



**MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY**

**Sunday, April 1, 2018  
Easter Sunday Of The  
Resurrection Of The Lord**

**8:00 AM**

Gathering: Festival Canticle BB 568

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 118)

***This day was made by the Lord, let us  
rejoice; let us be glad. This day was  
made by the Lord. Let us rejoice in  
salvation.***

Sprinkling Rite: ***God, you have moved upon the  
waters, you have sung in the rush of  
wind and flame; and in your love,  
you have called us sons and  
daughters, make us people of the  
water and your name.***

Preparation At The Lamb's High Feast BB 165

Mass Parts Storrington Mass

Communion: Bread For The World BB 351  
Come To Me And Drink BB 358

Recessional: Ye Sons And Daughters BB 171

**10:00 AM**

Gathering: Jesus Christ Is Risen Today BB 159

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 118)

***This day was made by the Lord, let us  
rejoice; let us be glad. This day was  
made by the Lord. Let us rejoice in  
salvation.***

Sprinkling Rite: ***If we have died to ourselves in Jesus,  
then we shall arise to new life in Him,  
Alleluia, alleluia!***

Preparation Christ Be Our Light BB 157  
You Are Mine BB 457

Mass Parts Mass of God's Promise

Communion: Song Of The Body Of Christ BB 333  
Gift Of Finest Wheat BB 324

Recessional: Alleluia, Alleluia, Let The Holy Anthem  
Rise BB 167

**✠ PARISH TITHING ✠**

**Our Parish needs to take in \$7,000.00 each week in order to make ends meet. Thank you for your generosity to our parish!** Your weekly contribution helps ensure that the parish remains a vibrant community. Please remember to submit your weekly gift even if you will be away. We depend upon your support!

**COLLECTION AMOUNTS FOR  
MARCH 25, 2018  
WILL APPEAR IN NEXT WEEK'S BULLETIN**

**PARISH GIVING**

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish has engaged *Parish Giving* to provide parishioners with an opportunity to make your offertory and other contributions through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Parish Giving is a simple, secure, and convenient way to manage your stewardship without weekly envelopes and without worries. It allows you to select contribution amounts and special collections right from your own computer or smart phone. You can be a good steward for the Parish even when you are away from the area on a weekend. Parish Giving allows you to print out a report detailing your contributions for the year. This program is available to parishioners at no cost. Log on to the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish website at <http://stlukenh.org>, click on the Parish Giving logo, and follow the easy registration instructions.

**UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

April 1, 2018	Easter
April 8, 2018	Property Management
April 15, 2018	No Second Collection
April 22, 2018	Fuel
April 29, 2018	Catholic Charities



**Out of respect, please remember  
to silence or turn off  
your cell phones during Mass.  
Thank you!**

**Suggested Weekly Contribution  
Based on Income**

Annual Income	5% Commitment annually/ weekly	3% Commitment annually/ weekly
\$100,000	\$5,000/ <b>\$100</b>	\$3,000/ <b>\$60</b>
\$75,000	\$3,750/ <b>\$75</b>	\$2,250/ <b>\$45</b>
\$60,000	\$3,000/ <b>\$60</b>	\$1,800/ <b>\$36</b>
\$50,000	\$2,500/ <b>\$50</b>	\$1,500/ <b>\$30</b>
\$40,000	\$2,000/ <b>\$40</b>	\$1,200/ <b>\$24</b>
\$30,000	\$1,500/ <b>\$30</b>	\$900/ <b>\$18</b>
\$25,000	\$1,250/ <b>\$25</b>	\$750/ <b>\$15</b>
\$15,000	\$750/ <b>\$15</b>	\$450/ <b>\$9</b>

**Suggested Weekly Contribution  
Based on a Percentage Increase**

Your Current Offertory Contribution	25% Increase	30% Increase	40% Increase
\$75.00	\$93.75	\$97.50	\$105.00
\$50.00	\$62.50	\$65.00	\$70.00
\$40.00	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$56.00
\$35.00	\$43.75	\$45.50	\$49.00
\$30.00	\$37.50	\$39.00	\$42.00
\$25.00	\$31.25	\$32.50	\$35.00
\$20.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$28.00
\$15.00	\$18.75	\$19.50	\$21.00
\$10.00	\$12.50	\$13.00	\$14.00
\$5.00	\$6.25	\$6.50	\$7.00

## ✠ PARISH NEWS ✠

### FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

If you would like an "end of year" financial statement of your contributions to the parish for 2017, please call Jackie at the Parish Office at 382-8324. Financial Statements are issued on a request only basis.



### **PASCHAL VESPERS and BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

Paschal Vespers are sung at Newton at 6:00 PM on the first two Sundays of Easter, **April 1 & April 8**. Join us for a quiet time of prayer and reflection. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament will follow Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday.

### EASTER CANDLES

Donations to defray the cost of the new Paschal Candles for the Easter Season are welcome. Please contact Jackie at the Parish Office for details.



### **From the Pastor's Desk**



### HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSED

Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow is now closed until Spring 2018. This decision comes as result of the real dangers of snow and ice in the Cemetery and the costs to Parishioners to inter during the winter months. Please contact the Parish Office with any questions.  
Fr. Albert



### **THE ROOF REPLACEMENT PROJECT AND CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH**

Our Parish community continues with our Capital Campaign to replace roofs on the Plaistow campus, and to raise funds to complete other projects in Newton and in Plaistow. Our three-year goal is to raise \$250,000.00. Besides the Plaistow roofs, we would like to accomplish the following projects: Plaistow church access ramp, Plaistow office building & convent window replacement, Newton rectory interior flooring, Newton church lighting and painting, Newton rectory painting as funds become available.

#### ***How can you help?***

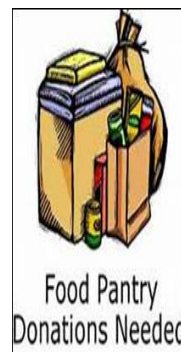
Any contribution is welcome.

Make checks payable to

***Saint Luke the Evangelist – Capital Campaign.***

### **ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST FOOD PANTRY**

Food or care items are always needed – donations can be dropped off at Church or are welcome at the Parish Office during regular business hours. Cash donations for food are always welcome – make checks payable to **St. Luke the Evangelist Food Pantry**. All donations to the Food Pantry go toward helping the needy of our communities.



### FOOD PANTRY HOURS

**Wednesday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon**

**Thursday from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM**

**Friday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon**

For more information, call the St. Luke Food Pantry at **603-819-4949**.

### **WHILE AWAY THIS SPRING...**

We appreciate all of you who remember to send in your Parish Offertory during the Spring even when on vacation or visiting other parishes. Thank you for remembering that our expenses also continue through the Spring months. We invite others to consider doing the same before or even after you return home.

