



# Bringing Home the Word

**Fifth Sunday of Easter (B)**  
**May 2, 2021**

## The Vine and the Branches Become One

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Jesus himself picked the image of the vine to describe the reality of our being united to him and the Father. And this was not lost on early Christians. One of the first images they used to mark their graves was the vine and the branches.

An amazing thing about a vine and its branches is that you can't tell the difference between them. Look at a grapevine and try to determine which is the branch and which is the vine or trunk. You can't, since it appears as one seamless reality. Jesus invites us to be so

close to him that we appear to be just like him—"other Christs," as our name Christian suggests!

Second, the sap that springs from the vine, runs through the branches, and matures in the fruit is all the same. The life in Jesus and the life in us as Christians are the same. He has given us the same Spirit that animated him, the Holy Spirit.

This is why Jesus can guarantee that, if we remain in him by listening to his word and following his Spirit, we will definitely bear much fruit. His word and Spirit cannot remain sterile in us.

The most important result of being united to Jesus and bearing fruit is that not only will we be united to him in this life, but this friendship will last for all eternity. That's why early Christians put vines on their tombs. +

## 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 John 3:18-24

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

### John 15:1-8

[Jesus said,] "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit."

*Jesus guarantees that,  
if we remain in him by  
listening to his word  
and following his Spirit,  
we will bear much fruit.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

Let us not forget that the Our Father is the prayer of the poor. Our asking for bread expresses our entrustment to God for our basic needs in life. Everything that Jesus taught us in this prayer expresses and brings together the cry of all who suffer from life's uncertainties.

—First World Day of the Poor,  
November 19, 2017



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## QUESTIONS 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?

# Beyond Gun Control

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

Michael couldn't wait to tell his second-grade friend what had happened to him. "A policeman pointed a gun at my head this morning!" Michael's friend was scared, so he told the teacher, who told the principal, who called Michael's parents. His parents explained that their home had



been raided at 6:00 AM by federal agents, guns drawn. One had pointed a gun at Michael. An uncle living with the family had been arrested and charged with illegal sale of semiautomatic weapons.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops called for gun control in their document *Community and Crime: A Statement of the Committee on Social Development and World Peace*. That document was followed by *Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*. It reiterated their support for legislative efforts to protect society from the violence associated with easy access to deadly weapons. Since then, the bishops affirmed their hope that any government action on gun-violence prevention would lead to greater respect for human life.

Like it or not, violence is part of our lives. Violent TV programs, video games, and movies are a source of entertainment

for many. War, insurrection, and mob scenes are reported on the news, in newspapers, and across the internet. Veterans are haunted daily by the trauma of battles fought decades ago, and thousands of soldiers continue to fight in conflicts around the world. Domestic violence is a reality for

many, and the tragedies of Littleton, Aurora, Columbine, Newtown, and Las Vegas have left an indelible mark on the American soul.

Even the Word of God is filled with violence—it can be found throughout the Hebrew and Christian Testaments. Prophets, priests, and kings are guilty of it; innocent and God-fearing men, women, and children are victims of it—and it's often attributed to God. Even our salvation was won through a horrific and violent act. We can't escape or explain violence away. It's a reality.

Our society encourages and celebrates overindulgence. People overeat, overspend, overwork, overachieve, overcommit, overdose, and overreact. It seems a bit like overkill to say this—but if you can name it, you can indulge in it.

Many turn to gun control as a remedy, and maybe there should be stricter government oversight of the availability and use of firearms. But a

deeper problem exists, one much greater than uncontrolled access to weapons. The inability to manage powerful emotions and urges—the absence of self-control—can have life-threatening and life-ending consequences. Self-discipline and self-restraint are more than indicators of healthy and mature growth and development; they are imperative to saving lives and building and maintaining true and lasting peace.

