus (Vespasian's son), who joined their armies together, and after four years of fighting put down the rebellion. In retribution they crucified thousands of Jews and levelled the city of Jerusalem,

¹ This is the same Josephus whose writings give us a great deal of what we know of Jewish history of that period. He was commander of the rebel forces in Galilee, where he was captured after the fall of the city of Jotapata (Yodfat). He predicted that Vespasian, a commoner, would become emperor. Vespasian was so impressed with him that he treated him well, and eventually freed him. Josephus in gratitude took Vespasian's family name and thereafter was known as Flavius Josephus. He went to Rome and lived the rest of his life in the imperial palace under four emperors. He is a very important historical figure, although most Jews consider him a traitor.

including the Temple. This final victory was achieved by Titus at the behest of his father Vespasian, because a year earlier his father had been called back to Rome to become emperor.

The Temple held not only the treasury of the city, but also an immense fortune in solid gold vessels, including the famous gold Great Menorah. All of this treasure was carried back to Rome. Vespasian used it to fund the building of the Colosseum, which took ten years to build. The arena could seat about 60,000 people. It had a vast complex of rooms and animal cages underneath, where gladiators could prepare, wild animals were housed, and all the equipment needed for the wide range of entertainments could be stored. Huge canvas sheets could be drawn over the top to shade the people from the hot summer sun. The arena could be flooded, and re-enactments of naval battles were staged in it. When it opened in AD 80 the spectacles went on for 100 days. One was a re-enactment of the naval Battle of Actium, in which Octavian (who became the first emperor, Augustus) defeated Marc Antony and Cleopatra.

Vespasian died in AD 79. He was succeeded by his son Titus, who was the reigning emperor when the Colosseum was opened. Titus reigned only three years, dying of a fever in AD 81. He was the most beloved of all the Roman emperors, even Augustus. His short reign may have contributed to that, since he had not ruled long enough to make many serious enemies.

He was succeeded by his brother Domitian, who erected a beautiful marble arch, the Arch of Titus, in his honor. On the arch is a panel showing the carrying of the Temple treasure



to Rome. Prominent in it is the Great Menorah. For centuries it has been tradition that when any free country's army marches in Rome under the Arch of Titus, Jewish soldiers, in remembrance of the destruction of the Temple, are permitted to step out of rank and march around it rather than under it.

Richard R. Losch+

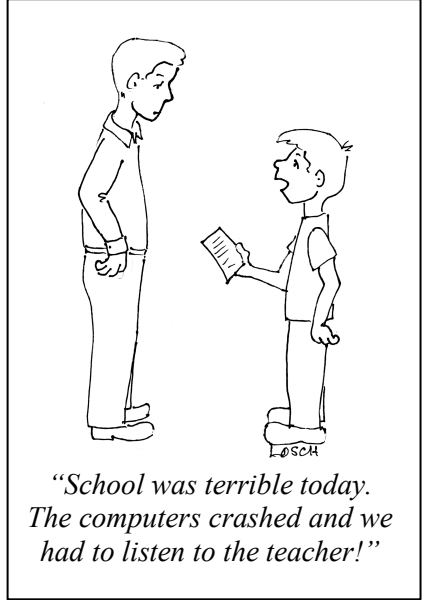
A Touch of Trivia

On May 10, 1908 Anna Jarvis had a memorial service in her church dedicated to her mother, who had died in 1905, and to all mothers for their contribution to humanity. For six years she campaigned to have Mothers' Day become a national holiday, and in 1914 Woodrow Wilson proclaimed it so. It was overwhelmingly popular, but became so highly commercialized that Jarvis spent the last years of her life campaigning to have it removed from the calendar.

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