## *EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD*

### ✠ WEEKLY CALENDAR ✠

#### Sunday, April 1

10:00 AM NO Religious Education – Pre-K to 8 *Plaistow*  
 11:00 AM NO Confirmation Session *Plaistow*  
 6:00 PM Vespers and Benediction *Newton*

#### Monday, April 2

#### PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

7:00 PM Knights of Columbus *Plaistow*

#### Wednesday, April 4

#### HOLY ANGELS CHURCH OPEN ALL DAY FOR PRAYER

7:00 PM Reader Scripture Share *Plaistow*

#### Thursday, April 5

8:30 AM Adoration Begins *Newton*  
 9:00 AM Intercessory Prayer *Plaistow*  
 10:00 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting *Plaistow*  
 8:30 PM Adoration Ends *Newton*

#### Saturday, April 7

3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation *Plaistow*

#### Sunday, April 8

10:00 AM Religious Education – Pre-K to 8 *Plaistow*  
 11:00 AM Confirmation Retreat *Plaistow*  
 11:00 AM RCIA *Plaistow*  
 11:00 AM Baptism Catechesis *Plaistow*  
 6:00 PM Vespers *Newton*



Find us on:  
**facebook®**

St. Luke the Evangelist is now on Facebook! Go to [www.facebook.com/stlukenh.org/](http://www.facebook.com/stlukenh.org/) or St. Luke the Evangelist Parish – Newton/Plaistow and give us a Like! Please invite fellow parishioners and friends to do the same.

**St. Vincent  
de Paul  
Society**



Our Society is available if you need a “hand up” when you “fall” because the unexpected happened or any other crisis has occurred. We are a confidential yet friendly ear, ready to listen to you.

Our next meeting on **Wednesday, April 18 at 7:00 PM**. We meet downstairs in the Church Hall in Plaistow. **New members are always welcome!**

If you seek assistance or need information about the St. Vincent de Paul Society,  
call 603-382-8324 x315.

**Hear, OH LORD, and answer me  
for I am poor and needy.**

### ✠ MASS INTENTIONS ✠

#### Saturday, March 31 ~ Great Vigil of Easter

*Gn 1:1—2:2; Gn 22:1-18; Ex 14:15—15:1; Is 54:5-14;  
 Is 55:1-11; Bar 3:9-15, 32—4:4; Ez 36:16-17a, 18-28;  
 Rom 6:3-11; Mk 16:1-7*

8:00 PM People of the Parish  
*Plaistow*

#### Sunday, April 1 ~ Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

*Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Col 3:1-4; Jn 20:1-9*

8:00 AM People of the Parish  
*Newton*

10:00 AM People of the Parish  
*Plaistow*

#### Monday, April 2 ~ Monday within the Octave of Easter

*Acts 2:14, 22-33; Mt 28:8-15*

8:00 AM Michael Delcore (Month's Mind)  
*Newton*

#### Tuesday, April 3 ~ Tuesday within the Octave of Easter

*Acts 2:36-41; Jn 20:11-18*

8:00 AM June Mullin (Month's Mind)  
*Plaistow*

#### Wednesday, April 4 ~ Wednesday within the Octave of Easter

*Acts 3:1-10; Lk 24:13-35*

6:30 PM Corrine Tozier by Melinda  
*Plaistow*

#### Thursday, April 5 ~ Thursday within the Octave of Easter

*Acts 3:11-26; Lk 24:35-48*

8:00 AM For Michael and his recovery  
*Newton*

#### Friday, April 6 ~ Friday within the Octave of Easter

*Acts 4:1-12; Jn 21:1-14*

*No Mass*

#### Saturday, April 7 ~ Saturday within the Octave of Easter

*Acts 4:13-21; Mk 16:9-15 (Day)*

*Acts 4:32-35; 1 Jn 5:1-6; Jn 20:19-31 (Vigil)*

4:00 PM Thomas Gallagher by May Gallagher  
*Plaistow*

#### Sunday, April 8 ~ Second Sunday of Easter / Sunday of Divine Mercy

*Acts 4:32-35; 1 Jn 5:1-6; Jn 20:19-31*

8:00 AM Joseph Thompson by Janice Bettencourt  
*Newton*

10:00 AM Robert Cooper by his parents  
*Plaistow*

### PRAYER LINE

St. Luke's offers a prayer line as a resource for those seeking prayer assistance. To submit your prayer request please call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 314 or email her at [csmith@stluketheevangelist.net](mailto:csmith@stluketheevangelist.net).

**ST. LUKE'S WEBSITE! <http://stlukenh.org>**

## ✠ FAITH FORMATION & PARISH INFORMATION ✠

### THE GOAL IS LIFELONG FAITH FORMATION

A new model of faith formation has been developing over the last 40 years. We have become accustomed to the classroom-instructional model. This model assumes that it is enough for young people to learn facts about the faith, once a week during their formative years. We all know that it takes much more than this for children to develop a strong foundation in their Catholic faith. The new model emphasizes that the community is at the heart of all faith formation. "Faith is communicated by the community of believers and the meaning of faith is developed by its members out of their history, by their interaction with each other, and in relation to the events that take place in their lives." (C. Ellis Nelson, *Where Faith Begins*, p.10). The life of our church is centered in the events that have the power to educate and transform individuals and the whole community. As Catholics, these include Church year feasts and seasons, sacraments and liturgy, justice and service, prayer and spiritual traditions, and community life. We know that these events are important to us, but we have to constantly learn how to participate in them so that we can understand them fully. Only then will they have the power to change us both personally and as a parish community. Lifelong faith formation is a process of growing in the faith that begins with Baptism. Immersed in the life of the Trinity, we are adopted sons and daughters of God our Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit. Like all human relationships, developing and deepening our relationship with the Trinity happens gradually and over time. Consequently, lifelong faith formation provides opportunities and experiences throughout the entire lifespan to strengthen our relationship and knowledge of God, Jesus and the Spirit; to enhance our understanding of Scripture, Tradition and doctrines of our faith; and to sustain us in living as disciples of Jesus Christ. Catechesis is no longer for children only. If we are to be a church of missionary disciples, we all need to enter into the process of deepening our faith by continually learning and experiencing what it means to be a Catholic Christian.

### RCIA

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** is the process by which people become members of the Roman Catholic Church. If you or someone you know is interested in inquiring about becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at [csmith@stluketheevangelist.net](mailto:csmith@stluketheevangelist.net).

### PARENTS BAPTISM PREPARATION SESSION

The monthly preparation session for infant Baptism will be held after the 10:00 AM Liturgy on **Sunday, April 8, 2018** in the Parish Office living room. All parents planning to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism are welcome. Families wishing to celebrate Baptism in the Church must be registered (according to Church Canon Law) and practicing (attending Sunday Mass) for 3 full months before a Baptism can be scheduled. Church Canon Law also regulates baptismal sponsors (godparents). Sponsors must be at least 16, fully initiated (having received Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation), and be practicing Catholics living Christian lives consistent with the Church's teaching. Please see Fr. Albert with questions.

### ADULT CONFIRMATION

Are you an adult who has been Baptized and received Eucharist, but has not celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation? If you would like to prepare for Confirmation, or if you have questions, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at [csmith@stluketheevangelist.net](mailto:csmith@stluketheevangelist.net).

### ADORATION

We are truly blessed to have times for Adoration of Our Lord in our Parish. We have many people who have made the commitment to spend an hour each week with our Eucharistic Lord, **but** we need more people so there will be at least two people at each hour. We are also looking for people who would be able to substitute.

#### Newton – Thursday

8:30 AM – 8:30 PM

If you can commit to one hour a week in Adoration of our Lord, or if you can be a substitute, please contact Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at [csmith@stluketheevangelist.net](mailto:csmith@stluketheevangelist.net).