As a nation, we've got a gun to our head—it's time to get control of ourselves. +

*Even the Word of God is filled with violence—it can be found throughout the Hebrew and Christian Testaments.*

**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

May 3–8

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

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

**Wednesday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 15:1–6 / Jn 15:1–8

**Thursday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 15:7–21 / Jn 15:9–11

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

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

Bringing Home  
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May 2, 2021

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# Bringing Home the Word

Sixth Sunday of Easter (B)  
May 9, 2021

## God's Generous Love

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The painting by Aldo Carpi, *The Madonna of the Poor*, shows the Virgin Mary bringing Baby Jesus to visit the poor. She doesn't make distinctions. Mary understood that Jesus didn't come just for the rich and powerful but for everyone.

Peter learns this lesson when speaking to Cornelius and his household. Until this time, the apostles were preaching to the Jewish people, but when Peter speaks to these Romans, the Holy Spirit comes upon them just as he had upon the Jews. They repent and believe. This for Peter was essential, because it

showed that Jesus wanted to send his Spirit and teachings to everyone, not just the chosen race. God doesn't show favoritism.

The same goes for us. It's natural to want to love our own: our family and those sharing our social status, political party, club, school, or parish. But our love has to spread to all peoples, especially those in the most moral, material, and spiritual need. God is love, and those who love show they come from God.

Another element of love is that it is free, wanting nothing in return. Recently, while sitting at an outdoor café, a woman walked up and gave me a small, wrapped gift. "I like to give gifts to complete strangers, just to make their day," she said. What a beautiful gesture.

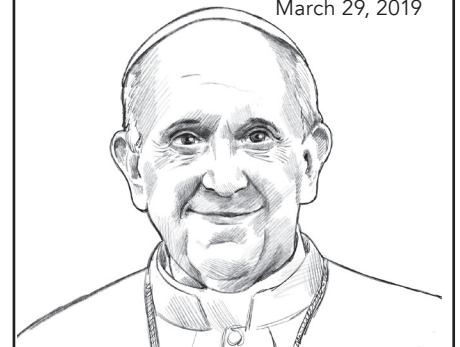
We should also not that Cornelius accepted God's love, was baptized, and began following the Way. He and his family didn't take that free love of God for granted. They responded to it in joyful obedience. God's generous love asks for an equally generous response. +

*It's natural to want to love our own, but our love has to spread to all people, especially those in most need.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

Reconciliation itself is a benefit that the wisdom of the Church has always safeguarded with all her moral and legal might, with the sacramental seal.... It is indispensable for the sanctity of the sacrament and for the freedom of conscience of the penitent...that the sacramental conversation will remain within the secrecy of the confessional.

—Address to Apostolic Penitentiary,  
March 29, 2019



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I help those who disagree with me or my beliefs?
- Do I understand that God's love requires a generous response?

## Sunday Readings

**Acts 10:25–26, 34–35, 44–48**

They could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God.

**1 John 4:7–10**

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.

**John 15:9–17**

[Jesus said,] "Love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

# How Are We Called?

By Kathleen M. Basi

Since the moment Pope Francis first appeared on the balcony at St. Peter's, he has been engaging the world. He energizes us and at the same time challenges us to actively participate in our faith. Most of us would rather practice our faith within the safety of a little box, where the Christian call is as clear-cut as praying the rosary, lighting a candle, and attending Sunday Mass. Pope Francis asks us to move beyond the walls of the Church and be a true witness to Christ in the world.

Like many faithful people, I always thought most issues had simple answers. However, after having a child with a disability, I realized that when the Christian call intersects with the real world, things become more complex—life isn't that simple.

Consider the pro-life cause, perhaps the most clear-cut issue imaginable. It's not enough to believe that children with disabilities have a right to be born. Their needs impose a heavy financial burden on their families: therapies, surgeries, orthotics, and so on. We have a moral obligation to support life at all stages, even when it requires societal intervention that runs counter to ideals about self-sufficiency.

Pope Francis has called us to confront complex questions and seek thorough answers. Using this thorough process, how can we address some of the questions we face?



