



Bringing Home the Word

Fifth Sunday of Lent | April 2, 2017

Newly Alive

By Mary Katharine Deeley

When I was a child, I saw a picture of Lazarus at the tomb, his face completely bound by a cloth. It scared me badly—the figures looking toward Lazarus were pulling away in fear or disgust. Unable to see his face, they lost any sense of his humanity. Without eyes, nose, and mouth, Lazarus had become the stuff of nightmares.

Much later in life, I reflected on that picture and realized that death—both spiritual and physical—is like that. It robs us of our humanity. We become faceless, unknown to all but those who loved us.

Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 37:12–14

“I am going to open your graves; I will...bring you back to the land of Israel.”

Romans 8:8–11

“But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness.”

John 11:1–45

“So Jesus said to them, ‘Untie him and let him go.’”

If we’ve committed grave sin, we might even lose those human relationships. But a second look at the picture revealed the steady figure of Jesus holding the raised Lazarus in his gaze. He didn’t turn away in fear. Rather, he continued to look at him with love, as a friend.

Jesus, the face of love, is the only one who can confront the two things that make us faceless, that take our humanity from us: sin and death. Sin kills the soul and has the capacity to make us unrecognizable to others. Death kills the body and can take us from our loved ones.

Jesus calls us forth from each of these. From sin, he calls us to conversion; from death, he calls us to eternal life. If we listen carefully, we can hear him call us by name to “come out.” And then, with infinite love, he will ask those who love us to untie us and let us go. †

Jesus confronts the two things that make us faceless: sin and death.

A Word From Pope Francis

Whoever experiences [the joy of the Resurrection] becomes a witness of the Resurrection, for in a certain sense he himself has risen, she herself has risen. He or she is then capable of carrying a “ray” of light of the Risen One into various situations: to those that are happy, making them more beautiful by preserving them from egoism; to those that are painful, bringing serenity and hope.

—*Regina Caeli*,
St. Peter’s Square,
Easter Monday,
April 21, 2014



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Has sin ever made you unrecognizable to your loved ones, even for a moment?
- Have you ever struggled to look beyond another’s sin and minister to his or her humanity?



The Agony in the Garden

By Ron Rolheiser, OMI

We tend to misunderstand “the passion of Jesus.” Spontaneously we think of it as the pain of the physical sufferings he endured on the road to his death. Partly that misses the point. Jesus’ passion should be understood as *passio*, passivity, a certain submissive helplessness he had to undergo in counterdistinction to his power and

activity. His passion begins in the Garden of Gethsemane immediately after he has celebrated the Last Supper. The Scriptures tell us that he went out into the Garden with his disciples to pray for the strength he needed to face the ordeal that was now imminent.

It’s significant that this agony take place in a garden. In archetypal literature

(Scripture, among other things, is this kind of literature), a garden is not a place to pick cucumbers and onions. It is the place of delight, the place of love, the place to drink wine, the place where lovers meet in the moonlight, the place of intimacy. It’s Jesus, the lover, the one who calls us to intimacy and delight with him who sweats blood in the Garden.

Jesus’ agony is that of the lover who’s been misunderstood and rejected in a way that is mortal and humiliating. It’s his entry into the darkest black hole of human existence, the black hole of bitter rejection, aloneness, humiliation, and helplessness. †

Source: *Daybreaks*, © 2004, Liguori Publications

Space for God

By Edward Sri, PhD

In the Bible, people fast when expressing repentance (Psalm 69:15), making a petition to God (Ezra 8:23), or seeking God’s will (Acts 13:1–2). We also fast to grow in self-control, training the will to deny ourselves little things so we can make bigger sacrifices when necessary. When we abstain from the enjoyments of this world, we come more in touch with a deeper hunger nothing in this world can satisfy.

Saint John of the Cross teaches us the soul has deep caverns that only the infinite God can fill. Yet when we feed our stomach whenever it’s hungry, busy ourselves with constant activity, and amuse ourselves on screens, we become distracted from our heart’s deepest

longing—God. No matter how much savory food we eat, how much money we make, how many “likes” we receive, or how much fun we have, we are constantly longing for something more.

Stepping back and abstaining from certain enjoyments in life helps free us from being enslaved to them and gives God room to draw out our deeper desire for him. It reminds us of the profound truth St. Augustine expressed in his famous prayer to God: “You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You, O God.” But fasting does not just apply to food. In the Catholic tradition, a similar pursuit of moderation has been applied to other things in life that aren’t necessary, such as conversation, rest, media, and entertainment.