**The Church in Plaistow is open all day on Wednesdays for people to stop by and pray before the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle.**

## ✠ PARISH DIRECTORY ✠

Parish Office	382-8324
Parish Prayer Line	382-8324 x 314
St. Vincent de Paul Society	382-8324 x 315
St. Luke's Food Pantry	819-4949
Preschool	382-9783
Presentation of Mary Convent	382-2744

Fr. Albert Tremblay	<a href="mailto:fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net">fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net</a>
Cathy Smith	<a href="mailto:csmith@stluketheevangelist.net">csmith@stluketheevangelist.net</a>
Joyce Szczapa	<a href="mailto:jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net">jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net</a>
Jackie Tremblay	<a href="mailto:jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net">jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net</a>
Thomas Kondel	<a href="mailto:tkondel@stluketheevangelist.net">tkondel@stluketheevangelist.net</a>
Val Barczak	<a href="mailto:mvmbarczak@comcast.net">mvmbarczak@comcast.net</a>
Youth Ministry	<a href="mailto:youth@stluketheevangelist.net">youth@stluketheevangelist.net</a>
Parish Council	<a href="mailto:parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net">parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net</a>



✠ **Parish News ~ Youth News ~ Around The Diocese** ✠



*In Loving Memory*

Please pray for the repose of the souls of:

**Ann Markovich**

**Chief Philip Consentino**

**Ann Sabato**

**PARISH OFFICE CLOSED**

The Parish Office will be closed **on Monday, April 2** and will reopen on **Tuesday, April 3 at 8:30 AM.**

**CONFIRMATION**

Confirmation will take place in our parish on **Sunday, April 22 at the 10:00 AM Mass** in Plaistow. Please pray for our youth as they prepare to receive the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation.



**PASSING ON THE FAITH TO FAMILY & FRIENDS**

**Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Concord, NH  
April 7, 2018 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM**

To register, or for more information, contact Bob Otis at [bobotisalpha@gmail.com](mailto:bobotisalpha@gmail.com).

**CRAFTERS AND ARTISTS WANTED FOR POPULAR CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR**

It's that time of year again when each of us starts making plans for the crafting season ... which fairs?? which weekends??

If you – or someone you know – would like to be considered as a vendor for this year's St. Luke the Evangelist Christmas Craft Fair, **the first jury period ends on May 7<sup>th</sup>**. We expect to be oversubscribed, so don't delay!

Work must be original and executed by the applicants, and may include food and/or beverages (no baked goods).

1<sup>st</sup> – Please save the date of our Parish Fair: **Saturday November 10, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.**

2<sup>nd</sup> – To apply, please contact the Craft Fair at: [stlukenhfair@gmail.com](mailto:stlukenhfair@gmail.com). Applications are also available at <http://stlukenh.org> under "News and Events" or call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324.

We are always looking for new vendors to keep our Fair exciting for our visitors!

Don't miss out on participating in this fun and well-attended event!



The Sanctuary Candle in Holy Angels Church will burn this week in loving memory of **Leo "Bud" Blinn** by his wife Frances and children

**AMAZON SMILE**

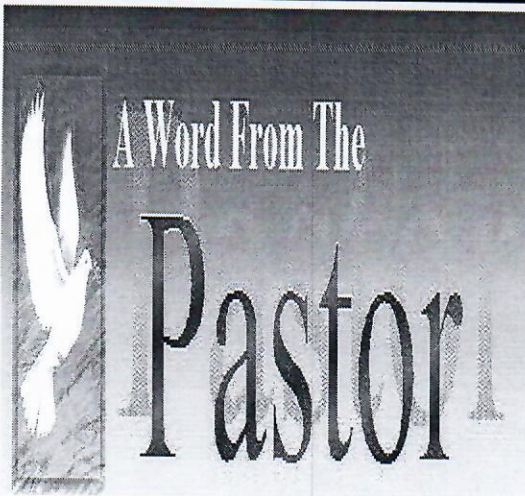
**AmazonSmile.com** is the same market platform as Amazon.com, but with the added benefit of allowing customers to donate 0.5% of the price of items purchased to a charitable organization. Please register today to start shopping and donating at [www.amazon smile.com](http://www.amazon smile.com). For questions, please call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324. Be sure to choose: **St Luke the Evangelist Parish, Plaistow.**

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS - THANK YOU**

The Knights of Columbus would like to thank everyone who attended our St Patty's Celebration on March 10<sup>th</sup>. We enjoyed a wonderful meal, awesome desserts, and great entertainment with the Irish dancing exhibition, Irish music and raffles. The people who attended were very generous and the winner of the 50/50 Raffle donated the money back to the Knights. The net profit from the Celebration will be used by the Knights to support St. Luke's Food Pantry with food baskets at Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, and the remainder of the net profit will be donated to our Parish's Capital Campaign Program.

**WINTER WEATHER CLOSINGS**

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Office, Holy Angels Cemetery Office, Saint Luke Food Pantry and the Parish Liturgical schedule complies with the longstanding inclement weather policy of Saint Luke Religious Education Program and Holy Angels Pre-School-Kindergarten: **If the Timberlane and/or Sanborn regional school districts close because of inclement weather, ALL Parish Offices and Parish programs will be closed or suspended. All activities by any Parish or non-Parish groups will be cancelled for that day/evening on both campuses.** In the event of a weather related closing, the scheduled weekday Liturgy will not be held and the intention (if any) will be moved to a conveniently available date. **Sunday (or Saturday evening) liturgies can never be cancelled, but all are advised to use prudence when deciding to travel to Church during winter storms.**



***"Christ is risen"***

***"Truly, he is risen!"***

From the days of the earliest Christians, this greeting formed the backdrop to countless expressions of new life, joy and freedom that are the fifty days of the Easter season.

For too many of us, today is another holiday, packaged in pastel colors and fake plastic grass

that lines Easter baskets. Like all holidays, Easter passes with Monday's alarm clock. So what might it mean to say to each other - for the next 50 days - that ***Christ is risen and alive among us?***

- It might mean that Easter candy and treats mean more than breaking a fast - those good things are a sign that the sweetness of God's life is here, now, today.

- It might mean that the water, the candles and the feasting of Easter echo far beyond this one day. Those things that are part our worship are meant to refresh us and draw us into the mystery of a Jesus who calls out, *"Do not be afraid!"*

- It might mean that those newly-initiated Catholics among us - adults and children - are called to be living witnesses to all of the ways God changes our life courses - always towards blessing and peace.

- It might mean that all those who come to church today - regular attendees, guests and even those who feel comfortable here only once a year - will be excited, reinvigorated, set on fire to tell the good news of Jesus.

***Dare we say it to each other.... Dare we mean it? Dare we recognize and celebrate and tell of the presence of a living and loving God alive among us?***

Fifty days of *"Alleluia!"* Fifty days of Baptismal Promises renewed and lots of water splashed... kids and old people giggling in church... Fifty days of celebrations - Baptisms, First Eucharist, Renewal of Vows... Fifty days of welcoming family and visitors.... Fifty days of basking in the light that renews the whole tired world.....

***Dare to celebrate?***

***"Christ is risen" - "Truly, he is risen!"***

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

**For Catholics:** As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (Canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

**For our fellow Christians:** We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions that separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one" (JN 17:21).

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily NOT admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (canon 844 § 4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of communion by Christians of these Churches (canon 844 § 3).

