

Sunday, Apr 26, 2026

Hope beyond hope

One of the greatest gifts that comes with the knowledge of Christ's death and Resurrection is hope. Christians live free from existential fears of meaninglessness and extinction because Christ showed us that our lives have eternal purpose: To love and serve God and others. The vocation that is right for you is the one that enables you in your own unique way to follow the call of love and service most joyfully.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER; GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY; WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 2:20b-25; John 10:1-10 (249). *"I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."*

Monday, Apr 27, 2026

Pure grace

The notion of what is "clean" and "unclean" is very important in Judaism, especially among Orthodox Jews. Purification rituals are observed for various occasions, and many of them require the ritual washing of the hands, or at times a full immersion. Early Christianity had to struggle with questions of purity as it grew and encountered the Gentile world. Some say that Baptism represents a form of ritual purification adapted from Judaism, and that even the dipping of fingertips in holy water upon entering church is part of that tradition. The apostle Peter helped the Early Church move beyond a narrow definition of purity. Spend some time today reflecting on what helps you feel "clean and pure" spirituality, and then practice it.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 11:1-18; John 10:11-18 (279). *"What God has made clean, you are not to call profane."*

Tuesday, Apr 28, 2026

How to define the Word

In today's reading the Jewish leaders ask Jesus to be straight with them: Are you or are you not the Messiah? Jesus says he's answered the question and they chose not to believe. In essence, Jesus says, "Every part of my mission screams savior." But Jesus is a man of metaphor. For Jesus, words are directly related to love. Words and deeds go hand in hand. If you aren't living out his saving mission, then you will have a difficult time recognizing the meaning and truth behind his teachings. Follow Jesus in deed, and his words will become easier to understand.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 11:19-26; John 10:22-30 (280). *"If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."*

Wednesday, Apr 29, 2026

Bringing truth and love to light

Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-80) was a fearless defender of the faith and papacy during fractious times. When declaring her a doctor of the church in 1970, Pope Paul VI referred to Catherine's unique "charism of exhortation," which is to say she never minced words. She sent copious letters to church officials and monarchs across Europe offering a piece of her mind. She berated cardinals for treachery, urged Pope Gregory XI not to be a coward, and told Pope Urban VI to control his temper. Catherine's spirituality centers on self-knowledge as the path to love and truth. Heed her advice and spend time in honest self-

reflection, which, says Catherine, allows you to know God's goodness toward you, and "upon knowledge follows love."

MEMORIAL OF CATHERINE OF SIENA, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Acts 12:24-13:5a; John 12:44-50 (281). *"I came into the world as light."*

Thursday, Apr 30, 2026

Home-grown forgiveness

Home cooking is great, but sometimes we are hurt the worst by the folks who share food at our table. Our spouses, our siblings, our children, and our grandchildren often betray the family trust and cause us pain that's hard to forgive. Yet there is within us the presence of the one who carried the cross of our own sinfulness. Just as Jesus forgave his closest disciples, those who betrayed him, denied him, and abandoned him in his hour of need, we have the power to forgive our family members for their offenses against us. "Sometimes 'plates fly,'" said Pope Francis about family life, "but if love is real, then peace is made quickly." Indeed, peace, like charity, begins at home.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 13:13-25; John 13:16-20 (282). *"The one who ate my food has raised his heel against me."*

Friday, May 01, 2026

The winding path of faith

The apostles didn't know who they were destined to be when they began to follow Jesus. The same could be said of all of us who start down the path of faith with faltering and uncertain steps. Maybe someday we'll be part of the canon of saints like Thomas, who up to the Last Supper was still asking Jesus where this road was headed. Obviously it had yet to occur to him that he would be one of the 12 founders of our apostolic tradition. Nor can we imagine who we might become if we continue on this faith journey. Saint Angela Merici has some advice that might help us plan our course: "Do now—do *now*—what you'll wish you had done when your moment comes to die."

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 13:26-33; John 14:1-6 (283). *"Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?"*

Saturday, May 02, 2026

Stand firm

Saint Athanasius was the fourth-century bishop of Alexandria, an important city in Egypt. He is best known for his opposition to the Arian heresy, which denied the full divinity of Christ. In taking this stand, Athanasius faced opposition by many within the church and incurred the wrath of emperors, who banished him five times. He spent a total of 17 years in exile. His courageous witness gave rise to the expression *Athanasius contra mundum*: "Athanasius against the world." When you take a stand against misinformation and moral error, you may share in the pain of persecution. In those moments remember these encouraging words attributed to Athanasius: "No one, ever, will prevail against your faith."

MEMORIAL OF ATHANASIUS, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Acts 13:44-52; John 14:7-14 (284). *"Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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