Faced with constant noise and visual distraction—incessant beeps, vibrations, images, and updates—it’s hard for us to

truly encounter God and the people God has placed in our lives. Pope Francis and other recent popes have encouraged us to limit not just our intake of food and drink but also our use of the internet, television, and social media. Fasting from various forms of media can help cultivate more silence in our lives so we can hear God and see the people right around us. †

Source: *Liguorian*, © February 2016, Liguori Publications



I will pray for a spirit of hope;
I will fast from apathy; I will be
more hopeful, loving, and
compassionate to the
people around me.

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 3–8

Monday	Lenten Weekday: Dn 13:1–9, 15–17, 19–30, 33–62 / Jn 8:1–11
Tuesday	Lenten Weekday: Nm 21:4–9 / Jn 8:21–30
Wednesday	Lenten Weekday: Dn 3:14–20, 91–92, 95 / Jn 8:31–42

Thursday	Lenten Weekday: Gn 17:3–9 / Jn 8:51–59
Friday	Lenten Weekday: Jer 20:10–13 / Jn 10:31–42
Saturday	Lenten Weekday: Ez 37:21–28 / Jn 11:45–56



Bringing Home the Word

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion | April 9, 2017

Come to Save Us

By Mary Katharine Deeley

From the joyful procession into Jerusalem, through the passion and death of Jesus, to the sealing of the tomb by the guards, Passion Sunday—as it is sometimes called—prepares us for the coming Holy Week.

The story draws us in. We are the ones who hail Jesus as the one who is to come. We pray the familiar words of Psalm 118 that call on God to save us. (The familiar word *Hosanna* is actually a plea for salvation from God.) When we hear the passion narrative, we become

the disciples at the Last Supper and are unable to stay awake in Gethsemane. We are the crowd who cries out for Barabbas (a play on words: the name means “Son of the Father”) and calls for Jesus’ crucifixion.

This is the most important thing that has ever happened to us. This is the story of the fulfillment of God’s promise to save us. We will meditate and pray on this mystery all week: God so loved the world, he sent us his only Son.

Paul reminds us that not only did Jesus not deem equality with God something to be grasped, he did not deem human beings creatures to be despised. He became one of us to lead us back into right relationship with God. On Good Friday, we will hear John’s version of the passion and remind ourselves again of the wonder that someone might give up his life for us. There was nothing we could do to earn God’s love, nor could we make God do this. †

Sunday Readings

Matthew 21:1–11 (Procession)
Isaiah 50:4–7 (first reading)

“Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.”

Philippians 2:6–11

“He humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Matthew 26:14—27:66

“We remember that this impostor while still alive said, ‘After three days I will be raised up.’”

This is the most important thing that has ever happened to us. This is the story of the fulfillment of God’s promise to save us.

A Word From Pope Francis

Jesus has awakened great hopes, especially in the hearts of the simple, the humble, the poor, the forgotten, those who do not matter in the eyes of the world. He understands human sufferings, he has shown the face of God’s mercy, and he has bent down to heal body and soul. This is Jesus. This is his heart which looks to all of us, to our sicknesses, to our sins. The love of Jesus is great.

Homily,
Palm Sunday,
St. Peter’s Square,
March 24, 2013



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What will you do during this Holy Week to express your thankfulness for God’s love?
- How do you hail Jesus as the “one who is to come”?



Our Ignorance of God's Love

By Ron Rolheiser, OMI

“Forgive them Father for they know not what they do!” Jesus said this

of his executioners. But is it true? A lot indicates that they were far from innocent. How could Jesus' executioners not know what they were doing?

The people who crucified Jesus didn't know what they were doing because they didn't know how much they were loved. That is the blindness and the real ignorance of the executioners. Far too often we crucify others and ourselves because of ignorance because we feel unloved. For this reason we are harsh in our judgments of others and unaware of

why we ourselves are prone to weakness and to compromise our dignity. We are judgmental and weak because we don't know any better.

The type of ignorance that allowed sincere people to crucify Jesus can also explain why so many good, sincere people today are massively blind, communally and individually, to the economic and social demands made by our faith. The real reason we can live so comfortably as the gap between the rich and the poor widens is because we don't know how much we are loved by God, not because we are bad and without conscience. We feel unloved and so we feel we have to take life for ourselves.