**For those not receiving Holy Communion:** All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

**For non-Christians:** We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.



# EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD



## Go Forth

O God, source of all joy,  
your majesty has been proclaimed  
throughout all of creation  
in the dying and rising of your Son, Jesus.  
Today, we celebrate his victory,  
his triumph over darkness and death;  
and rejoice in the gift of new life.  
Like Mary of Magdala,  
grant us joyful hearts that go forth  
announcing salvation.  
Instill within us a deep faith and an  
intense love.  
On this Easter day, filled with wonder,  
help us to know your Son more intimately  
so that, filled with the Holy Spirit,  
we may forever proclaim the enduring  
love poured out on all.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, April 1, 2018

Good News



*Today's Readings: Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37–43; Psalm 118:1–2, 16–17, 22–23; Colossians 3:1–4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b–8; John 20:1–9.* As the trumpets sounded the introduction to the Alleluia at the Easter Vigil one year, Christ's triumph over death and sin was truly present to me; the reality that God's love saves me set in and tears of joy filled my eyes. How could I be loved so much? As the congregation's Alleluia broke the silence of the Triduum, I asked, "How can we not rejoice and sing with all creation at God's marvelous gift?" Think of a time when your Easter joy flooded you. What did you come to know about Christ, about the Resurrection and your life?

The mystery of the Resurrection is hard to comprehend, but this is truly the day that the Lord has made. All

creation shouts with a profound joy in exultation to our loving God, who, in his kindness, gave his Son that we might live. This is the fulfillment of the covenant promised to Noah and Abraham and all our ancestors. Many of us will gather around a table to share a meal with family and friends. Like the Eucharist, keep in mind that this is the feast of joy; a feast where the Church not only gives thanks and praise, but also learns what it means to live in the light. The suffering and challenges of Lent make way to a new life, in which we are called to serve the poor and marginalized and to proclaim the Good News. During the Octave of Easter, strive to eat a festive meal as a family each evening.





## THIS WEEK AT HOME

### Monday, April 2 Good News

Today's Gospel picks up right after the two Marys encounter the angels at the empty tomb. These faithful women hurried to share the news with the others. If we have truly seen and heard the Good News of Jesus' Resurrection, then why wouldn't we also go forth to tell of God's salvation? Imagine yourself meeting these two on their way to share the news. What would they say to you? How would you respond? Write a note of Good News to a friend. *Today's Readings: Acts 2:14, 22–33; Psalm 16:1–2a and 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11; Matthew 28:8–15.*

### Tuesday, April 3 Mary at the Tomb

John's Gospel presents another telling of Mary Magdalene at the tomb. It's a bit more somber than yesterday and you can hear the sorrow that fills Mary's heart. When she finally recognizes Jesus, she goes to tell the others that she has seen him. Like Mary, we must witness to others. Like Peter in Acts, we invite others to hear the story and come to know Jesus more intimately. For your prayer before meals, sing your favorite "Alleluia" in praise to God. *Today's Readings: Acts 2:36–41; Psalm 33:4–5, 18–19, 20 and 22; John 20:11–18.*

### Wednesday, April 4 Hearts Burning

The story of the road to Emmaus captures a scene soon after the Resurrection account. Think about who introduced you to Jesus. When Christ is present in our lives, our hearts should burn with joy. This joy overflows and propels us to share the Good News to the ends of the earth. Break bread at dinner tonight and talk about the joy of the Lord in your life. *Today's Readings: Acts 3:1–10; Psalm 105:1–2, 3–4, 6–7, 8–9; Luke 24: 13–25.*

### Thursday, April 5 Peace Be with You

It's easy to imagine the fear the disciples had immediately after the death of Christ. They believed he was the Savior and yet, he had been killed. The encounters with Christ after the Resurrection help his followers understand more fully God's plan. The Messiah came as a servant who gave himself so that others might have life. In the Gospel, Jesus offers the disciples peace and attempts to calm them. Think about ways you can bear the light of peace in your family and community. *Today's Readings: Acts 3:11–26; Psalm 8:2ab and 5, 6–7, 8–9; Luke 24:35–48.*

### Friday, April 6 Eucharist

In this third encounter with Jesus, the disciples share a meal with him after a night of fishing. As with the Emmaus reading, Jesus is revealed in the breaking of the bread. At every Mass, the Risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking and sharing of bread. The Eucharist provides the nourishment we need to go forth, "fish" for people, and share the news of salvation. Where else do you see Christ present? Invite a friend to lunch today. *Today's Readings: Acts 4:1–12; Psalm 118:1–2 and 4, 22–24, 25–27a; John 21:1–14.*

### Saturday, April 7 Proclamation

In the First Reading, we hear that, despite the elders' warning, Peter and John continue to speak of Jesus. The truth they experienced in the person of Christ is undeniable and filled with love. To continue Christ's work and build up the Kingdom, they are committed to sharing the Good News with any person they encounter. As an Easter people, we must fervently share the Gospel. Make it a point to get to know one of the neophytes in the parish and hear their story of encountering Christ. *Today's Readings: Acts 4:13–21; Psalm 118:1 and 14–15ab, 16–18, 19–21; Mark 16:9–15.*



## ✠ AROUND THE DIOCESE ✠



### **MARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH** Did you know that ALL Catholics are required to be married in the Church as a condition of the validity of their marriage?

Any Catholic married in a civil ceremony (JP) or in any religious ceremony other than a Catholic one (unless specifically excepted by the Bishop) is not living out the Sacrament of Marriage in its fullness according to the teaching of the Church. Contact Father Albert at the parish office for more information.



### **STAY INFORMED WITH FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP NEWS**

The Diocese of Manchester wants to inform Catholics about important public policy matters facing our elected officials. Faithful Citizenship News provides briefs on legislation as well as information about Catholic social teaching on some of today's pressing issues. To read the current issue of Faithful Citizenship News and to subscribe, visit [www.catholicnh.org/fcnews](http://www.catholicnh.org/fcnews).

### **CATHOLIC CHARITIES COUNSELING**

New Hampshire Catholic Charities provides individual, marital, family, and couples' counseling, helping people with a variety of personal difficulties, including: Depression, Stress, Family Conflicts, Relationship Problems, Anxiety, Substance Abuse, Life Adjustment Issues, Grief and Loss. Counseling also helps individuals and families strengthen communication skills in order to build and sustain healthy relationships and live more satisfying lives. A sliding scale fee is offered. Contact Arlene Dody, LCMHC in Salem at 603-893-1971 for more information.

### **HOW TO MAKE A REPORT OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

Child sexual abuse is a crime in the State of New Hampshire and the Church. New Hampshire law requires that anyone who has reason to suspect that a child is being or has been abused or neglected must make a report to the Division for Children, Youth & Families ("DCYF") of the State of New Hampshire, 1-800-894-5533. Any person who suspects or alleges child abuse on the part of a priest, deacon, employee, or volunteer of a parish, school, or institution of the diocese of Manchester is also encouraged to make a report to the Office for Ministerial Conduct, 603-669-3100. Church personnel – clergy, paid employees, and volunteers – have additional reporting requirements if they believe that Church personnel have sexually abused a child. You can learn more about these reporting requirements on the diocesan website at [www.catholicnh.org](http://www.catholicnh.org) or by speaking with our Parish Safe Environment Coordinator, Cathy Smith at 382-8324.

### **The Pregnancy Care Center**

The Pregnancy Care Center is a non-profit organization that offers its confidential services at no cost to its clients. We are committed to promoting the culture of life by assisting expectant parents in the birth and subsequent development of their child during his or her first year of life. We are also committed to helping young people embrace the virtues of chastity and continence as a sign of their Christian dignity.