- How am I *called* to respond to bitter conflicts within my extended family?
- How am I *called* to interact with the person who delights in goading me?
- How am I *called* to love the family member who is gay or lesbian?
- How am I *called* to help the homeless person at the corner?
- How am I *called* to interact with the person in a wheelchair whose speech is hard to understand?
- How am I *called* to alleviate the desperation that leads a woman to choose abortion?
- How am I *called* to honor human dignity, not only of crime victims, but of those who perpetrate the crime?

As followers of Christ, we will always find ourselves being called upon to respond to situations that may not be as clear-cut as they appear on the surface. Although the path may be demanding, we have the support of the Church and Christ as an example of how to do the hard work. Pope Francis has called us to labor together.

Faith grows only when it is stretched. A call of faith is not a static request; to follow Christ means to get up, pick up your cross, and act. True discipleship—though difficult—is worthwhile, because it draws us closer to the heart of Christ, the source of our calling. +

*Faith grows only when it is stretched.*

**PRAYER**

*Risen Lord, you command us to love one another.*

*Help me to show your love to all people.*

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

May 10–15

**Monday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 16:11–15 / Jn 15:26–16:4a


**Tuesday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 16:22–34 / Jn 16:5–11

**Wednesday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 17:15, 22–18:1 / Jn 16:12–15

**Thursday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 18:1–8 / Jn 16:16–20

**Friday**, St. Matthias:  
Acts 1:15–17, 20–26 / Jn 15:9–17

**Saturday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 18:23–28 / Jn 16:23b–28

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# Bringing Home the Word

*Ascension of the Lord (B)*  
May 16, 2021

## Sent to be Missionaries

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The beginning of the Book of Acts presents a summary of the life of Christ and. How he called and taught the apostles in the Holy Spirit. After his resurrection, Christ kept the apostles in Jerusalem, where they prayed together with the Virgin and awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit which would give them power to witness to him beyond the city and into the outlying countries and regions, just as the Gospel reading commands.

This Spirit given to them by Christ is a spirit of mission and witness. When

Jesus was finished speaking, when his revelation had finished, he was taken to heaven. And the apostles were left standing there, looking up after him.

That looking up can be interpreted as a longing for Jesus' presence that was no longer in human form. Things had radically changed. Jesus' mission had finished, and now theirs was beginning. Their situation is the same as ours. We are sent on a mission!

An essential element of being Christian is to understand that we are sent into the world to build Christ's kingdom. We are his missionaries, his representatives. He counts on us to go into the world and bring his message to all his beloved children just as he did—with preaching, testimony, and love. Jesus doesn't send us to be comfortable, professionally successful, and wealthy. He sends us to be missionaries! +

## Sunday Readings

### Acts 1:1-11

When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight.

### Ephesians 1:17-23 or Ephesians 4:1-13 or 4:1-7, 11-13

I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness.

### Mark 16:15-20

[Jesus] said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature."

*Christ counts on us  
to go into the world  
and bring his message  
to all his beloved children  
just as he did.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

The Ascension tells us that Jesus, although he ascended to heaven to dwell gloriously at the right hand of the Father, is still and is always among us: this is the source of our strength, our perseverance, and our joy, from the presence of Jesus among us with the strength of the Holy Spirit.

—Ascension Sunday, May 24, 2020



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I live as if I am Christ's presence on earth, aware that I am his missionary?
- If Jesus were in my family, social, and professional situations, what would he do?

# Not Right or Wrong—Just More

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSSR

When I was in the college seminary, a venerable old Redemptorist came for a visit and said, “I met the seminarians, and I am not impressed.” I heard other comments about “the seminarians” during my nine years in the seminary, but none as memorable as the one made by that aging Redemptorist concerned about the future of his beloved congregation.

Maybe Pope Francis’ comment that some seminarians are like “little monsters” was born out of the same kind of feeling—concern for the future of the Church. Most, if not all, Catholics at some point find themselves worrying about the future of the Church. So, we look to the future leaders of the Church—seminarians—to get some indication of where the Church might be headed.

A sense of eagerness was evident in most of the men during my time in the seminary. We were eager to serve God and God’s people, to bring people closer to Christ in the Church.