Small wonder we settle for second-best or for almost anything else that promises to fill an aching void inside us. Jesus, no doubt, is looking at us and saying: “Forgive them Father for they know not what they do!” Too few of us, at any personal level, have ever heard God say to us: “I love you!” Too few of us have ever felt what Jesus must have felt when, at his baptism, he heard his Father say: “You are my beloved child, in you I take delight!” Indeed, most of us have never heard another human being saying this to us, let alone God.

There is a place inside us, a place we are rarely aware of, where each of us is being touched and held unconditionally in love by God. Jesus' executioners acted in a darkness that came from never having had that experience. †

Source: *Daybreaks*, © 2004, Liguori Publications

Radical, Imperfect Disciples Are We

By Julie Donovan Massey and Bridget Burke Ravizza

Jesus' preaching teaches us two important lessons about discipleship we should recall during Lent. First, the call to follow Jesus is radical and risky. Second, Jesus calls imperfect people to be disciples.

In all four Gospels, we see that the call to follow Jesus is demanding, uncomfortable, and risky. Why? Because when Jesus calls disciples, he asks for total commitment. He invites them to

wholeheartedly let go of whatever is holding them back from following God.

What might be holding you back from authentic radical discipleship? Perhaps it is an inordinate concern for success at work. Perhaps it is too much time spent thinking about possessions. Or are you clinging to a grudge, refusing to let go of anger and offer forgiveness and seek reconciliation? Do you make judgments about others to make yourself feel safe and superior? Could you let go of self-righteousness to actively build a community in which everyone feels accepted?

Recognizing God's unconditional love shown in Jesus frees us to strive to do our best, knowing we need not prove our perfection to earn God's love.

We are challenged because we can no longer use our weaknesses as an excuse to do nothing or to give up. If each of us is called to be a disciple, we must seek holiness, knowing we are, already, radically loved by God. †

Source: *Liguorian*, © March 2011, Liguori Publications



Lord, you are the model of nonviolence and unconditional love. May your example inspire me to be a more loving and forgiving person in life.


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

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 10-15

Monday	Holy Week: Is 42:1-7 / Jn 12:1-11
Tuesday	Holy Week: Is 49:1-6 / Jn 13:21-33, 36-38
Wednesday	Holy Week: Is 50:4-9a / Mt 26:14-25

Holy Thursday	Ex 12:1-8, 11-14 / 1 Cor 11:23-26 / Jn 13:1-15
Good Friday	Is 52:13-53:12 / Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9 / Jn 18:1-19:42
Holy Saturday	Easter Vigil: 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 / Mt 28:1-10

Bringing Home
the **Word** 
April 9, 2017

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Bringing Home the Word

The Resurrection of the Lord | April 16, 2017

Nothing? Or Everything?

By Mary Katharine Deeley

No angel.
No trumpet blasts.

No remarkable glow of light.

The only thing Mary saw was a stone that had been moved from its place at the entrance of Jesus' tomb. The only thing Peter and the beloved disciple saw were burial cloths set aside, the one for Jesus' head in a separate place.

Some have pointed out that this tells us only that a body that was supposed to be in the grave was not. It does not "prove" Jesus rose from the dead. But

there was an empty tomb—there was nothing when there should have been something.

We preach Christ risen from the dead on Easter. Is it foolishness? The whole of creation began in mystery—God took emptiness and created the world. Our new life begins in mystery, too. It starts with an empty tomb. God goes on to create stars, planets, animals, and human beings. Jesus, who had taught in the synagogues, healed the sick, and raised the dead, opens our eyes and hearts little by little and shows us that the empty tomb means abundant life for all who believe—a new relationship with God.

A little later in the day, Mary encounters Jesus in the garden, though she doesn't know him at first. When she understands it is Jesus, she touches the mystery that is life. When Jesus appears to the disciples, nail marks still visible, he wishes them peace and invites them and all of us into new life with God.

We've told this story for almost two thousand years, and it has never worn out or grown stale. What other evidence do we need? †

Sunday Readings

Acts 10:34a, 37–43

"Everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name."

**Colossians 3:1–4 or
1 Corinthians 5:6b–8**

"Let us celebrate the feast...with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

**John 20:1–9 or
Matthew 28:1–10**

"For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead."