#### **Main Center**

496 Main St., Haverhill, MA (978-373-5700)

[www.pccnortheast.org](http://www.pccnortheast.org)

Helpline: 866-254-4440



### **MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER**

Don't you and your spouse deserve a beautiful, romantic weekend away together? Get away from all those worldly anxieties and take time to just focus on each other by making a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. Deepen your communication, strengthen your relationship, rekindle your romance, and renew your sacrament by attending the next Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend in New England. For more information, call Ralph & Jane Becker at 1-800-710-9963 or visit [www.wwme.org](http://www.wwme.org).

### **NH COUPLE ENRICHMENT CIRCLE**

Have you attended a Marriage Encounter Weekend? If your answer is yes, you are invited to participate in the NH Couple Enrichment Circle to continue to strengthen your marriage relationship. For more information, contact David and Karen Demers at 617-480-9989 or [ddemers@aviconpartners.com](mailto:ddemers@aviconpartners.com).

### **RETRouvaille...A Lifeline**

Rediscover a loving marriage with a Retrouvaille weekend. If your marriage is tearing the two of you apart, if there is little or no meaningful communication, if you are considering separation or divorce, we believe Retrouvaille can help you. For more information, call 1-800-470-2230 or visit [www.HelpOurMarriage.com](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.com).



### **SUPPORT FOR DIVORCED AND SEPARATED**

Divorce and separation can be painful experiences. Support groups are available to those who are seeking healing, comfort, and empowerment. Visit [www.catholicnh.org/support](http://www.catholicnh.org/support) for a listing of groups.





# The Gospel at Home

## Easter Sunday Gospel: John 20:1–9 2nd Sunday of Easter Gospel: John 20:19–31

Easter Sunday celebrates the core of the Christian faith—that God raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus promised that all who believe in him will have new life with God. The Gospels for both Sundays that are covered in this lesson tell the story of Easter—first through the eyes of Mary Magdalene and next through the eyes of the Apostles, especially Thomas. Note that the Gospels in the children’s lessons include the bridge between these two Gospels: John 20:10–18.

### Exploring the Gospel Message

**Seeds (Preschool):** Easter celebrates the power of Jesus’ great love. Jesus promises that all who believe in him will live forever. Talk with your child about the signs of new life they see in springtime. Make sure you point out that the bunnies, egg hunts, and candy are ways to celebrate the great joy of Easter and the new life Jesus gives.

**Promise (Grades K–1):** Children of this age love to tell stories. This week, your child learned about the greatest story of all—God raising Jesus from the dead. Ask your child to share this wonderful story with the family in his or her own words. Make sure that you find a place to hang the Alleluia butterflies in your home.

**Good News (Grades 2–3):** Your child learned about God raising Jesus to new life. Share all the ways your family celebrates this great feast. Ask each member to tell what he or she likes best about Easter. Ask your child to tell the story from the lesson titled, “The Easter Egg Hunt.” Talk about the symbols that tell of Easter joy—candles, eggs, lilies, butterflies, and the like. Be

sure to attend Easter Mass together.

**Venture (Grades 4–6):** Your child’s class discovered that Easter is also a Baptism feast. The class learned about the experience of Easter Baptism through the eyes of three young people their age who were baptized at the Easter Vigil. Share memories of your child’s baptism. As a family, renew your baptismal promises to be faithful to Christ and the Church and to follow what the Church believes and teaches.

**Visions (Grades 7–8):** Easter is the central festival of the Church year. It celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus and every Christian’s passage through the waters of Baptism to new life in Christ and his Church. The celebration of the Easter Vigil is filled with symbols of the history of God’s People, of their new life, and of the promise of life everlasting. Your young son or daughter is at an age when the experience of the Easter Vigil can help them appreciate their membership in the Church.

### Pray Together

Make a family Easter candle. Decorate a plain white candle with the signs and symbols of Easter. Each evening during the first week of the Easter feast, light the candle and spend a few moments in family prayer. Then renew your baptismal promises by making the Sign of the Cross together.





# Bringing Home the Word

Easter Sunday, The Resurrection of the Lord | April 1, 2018

## Transformed by Christ

By Mary Katharine Deeley

**W**e've all been waiting for this. For six weeks we've focused on letting go of our treasure to help others, taking in a little less food, and reaching out to God a little more, all so that we might in some small way prepare for this day—the greatest celebration of our Church year.

So now, after the alleluias have been sung, the baptismal vows repeated, and the Easter lamb or ham eaten, it's time to ask ourselves, "What was all that preparation for? How have I changed?"

When I was young, I gave up candy or little treats for Lent, but after Easter I happily went back to eating candy and carried on as before. As a young adult, I began using Lent to correct bad habits. I had a little more success keeping those at bay after Easter but, I confess, I didn't see myself as transformed.

"How have I drawn closer to Christ through this Lent? How will I show forth the glory of his resurrection in my life? How will I do these things?" These are good questions for all of us to ask as this Easter winds down.

Once they realized what had happened, the early Christians couldn't keep it to themselves. They preached about Jesus' death and resurrection wherever they went, witnessed to the change he'd made in their lives, and tried to live differently. They invited others to join them. Jesus calls us to do no less.

How have Lent and Easter and the memory of Christ's death and resurrection changed you? How will you live out that change? +

## A Word From Pope Francis

We Christians are all called to communicate this message of resurrection to those we meet, especially to those who suffer, to those who are alone, to those who find themselves in precarious conditions, to the sick, to refugees, to the marginalized.

—Regina Caeli,  
April 10, 2016



## Sunday Readings

### Acts 10:34a, 37–43

He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God

### Col 3:1–4 or 1 Cor 5:6b–8

Think of what is above, not what is on earth.

### Jn 20:1–9 or Mk 16:1–7

Then the other disciple also went in ... and he saw and believed.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## ONE QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

- Do I trust in Christ's power, which I cannot see, more than the problems that I can see?
- Do I believe God is a good Father and only permits that which leads to greater glory for both of us?



# Learning From the Cross

By Richard Rohr O.F.M.

It is no accident that Catholics have made the cross the image we look upon. In the revelation of the cross, great truth becomes obvious: The mystery of the rejection, passion, death, and rising of Jesus is the fuel of history. We are wounded, then transformed.

For the first 1,100 years of Christianity an idea was popular that Jesus needed to die for us. As many saw it, Jesus gave his life as a ransom. That ransom had to be paid—some thought to the devil. Saint Anselm then introduced the notion that it was to the Father that Jesus made satisfaction. By dying, Jesus returned the love God deserved from the human race—the love that Adam, Eve, and their descendants had failed to give.

I believe we are now finally ready to accept that Jesus' sacrifice was to transform us, to reveal a God who is self-giving love. Jesus did not need to die. There was no debt to be paid. Jesus died to reveal the nature of God.

By his death on the cross Jesus does not project the evil of humanity onto anyone. He becomes the forgiving victim of human history. It is for good reason that we have dated history from Christ's entrance onto the human stage. Something is different with Jesus' arrival.

## Winning Message

The perspective of the cross is that of the victim, the rejected one. After we have gone through our own Passover we come out on the other side, not just alive but changed. We learn who it is that really sustains us. We find ourselves living a life that is not our own: "Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). It's a new kind of life we are living, a life of compassion.

For many, the message of the cross seems neither practical nor relevant. We see it as something Jesus did to prove God's love for us. Jesus becomes the heavenly Hercules who endured unimaginable suffering. But that is only half the mystery. What the mystery of the cross reveals is a different way of living, a way of transformation.