I sense a different direction or emphasis in some seminarians today. Certainly, they are eager to bring people closer to Christ and the Church, but there’s something else: They feel called to reform the Church. I’ve heard them say things like, “Nothing good happened after Vatican II” and “Vatican II was a mistake.”

Maybe some *Bringing Home the Word*

*Most, if not all, Catholics at some point find themselves worrying about the future of the Church.*



readers feel the same way. Some of the criticism is focused on liturgical practice and the reform of the Mass, but there’s something else: the implication that there’s a right way—and a wrong way—to be Catholic.

*Catholic* is commonly understood to mean “universal.” *Universal* means “widely dispersed, present everywhere.”

*Catholic* also refers to a group of people set apart from others by their agreed-upon beliefs and practices.

I think most people, seminarians included, would agree with these two definitions and be content to stop here.

But there is still another definition: *Catholic* is how we live our faith in the world. *Catholic* means “elastic.” The Church stretches to welcome people of all kinds—and as many as possible. From the Church’s beginning, an inherent inclusivity enables saints and sinners, rich and poor, conservatives and liberals to be one in Jesus Christ. The Church by its very nature relates to everyone and everything. This is the Catholic Church described in the 1965 Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.

As for seminarians and the future of the Church, St. Paul gives some solid advice: “To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some” (1 Corinthians 9:22).

There is no right or wrong way to be Catholic. We’re all just called to be more Catholic. +

  
**PRAYER**

*Risen Lord, your death,  
resurrection, and ascension  
are good news for us.*

*Help me to share this message  
of hope with all people.*

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of  
Easter through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

May 17–22

**Monday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 19:1–8 / Jn 16:29–33

**Tuesday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 20:17–27 / Jn 17:1–11a

**Wednesday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 20:28–38 / Jn 17:11b–19

**Thursday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 22:30; 23:6–11 / Jn 17:20–26

**Friday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 25:13b–21 / Jn 21:15–19

**Saturday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 28:16–20, 30–31 / Jn 21:20–25

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# Bringing Home the Word

**Pentecost Sunday (B)**  
**May 23, 2021**

## The Patience of Mary

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

A common image of Mary—surrounded by the apostles in the upper room, awaiting the Holy Spirit—has a name: *Regina Apostolorum*, Queen of the Apostles. She is enthroned as Queen Mother because, when her Son the King was enthroned and lifted up, he told her, “Behold your son.” With those words he entrusted Mary to the care of John, the apostles, and the whole Church. As any good queen and mother, she defends her own.

She is also called the Spouse of the Spirit, because it was in union with

the Spirit that she engendered the Son. She also engenders him in the apostles and in our souls through her powerful intercession and waiting on the Spirit.

One of Mary’s best qualities is waiting patiently until God’s power arrives. After the annunciation she waited nine months with Jesus in her womb. Then she waited some thirty years while Jesus grew and prepared for his mission. She waited during his public life and watched as his fame spread, but also as his enemies plotted. She waited at the foot of the cross and endured that unending Holy Saturday until the resurrection. And she waited patiently on the first Pentecost Sunday for the coming of the gift of the Holy Spirit promised by her Son. She knew he would come through, as he always did.

We get impatient with God and want him to respond on our timetables according to our expectations. He waits to give us a chance to adapt our hearts to his plan and timing. He waits until the time is just right. +

*One of Mary’s best qualities is waiting patiently until God’s power arrives. We get impatient and want him to respond on our timetable.*

### **A Word from Pope Francis**

The Holy Spirit...reminds us that first of all we are God’s beloved children; all equal, in this respect, and all different. The Spirit comes to us, in our differences and difficulties, to tell us that we have one Lord—Jesus—and one Father, and that for this reason we are brothers and sisters!

—Pentecost Homily, May 31, 2020



## Sunday Readings

### **Acts 2:1–11**

And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were.

### **1 Cor 12:3b–7, 12–13 or Gal 5:16–25**

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.

### **John 20:19–23 or John 15:26–27; 16:12–15**

But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### ONE QUESTION REFLECTION

- How often do I seek Mary’s intercession or help?
- Patience is a fruit of the Spirit. How can you practice more patience this week?

