

2017 Easter Season Reflections

A Journey to Pentecost

with

West Allis Disciples



Easter Season Reflections from The West Allis Catholic Parishes-West

*Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mary Queen of Heaven and
St. Aloysius*

Introduction

Welcome to our fifth Cluster Reflection Book and our third “*Easter Season*” booklet. As with the other books, the reflections, actions, and prayers that you will find in these pages have been prayed over, reflected on and written by individual parishioners involved in in our three cluster parishes including staff and volunteers.

We hope that you are able to prayerfully read and reflect on these daily writings as we journey through the Easter Season to Pentecost, and that you will feel inspired each day to act with grace, mercy, and kindness as disciples of Jesus helping all those around you. We thank our Pastors, all of our contributors, Beth Mouradian, David Reiner and Kathy Smith for formatting and editing this booklet, and everyone on our Committee who helped in any way to bring this book to fruition and print.

The Cluster Adult Formation Committee

April 16, 2017 The Resurrection of the Lord

The Mass of Easter Day

Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23;

Colossians 3:1-4 OR 1Corinthians 5:6b-8;

Alleluia – 1Corinthians 5:7b-8a; John 20:1-9

Easter's Good News

“Through His Name” (Acts 10:43)

The good news of the day is that Jesus is Risen. Many cultures, used to say hello on Easter Sunday with the words “Christ is Risen” to which people responded “Alleluia”. While most of us have moved away from that particular greeting, we still count on God’s Word to us through the Acts of the Apostles. We are saved through the name of Jesus. True forgiveness of all our sins is accomplished through the dying and rising of Jesus. If we will just remember to call on His name, and live as He told us. If we would just keep His image in our mind’s eye a little more fervently, so much about life would change. Easter is the fulfillment of all God’s promises through the centuries. Let us rejoice and be glad!

Easter Action:

This Easter Day, spend an extra moment or two thanking God for the gift of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Call upon His name in gratitude for our forgiveness and for the light this day brings into our world.

Easter Prayer:

God our Father, by raising Christ your Son
you conquered the power of death and opened for us the way to eternal life.
Let our celebration today raise us up
and renew our lives by the Spirit that is within us.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Fr. Jeff Prasser

April 17, 2017 Monday in the Octave of Easter

Acts 2:14, 22-33; Psalm 16:1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11;

Alleluia - Psalm 118:24; Matthew 28:8-15

My Soul Rejoices

"Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers." Matthew 28:10

High on the chart of God's gifts is the gift of the Resurrection. We are now celebrating the Resurrection season. We shared with all of Christ's disciples the devastation of the Crucifixion of our Savior. Then Mary Magdalene and her friend meet the risen Christ. Rejoice! The Crucified Christ is still with us! He has risen! Our faith in the crucified criminal is justified! Such an unbelievable event has the two women frozen in startled suspension. What else could we expect from mere humans?

Christ then tells the two women: "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers."

The two women change from two persons in frozen suspension to two women with a joyous mission. They see the Risen Savior. They are to tell the others.

We are also are to go tell the others. Some two thousand years ago "on the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up with the Eleven" and gave the startling message of the two women. We, the uniting parishes of western West Allis, are to present this message at Pentecost. Let us pray with fervor for next fifty days in preparation for this our Pentecost.

Easter Action:

Pray with fervor. Participate in daily Mass the best you can.

Easter Prayer:

Dear Lord,

We die in You, hoping to rise in You. It is through this dying and rising that your kingdom is built. During this Eastern season may we join as one in You. Amen.

John Donovan

April 18, 2017 Tuesday in the Octave of Easter

Acts 2:36-41; Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19, 20 and 22;

Alleluia - Psalm 118:24; John 20:11-18

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene at his tomb

*“Woman,” he asked her, “Why are you weeping? Who is it you are looking for?”
“I have seen the Lord!” John 20:15, 18*

Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb of Jesus after his crucifixion to pay him homage. She does not find his body in the tomb. At first, she does not recognize Jesus as he asks her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?” I have to wonder, would I be like Mary Magdalene? Would I recognize Jesus? Would you recognize Him?

As I live every day in this world, I know that Jesus is everywhere. I recognize Him in the Eucharist I receive during Mass. I recognize Him in the people I encounter each day. I recognize Him in the Earth that God has created; the natural beauty of every day and season.

I have seen the Lord! I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for me and for you. I trust in Him.

Easter Action:

May I be like Mary Magdalene and go out into my daily life activities and proclaim, “I have seen the Lord!”

Easter Prayer:

Help me to believe in you, Jesus. Help me to see with eyes of Faith in you.
Amen.

Caroline Ognenoff

April 19, 2017 Wednesday in the Octave of Easter

Acts 3:1-10; Psalm 105:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9;

Alleluia – Psalm 118:24; Luke 24:13-35

Believe – and Rejoice - in Miracles

“... in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, rise and walk.” Acts 3:6

“Sing to him, sing his praise, proclaim all his wondrous deeds.” Psalm 105:2

“... they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels ...” Luke 24:23

Isn't the essence of faith a belief in what cannot be seen, nor heard, nor comprehended? Just as Jesus healed the lame and the lepers, made a blind man to see, turned water into wine, and amazingly appeared – after dying on a cross – to his women followers, we must strive to believe that we have the ability to heal conflicts, are able see the good that results from positive thoughts, and understand the obligation to perform kindhearted deeds ... so as to delight in knowing that we too will one day appear with Him among the angels.

Easter Action:

Consciously affirm to yourself that something wonderful can happen, and will happen - easier said than done, but God likes to challenge us, right?

Easter Prayer:

“We walk by faith, and not by sight:

No gracious words we hear

Of him who spoke as none e'er spoke,

But we believe him near.”

Amen.

“We Walk By Faith” – text, Henry Alford, 1810-1871

Anonymous

April 20, 2017 Thursday in the Octave of Easter

Acts 3:11-26; Psalm 8:2ab and 5, 6-7, 8-9

Alleluia – Psalm 118:24; Luke 24:35-48

The New Faith

Acts 3:11-26

Despite Christ's glorious and amazing resurrection from the dead, the people still did not get it. They did not understand the power that Peter received from Jesus was the reason the crippled man could now walk. More importantly, it was their faith in that power that brought about miracles and conversion. Peter reflects on the call to turn from their evil ways and believe in the resurrection. Following the arrival of the Messiah that was prophesized to their ancestors, Peter wants them to know that repentance and conversion are the way to life. By their faith in Jesus they are the new Church. Peter and John are the witnesses to that and the example of complete faith.

Easter Action:

Complete faith in the power and mercy of Jesus is a difficult goal to achieve. The resurrection was a powerful and amazing triumph. We must pray and strive towards complete trust that will bring us to be true witnesses of our faith.

Easter Prayer:

Dear Lord, Faith is the way we can grow more closely united to you and to each other. It is also a gift that needs nourishment and protection. The world is full of distractions and temptations. Grant us your grace to always treasure this gift, help us to increase our faith and show us how to live it to the fullest. Amen.

Laurie Gomez

April 21, 2017 Friday in the Octave of Easter

Acts 4:1-12; Psalm 118:1-2 and 4, 22-24, 25-27a;

Alleluia – Psalm 118:24; John 21:1-14

Filled with the Holy Spirit

“Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, answered them...” Acts 4:8-12

Peter **boldly** proclaimed to the leaders, elders, and scribes that salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone. Where was this confident Peter during Jesus’ Trial and Crucifixion? At that time, he was scared. He denied Jesus. He allowed fear to rule him and he ran away. But now, filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter has answered the charges brought against him and the other disciples – Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved.