The cross is about fighting without becoming a casualty yourself. The cross is about being the victory instead of just winning a victory. It is not about passivity or giving up. It is a way of winning that tries to bring your opponent along with you. It is refusing the simplistic win-loss scenario and holding out for a possible win-win. The cross is refusing to hate or needing to humiliate the other, which only continues the pattern that many have always followed.

## Jesus' Calling Power

This is why the cross has turned around history and given us a new story. The cross utterly reframes humanity, forcing us to redefine success and victory. The way of the cross resets the agenda to the way of nonviolence.

When we stand in the mystery of Jesus we can never stand righteously. We have taken on the mind of Christ. We preach Jesus but, more important, we become Jesus. We recognize that Jesus has calling power over us. In return, Jesus asks that we follow him on our journey of transformation. Your job and my job is to be Jesus, yet I admit I don't know how to be Jesus. He has to do it in me, through me. All I can do, all we can do, is get out of the way and let the mystery of the cross transform us. +



Lord, your resurrection pierces the darkness of doubt and fear.  
May the power of your resurrection help me to deepen my love for you and all people.

*From Mindful Meditations for Every Day of Lent and Easter,*


Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

April 2–7, 2018

Monday of Easter Week:  
Acts 2:14, 22–33 / Mt 28:8–15  
Tuesday of Easter Week:  
Acts 2:36–41 / Jn 20:11–18  
Wednesday of Easter Week:  
Acts 3:1–10 / Lk 24:13–35

Thursday of Easter Week:  
Acts 3:11–26 / Lk 24:35–48  
Friday of Easter Week:  
Acts 4:1–12 / Jn 21:1–14  
Saturday of Easter Week:  
Acts 4:13–21 / Mk 16:9–15

Bringing Home  
the Word   
April 1, 2018

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# Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy) | April 8, 2018

## Life Reborn

By Mary Katharine Deeley

In the first few days after our first child was born, I wasn't conscious of time. I'd sit still and look at this miracle of life, knowing that I loved her with all my heart and that our lives would never be the same. I'd get to the end of the day and wonder where the time had gone. And when she was married last year, I remembered those days like they were yesterday.

Something like that is happening now, but the first week of Easter is more than a recollection of the empty tomb. Each day's Gospel reading refers to appearances of the risen Christ to his disciples. In this way we mark the "new creation" brought about by Christ's resurrection.

For many of us, the week was another round of work or school. Our busyness might have kept us from giving much thought to the feast we just celebrated. But in our spiritual lives, time has stood still for a little while so we might ponder this miracle of life. It's a reminder that we're born new in this moment, an invitation to savor the experience and allow ourselves to be changed by it.

In today's reading, St. Paul gives us a glimpse of what life reborn looked like for the new Christian community. There was unity of heart and mind and generosity toward those who were in need. After the resurrection, their lives would never be the same.

The Church takes its time with Easter so that, no matter how old we get, we'll remember it like it was yesterday and live accordingly. +

## A Word From Pope Francis

Mercy warms the heart and makes it sensitive to the needs of brothers and sisters with sharing and participation. Thus, mercy requires everyone to be instruments of justice, reconciliation, and peace. Let us never forget that mercy is the keystone in the life of faith, and the concrete form by which we make Jesus' resurrection visible.

—Divine Mercy Sunday,  
April 23, 2017



## Sunday Readings

**Acts 4:32–35**

The community of believers was of one heart and mind.

**1 Jn 5:1–6**

And the victory that conquers the world is our faith.

**Jn 20:19–31**

[Jesus said,] "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do I find security in the love of another in a healthy way? Is it the fruit of giving and not possessing?
- Is my strongest foundation in the love and mercy of Jesus?





# God's Extravagant Mercy

By Bishop Robert F. Morneau

There is a scene in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that addresses forgiveness. The king, Claudius, has murdered his brother, married his brother's widow, and stolen the crown. In his soliloquy, Claudius reveals what is transpiring in his tortured soul. The king knows that his fault is past but prayer does not serve him well since the effects of his crime—the stealing of the crown, the sinful fulfillment of his ambition, and his adulterous relationship with the queen—all remain. He senses that his murder cannot be forgiven as long as the effects of the murder remain.

Our faith tells us that God's mercy is always available through the salvation gained for us in Christ. We need but turn to God with sincere intent and resolve, confess our sins, and receive divine mercy. No one is excluded from this grace. God's will is that all be saved.

What is blasphemous, what blocks God's extravagant mercy pouring into our souls is not any particular sin that is unforgivable. Rather, the blasphemy happens when we refuse to forgo the effects of our sins (power, pride, possessions) and are unwilling to reform our lives with a sincere

purpose of amendment. It is not that sin is unforgivable, that God withholds divine mercy. Rather, it is an obstinate disposition that hardens the heart, preventing the rain of divine mercy from penetrating the soul.

## Mercy Accepted, Rejected

In the Garden, Peter spoke words of betrayal, denying that he knew Jesus. Subsequently, Peter acknowledged his sin, wept bitterly, and was forgiven. With humility and courage, Peter faced his failure. We know the rest of the story.

For just thirty pieces of silver Judas also betrayed his master. Unable or unwilling to accept Jesus' merciful gaze, this disciple took his own life.

Mercy was afforded to both; it was accepted by only one. In some way Judas got stuck in himself and could not believe that he still retained infinite human worth. His sin shattered his sense of dignity and led to self-disdain.

Saint Augustine, in speaking of sin, describes it as *curvatus in se*, that is, turned in on oneself. Sin does exactly that. It refuses to breathe the fresh air of God's mercy. It suffocates us, cutting us off from God and others. There is a disconnect, a partial or total severing of the branch from the vine of God's life.

Jesus came precisely to reconcile us to God, to one another, and to ourselves.

## Appropriating God's Message

In another Shakespearean play, *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo sees his beloved at some distance and says to himself: "O it is my love. O that she knew she were." Juliet doesn't know it! God says to us, his beloved daughters and sons: "O you are my love. Would that you knew you were!"

Could the "unforgivable" sin against the Holy Spirit be our refusal, upon hearing the message of God's love in Jesus, to appropriate this message and let it shape our lives? Joseph Campbell once suggested that the unpardonable sin was "the sin of inadvertence, of not being alert, not quite awake." The spiritual life is about staying awake to the infinite love and mercy of God given us in Jesus.

Though Shakespeare as a dramatist is not a "religious" writer, his plays provide clues for understanding the great mysteries of sin and forgiveness. For these clues, we should be grateful. +

***Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven" (Luke 12:10).***



Risen Lord, you fulfilled your promise by rising from the dead.

Help me to practice what I preach..

From Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost,

Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

April 9–14, 2018

Monday, Annunciation of the Lord:  
Is 7:10–14; 8:10 / Heb 10:4–10 / Lk 1:26–38


Tuesday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 4:32–37 / Jn 3:7b–15

Wednesday—St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr: 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, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 6:1–7 / Jn 6:16–21

Bringing Home  
the Word   
April 8, 2018

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# Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday of Easter | April 15, 2018

## Putting Our Fears to Rest

By Mary Katharine Deeley

During a particularly difficult period at one place I worked, I would come home at night and rehash conversations and events, wondering whether the outcome would have been different if I'd said or done something else.

I wonder whether the apostles asked themselves the same kinds of questions after the crucifixion. "Should we have done something differently? Could we have prevented this somehow?" Perhaps they locked the door because they were afraid they'd be put to death too.

When we're in a bad situation, sometimes all we want to do is hide. It's a child's response: If I don't look at it, maybe it will go away. But the locked door was no barrier, and Jesus came and stood in their midst. Rather than ridicule their fear, he gently put it to rest: "Peace be with you." The more Jesus talked, the more they heard, and they came to know that the peace of the Lord is not like the world's peace.