*Our new life begins
with an empty tomb.*

A Word From Pope Francis

I would like it to enter every heart, for it is there that God wants to sow this Good News: Jesus is risen, there is hope for you, you are no longer in the power of sin, of evil! Love has triumphed, mercy has been victorious! The mercy of God always triumphs!

Urbi Et Orbi Message,
Easter, March 31, 2013



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Are you fully convinced Jesus rose from the dead?
- How will you live the resurrection in your own life this Easter season?



Resurrection Power

By Ron Rolheiser, OMI

The resurrection is not just something that happened to Jesus 2,000 years ago and

will happen to each of us some time in the future after we die when our own bodies will be raised to new life. It is that, but it is much more.

The resurrection is something that buoys up every moment of life and every aspect of reality. God is always

making new life and undergirding it with a goodness, graciousness, mercy, and love that, in the end, heals all wounds, forgives all sins and brings deadness of all kinds to new life.

We feel this resurrecting power in the most ordinary moments of our lives. A sense of the resurrection, understood in its deepest sense, manifests itself unconsciously in our vitality, in what we call health; in the feeling, however dimly

it is sensed, that it is good to be alive. The very atomic structure of the cosmos feels and knows that resurrecting power. That is why it (like us, when we are healthy) pushes forward blindly, buoyed up by a hope that it cannot understand.

A friend of mine once sent me an Easter card that ended with the challenge: “May you leave behind you a string of empty tombs!” That is both my Easter wish and my Easter challenge for all of us. Let our wounded, muted voices begin to sing again: Christ is risen! Life is very, very good. †

Source: *Daybreaks*, © 2004, Liguori Publications

Keeping Vigil

By Thomas Richstatter, OFM

The dictionary explains that a vigil is “a purposeful or watchful staying awake during the ordinary hours of sleep.” This is what we do on Holy Saturday night. We gather, we wait, we watch. We keep vigil. We wait with the generations of those longing for Christ to rise from the tomb.

Service of Light. As the natural light of day fades away, we turn our attention to the light that is Jesus Christ. We gather around a fire and we think of Christ, who is the light of God’s glory. And from this special fire, we light our most beautiful candle.

As this paschal candle enters the church, its light spreads to the candles held by each member of the worshiping community.

Salvation History. In this light we

keep watch. And as we wait around this special fire—the paschal candle—we tell our story: creation, Abraham’s sacrifice, our passing through the Red Sea. Our joy and anticipation grow, and we sing “Glory to God in the highest,” a hymn we have not used since Lent began.

Death in Baptism. The Letter of Paul to the Romans makes explicit the fact that this is our resurrection night.

“Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life” (6:3–4).


We stand and joyfully sing “Alleluia” (a word we have not heard for forty days), and the Gospel of the resurrection is proclaimed: Christ is risen!

Recommitment. If your parish is welcoming new Catholics to the Church, you will also be called to renew your baptism promises. The Church turns to

its members and asks: “Do you reject sin? Do you believe? Do you wish to renew your baptism?” The answer to these questions are two simple words: “I do.”

In this “I do,” we renew all that this holy night promises so that in the Eucharist we can share with the newly baptized the food and drink that take all the sting out of death and ensure eternal victory. †

Source: *Catholic Update*, © April 1992, Liguori Publications



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.

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 10–15

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

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



Bringing Home the Word

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

The Way

By Mary Katharine Deeley

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

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

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

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

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

It takes a remarkable faith to love someone you have not seen.

A Word From Pope Francis

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

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



Sunday Readings

Acts 2:42–47

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

1 Peter 1:3–9

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

John 20:19–31

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

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



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



Daily Resurrections

By Ron Rolheiser, OMI

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: *Daybreaks*, © 2004, Liguori Publications

Salvation Is in the Key of Mercy

By James F. Keenan, SJ

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 24–29

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

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



Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday of Easter | April 30, 2017

We Know Him

By Mary Katharine Deeley

The story of the road to Emmaus is a favorite among retreat leaders because they can pair off participants to talk about hopes, fears, and dreams while they take a long walk or find a safe place to sit.

I've heard people tell dark secrets and expose long hidden resentments on such walks. It seems the act of walking loosens the tongue and allows us to look at scenery while we bring forth the courage

Sunday Readings

Acts 2:14, 22-33

"This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him."

1 Peter 1:17-21

"Realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct...not with perishable things...but with the precious blood of Christ."

Luke 24:13-35

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?"

to tell what is happening in our lives.