Can you identify with Peter? When have you been afraid? When did you “run away” from something out of fear, instead of facing that fear? Have you ever had a life transformation like Peter – from being timid and afraid to being supremely confident in your abilities? Try to recall how that happened. No doubt you prayed a lot, asking for His strength and courage to speak up. No doubt the Holy Spirit answered your prayers and infused you with His Strength.

Easter Action:

Identify one aspect in your life in which fear paralyzes you. Prayerfully request that the Holy Spirit help you get past this “stumbling block”.

Easter Prayer:

Holy Spirit, help me to become more like Peter, after the Resurrection, boldly proclaiming and living the faith! Amen.

David Reiner

April 22, 2017

Saturday in the Octave of Easter

Acts 4:13-21; Psalm 118:1 and 14-15ab, 16-18, 19-21

Alleluia – Psalm 118:24; Mark 16:9-15

Living Easter

“His mercy endures forever.” Psalm 118:1

The Lord chose us to be his disciples. Like those that walked with the Lord during his time here on earth, we are human.

Our pride, stubbornness, and willingness to let others affect our thoughts, and many times, taking the easy way out by letting ourselves be influenced in ways other than God’s, becomes our downfall. This makes us unwilling to believe, and clouds our vision of what we have just experienced—the Lord’s sacrifice of himself to gain for us his eternal kingdom.

Even though the Lord made real his promise to rise from the dead, how many of his disciples did not believe? Our faith tells us to believe, but how quick are we to deny that belief by worrying about what others think and then reacting accordingly?

Despite our failings and weaknesses, “His mercy endures forever” gives us, time and time again, the chance to start over.

Easter Action:

The key word is “action.” By example, the Lord gave us the guidelines to live our lives in grace. Putting this knowledge into practice in our daily lives is what he expects, and deserves.

Easter Prayer:

Jesus, your words to us are clear. Help us to ignore the things that cloud our vision, and by your grace, accept only those things that lead us to our resurrection and heaven.
Amen.

John Czepulis

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

Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24; 1Peter1:3-9; John 20:19-31

Peace in your life

“Jesus said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’” John 20: 19

In the Gospel for this Second Sunday of Easter, we find the Disciples fearing for their safety, staying inside behind locked doors, for fear of the Jews. Jesus reveals Himself to them, and the first thing He offers them is His Peace. When have you found yourself afraid? When have you been anxious and fearful? Why were you restless, lacking peace and serenity in your life?

Life is challenging, and there will always be times when we will be anxious and fearful. Know that anxiety and fear do not come from God. In fact, they keep us from Him. How do you get rid of these anxious and fearful feelings? Ask your Heavenly Father to help you! Pray that God grants you peace in your life. Ask Him to send His Spirit to help you! Ask Jesus to walk by your side every day!

Peaceful living allows us to properly discern God’s will for us. Fear prevents us from discerning it -- we tend to do what we want, rather than what God wants for us. There is a ‘bumper sticker’ I’ve seen which exemplifies what peaceful living can do for us:

No peace? No Jesus.

Know peace. Know Jesus!

Easter Action:

The next time you experience fear or anxiety as you are about to enter some new situation, STOP and ask Jesus to hold you and ask that you proceed with him by your side. Experience the peace Jesus wants for you in everything you do.

Easter Prayer:

Lord Jesus, walk with me each day. Grant me Your Peace to live my life to the fullest, as You have planned for me. Amen.

David Reiner

April 24, 2017 Monday of the Second Week of Easter

Acts 4:23-31, Psalm 2:1-3, 4-7a, 7b-9, Alleluia - Colossians 3:1, John 3:1-8

We are truly blessed!

“Blessed are all who take refuge in the Lord.” Psalm 2:11b

As we savor these days through the Easter Season, let us not lose sight of the risen Jesus, our Savior. We have received the greatest gift of all... to lay down one's life for our salvation, our hope, and our *refuge*. “Blessed are all who take *refuge* in the Lord” (Psalm 2:11b). It is not just for a chosen few; but for all people in all nations. All you have to do is ask, act, and follow God's ways. The Lord provides *refuge* even when we don't ask just because He loves us.

Over the centuries many immigrants have taken *refuge* in the United States fleeing from persecution, poverty, and/or execution. By using the Lord's example of love, so too must we act with love to shelter and feed those most in need. May all of God's children take comfort in his loving embrace. We are all truly blessed who take *refuge* in the Lord.

Easter Action

Embrace those most in need of comfort and love with a smile, a kind word, or hug.

Easter Prayer

Lord Jesus, help me to be an example for all of the people that I encounter so they may see Your love through my actions. Amen.

Margaret Rondeau

April 25, 2017 Tuesday of the Second Week of Easter

Feast of Saint Mark, Evangelist

*1 Peter 5:5b-14, Psalm 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17, Alleluia 1 Corinthians 1:23a-24b,
Mark 16:15-20*

Being Humble Daily

“Beloved: Clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for God opposes the proud but bestows favor on the humble.” 1 Peter 5:5b

We should show humility in our interactions with others. God will be grateful and show his humbleness & exalt you in due time. We need to be sober & vigilant so Christ is able to restore, confirm and strengthen us. We encounter this in our daily activities no matter where we happen to be: school, work, volunteering, at the store or mall. In today's society we need to listen well, think carefully and say kind and peaceful words as we face many issues, choices and decisions daily. Being Christ-like in one's daily actions is not easy.

Goodness of the Lord: By sharing acts of kindness with each other, the community continues this daily practice. Know your joyful shout may or may not be heard by others but through God's justice you will be known for being humble & showing goodness.

Proclaim the Gospel to all creation. As the early community went forth so must all of us do the same today as brothers & sisters in the faith community. We must be able to reach out and show humility to all no matter what kind of day we are having. We could be the face or light of Christ to someone and help them through their day.

Easter Action:

Stand strong & be a faithful presence each day. Take the time to be a friend to those you encounter & interact with. Show a smile, say a kind word, share a laugh, offer your shoulder. The risen light of Christ will work through you.

Easter Prayer:

Help me to be a loving, respectful, and humble person each & every day. Amen.

Kevin Kuhlmann

April 26, 2017 Wednesday of the Second Week of Easter

Acts 5:17-26; Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9; Alleluia – John 3:16; John 3:16-21

This Life

“...tell the people everything about this life ...” Acts 5:20

After the apostles were miraculously released from prison, the angel directed them to go and tell the people about “this life.” What did the angel mean by this? Whose or what life? Jesus’s or their own? After pondering this, I’ve come to realize that it was both! By talking about Jesus, they were telling everyone how their own lives were changed by hearing the parables and following Jesus’s example. Not only did they talk of the miracles that Jesus performed, but the way in which he lived his life. One of love, forgiveness and compassion. They also started to share with the people the good news of eternal life brought about by belief in Jesus and his death for all. But what about us? What would we say if given that command? I hope I would be able to share how my faith has given each day meaning as I move forward on this journey called life. Although we weren’t given the ability to perform miracles in the way the apostles were, we don’t know what a difference we could make in someone’s life. That’s what we’re called to do!

Easter Action:

Just for today, look for some small way to share what your life in Jesus means to you.

Easter Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, help us to strengthen our faith in you each day and to align our life more closely with yours. Amen.

Karen Brah

April 27 Thursday of the Second Week of Easter

Acts 5:27-33; Psalm 34:2 and 9, 17-18, 19-20;

Alleluia – John 20:29; John 3:31-36

What will I do?

“It is necessary to obey God, more so than man.” Acts 5-29

Recently Pope Francis asked us to give up a “globalization of indifference” in which we forget about others. In reflecting on this I thought about how easy it is to donate food or clothes to the poor (which I should be doing), but also how easy it is to *forget about* so many others. Do I go out of my way to help the disabled, the unborn, the mentally ill, or the addicted? What about the plight of the immigrants? Do I listen to people’s problems and try to help them to the best of my ability, or do I leave this to others?