It's not a temporary measure that will only give way to more turmoil. Jesus calmly and lovingly put their fears to rest. It wasn't that the world was suddenly going to be welcoming; rather, they would be confident in the new life that was in them and in the grace Christ alone can give.

Jesus does this for us as well. He walks through the locked doors of our hearts and blesses us with peace. The more we listen to Jesus' words, the more we can understand and witness to his truth.

Is the Lord with you today? +

## A Word From Pope Francis

Jesus tells us that the path to encountering him is to find his wounds. We find Jesus' wounds in carrying out works of mercy, giving to ... the body of your wounded brother, because he is hungry ... because he is incarcerated, because he is in the hospital. These are the wounds of Jesus today.

—Homily, feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, July 3, 2013



## Sunday Readings

**Acts 3:13–15, 17–19**

The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead;

**1 Jn 2:1–5a**

He is expiation for our sins, and ... for those of the whole world.

**Lk 24:35–48**

[Jesus said,] "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead."

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### ONE QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

- Is there an area of my heart and life where I need Jesus' healing?
- Am I confident in God's power to raise me up out of my weakness?



# Transformed by Easter

By Richard Rohr, O.F.M.

Christian history reaches its crescendo in the resurrection. The risen Jesus is the final revelation of the heart of God—a God who teaches love rather than hate, forgiveness rather than blame, nonviolence rather than violence.

Recall Jesus' encounters with his disciples after his resurrection. He came to his followers with whom he had spent three years, the people closest to him who had nevertheless rejected, betrayed, and abandoned him. Following his resurrection Jesus had the opportunity to chastise them. And yet, in all four Gospel accounts we see that the risen Jesus neither berates nor blames his disciples. Indeed, Peter, who had betrayed him three times, is given three chances to say "I love you" to his master.

There is nothing to fear in the risen Christ. We have in him the perfect icon of a God who is safe. We have a God who does not blame, punish, threaten, or dominate. We have a God who breathes forgiveness. The entire biblical tradition has been moving to this moment where God is identified with universal forgiveness.

Jesus' resurrection tells us that there is no victory through domination. There is no such thing as triumph by force. By his life, death, and resurrection Jesus stops the cycle of violence, challenging the notion of dominating power. He invites

us to relational or spiritual power, where we are not just changed but transformed.

## Redemptive Forgiveness

Many of us identify more easily with the judging God we may have encountered in childhood: the one who knows our every sin and metes out punishments, the one we must attempt to placate and please. Often, we are more comfortable living with a fearsome God than one whose love is boundless. But by his life, death, and resurrection Jesus challenges us to new heights of redemptive forgiveness.

Most of us cannot go for long without thinking a judgmental or accusatory thought about others. So often, there is someone we're judging, accusing, blaming. To live in the good, to live in the love, to live without a need to judge—that's major surgery! None of us reaches that point early in life, but when we're there we know we're transformed. We're free. We are at one with the risen Jesus.

Once we have a personal experience in our own life of the risen Christ upholding, loving, and freeing us, then we have nothing to fear. That's how secure Christ makes us, because we have a center point. We have received the gift of the Spirit.

## Divine Lure

During a retreat, my fellow retreatants

and I were asked to list the adjectives each of us would use to describe Jesus. My list included words such as compassionate, self-confident, humble, forgiving. When our leader brought us back together as a group she suggested that the qualities we had identified represented not so much what Jesus was like, but what each of us wanted in ourselves. Jesus is the divine lure who invites us forward in our humanity, enticing us into these virtues by his own full living of them. The qualities I had on my list are indeed qualities Jesus possessed. But the reason we want to embrace them is because Jesus has set the standard, the ideal for humanity.

In Jesus we see the divine being who is also the perfect human being. Jesus comes in human form to show us the face of God, who is eternally compassionate and joyous, standing with us in our sufferings and joys. As Christians, our vocation is to unite with Christ crucified and risen. +

## PRAYER

Risen Lord, your resurrection revealed to the world the hope and promise of new life. Help me to be a faithful, hopeful, loving presence to all people.

From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*,

Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

April 16–21, 2018

Monday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 6:8–15 / Jn 6:22–29

Tuesday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 7:51–8:1a / Jn 6:30–35

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 8:1b–8 / Jn 6:35–40

Thursday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 8:26–40 / Jn 6:44–51

Friday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 9:1–20 / Jn 6:52–59

Saturday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 9:31–42 / Jn 6:60–69





# Bringing Home the Word

Fourth Sunday of Easter | April 22, 2018

## Our Good Shepherd

By Mary Katharine Deeley

**M**y mother lived for a time on a ranch in Texas. The ranch had cattle and sheep. My mother told me that sheep are pretty dumb and need a lot of care. She had great respect for the ranch hands who patiently got them out to pasture and then rounded them up when it was time to come in. Left to their own devices, she said, sheep would be easy prey for coyotes, foxes, and bobcats that roam the hill country.

Sheep were important for many families living in first-century Palestine as well. They provided food, clothing, milk, and a source of income.

A good shepherd was worth his weight in gold, because he spent his days with the sheep, leading them to pasture, protecting them from harm, and finding them when they got lost.

Shepherds may not have had a high social status, but it would have been hard to live without them.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, does all these things for his flock, and then goes even further: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

The ranch hands my mother talked about would have grieved over a dead sheep but wouldn't have died trying to save it. They made sure the sheep were watered and fed, but they didn't make the sheep's lives more abundant.

But we have abundant life because Jesus laid down his life for us. He is our Good Shepherd. Can we ask anything more?

Is the Lord with you today? +

## Sunday Readings

**Acts 4:8–12**

[Peter said,] "He is the stone rejected by you ... which has become the cornerstone."

**1 Jn 3:1–2**

Beloved, we are God's children now;

**Jn 10:11–18**

[Jesus said,] "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

## A Word From Pope Francis

The grave environmental crisis facing our world demands an ever greater sensitivity to the relationship between human beings and nature. We have a responsibility to pass on the beauty of nature in its integrity to future generations, and an obligation to exercise a just stewardship of the gifts we have received.

—Visit to Kenya,  
November 25, 2015



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- Jesus, how well do I imitate your love by sacrificing for others?
- Do I seek salvation, peace, and healing from Jesus?



# Treasuring Sabbath Time

By Kathy Coffey

*Third Commandment: "Remember the sabbath day—keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8).*

We've all gotten a Great Idea in the shower, on the bus, at the gym, or staring into space. We might suddenly remember where we left the keys, decide what's for dinner, or solve a problem that's been annoying us. The mind relishes empty spaces, becoming more creative in decluttered stretches.

If that is true in daily life, the Third Commandment shows how rest is even more important for our spiritual lives. The root meaning of the word *sabbath* is "to separate." It marks the end of one week and the start of another, or the close of work and the beginning of play.

As soon as a good directive like this is given, people exaggerate it. Some folks really ran amok with this one, even to the extreme of forbidding doing good on the Sabbath. Religious authorities spun into a frenzy when Jesus healed on the Sabbath. Clear-sighted as always, he reminded us: "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27). In other words, if it helps you live a more fulfilled life, do it. If you're going through contortions to keep a law and losing compassion in the process, forget it.

How delightful when the commandments, carved solemnly on stone and written in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, usually a grave document, both tell us to relax, lighten up.

