



Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Easter / Divine Mercy Sunday | April 23, 2017

The Way

By Mary Katharine Deeley

Exaltation, sincerity of heart, indescribable and glorious joy—these are the words that describe the gathering of believers who formed the early Church after Pentecost. Filled with the Spirit, they committed themselves to “The Way” by caring for one another, following the teaching of the apostles, and breaking bread in their homes. Imagine going to Mass every week and being greeted as an old friend or a new one, not worrying whether someone was genuine, and feeling that something

miraculous and new was in the world. Why isn't it this way in every church? In an age that demands proof, I wonder whether we've grown suspicious of faith. In a culture that thinks most people have an angle, I wonder whether we have a hard time believing that someone could love us so much that he would die for us.

Maybe we've all become a little more like Thomas in his doubt rather than in his belief. I keep returning to Peter's words: “Although you have not seen him you love him.”

It takes a remarkable faith to love someone you haven't seen. But parents do it for their unborn children. We love those who have been taken from us in death. If we can love these, however imperfectly, surely we can love Christ, who died that we might live. Surely we can strive to love all people, known and unknown, because they are God's children.

In the stories of the early Church, we see the evidence of love—joy and compassion for all. What if every church could do this today? †

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A Word From Pope Francis

We are called to abandon the behavior of sin and fix our gaze on what is essential. “A man is more precious for what he is than for what he has” (*Gaudium et spes*, 35). This is the difference between life deformed by sin and life illumined by grace...This love conquers sin and gives the strength to rise and begin again, for through forgiveness the heart is renewed and rejuvenated.

Homily,
Celebration of
Penance,
Vatican Basilica,
March 28, 2014



Sunday Readings

Acts 2:42–47

“All who believed were together and had all things in common.”

1 Peter 1:3–9

“Although you have not seen him you love him.”

John 20:19–31

“These [signs] are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How do you share the joy and compassion of Christ every day?
- Is there anything about the faith you are reluctant to believe without proof?



Daily Resurrections

By Ron Rolheiser, OMI

What the resurrection of Jesus promises is that things can always be new again. It's never too late to start over. Nothing is irrevocable. No betrayal is final. No sin is unforgivable. Every form of death can be overcome. There isn't any loss that can't be redeemed. Every day is virgin.

The resurrection assures us that God never gives up on us, even if we give up on ourselves, that we can regain lost

innocence and move beyond bitterness. In a scheme of things where Jesus breathes out forgiveness on those who betray him and God raises bodies from the dead, we can begin to believe that in the end all will be well, including our own lives.

However, the challenge of living this out is not just that of believing that Jesus rose physically from the grave, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, to believe that no matter our age, mistakes, betrayals, wounds, and deaths, we can

begin each day afresh. No matter what we've done, our future is forever pregnant with wonderful new possibilities. Resurrection is not just a question of one day, after death, rising from the dead, but it is also about daily rising from the many minigraves within which we so often find ourselves.

We are human and we cannot avoid falling—into depression, bitterness, sin, betrayal, cynicism, and the tiredness that comes with age. Like Jesus, we, too, will have our crucifixions. More than one grave awaits us. Yet our faith in the resurrection invites us precisely to live beyond these. †

Source: *Daybreaks*, © 2004, Liguori Publications

Salvation Is in the Key of Mercy

By James F. Keenan, SJ

Could mercy be the trademark for Catholicism? After all, we share much of our faith with other Christians and with Jews and Muslims. We even share many things that make up our faith with all people of goodwill everywhere. But the works of mercy—those really are uniquely Catholic.

If we look closely at the Good Samaritan parable (Luke 10:25–37), we see that the story of our salvation is completely in the key of mercy. Jesus tells this parable because he has just given the love commandment, and this parable is the answer to the question, “Who is my neighbor?”

Are we not thinking the answer to the question will be the man lying wounded along the road? But it is not. The answer is the Samaritan. The *neighbor* is the one who shows mercy.

In the first thousand years of the Church, the parable was primarily preached on two levels: first, what Christ accomplishes for us; then, what we ought to do for others. For instance, Venerable Bede wrote that the injured man who lies outside the gates is Adam, wounded by sin, lying in exile outside the gates of Eden. The priest and the Levite, representing the tradition and the law, are unable to help him. Then along comes Christ, who tends to Adam's wounds, takes him to the inn (Church), gives payment (his life) for Adam's healing, and promises to return (our salvation) and take him to where he dwells (the kingdom of God).

By this understanding, the parable is less a story about how we should treat others than it is the story of what Christ has done for us. We are called to follow the actions of the Good Samaritan because it is a retelling of the entire gospel. In a sense, this parable serves as the foundational explanation of Jesus' commandment to love. †

Source: *Catholic Update*, © April 2010, Liguori Publications



Risen Lord, you share with me God's gifts of peace and forgiveness. Open my heart to share your peace and forgiveness with all people.

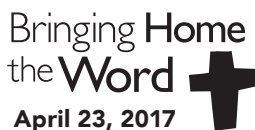
Hopeful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 24–29

Monday	Easter Weekday: Acts 4:23–31 / Jn 3:1–8
Tuesday	St. Mark: 1 Pt 5:5b–14 / Mk 16:15–20
Wednesday	Easter Weekday: Acts 5:17–26 / Jn 3:16–21

Thursday	Easter Weekday: Acts 5:27–33 / Jn 3:31–36
Friday	Easter Weekday: Acts 5:34–42 / Jn 6:1–15
Saturday	St. Catherine of Siena: Acts 6:1–7 / Jn 6:16–21



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