God expects me to do what is right in all circumstances, not just where I feel comfortable. Do I speak out for injustice? Do I need to stand up and do things that need to be done even though the government or others say otherwise? Now is the time that I should look for ways to help others in the many ways that I have overlooked in the past.

Easter Action:

I will open my eyes and ears to look for ways to help those in need. I will stop to talk and listen to them. This is as important as presuming to know what they want or need.

Easter Prayer:

Lord, open my mind, eyes, ears, and heart to the needs of others around me that I may have overlooked in the past. Make me mindful of all people, especially those that may be easily overlooked. Amen.

John Hopkins

April 28, 2017 Friday of the Second Week of Easter

Acts 5:34-42; Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14; Alleluia - Matthew 4:4b;

John 6:1-15

In The Lord's Time

"Wait for the Lord with Courage" Mt 4:4B

For the past 16 years, I have suffered from a rare, neurological condition called Spasmodic Dysphonia – a vocal cord disorder of which there is no known cause or cure. This condition seriously affected my voice as I was unable to speak clearly, sing, or carry a conversation without my voice "cracking." It was an extremely difficult time for me as I am a very social person.

My daily prayers always included my asking our Lord for the gift of restoring my voice. This Christmas season, I finally received the best Christmas present I could have ever hoped for! After sixteen years, I was led to a treatment that allows me to speak in a normal voice and sing with the congregation at mass. I give praise and thanks to God daily for this amazing gift--It has been like heaven for me!

Easter Action:

Think of a situation in your life that you have been praying for and feel like you have not received an answer.

Easter Prayer:

Lord help me to remember that my time is not your time. Give me the courage to trust in You and wait patiently for an answer to prayer. Amen.

Yvonne Kaminski

April 29, 2017 Saturday of the Second Week of Easter
Memorial of Saint Catherine of Siena, Virgin and Doctor of the
Church

Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19; John 6:16-21

Do not be afraid

“It is I. Do not be afraid.” (John 6:20)

Fear can be incapacitating. It can cause people not to experience something that may be very rewarding. In my job as a home care physical therapist, I observe how fear can overpower people and limit their abilities. My patients fear falling. They fear pain. They fear being alone. I am their “cheerleader” to take them from this self-inflicted paralysis to a more functional state. I am there encouraging them to take that step on their new prosthesis after a year of being in the hospital. I am there to tell them what they can do to decrease their pain or how to prevent falls.

Jesus is that cheerleader for us. He is telling us to reach out to Him and believe in Him when we are uncertain or fearful of the unknown. I am at my best when He is in control and I am not living in fear.

Easter Action: The next time you are leery of something new or fearful of something going on in your life, just remember what Jesus said and say a prayer for Him to be with you.

Easter Prayer: For the prayer, I would like to quote from a song, “Oceans”:

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders
Let me walk upon the waters
Wherever You would call me
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander
And my faith will be made stronger
In the presence of my Savior. Amen.

Laurie Heer

April 30, 2017 Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14, 22-33; Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11;

1 Peter 1:17-21; Alleluia - Luke 24:32; Luke 24:13-35

The Lord is my Refuge

“Keep me safe, O God, in you I take refuge. With the Lord at my right, I shall never be shaken.” Psalm 16:1, Psalm 16:8

Our faith should be our foundation and guidepost in dealing with the issues and problems of our lives in this world, but it should also serve as a refuge if we find the world to be overwhelming. Faith is what gets us through hard times. It should be the source of our caring about others. Everything else may be taken from us, but no one can take our faith from us.

Easter Action:

We need to re-examine our faith. Ask yourself the following. Is my faith the focal point of my life? Is it the guide for all of my actions? Is it strong enough to carry me through all the problems and situations that I face?

Easter Prayer:

Dear God, increase my faith in you so that I may find comfort in your love among all of the problems in our state, country and world. Amen.

Mark and Anne Weitenbeck

May 1, 2017 Monday of the Third Week of Easter

Acts 6:8-15; Psalm 119:23-24, 26-27, 29-30;

Alleluia – Matthew 4:4b; John 6:22-29

Unwavering Faith

“This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent.” John 6:29

Today is the feast of St. Joseph the Worker. Growing up in a faith-filled Catholic home, my parents felt it was important for the family to have a patronal saint and their choice was St. Joseph. He was a hard-working faith-filled man who accepted what God asked him to do with his life without question. My parents felt that St. Joseph set a very good example for all of us, on all levels. He did – how much better are our lives when we begin with the basic belief in Jesus as the Son of God and our Savior? It is then our job to add to that belief, a solid work ethic and unshakeable faith that we will discern and follow God’s plans for us. Simple, right?

Easter Action:

Make it a habit to pray every day that God’s will for our life’s direction will be made clear to us because of our faith in God’s love for everyone.

Easter Prayer:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Please help me to understand your will so that I may best make use of all of my God-given gifts each and every day of my life. Amen.

Anonymous

**May 2, 2017 Tuesday of the Third Week of Easter
Memorial of Saint Athanasius, Bishop and Doctor of the Church**

*Acts 7:51—8:1a; Psalm 31:3cd-4, 6 and 7b and 8a, 17 and 21ab;
Alleluia - John 6:35ab; John 6:30-35*

Seeking Grace

“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always oppose the Holy Spirit; you are just like your ancestors.” Acts:7:51

Just like the people, elders and scribes, we too close our ears and do not open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. Perhaps it is fear of change or being out of our comfort zone. We sometimes rely too much on our own thoughts and abilities to guide us without seeking guidance that can help us to live better lives and bring us closer to Our Father in Heaven.

We can become stubborn and prideful at times, when we want to hear only the things which we desire. Maybe with a little more prayer and understanding we can come to receive the grace we need in order to open our ears, hearts and minds. We can be people filled with the Holy Spirit to see more fully the glory of God.

Easter Action:

Try to read and pray more on what the Holy Spirit means to us. Being filled with that Spirit can bring change to our lives, remove fear and bring us in closer union with God.

Easter Prayer:

We pray heavenly Father for the grace to seek the guidance of your Holy Spirit. May our minds and hearts be enlightened with the gifts that will be given to us by the Holy Spirit. Bless us this Easter season and beyond. In Your Heavenly name Father we ask this through your Son Jesus.

Amen.

Laurie Gomez

May 3, 2017 Wednesday of the Third Week of Easter

Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles

1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Psalm 19:2-3, 4-5;

Alleluia - John 14:6b, 9c; John 14:6-14

Fake News or Good News

“I am the way, the truth and the life.” John 14:6

It’s so easy these days. When I want directions or am lost, I check the GPS on my phone. When I am wondering if a news story is accurate or “fake news,” I can confirm it on NPR or Factcheck.org. When a friend receives a serious medical diagnosis, I immediately Google the disease to get a better understanding of what she is facing. But technology, even at its best, can’t answer the questions that keep us awake at night. It can’t point us in the right direction. It can’t distinguish a truth from the Truth. In today’s Gospel, Jesus boldly assures [the doubtful] Thomas, that he himself is the Way, and the Truth and the Life. Note that Jesus doesn’t say that he *knows* the way, or the truth or the life but that he *is* all those things. So, like Philip and James, the apostles whose feast we celebrate today, we get to choose, is this “fake news” or “Good News?”

Easter Action: Today is the 18th day of our 50-day-long Easter festival. Look for an opportunity to speak the truth, accompany someone on their way or bring life to a seemingly hopeless situation.

Easter Prayer: Risen Jesus, you understood when your disciple Thomas could not make sense of his world. A crucified Messiah? A Redeemer risen from the dead? Reassure us also that our life, our truth and our way are found in you alone. Amen.