## Ready, Set, Go

For many of us, Sunday has become the "junk drawer" of the week: We cram in all the errands and duties that can't get done because of work pressures every other day. Retailers are happy to accommodate, and Sunday becomes Shopping Day.

What's wrong with this? It's not the greatest moral evil, but we could do better. In this pattern, we lose sight of what we were made to be: God's delight. We forget that we have abundant blessings and should take time to savor them, awash in gratitude.

The original meaning of the Sabbath was the day set aside for Israel to honor its covenant with God. Today, one way to observe it is with Sunday Mass. Sabbath time also reminds us that God is eager to have our attention and quick to pour out graces. When we clear our calendars and minds, we remember who we are, just as if we are making a retreat.

And if we don't? If we keep cranking out work and churning out errands, we look like responsible, tax-paying citizens. But by giving up quiet Sabbath time, we dehumanize ourselves and lose sight of what's most important. We were all made for loving God and each other. Other accomplishments are fine, but don't measure up to that.

## Clearing Space for God

Some people may protest: "But I'm working three jobs to feed my family! Where am I supposed to fit in Sabbath?" For those who are this tightly scheduled, maybe it becomes an hour before the kids wake up or after they go to bed. Maybe it's time in the evening without television or computer. There are as many ways to keep holy the Sabbath as there are people. In such times we remember we are God's beloved, and no matter what life throws at us, nothing else is as fundamentally important.

Modeling a sense of Sabbath is especially important for parents. What do we want our children to remember? Mornings when the family snuggled in pajamas, built blanket caves, held tickling contests, and cooked something delicious? Or the fact that Mom and Dad dourly trooped off to work like robots? +

## PRAYER

Risen Lord, you are the Good Shepherd who watches over us and protects us from all harm. Give me the courage to be a loving shepherd and advocate for the poor and vulnerable.

*From Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost,*

Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

April 23–28, 2018

Monday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 11:1–18 / Jn 10:1–10


Tuesday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 11:19–26 / Jn 10:22–30

Wednesday, St. Mark, Evangelist:  
1 Pt 5:5b–14 / Mk 16:15–20

Thursday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 13:13–25 / Jn 13:16–20

Friday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 13:26–33 / Jn 14:1–6

Saturday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 13:44–52 / Jn 14:7–14

Bringing Home  
the Word   
April 22, 2018

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# Bringing Home the Word

Fifth Sunday of Easter | April 29, 2018

## We Are the Branches

By Mary Katharine Deeley

**M**any enduring images of Church come to us from the New Testament. One is Paul's image: "The Body of Christ." Another comes from our Gospel today: "The Vine and the Branches."

Both are metaphors of living organisms. For both, Christ is the most important element. Christ is the head of the Body and the symbol of authority and purpose. Christ is the Vine that brings life and nutrients to the branches that produce fruit. Anyone who has visited a winery knows the significance of the vine. If it's cut, the branches wither and the crop fails.

Why is it important to have both images?

John's image reminds us that the Church can't survive if it's separated from Christ. We can live only if we remain in Christ so that the power of grace can continue to infuse us with everything we need to bear the fruit of love, compassion, and mercy.

Paul's metaphor keeps us humble. Regardless of how this Body is structured, Christ is the true head; we are to submit ourselves in obedience to him regardless of how important we are in this world. We also know we belong as a community to Christ and in communion with one another.

There are many parts to the Body and many clusters of fruit on the vine. To leave either is to separate ourselves from Christ.

That's why praying together each week is so important. It reminds us who we are and to whom we belong.

Let us offer praise for this vine and for this Body into which our baptism has called us. +

## A Word From Pope Francis

The Holy Spirit, in the variety of his gifts, unites us and enables us to contribute to the building up of the Church in holiness.... Let us ask the Lord to help us to take an ever more active part in the Church's life and mission.

—General audience,  
June 26, 2013



## Sunday Readings

### Acts 9:26–31

The Church ... was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers.

### 1 Jn 3:18–24

Love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

### Jn 15:1–8

[Jesus said,] "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower."

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## ONE QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

- Do I find ways to regularly read and hear the word of God?
- What symbols would sincerely represent the way I live my life?





# John's Gospel: Our Gift

By Bishop Robert F. Morneau

One of the treasures of the Church is the Gospel of John. In this work we are given a unique insight into the life of Jesus. Moreover, we are invited to enter into intimate union with Christ, at a personal level and as members of a community.

In the John's Gospel we learn the concept of "blessedness," what it means to live a Christian life. To the extent that we respond to our fourfold baptismal call, we will experience the blessedness John articulates.

Through the other evangelists—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—we see Jesus as someone who is earthly, but also the very presence of God in history. The Gospel of John, on the other hand, presents Jesus as the preexistent one. In becoming human, Jesus reveals the inner workings of divine life. That life is offered to us, and salvation consists precisely in our participation in it. To the extent that we accept Jesus into our lives, we enter into the mystery of salvation.

Through our baptism into the life of Jesus, we are called to maturity, holiness, community, and service. John's Gospel articulate those calls, and provides insights into living them. Responding to the call is the way to a blessed, happy life.

## Four Roadmaps

*The call to maturity!* The mature disciple

is a person of faith. Faith is the opening of our lives to God revealed in Jesus. Everything depends on faith, on our submission to Jesus and his word. Maturity is a lifelong process; faith demands ongoing development. The reading and rereading of the Gospel of John helps us grow into the full stature of Christ.

*The call to holiness!* Within Catholic tradition, holiness is the perfection of love. John speaks eloquently of the grace of love. In the Last Supper discourse, Jesus speaks profoundly of the values of friendship, intimacy, and love. This love points to union with God and unity among us. The tenderness and force of God's love is overwhelming. And the test? To lay down one's life for others.

It is in John's Gospel that Jesus uses the metaphor of the vine and the branches. This image captures the essence of holiness. To the degree that we are united to Jesus, the Vine, then we the branches, can bear fruit that will last forever. Holiness is that union, that oneness which sustains us on our journey.

*The call to community!* One characteristic of early Christians was the insistence on Jesus' command that its members love one another. Another feature was dedication of the community to the person of Jesus. His vision and values were their compass. They came together because of an outside enemy, the "world," which stood for all that was not good.

*The call to service!* John depicts Jesus as someone for others. In the Cana miracle of water turned to wine, in the healing of the royal official's son, in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, in the washing of the feet at the Last Supper, in the resurrection accounts—Jesus is serving the physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of the people.

## Simple Treasure

A great treasure, this Gospel of John. Though complex in many ways, there is an underlying simplicity: Jesus, the preexistent Word of God, is for and with us. We are invited into a life of deep friendship and called to share the gift of light, love, and life with others. God dwells within us; we are temples of the Holy Spirit. Thus, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me" (14:1). +

## PRAYER

Risen Jesus, your abiding presence gives us hope.  
Help me to be a loving presence to others.

From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*,

Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

April 30–May 5, 2018

Monday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 14:5–18 / Jn 14:21–26


Tuesday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 14:19–28 / Jn 14:27–31a

Wednesday, St. Athanasius, Bishop  
and Doctor of the Church:  
Acts 15:1–6 / Jn 15:1–8

Thursday, Sts. Philip and James,  
Apostles: 1 Cor 15:1–8 / Jn 14:6–14

Friday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 15:22–31 / Jn 15:12–17

Saturday, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 16:1–10 / Jn 15:18–21

Bringing Home  
the Word   
April 29, 2018

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