



Bringing Home the Word

Sixth Sunday of Easter (B)

May 5, 2024

God's Call

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

The story about Cornelius shows that God's call is not restricted by our likes and dislikes. Cornelius was a Roman, a citizen of the nation that was occupying Israel. More than that, he served in a military that exercised harsh control over the inhabitants of the land. A man like this would not have been loved by the Jews of the day. However, Cornelius recognized Peter as a representative of God. All who were listening to Peter's words were baptized and became one with the community of believers.

Faith, baptism, and incorporation into

the community of believers are offered to Jew and Roman alike. They are offered today to those who are members of our own religious, racial, or ethnic groups and those who are not; those who are socially or politically vulnerable, and those with power. The question is not, "Who does God favor?" but, "Who favors God?"

The Gospel story reinforces this point, insisting God's love for us is the foundation of everything: "Love one another as I love you" (John 15:12). God's love is all-inclusive. So should our love be all-inclusive. If God's love is for all, it follows that we are all favored by God—all chosen and cared for by him. This includes even those who might be our political adversaries, or who might exercise exacting authority over us, or who cherish different religious ideas. Imitating God's love requires that we will goodness to others—even those with whom we disagree or who have caused us harm. †

***The question is not,
"Who does God favor?"
but, "Who favors God?"***



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."

A Word from Pope Francis

To love as the Lord loves us means to appreciate the people beside us, to respect their freedom, to love them as they are, not as we want them to be.... Where does this abiding in the Lord's love lead?... Jesus told us: "That my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

REGINA CAELI, ROME, MAY 9, 2021



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Can you pray for the grace to accept the goodness of people with whom you disagree?
- Can you listen to them?

Easter Wisdom from Henri Nouwen

Listen to the Church—I know that [listening to the Church] isn't a popular bit of advice at a time and in a country where the Church is often seen more as an obstacle in the way than as the way to Jesus. Nevertheless, I'm deeply convinced that the greatest spiritual danger for our times is the separation of Jesus from the Church. The Church is the body of the Lord. Without Jesus, there can be no Church, and without the Church, we cannot stay united with Jesus. I've yet to meet anyone who has come closer to Jesus by forsaking the Church. To listen to the Church is to listen to the Lord of the Church. Specifically, this entails taking part in the Church's liturgical life. Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Ascension, and



Pentecost—these seasons and feasts teach you to know Jesus better and better and unite you more and more intimately with the divine life he offers you in the Church.

Listen to Your Heart—It's there [in your heart] that Jesus speaks most intimately to you. Praying is first and foremost listening to Jesus who dwells in the very depths of your heart. He doesn't shout. He doesn't thrust himself upon you. His voice is an unassuming voice, very nearly a whisper, the voice of a gentle love. Whatever you do with your life, go on listening to the voice of Jesus in your heart. This listening must be an active and very attentive listening, for in our restless and noisy world Jesus' loving voice is easily drowned out. †

From Lent and Easter Wisdom by Henri J.M. Nouwen, compiled by Judy Bauer, © 2005, (812866) available at Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From "Acts of the Apostles" by Ronald D. Witherup, SS

“What is your church like?” I have heard this question posed at gatherings of large groups of Catholics. The responses to this question often begin with comments about church buildings and only later shift to descriptions of the congregation. Yet that experience of the congregation, of the People of God everywhere, is what the Church is really about. The story is told in the Acts of the Apostles...the only New Testament document devoted exclusively to the story of the early Church. It is the companion volume to the Gospel of Luke (compare the Prologues, Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1–5). The Church uses this book at Mass almost exclusively throughout the Easter season, from Easter Sunday to Pentecost. †

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church teaching and tradition on contemporary topics. To subscribe, visit Liguori.org or call 800-325-9526.



Lord Jesus, grant us the grace of open hearts and minds that we may be receptive to the promptings of your Spirit, we pray. Amen! Alleluia!

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 6–11

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, Easter Weekday:
Acts 18:9–18 / Jn 16:20–23

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

Bringing Home
the **Word** 

May 5, 2024

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Bringing Home the Word

Ascension of the Lord (B)

May 12, 2024

Up in Heaven

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

The message of this feast is that Jesus was taken up into heaven. Just what does this mean? Is heaven “up there” along with the moon and the stars? Cosmology would question that. Today’s readings also indicate that Jesus is seated at God’s right hand. Is this science, or is it a concrete image used to explain something more marvelous than words can describe?

Traditionally, the place of honor is at the dignitary’s right hand (decided by a right-hander, no doubt). That Jesus sits at God’s right hand means he enjoys the place of highest honor. The responsorial psalm refers to this exalted place as the

throne of God. “Throne” suggests king. Thus, the readings tell us that Jesus, who is now exalted with divine honor, is above everything else. Finally, to say that heaven is “above” means that it is beyond earth, perhaps not in actual distance, but in distinction and glory. Thus, Jesus’ ascension means the risen Lord is no longer limited by the restrictions of earth’s space and time but now enjoys the highest honor with God everywhere and always.

This is the message the disciples were sent to preach. This is the message we also are sent to preach. But how are we to do it? By the way we live our lives. Emmanuel Célestin Cardinal Suhard of Paris (1874–1949) wrote: “To be a witness...means to live in such a way that one’s life would not make sense if God did not exist.” Do our lives show that we believe this? †

Sunday Readings

Acts 1:1–11

[A]s 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...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 his disciples: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.”

The risen Lord is no longer limited by space and time but now enjoys the highest honor with God everywhere and always.