Kathy Luty

May 4, 2017 Thursday of the Third Week of Easter

Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 66:8-9, 16-17, 20;

Alleluia - John 6:51; John 6:44-51

The Living Bread

"I Am the Living Bread" John 6:51

The whole of Chapter 6 in John's Gospel is about bread that gives eternal life. Jesus worked many signs, such as multiplying the loaves to feed a multitude. These signs led up to his profound discourse that, "I am the bread of life. ...I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I give is my flesh for the life of the world." Many did not believe him. The greatest gift that Christ has given us is his presence with us until the end of time. Every day at mass, bread is consecrated into the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the priest elevates the Host, do you then believe? When you receive the Host in Holy Communion, are you conscious that Christ is now within you?

In the Acts, the message Philip the Apostle and the Ethiopian eunuch give us, is that by proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel we will find great joy as did the recipient of this proclamation. The psalmist punctuates this fact by calling our attention to the great things God has done for us, his power and loving guidance, plus recommending our praise and thanksgiving.

Easter Action:

Invite someone you know to attend Mass with you during this Easter Time.

Easter Prayer:

Come Holy Spirit and from heaven direct upon us the rays of your light. Come Father of the poor. Come Giver of God's gifts. Come Light of our hearts. Guide our steps, most kindly Paraclete, that we may not stumble in our pursuit of holiness.

Joe Kane

May 5, 2017 Friday of the Third Week of Easter

Acts 9:1-20; Psalm 117:1bc, 2;

Alleluia - John 6:56; John 6:52-59

Light, Lent, Living

“...as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew near to Damascus, when suddenly a light from heaven shone round about him; and falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?’ And he said, ‘Who are thou, Lord?’ And he said, I am Jesus whom thou art persecuting. And, he, trembling and amazed said, ‘Lord what wilt thou have me do?’ Acts 8:4-6

Following the Light that St. Paul experienced calls us to sacrifice. Our first thoughts typically interpret this as giving up something, particularly during Lent. This can leave us with negative thoughts that dampen our enthusiasm. With free will we are able to adjust our attitude and shift to the positive. What does sacrifice mean to you? Is it, “I chose to do this” (positive), or is it “I am being forced to do this” (negative)? Which is more pleasing to our Lord? Positive actions in the end are rewarding in so many ways. Each of us who participates this way can make a difference in this world. Yes, you can still include giving up chocolate and Starbucks pricey coffee for awhile.

Among positive sacramental choices are Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Catholics celebrate the institution of the Eucharist at the end of the Lenten season. In daily life many positive opportunities exist—there’s something for everyone’s special gifts and talents. No doubt you have found the difficulty of true giving because it seems that we receive so much more in return than we gave.

Will we choose the Light to prepare for eternal life, or will we end up in darkness? Thinking of the Seven Dwarves, will we be *Grumpy* or *Happy*?

Easter Action: As we remember the celebrations of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, can we put ourselves mentally in Jesus’ place? His thoughts? His actions? His deliberate choice to suffer? Being at the table during the last Supper? Rising from the dead? Can we say, “I choose to do this” during our sacrifices?

Easter Prayer: Dear Lord, we come before You acknowledging all You have done for us—allowing your Son to suffer as He did, and be crucified. Help is in our daily efforts to live as Jesus did. Help us to help others in their daily struggles. Help us choose the positive and to abandon negative ways so that we can follow your will. Amen.

Ray Ciszewski

May 6, 2017 Saturday of the Third Week of Easter

Acts 9:31-42; Psalm 116:12-13, 14-15, 16-17;

Alleluia - John 6:63c, 68c; John 6:60-69

Everlasting Mercy

"No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." John 8:11

For about three years, I had the role of Saul. No, I did not go around persecuting Christians but what I did was very similar in its effect. It was during the time when I drank heavily. I became very selfish. I turned my back everyone who played a significant part in my development as a Christian. It was an ugly part of my life.

Just like Saul, I heard Jesus ask the question, "Why do you persecute me?" And that is exactly what I was doing. I needed to turn things around. I was overwhelmed with the many prayers that were already being said for me. And because this was happening, as did with Saul, my eyes started to slowly open again. I was finally able to see the needs of others and not just my own.

I am very grateful for God's everlasting mercy. It is also comforting to know that the story of Saul is one that can give me strength and hope for my continued journey.

Easter Action:

When I interact with people who may have traveled the same route I had, I try and share with them the mercy and compassion I received from God.

Easter Prayer:

Lord, let me never forget my humble beginnings and the graces that have helped me on my journey. Provide me the confidence and blessings to help others who may be struggling with their own journey.

Jim Hanover

May 7, 2017 Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 23: 1-3a, 3b4, 5, 6;

1 Peter 2:20b-25; Alleluia - John 10:14; John 10:1-10

Restful Waters

“Beside restful waters he leads me” Psalm 23:2

What does restful waters mean and why does He lead me there? This is second verse of Psalm 23. Many of us have heard it read at funerals. It gives comfort to people after a loved one has passed. I find my restful waters many times a day. My favorite one is when I can wash my hands or start filling the sink to do my dishes. I take this short time and reflect and listen, everything else is blotted out. I frequently have to ask people to repeat themselves during that time. I connect the flowing water with my time alone with God. I give thanks to God for the blessing of water and not having to lug and carry it like past generations. I give thanks again that I can have hot or warm water to wash with. These past burdens are no longer and I know that my other burdens will be also taken care of.

Restful waters bring to mind the peace I feel when sitting by a river and watching it move slowly and freely. It moves gracefully as it laps at the shore line. A babbling brook reminds me of finding God deep in the woods. Watching the waves on the shore of a lake, can also bring that peace. This past month Lake Winnebago revealed what happens when temperature, wind and water combine. This was our Lord protecting the shoreline from damage. My sister has lived by a lake most of her married life. I have been able to see how bright the moon can shine when it reflects off of the water. This light allows the wildlife to drink water safely, and I get to see this happen and not disturb the wildlife.

Restful waters can give us many things: quiet, time to contemplate, satisfaction of thirst, peace, light, and sound. We might see our loved one resting by a brook or stream in our minds. This gives us a good feeling that they are at rest now, away from the turmoil of life, or disease. The biggest feeling I get from that small section of the verse is that God will provide me with what I need and give me rest from the turmoil of my life.

Easter Action:

Wash your hands and thank our Lord for what he has given you each time you wash.

Easter Prayer:

My Lord and God, I am thankful for (state one request at a time). Amen.

Clara Weinberger

May 8, 2017 Monday of the Fourth Week of Easter

Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 42:2-3; 43:3, 4;

Alleluia - John 10:14; John 10:11-18

Wisdom from the Pasture

"I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me..."John 10:14

In Jesus' day, sheep were a big thing. I imagine that when he was a young child growing up, he saw the sheep with their shepherds while walking about Nazareth with his mother. And as he grew a little older, maybe he even helped a friend watch over his flock from time to time. He probably marveled at the way several different flocks gathered together overnight in one sheepfold, then in the morning, each shepherd would call out to his flock. Only "his" sheep would come—bumping and skipping past those from other flocks who remained in the enclosure waiting for their own shepherd's call. Once they recognized his voice, the hungry sheep willingly moved away from the safety of the sheepfold led by the words of the only one they trusted to bring them to the fresh, running waters and lush pastures of the daylight. Then at night, once sheep settled back into the corral, the shepherd would lie across the gates' opening to protect his sheep from any harm while they slept.

Generally speaking, sheep are not considered very bright. Maybe that's true, maybe not. Really, the hardest thing they do is learning to recognize the sound of their master's voice—to be able to differentiate it from other shepherd's or even the voice of thieves imitating their master. Once done, they then willingly put their trust in this one alone, knowing he is the one who, without fail, shows them the way and keeps them safe. Because they recognize this one voice and trust in him, the sheep can then live their lives without want or fear. He will take care of the rest.