# The Many Faces of Mary

By Johan van Parys

I celebrated my first Communion in 1967. Of the many religious gifts I received, my absolute favorite was a statue of Mary. She wore a beautiful pastel dress and had flowing blonde hair and brilliant blue eyes. Even more exciting, she played “Immaculate Mary.” The statue received a place of honor in my bedroom which, according to my concerned mother, looked more like a shrine. Part of my bedtime routine was to pray the Hail Mary in front of Mary. Then I took a moment of silence before winding up the mechanism and listening to “Immaculate Mary” as I quietly hummed along.

A couple of years later I realized that in real life Mary didn’t have blonde hair or wear pastel robes, and she had only herself as the immaculate conception until fairly recently. This came as a spiritual shock, and I felt betrayed; however, my curiosity of who Mary was and what she may have looked like was piqued.

Mary, mother of Jesus and wife of Joseph, was Jewish. More than likely she was born to a poor family and led a hard life. She undoubtedly worried about her son, especially when he set out to complete his mission at about age thirty. Regardless, she stayed by his side. She even flanked the cross he was nailed to and cradled his body after he was lowered from it.

Mothers are often the first to know the truth about their children, and Mary



knew Jesus was the Messiah before anyone else did. She testified to this not only during her lifetime, but also after she was assumed into heaven during her many apparitions.

I find these apparitions fascinating—not that they happened, but rather how they happened. It seems like Mary was and continues to be the supreme missionary. She understood that by taking on the image of the people to whom she was appearing, she could more easily win them over to her Son. In an instant, this foreign religion would receive a local face.

When she appeared in Mexico as Our Lady of Guadalupe, she appeared as an Aztec princess. Thus, the Aztec people

could recognize themselves in Mary, and she became one of them. In Vietnam, she appeared as Our Lady of La Vang, a Vietnamese woman; in Africa, as an African woman; in Belgium, as a blonde woman. Indeed, Mary has taken the shape, color, and form of almost every woman on this planet. This affirms that we’re each created in God’s image and that Jesus died for all of us.

Today, my entire house is filled with religious art. Many might think of it as more of a shrine than a home—old habits die hard. I have images of Mary from all around the world. In these Marian statues I see the face of Mary, the Mother of God and our heavenly mother. I also see the faces of all mothers.

Similarly, the diverse statues of Mary in our churches allow us to recognize ourselves in her. We are invited to become more like her by taking on her virtues.

As we celebrate Mary in May, may we learn from her and turn to her with our every need. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us! +

## PRAYER

*Lord, your Spirit renews  
our faith, hope, and love.  
Empower me to be your  
presence of love and  
compassion to others.*

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of  
Easter through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

May 24-29

**Monday, Blessed Virgin Mary:**  
Gn 3:9–15, 20 or Acts 1:12–14 / Jn  
19:25–34


**Tuesday, Weekday:**  
Sir 35:1–12 / Mk 10:28–31

**Wednesday, St. Philip Neri:**  
Sir 36:1, 4–5a, 10–17 / Mk 10:32–45

**Thursday, Weekday:**  
Sir 42:15–25 / Mk 10:46–52

**Friday, Weekday:**  
Sir 44:1, 9–13 / Mk 11:11–26

**Saturday, Weekday:**  
Sir 51:12cd–20 / Mk 11:27–33

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# Bringing Home the Word

**Most Holy Trinity (B)**  
**May 30, 2021**

## The Mission of the Trinity

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The very first fresco Raphael painted for Pope Julius II, *The Disputation of the Holy Sacrament*, includes a representation of the Trinity. Christian iconography commonly depicted the Godhead as a triangle with the all-seeing eye in the center, often with rays of glory flooding forth. Yet Raphael chooses to make it much more personal, more real. He depicts the three persons of the Trinity.

