



Bringing Home the Word

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 1, 2016

Living With God

By Janel Esker

Some experiences you can have only when living with someone. You have a regular dinner companion, someone to share household responsibilities with, someone to share your day's experiences with. No matter what the relationship, it can be fantastic.

But sometimes it's not. Your parent snores loudly enough to wake the neighbors. Your roommate prefers the floor for clothes storage as opposed to a closet. Your spouse can't write "laundry detergent" or "olive oil" on the well-displayed grocery list (not that my husband is guilty of any of these...).

Sunday Readings

Acts 15:1–2, 22–29

"We have with one accord decided to choose representatives and to send them to you."

Revelation 21:10–14, 22–23

"Its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb."

John 14:23–29

"Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him."

That's why I did a double take when reading today's Gospel. Jesus, in his farewell discourse from John, declares that he and the Father will "make our dwelling" with those who keep God's word. The Greek word for "dwelling" is *moné*. It indicates that this is not temporary—it's not an overnight camping trip or a two-week can-I-crash-on-your-couch situation. *Moné* intends a permanent home for God with us—not over us or next to us or down the street. With us, within our very selves.

But hasn't God learned about roommates? Doesn't God know about the snoring? About our sins and our brokenness? Our unworthiness and our doubts?

I certainly can't explain God's choices. I can only rejoice that God has decided to dwell with us in spite of our many flaws, foibles, quirks, and outright sin.

It's the best experience of "living with someone" I can imagine. †

A Word From Pope Francis

Faith becomes a light capable of illumining all our relationships in society. As an experience of the mercy of God the Father, it sets us on the path of brotherhood....As salvation history progresses, it becomes evident that God wants to make everyone share as brothers and sisters in that one blessing, which attains its fullness in Jesus, so that all may be one. The boundless love of our Father also comes to us, in Jesus, through our brothers and sisters. Faith teaches us to see that every man and woman represents a blessing for me."



—*Lumen Fidei*, 54

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Which relationships do I treat as valuable and permanent? As transitory?
- How can I make my dwelling place(s) more inviting to God?

MARY: Queen, Servant

By Matthew Allman, CSSR

May and June present us with rich opportunities for connection with Our Mother of Perpetual Help. We might not see as many May processions and crownings today as we did decades ago, but the Church still considers May a month particularly dedicated to Mary, and every June 27, the Redemptorists celebrate the feast of Our Mother of Perpetual Help.*

Much of the imagery we use during these celebrations emphasizes Mary's role as a queen. Our hymns and prayers refer to Mary as "The Queen of May," "The Queen of Heaven," or "The Queen of the Angels," and in many of our copies of the icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, we see Mary wearing a golden crown, a mark of royal dignity. Perhaps it is the stress on Mary's unique status as the Mother of Christ that has led people over the years to emphasize her queenly nature, or maybe it has been a desire to emphasize her power as an intercessor. If people imagine heaven as a royal court, then it makes sense to glorify the queen and keep her on one's side.

Yet Mary's title for herself stands in direct contrast to the queenly titles we so often give her. When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her of the Son whom she was to bear, Mary's response was to call herself "the handmaid of the Lord," a servant, or a slave. Mary embraced her status as one wholly dependent on the God of love. It was



actually by her so thoroughly becoming God's servant that she eventually became so thoroughly our queen.

This Marian season we can ask for the grace to embrace our own servanthood. In our baptism we were anointed and named members of the kingly, royal family of Christ. But the only way for us to enter the fullness of our heritage is, as Mary did, to embrace our status first and foremost as servants of one another and of the God who loves us.

* *This year, Redemptorists worldwide are celebrating the 150th anniversary of Pope Pius IX entrusting the icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help to them. Events, missions, retreats, celebrations, and more are occurring across the globe. See more at IconOfLove.org, the official site of the jubilee.*

Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary

- January 1: Mary, Holy Mother of God (holy day of obligation)
- March 25: Annunciation of the Lord
- May 31: Visitation
- June 4: Immaculate Heart of Mary (Day after Most Sacred Heart of Jesus)

- August 15: Assumption (holy day of obligation)
- August 22: Queenship
- September 8: Nativity
- November 21: Presentation
- December 8: Immaculate Conception (holy day of obligation)

Marian Apparitions

- Our Lady of Lourdes (February 11)
- Our Lady of Fatima (May 13)
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16)
- Our Lady of Sorrows (September 15)
- Our Lady of the Rosary (October 7)
- Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12)

Other Marian Titles*

- Ark of the Covenant
- Cause of Our Joy
- Ever Virgin
- Full of Grace
- The Madonna
- Mother of Good Counsel
- Mother of Mercy
- The New Eve

* *For more, see the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Litany of Loreto), approved by Pope Sixtus V in 1587. †*

PRA^YER

Risen Lord, your death and resurrection brought peace to the world. Help me to be an instrument of your peace to others.


—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 2–May 7

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| Mon. | St. Athanasius: Acts 16:11–15 / John 15:26—16:4a |
| Tue. | Sts. Philip and James: 1 Corinthians 15:1–8 / John 14:6–14 |
| Wed. | Easter Weekday: Acts 17:15, 22— 18:1 / John 16:12–15 |

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| Thu. | Easter Weekday: Acts 18:1–8 / John 16:16–20 |
| Fri. | Easter Weekday: Acts 18:9–18 / John 16:20–23 |
| Sat. | Easter Weekday: Acts 18:23–28 / John 16:23b–28 |

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