So it doesn't surprise me at all that Jesus makes his first post-resurrection appearance in Luke to two people who are walking and talking. Believing him to be a stranger, the disciples are free to tell everything about their fear, their anger, their dashed hopes, and their confusion over the empty tomb. They are able to be themselves, and Jesus does what they need him to do—he listens and hears them.

Then something remarkable happens. He opens their minds and hearts to the revelation of God in Scripture. He gives them a new way of seeing. They are eager to know more. They beg him to stay and share a meal. And, finally, they know him in the breaking of the bread and the breaking open of their hearts.

Maybe there's a lesson here for us. When we're weary or worried, perhaps we can take a walk on our imaginary road and tell Jesus everything that has happened, let him love us, and let him help us remember the Scriptures.

And, hearts lightened, we can know him again in the breaking of the bread. †

It seems we often open up during a simple walk.

A Word From Pope Francis

We all have difficulties, all of us. All of us here have difficulties. All of us here—all of us—have miseries and all of us here have weaknesses. No one here is better than another. Jesus was not indecisive; he was not indifferent. He made a decision and followed it through until the end. He decided to become man and as a man to become a servant until his death on the Cross. This is the way of love, there is no other.

*Pastoral Visit to
Cagliari, Italy,
September 22, 2013*



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Choose someone in your life to share a walk with. What do you want to share with him or her?
- What would you tell Jesus on a walk with him?



Called to Follow Jesus

By Johan Van Parys

Every time I sit at my desk, I glance at the small crucifix lying on it. It was given to me by one of the late abbots of the Benedictine abbey of Mont César in Leuven, Belgium. He had received it from the late Bishop Boleslavs Sloskans, a Latvian national who had secretly been ordained a bishop in 1926 for a diocese in the former Soviet Union. I remember the day father abbot

gave it to me with great clarity. It was the day I decided not to become a priest.

I had always wanted to be a priest. In prayer, I heard Jesus say, "Come and follow me," which I understood to mean "become a priest." When I turned seventeen, I applied to our local seminary. Visiting the abbot, my spiritual director, to explain that I didn't have "the calling" was a difficult moment. He said that while I may not be called to be a

priest, I was called to follow Christ. The latter, he continued, was more important than the former.

There is no higher or better calling than to follow Christ. There is, in fact, only one calling, and it is the one Jesus addresses to each of us: "Come and follow me." The way each of us lives out this calling can be very different. Mostly it is informed by our personal strengths and talents. Yet in the end, our fundamental calling as Christians is to become more and more like Christ regardless of who we are, where we live, or what we do. †

Source: *Liguorian*,
© May-June 2011, Liguori Publications

Savor the Resurrection

By Fr. Paul Turner

It's not easy to keep up with the fifty-day Easter season. It's hard to stay in the resurrection experience. As humans, we aren't programmed to be that happy for that long. Even the lilies in the sanctuary will wilt before the season is half over. Memories of the Easter Vigil and Easter fade into the background as the season is overtaken by other priorities. So what's a Christian to do?

Perhaps the first tip in having a successful Easter is a successful Lent. If you've spent forty days fasting, you'll


appreciate fifty days of feasting. You will recognize the power of the risen Christ helping you overcome sin and temptation. If you have made the season of Lent a time for personal and spiritual evaluation, the rejoicing of Easter will have some real meaning; however, if your Lent was flabby, what do you expect?

A second suggestion is a successful Easter Vigil. Of course, this means you'll need to attend the Easter Vigil Mass. The Vigil Mass is arguably the most important Mass of the entire year. Only at the Vigil do you gather in the night around the fire that shatters darkness, hear the readings that reveal salvation's history, experience the return of the *Gloria* and the *Alleluia* after an absence of six weeks, and hear the first announcement of the Gospel of the resurrection. Only at the Vigil do you celebrate with the newly baptized who

have waited, prepared, and longed for this day.

Finally, now that Easter has come, what better way to celebrate Christ than to meet him day after day in the Eucharist? Such a practice can lay a strong foundation on which we can build for days to come. †

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Risen Lord, you walk with me as my friend and companion.
Help me to recognize your presence in all people.
Hopeful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 1-6

Monday	Easter Weekday: Acts 6:8-15 / Jn 6:22-29
Tuesday	St. Athanasius: Acts 7:51-8:1a / Jn 6:30-35
Wednesday	Sts. Philip and James: 1 Cor 15:1-8 / Jn 14:6-14

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