It all starts with recognizing their good shepherd's voice. Maybe I can learn a thing or two from these wise little sheep.

Easter Action: Spend some time reflecting on all the different voices you hear throughout the day, and ask yourself what each one has to offer you.

Easter Prayer: Loving and gracious God, give us the grace to truly hear to your Son's call, and the trust and courage to walk with him out into your waiting world. Amen.

Beth Mouradian

May 9, 2017 Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Easter

Acts 11:19-26; Psalm 87:1b-3, 4-5, 6-7;

Alleluia - John 10:27; John 10:22-30

Make Peace Through Dialogue

It is impossible for peace to exist without dialogue. All the wars, all the strife, all the unsolved problems over which we clash are due to a lack of dialogue. When there is a problem, talk: this makes peace.

Easter Action:

For today, resolve to talk out your problems with an estranged family member or a friend or coworker with whom you've had a disagreement. Try to find some common ground through dialogue to improve relations with that person.

Easter Prayer:

Holy Spirit, please be with me today when I try to improve relations and dialogue with those I have had disagreements with. Amen.

Reflection and Action taken from "365 Daily Meditations with Pope Francis" from the USCCB, copyright 2015.

Pope Francis' Address to Students and Teachers, St. Damasus Courtyard in the Vatican, August 21, 2013

May 10, 2017 Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Easter

Acts 12:24-13:5a; Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6 and 8;

Alleluia - John 8:12; John 12:44-50

Live in His Light!

“I came into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me might not remain in darkness.” John 12: 46.

As I write this reflection, we are once again in the midst of an unusually warm, sunny but extremely windy day! This winter has been unseasonably warm with many sunny days filled with light and warmth. Perhaps on this day in May we are experiencing another weather extreme...a day that is very cold, rainy and dreary. Those of us who have grown up in Wisconsin know that snow storms can happen even in the month of May, holding us once again in the grips of winter!

One thing that we are assured of with the celebration of Easter just twenty four days ago, is that because of Christ's death on the Cross for our sins and the sins of the World, we can live in his light for all eternity. While sunlight may not be shining down upon us this day, we can be assured that when our time comes to leave our earthly home, Christ's light will lead us to our heavenly home and into his loving embrace.

Easter Action:

I will let your light shine through me today by smiling or saying good morning, good afternoon or good evening to those I encounter.

Easter Prayer:

I thank you Lord for your light in my life

May I be a little light of joy to all I meet today.

In your name I pray. Amen

Laurie Cosson

May 11, 2017 Thursday of the Fourth Week of Easter

Acts 13:13-25; Psalm 89:2-3, 21-22, 25 and 27;

Alleluia - Revelation 1:5ab; John 13:16-20

To Look Forward and Not Back

“Behold one is coming after me” Acts 13:24

Paul shares the history of the Jews highlighting the importance of knowing who we are and where we come from. But then he moves into the future; the arrival of Jesus reminds us not to get stuck in the past, always wanting to return to “the way things are.” Change is not easy and quite often, our human nature resists any new ways of doing things. We need to put our trust in the Lord and believe the Spirit will guide us in our future endeavors with possible new ventures, as challenging as this may be.

Easter Action:

As an Easter people, we need to live the new life of resurrection as we move to accept new ways of doing things, new challenges in life.

Easter Prayer:

We pray:

To look up and not down,

To look forward and not back

To look out and not in.

Joe Terrian

May 12, 2017 Friday of the Fourth Week of Easter

Acts 13:26-33; Psalm 2:6-7, 8-9, 10-11ab; Alleluia - John 14:6; John 14:1-6

Stay on the Path

“Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me.’” John 14:1

Why do we feel that we have to fill our lives with so many activities that we have no time for prayer? We try to please everyone. The most important thing in our lives should be our faith in Christ crucified for us.

There are so many distractions – so many ways to get “off the path.” The most important part of our lives (if we have this opportunity and are able to) is receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist in our Catholic churches. We need to become one body with Christ. Our children live in a world that is so completely different than the one we lived in. As I watch them become what God wants them to be, I pray that nothing hinders that process!

Easter Action:

Make time for prayer and the Eucharist so that we and our families, don't fall off of our faith path.

Easter Prayer:

Dear Lord, protect our children on their journey through life so that we will all be together in heaven. Amen.

Ellyn Buhmann

May 13, 2017 Saturday of the Fourth Week of Easter

Acts 13:44-52; Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4;

Alleluia - John 8:31b-32; John 14:7-14

God's True Disciples

"If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciple and you will know the truth, says the Lord." John 8:31b, 32

Since I was a little child, I was intensely close to my father, a loving wise man, and took great interest in knowing everything about him. The same sentiment I also shared for our God, especially the Father, except his love and wisdom have always been way beyond my comprehension. I continue to study the Bible though, hopefully to know my Heavenly Father a bit more from each effort.

Jesus once said, "The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works." (John 14:10). Through Jesus then, our Father taught us how to be a true disciple. My spiritual advisor explained it so well: the core message of Jesus's teaching words and his living examples on earth are all about the truth of "God is Love." Indeed, God is all merciful with his unconditional love; righteous yet slow in anger, ready to forgive. Living by the truth of loving God and loving others to transform the world is the core criteria to be God's true disciple.

Easter Action:

Read the Bible daily and pray for inspiration to understand the message; make an effort to be kind in words, thoughts and deeds.

Easter Prayer:

Help me, Heavenly Father, to know you a bit more daily through the wisdom revealed in your words, furthermore, help me to treasure and live by the truth of your words. Amen.

Caecilia Huang

May 14, 2017 Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19; 1 Peter 2:4-9;

Alleluia - John 14:6; John 14:1-12

Light of the World

“...you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9

Where do you go when you are in a spiritual crisis? Sometimes you feel like you are in your own personal darkness as you blindly walk through one day after another. At times like these, some people check out. They busy themselves at work or lose themselves in relationships. Some even leave Jesus altogether.

Instead of running, look deeply into yourself, and search until you find the core of the issue. Allow yourself to feel uncomfortable. Don't pray for God to take away the pain or struggle because something significant is coming to the surface. Part of being penitent is examining and feeling truly sorry over time. Any significant change has to be felt, and pain isn't always bad. It motivates us. In the midst of our pain, in the depth of our personal darkness, we are called to trust God.

He will give encouragement: a word during a homily, an article on the Internet, the call and counsel of a friend. Despite what you are going through, pray that you will stay the course, persevere and keep walking forward through the darkness, with trust. As you trust Him more completely, you will become stronger, and emerge into his wonderful light.

Easter Action:

Take a personal inventory. What areas of your life need to be addressed? How can you trust God more?

Easter Prayer:

Lord, help me to look at myself honestly and see what needs to be changed. Help me to trust you and to remember that you are the Light of the world. Amen.

Vicki Johnson

May 15, 2017 Monday of the Fifth Week of Easter

Acts 14:5-18; Psalm 115:1-2, 3-4, 15-16;

Alleluia - John 14:26; John 14:21-26

Who Is the Advocate?

“He will teach you everything”John 14:26

Have you ever felt that your prayers are not being answered? Do you sometimes feel that God is not listening to you or doesn't even hear your constant prayers? Well.....maybe you are not praying right.

When Jesus died and rose to go to the Father, He sent us the Holy Spirit. Another name for the Holy Spirit is the “Advocate.” Advocate means, “one who speaks in our defense or behalf.” We can pray through the Holy Spirit to Our Lord. I believe that we add special emphasis to our prayers when we do that. The Holy Spirit will always be with us. Jesus told the Apostles, and therefore told us, “I will ask the Father and He will give you another Advocate to be with you always.” Starting our prayers with, “Come Holy Spirit” is one way to be sure we are being heard. I also believe that saying the “Prayer to the Holy Spirit” during the day and at night is sure source of protection against all evil and a strengthening of ability to “renew the face of the earth.”