God is not merely an idea, a first principle, or a mental criterion for moral choosing, but three real divine persons, each one active in your life. A triune

God, an eternal explosion of love in which the Father begins by creating you; the Son continues by saving you; and the Holy Spirit consumes their love by inspiring and sanctifying you.

Although all things change, God never changes. He is still, the point of the pendulum from which all things hang and are supported. He wisely governs with his one hand lifted in authoritative and assuring purpose. In his other hand, the sphere of the world rests secure. His decisions are not arbitrary, swayed by public opinion, or motivated by insecurity needing affirmation. He is who is. It is we who need him and not the other way around.

Yet, his absolute authority doesn't convert him into an aloof despot. God lovingly takes interest in everything! Nothing is unimportant—from the greatest things on earth to the smallest minutiae of my day. If it is important to me, it is important to him, and his providential hand keeps it all in balance. +

*God lovingly takes interest in everything, from the greatest things on earth to the smallest minutiae of my day!*

### A Word from Pope Francis

God loves each one of us even when we make mistakes and distance ourselves from him. God the Father loves the world so much that, in order to save it, he gives what is most precious to him: his only-begotten Son....The Trinity is therefore love, wholly at the service of the world.

—Angelus, Trinity Sunday, June 7, 2020



## Sunday Readings

### Deuteronomy 4:32–34, 39–40

Ask from one end of the sky to the other: Did anything so great ever happen before? Was it ever heard of?

### Romans 8:14–17

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

### Matthew 28:16–20

[Jesus said,] "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- The Trinity shares their life with me through grace. Do I care for that gift in my soul?
- In the Holy Trinity the Father creates, the Son saves, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies. Do I thank each for these gifts?

# Called to Follow Jesus

By Johan van Parys

Every time I sit at the desk in my home office, I glance at the small crucifix lying on it—a simple wooden cross with a small metal corpus. 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.

When authorities found out, he was arrested and sent to a Soviet work camp. He managed to keep a small crucifix during his imprisonment. At the beginning of World War II, Bishop Sloskans found refuge at Mont César, where he spent the rest of his life. The crucifix rested on his desk at Leuven until it was passed down to the abbot.

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, thinking that I had the calling. 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; thus began a circuitous trajectory in and out of seminaries until I finally decided that I must not have *the calling*.



That was a difficult moment. I visited the abbot who was my spiritual director and said that I was sad not to have “the calling.” He said that while I may not be called to be a priest, surely I am called to follow Christ. The latter, he continued, is much more important than the former.

He then recounted the life of Bishop Sloskans and gave me the small crucifix. He explained that what made Bishop Sloskans such a great Christian was not his calling to the priesthood, but the way he lived out his calling to follow Christ

wherever he found himself—even in prison.

At that moment I realized that I had received the calling—maybe not to be a priest, but to follow Jesus. There is no higher or better calling. There is 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.

Every time I glance at the simple crucifix, I think of Bishop Sloskans and I am reminded of his commitment to Christ. His example, like that of many saints, is an inspiration to us all.

Let us pray daily for the grace to be faithful to our calling as followers of Christ—no matter where life’s path takes us. +

## PRAYER

*Lord, you command me to love all people. Remove the prejudice that keeps me from loving my brothers and sisters.*

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter* through Pentecost, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

*There is only one calling, and it is the one Jesus addresses to each of us: “Come and follow me.”*

## WEEKDAY READINGS

May 31-June 5

**Monday,**  
*Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary:*  
Zep 3:14–18a or Rom 12:9–16 / Lk 1:39–56

**Tuesday, St. Justin:**  
Tb 2:9–14 / Mk 12:13–17

**Wednesday, Weekday:**  
Tb 3:1–11a, 16–17a / Mk 12:18–27

**Thursday, St. Charles Lwanga and Companions:**  
Tb 6:10–11; 7:1bcd, 9–17; 8:4–9a  
Mk 12:28–34

**Friday, Weekday:** Tb 11:5–17 / Mk 12:35–37

**Saturday, St. Boniface:** Tb 12:1, 5–15, 20  
Mk 12:38–44

Bringing Home  
the **Word** 

May 30, 2021

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