Easter Action:

Our Easter response to our Risen Jesus is to spread the word of the power of the Holy Spirit to all we know, especially to our children and grandchildren.

Easter Prayer:

Come Holy Spirit, Fire of Love, send down your special graces on my prayer and present it to Our Lord for a favorable reply. If the reply isn't favorable, grant me the graces to always do God's Will. Amen.

Grace Elliott

May 16, 2017 Tuesday of Fifth Week of Easter

Acts 14:19-28; Psalm 145:10-11, 12-13ab, 21;

Alleluia - Luke 24:46, 26; John 14:27-31a

The Search for Happiness

God has placed in the heart of every man and woman an irrepressible desire for happiness, for fulfillment.

Easter Action:

For today, consider what makes you feel happy and fulfilled. Work toward achieving true happiness through faith in God and through trusting his plan for you.

Easter Prayer:

Dear Lord, help me in my daily journey towards achieving true happiness by opening my eyes and showing me the path to follow. Help me to always trust in you in my faith life. Amen.

Reflection and Action taken from "365 Daily Meditations with Pope Francis" from the USCCB, copyright 2015.

Message for the Thirtieth World Youth Day. January 31, 2015.

May 17, 2017 Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Easter

Acts 15:1-6; Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5;

Alleluia - John 15:4a, 5b; John 15:1-8

How to Bear Fruit

"...because without me you can do nothing." John 15:5

In this chapter, Jesus is talking about how to bear fruit. It is only because of him, as he is "the true vine" (John 15:1). I would like to relate a little story of my life when I could do nothing because I was without Him.

When I was in high school, I took up what some people might call a "bad habit" also known as the addiction of alcoholism. I had no real faith at that time. From then until around the age of twenty-seven, I rarely attended mass, even though I was a cradle Catholic.

Then, with the help of God and another fellowship, I started coming back to the Church. I now go to mass and attend many other offerings of the tri-parish group.

Besides that, now I can volunteer outside this community. I can handle my own money and have a successful relationship. Also, I can now write this reflection!

Easter Action:

During this Easter Season, work on breaking at least one bad habit or addiction, the benefits will be immense!

Easter Prayer:

Heavenly Father, help us continue working on our "bad habits." Let us increase our spirituality so that we become like your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Anonymous

May 18, 2017 Thursday of the Fifth Week of Easter

Acts 15:7-21; Psalm 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 10; Alleluia - John 10:27; John 15:9-11

Complete Joy

*"I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete."
John 15:11*

Today is my mother's 90th birthday. To be a mother myself and to have a mother who has shared her life with me and so many others for all these years is a gift of incredible magnitude. My siblings and I have had the benefit of being raised by two faith-filled parents and live in a family filled with an amazing amount of love – love of God, country, family, and life in general. In this gospel John reminds us that Jesus said that as our Father in heaven loves his son Jesus, so Jesus loves us, and if we remain in that love by keeping the commandments, we can experience complete joy. I saw that in my father, continue to see that in my mother, and fervently hope that I too, can reflect that. What more could one ever ask for?

Easter Action:

Every day strive to follow the commandments and love God, love your family and love your neighbor, as difficult as this can be at times.

Easter Prayer:

Dear Lord, guide my heart and mind that I may always love you and my neighbor, following your commandments every day. Amen.

Kathy Smith

May 19, 2017 Friday of the Fifth Week of Easter

Acts 15:22-31; Psalm 57:8-9, 10 and 12;

Alleluia - John 15:15b; John 15:12-17

Pay It Forward

“No one has greater love than this to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” John 15:13

The sacrifice required by the Father through his son Jesus exemplifies in a very transparent manner, how we as Catholics, endeavor to lead meaningful lives. God’s love for us through his choice provides an important but often difficult path to follow. We may not be required as individuals, to suffer death defending faith or our fellow man. However, our love of our fellow man allows us by choosing Christ, to promote and “bear fruit.” Each act of love promotes a kindness that has the potential to exponentially affect mankind by severing the claws of hate.

The words of Jesus lacking opaqueness, provide guidance as we endeavor to attain our heavenly goal. No dark agenda here! While Jesus’ commandment “to love one another” appears somewhat dictatorial, we should accept his statement as an indication of the importance placed on love. No matter how slight the act, we should pay each act forward with joy. Genuine love will allow us, by praying through Jesus Christ to the Father, to fulfill our needs. More importantly, we may become as Jesus stated “one of my friends.”

Easter Action:

Through serious contemplation, attempt to examine how extraordinarily powerful the crucifixion depicts the Father’s love. This selfless act of love serves as a remembrance allowing us to reflect on how we should treat others. With love and kindness, realizing each interaction is an opportunity, we become more intimate with the message of God’s love through his Son’s death.

Easter Prayer:

Please Jesus, allow me to recognize opportunities to exhibit unconditional love and kindness toward others as they have shown me. Amen.

Paul Sartorius

May 20, 2017 Saturday of the Fifth Week of Easter

Acts 16:1-10; Psalm 100:1b-2, 3, 5;

Alleluia - Colossians 3:1; John 15:18-21

Mary's Faith

Surely in her heart she said to the baby she was carrying in her womb: "Come, I want to see your face, for they have told me you will be great!"

Easter Action:

For today, meditate on the birth story of Jesus, and if possible, tell the story to a child in your life, or read them an age-appropriate book. Join in Mary's anticipation!

Easter Prayer:

Jesus, we have experienced your birth, your life, your death, and your resurrection through the inspired words of the Bible. Help me to share those experiences and stories with those I love, especially the young people in my life. Amen.

Reflection and Action taken from "365 Daily Meditations with Pope Francis" from the USCCB, copyright 2015.

General audience. St. Peter's Square. September 3, 2014. L'Osservatore Romano translation.

May 21, 2017 Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Psalm 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20; 1 Peter 3:15-18;

Alleluia - John 14:23; John 14:15-21

Never Alone

"I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you." John 14:18

His disciples were gathered together at supper filled with sorrow and troubled hearts. Jesus had just told them He must die, yet live again, and though absent in body, be with them in spirit. With comforting words, Jesus promised them that He would return and not leave them orphans. He also promised that He would continue his care for them. The fact that Jesus will be raised from the dead reinforces the spiritual life He will give to his disciples and to all who trust Him. He encourages them to use the help of the Holy Spirit to believe and be faithful followers.

Easter Action:

Real sorrows and disappointments are part of this life, leaving me at times feeling abandoned and orphaned. By recognizing that the bodily presence is at an end, the real presence truly lasts forever and Christ comforts and soothes me. Faith is my complete trust without question.

Easter Prayer:

You have invited me to realize that your promise has been fulfilled. You will not leave me. Through your Resurrection, You are still with me, giving me strength, peace and joy. For this, I am thankful.

Roz Jasinski

May 22, 2017 Monday of the Sixth Week of Easter

Acts 16:11-15; Psalm 149:1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b;

Alleluia - John 15:26b, 27a; John 15:26—16:4a

Sing, Dance, and Play for Joy

“Let them praise his name in the festive dance, let them sing praise to him with timbrel and harp.” Psalm 149:3

During some liturgical celebrations (usually Christmas season and the Triduum celebrations) depending on where they are being celebrated, we may be fortunate enough to be lead in our worship with liturgical dance or additional instrumentation beyond the “usual” organ, piano and occasional percussion and handbells. What a joy to experience this and how special it is and makes those celebrations. Music and dance have the ability to lift our souls to ever new heights if we let them.

Nearly every liturgy has music of some sort and almost all of us are able to sing. Our combined voices give praise to the Lord that can be heard by nearly everyone present. Again, what a joy it is to be able to be an active participant and if that isn’t possible, to be an enthusiastic appreciator of those who are participating.

Easter Action:

When there is music to sing – sing. If you have a talent in the musical area - voice, instrument – or even wish to learn, don’t wait. Offer your talent whenever possible or start taking those lessons you’ve been putting off for years. If you can’t liturgically dance, put some liturgical or other music on at home and just dance for God with joy. God sees you! The benefits are priceless.

Easter Prayer:

Praise the Lord for all the musically and artistically gifted people who share their gifts with us at our liturgical celebrations. Praise the Lord for the ability to dance, clap and raise our hands in praise to the Almighty!

Anonymous

May 23, 2017 Tuesday of the Sixth Week of Easter

Acts 16:22-34; Psalm 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8;

Alleluia - John 16:7, 13; John 16:5-11

Facing Challenges

We face so many challenges in life: poverty, distress, humiliation, the struggle for justice, persecutions, the difficulty of daily conversion, the effort to remain faithful to our call to holiness, and many others. But if we open the door to Jesus and allow him to be part of our lives, if we share our joys and sorrows with him, then we will experience the peace and joy that only God, who is infinite love, can give.

Easter Action:

For today, open the door to Jesus, and invite him to help you with your problems and daily struggles. Ask for guidance in making tough decisions.

Easter Prayer:

Jesus, I am calling to you to help me every step of the way, each day, as I encounter life with all the various struggles, big and small, that I may face. I trust in You. Amen.

Reflection and Action taken from "365 Daily Meditations with Pope Francis" from the USCCB, copyright 2015.

Message for the Twenty-Ninth World Youth Day. January 21, 2014.

May 24, 2017 Wednesday of the Sixth Week of Easter

Acts 17:15, 22—18:1; Psalm 148:1-2, 11-12, 13, 14;

Alleluia - John 14:16; John 16:12-15

Spirit of Truth

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of Truth." John 14:16-17

Jesus is teaching his disciples about the Holy Spirit. The disciples do not understand that they will not be left alone when Jesus ascends to the Father. Jesus no longer will be with them physically; however, the Holy Spirit will be in them and live with them. This concept is even hard for us today to grasp. We acknowledge the Holy Spirit when we make the sign of the cross; we know that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity; we try to understand how on Pentecost the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to go out and preach the Word of God. In the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit brings people to the truth of God. In today's world truth is often compromised; however, the Spirit of God dwelling in us is never compromised.

Easter Action:

Quietly sit and listen to that still voice within you encouraging you to be truthful in all aspects of life as you allow the Holy Spirit to empower you to do the work of our Lord on earth.

Easter Prayer:

Holy Spirit empower me as you did the disciples so I can share the truth of Jesus and understand God's purpose for my life knowing that Jesus will never leave me. Help me to reflect Christ's love to everyone that I meet.

Nancy Dlouhy

May 25, 2017 Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter or The Ascension of the Lord

Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9; Ephesians 1:17-23;

*Alleluia - Matthew 28:19a, 20b; Matthew 28:16-20 or
Acts 18:1-8; Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4; Alleluia - John 14:18; John 16:16-20*

Commission and Promise

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

This passage is called the Great Commission. The final instructions of Jesus to his church. One might think of it as our marching orders. In others words, instructions for us to finish what Jesus began. “To make disciples of all people, to go out into the world and teach all he commands, to live the truth of the cross of redemption.”

All of us can do this. Do it with those you work with, go to school with, neighbors, friends, family. Your efforts will not go unrecognized, for Our Lord will bless us for continuing his work. “I am with you always, until the end of the age.” What a comforting statement from the Lord. The promise he will be with us always.

Easter Action:

To become disciples we must believe in our heart and obey what Jesus teaches us. We must have the patience to follow him wherever he may lead us. Trust in Him. We must share our knowledge. A lot of us are not qualified to teach Bible study, but it can be as easy as showing compassion, kindness, humility. Our actions should reflect our beliefs.

Easter Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for all you have given me and thank you for all you have done for me. Help me Lord, to be a good Christian. Help me Jesus, to say and do as you would do. I need you and want you in my life every minute of every day. I can not do it alone. I struggle everyday. I need your help Jesus. You are my Lord, my Savior, and my salvation. Amen.

Deb Stenz

May 26, 2017 Memorial of Saint Philip Neri, Priest

Acts 18:9-18; Psalm 47:2-3, 4-5, 6-7;

Alleluia - Luke 24:46, 26; John 16:20-23

A Love So Great

*“Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you.”
John 16:23*

Even though I can be so proud,
You humbled yourself on a cross for me.

Even though I can be so selfish,
You rose to share your life with me.

A love so great, so deep!
A heart so humble, so generous!

Lord thank you for caring so much;
for seeing the good I'm capable of,
rather than condemning the bad;
for encouraging the good that's in me,
the new life within waiting to happen;
for patiently waiting for me to come to life.

Lord, help me to lead a life
worthy of Your love.

Amen.

Prayer from the Columbian Fathers

Submitted by Joan McCoy

May 27, 2017 Saturday of the Sixth Week of Easter

*Acts 18:23-28; Psalm 47:2-3, 8-9, 10;
Alleluia - John 16:28; John 16:23b-28*

Pop Quiz: Faith

“He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the Way of God more accurately.” Acts 18:26

We all have had some form of formal education about the Catholic faith, receiving it either as children or adults. Have we taken that education any further? Do we ever even think about it even when our faith is being tested in so many ways on a daily basis? Are we strong enough in our faith to defend it? Do we even care? We believe that the Father sent the Son to save us. That proves how much He loves us. What are we doing to prove our love for Him? Are we spreading our faith in words or more importantly, our actions? Or are we Christians in name only?

Easter Action:

Let us all recommit ourselves to our faith. Let us look for opportunities to share that faith. Let us ask the Father for the wisdom, strength, and courage to prove our love for Him.

Easter Prayer:

Father, be with me today that I might be all that you ask of me. I pray that I may be a beacon to all those around me seeking a way back to you. Amen.

Dave Shook

May 28, 2017 The Ascension of the Lord

Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9; Ephesians 1:17-23;

Alleluia - Matthew 28:19a, 20b; Matthew 28:16-20

Time to Get to Work

“Why are you standing there looking at the sky?” Acts 1:11a

I sense that I, like many of you, are filled with great heartache when contemplating the current state of our country. Never before in my life history have I witnessed such angst against not only elected officials, but those who believe differently than ourselves. We have become polarized, each in our own camp and have surrounded ourselves with “like” believers that support our positions. Within this environment fueled by anger and harsh discourse it seems to me that we have forgotten the true work that we are called to do – the building of God’s kingdom here on earth. Like those early disciples who stood staring up at the sky overcome by all that was happening and paralyzed by inaction, you and I need to re-center ourselves in Christ so as to do the work of Christ. The Kingdom of God is a place of justice and equality, of compassion and truth, of gentleness and welcoming. While the kingdom we attempt to build on this earth is but a dim reflection of that which exists in heaven – that is our call, our mission – to become builders in God’s Kingdom.

Easter Action:

We must accept the mission given to us in the sacrament of baptism and become builders of God’s Kingdom.

Easter Prayer:

Sweet Jesus, though it would be easy to lock the doors and spend each day with our eyes cast to the heavens, give us the courage to be in the world active in the building of your kingdom. Amen.

Deacon Gene Brah

May 29, 2017 Monday of the Seventh Week of Easter

Acts 19:1-8; Psalm 68:2-3ab, 4-5acd, 6-7ab;

Alleluia - Colossians 3:1; John 16:29-33

You Are Never Alone

“But I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” John 16:32

Do you recall a time when you felt utterly alone? How did you feel? How did you cope? Were you anxious? Fearful? What did you do to relieve the alone-ness? It should be of some comfort to learn that Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ would be left alone, too, for He knew His Disciples would leave Him, scattered each to their own homes. But Jesus also knew that He would never be completely alone, for His Heavenly Father would always be with Him.

Because of Jesus' ultimate Sacrifice on the Cross for our sins, we are made adopted sons and daughters of God, so we, too, are able to call God “Abba, Father.” And we should know that God will never leave us alone, as well.

Take comfort in this the next time you feel isolated in this world. If you're feeling lonesome and alone, remember that God is always there for you, only a prayer away. And when we take comfort in God's healing hands, we should recognize that we really are never alone in this world either. Take encouragement from Jesus' relationship with his Father, and do not be discouraged in your alone-ness. You have the greater Church community family, close family, friends, and colleagues in other social and volunteer circles, all just a text or a telephone call away.

Easter Action:

The next time you feel completely alone in this world, remember that God is always with you, just waiting for you to call upon Him. He is the supporting Father behind the scenes. Sense Him and feel His Presence in those lonesome times, by those who love you and care for you.

Easter Prayer:

Holy Spirit will be with us so we are not alone, but feel the father's peace as we spread the word and message of Jesus. Amen.

David Reiner and Kevin Kuhlmann

May 30, 2017 Tuesday of the Seventh Week of Easter

*Acts 20:17-27; Psalm 68:10-11, 20-21;
Alleluia - John 14:16; John 17:1-11a*

See The Face of Your Brothers and Sisters

You will discover that God can be “seen” also *in the face of your brothers and sisters*, especially those who are most forgotten: the poor, the hungry, those who thirst, strangers, the sick, those imprisoned (cf. Mt 25:31-46), Have you had this experience?

Easter Action:

For today, remember to look for God in the face of the next homeless or needy person you encounter. If possible, help him or her by paying for a meal or groceries. Whatever you do for the poor, you are doing for Jesus!

Easter Prayer:

Almighty Father, please help me to see You in the faces of everyone I meet today, especially those who may be homeless or in need of food. Help me to always be compassionate and non-judgmental in these situations. Amen.

Reflection and Action taken from “365 Daily Meditations with Pope Francis” from the USCCB, copyright 2015.

Message for the Thirtieth World Youth Day. January 31, 2015.

May 31, 2017 Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Zephaniah 3:14-18a, or Romans 12:9-16;

Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6; Alleluia - Luke 1:45; Luke 1:39-56

Saying “Yes” Like Mary

Mary’s journey to heaven began with the “yes” spoken in Nazareth in response to the Heavenly Messenger’s announcement of God’s will to her. And in reality it is just like this: every “yes” to God is a step toward Heaven, toward eternal life. Because this is what the Lord wants: that all his children may have life in abundance! God wants us all with him, in his house!

Easter Action:

For today, pay close attention to what the Lord is saying to you in your heart, and live out your “yes” to him! Take joy in knowing that as you let Jesus work through you and for you, you grow closer to Heaven and bring Heaven down to earth.

Easter Prayer:

The Memorare

Remembr, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known, that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

Reflection and Action taken from “365 Daily Meditations with Pope Francis” from the USCCB, copyright 2015.

‘Angelus’ on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Castel Gandolfo. August 15, 2013.

June 1, 2017 Memorial of Saint Justin, Martyr

Acts 22:30; 23:6-11; Psalm 16:1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11;

Alleluia - John 17:21; John 17:20-26

Becoming One

“...that they may all be one” John 17:21

Deep in our psyche we want to be one with others. We put a lot of effort into developing friendships. Jesus Christ wants us all to be one. After he requests that we all may be one, he continues: “...as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us.” (John 17:21) We will be one when we are united in the three persons of perfect love: the Divine Trinity. I reason that when I unite myself in the Divine Trinity, I will unite with others who are uniting themselves in the Divine Trinity. We are becoming one. Jesus Christ is showing us the way to become one. It is through his life, crucifixion, and resurrection - a Divine Mystery. As a Catholic, I have an opportunity to participate in the celebration of this Divine Mystery - the Mass.

Easter Action:

Pray with fervor. Participate in daily Mass the best as is possible.

Easter Prayer:

Dear Lord,

We thank you for giving us the way to become one. It is through living in your life, dying in your Crucifixion and rising in your Resurrection. Help us to make a real effort in living, dying and rising in You. Amen.

John Donovan

June 2, 2017 Friday of the Seventh Week of Easter

Acts 25:13b-21; Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20ab;

Alleluia - John 14:26; John 21:15-19

Kindness

“For as the heavens are high above the earth, so surpassing is his kindness towards those who fear him.” Psalm 103: 11

My father passed away over fifteen years ago but I will never forget his eyes. When I read this psalm and this particular line today, it brought back so many memories. My father, just like our Father in heaven, was kind. He was kind to his family, his friends, and most importantly, his enemies. The best part of his kindness was that you could see it in his eyes. Many say that our eyes are the windows to our souls and I believe that.

Not only were his eyes kind, but they were honest. You knew that this was a man of integrity who truly saw Jesus in every person he met, and then treated them that way. I look forward to meeting him again in heaven, if only I too, can practice that kindness.

Easter Action:

Today (and every day possible) see Jesus in the face of every person you meet. Treat them with kindness and mean it.

Easter Prayer:

Holy Spirit, please help me every hour of every day to act as Jesus did with kindness and compassion. Amen.

Anonymous

June 3, 2017 Memorial of Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs

Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; Psalm 11:4, 5 and 7;

Alleluia - John 16:7, 13; John 21:20-25

Be Patient

We need also to be patient if we want to understand those who are different from us. People only express themselves fully when they are not merely tolerated, but know that they are truly accepted.

Easter Action:

For today, have patience with young people or friends or family who may be struggling to live their faith. Watch out for their safety, but give them room to make their own decisions. Provide encouragement and be a good example for them through living God's love every day.

Easter Prayer:

Holy Spirit, please bring me patience in my dealings with all young people, especially those who may be family members. Please help me to be a positive influence by guiding my actions at all times so that I may be a beacon of your love. Amen.

Reflection and Action taken from "365 Daily Meditations with Pope Francis" from the USCCB, copyright 2015.

Message for the Forty-Eighth World Communications Day. June 1, 2014.

June 4, 2017 Pentecost Sunday At the Vigil Mass

Joel 3:1-5; Psalm 104:1-2, 24, 35, 27-28, 29, 30; Romans 8:22-27; John 7:37-39

With Dreams and Visions...

Thus, says the LORD: "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old shall dream dreams, and your young ones shall see visions." Joel 3: 1-2

During this Easter Season, we have been challenged. The leadership of our parish community has recommended that we look to our common future with hope, along with a healthy dose of dreaming and visioning. The prophet Joel was talking about the end of days. There, God would raise up His Faithful people after all the changes had taken place in the world. Here, I believe, the Spirit is calling the cluster to be aware of many things.

For some changes will seem inevitable and they will move with them. Some will see our process as the destruction and the ruin of what once was and retreat to some other reality. Some won't care until it affects them. Others will be energized and excited about the possibilities and look forward to the future. Through it all, God is promising us the same gift of the Holy Spirit, wherever we find ourselves in the process. We will grow into whatever God has planned for us if we are prayerful, honest, and open to the Gift of the Holy Spirit whom we celebrate today. As a living, breathing example of the dying and rising of Jesus, our CHURCH will rise from this process renewed and ever-more faithful to the Mission of Christ in the world today. To do that, we must be willing to dream dreams and see the vision of what can be, here in our corner of the Kingdom.

Easter Action:

Make a commitment to pray for our planning process daily. Come to pray with the parishes on Tuesdays for the Rosary.

Easter Prayer:

Almighty God, grant that the splendor of your glory may shine forth upon us. By the bright rays of the Holy Spirit, may the light of your light confirm the hearts of those born again by your grace. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. AMEN

Fr. Jeff