A Word from Pope Francis

Do we really think we can build peace by destroying the other? In the name of God who created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity...I make an appeal for calm and, for those who are responsible to put a stop to the clamor of weapons and to follow the paths of peace....

REGINA CAELI, ROME, MAY 16, 2021



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Who witnesses to God’s goodness in my life?
- Am I such a witness by how I live?

When You Seek to Be the Perfect Mom

Agnes Bojaxhiu, now known worldwide as “Mother Teresa,” was born in Macedonia in 1910. A Sister of Loreto, she was sent to India, where she spent years educating wealthy girls. Teresa began to experience a series of visions in which Jesus asked her to serve the poorest of the poor. She did just that for the rest of her life, founding the Missionaries of Charity. She was canonized in 2016.

When I have visited a friend whose house is spotless and whose life seems perfectly organized, I feel more than a twinge of inferiority. I’m forever behind on everything that needs to be done, and our house looks like a toy factory merged with a laundromat that blew up. *Why can’t I keep up?* I wonder. I want to be the organized, efficient, got-it-



together mom. I want my child to have a household that runs like a machine, with a mom who juggles everything calmly and expertly.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta has insight to share with those of us seeking after perfection. She once said that we are not all called to do great things, but we are called to do little things with great love. Not with great efficiency, not even with great skill. Great love. Saint Teresa should help us realize that when our children grow up, we want more than anything for them to remember feeling happy and loved because of the little things. To remember a mom who made time to play in the sandbox, dance in the kitchen, and read to them in bed. We want them to recall a mom who did these littlest things with the greatest love. †

Source: *Saints on Call: Everyday Devotions for Moms* by Christine Gibson, © 2011, (820342) available at Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From “The Liturgical Year: How Christians Celebrate Time”
by Sandra DeGidio, OSM

The Church year...is the way we Christians add a religious or spiritual dimension to the natural seasons, months, weeks, and days. It was only after the resurrection that Jesus’ followers finally understood the saving activity of Christ within the story of his life, words, and works. Because of this understanding, the first Christians gathered on Sunday in Jesus’ name to break bread and share the stories of the redeeming work of Christ. By the end of the first century, a Church manual called the *Didache* instructed Christians to come together every Sunday (the Lord’s Day) for giving thanks, proclaiming the word, and breaking bread. The first day of the week, the day Christ rose, gave shape to the week and to the year. †

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*Lord Jesus, send us your Spirit
that we may be your witnesses
to our families, friends, neighbors,
and all whom we meet, we pray.
Amen! Alleluia!*

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 13–18

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


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

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

Bringing Home
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May 12, 2024

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Bringing Home the Word

Pentecost Sunday (B)

May 19, 2024

Tongues of Fire

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

When I was a child, I thought the flames I saw atop the heads of the apostles in pictures depicting Pentecost turned them into living candles. That certainly is what the images suggested. Only many years later did I come to realize that was exactly what had happened: the Spirit of God set them on fire.

In both the Old and New Testaments, the phrase “Spirit of God” refers to the dynamic power of God at work in the world. To be filled with the Spirit is to operate with this dynamic power. Today’s first reading tells us that those in the

house “filled with the holy Spirit” began fearlessly to tell of “the mighty acts of God” (Acts 2:4, 11). They were indeed set on fire.

This Spirit might be dynamic, even forceful, but it is not violent or destructive. The sequence for the feast lists some of the ways we experience the Spirit of God: the Spirit enlightens and comforts us; refreshes us and lets us rest; heals our wounds and washes away our guilt; softens hearts that are stubborn and melts hearts that are cold; grants us gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. This is a Spirit of gentle and loving power. It is a Spirit that transforms us so that we, in turn, might transform our world. In other words, it sets us on fire so that we too might fearlessly tell of “the mighty acts of God.” †

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 Corinthians 12:3b–7, 12–13 or Galatians 5:16–25

[T]here are different forms of service but the same Lord.

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.

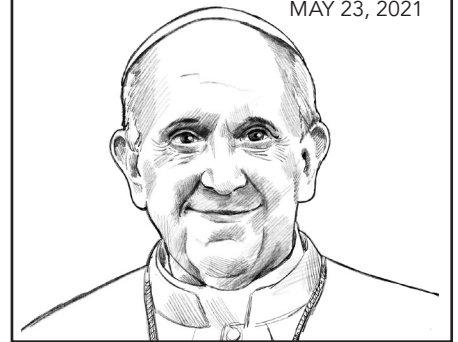
***The Holy Spirit transforms us
so that we, in turn,
might transform our world.***



A Word from Pope Francis

The Spirit is asking us to embody the comfort he brings. How can we do this?... Not with trite words, but with prayer and closeness. Let us remember that closeness, compassion and tenderness are God’s “trademark,” always. The Paraclete is telling the Church that today is *the time for comforting*.

HOMILY, ST. PETER’S BASILICA,
MAY 23, 2021



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How is the Spirit of God working through me?
- What gift of the Spirit am I praying for?

Discovering Our Mission

Rev. Warren J. Savage and
Mary Ann McSweeney

We all have a special calling or mission. We are drawn to a way of life that gives us a sense of purpose. Some people feel called to raise a family, to become an educator, a social worker, an engineer, a scientist, a doctor, a nurse, a lawyer, an electrician, a carpenter, a law enforcement officer, an accountant, a politician, a spiritual leader, a musician, or an artist. It takes time to discern our calling in life. We need to observe and work with others to get a sense of what we would like to become. Our calling in life is not about ourselves; it is connected to a universal vision of a world in which all people can live and work together in



love and peace. Inherent in our calling is a common desire to serve people, to improve the quality of life, and to teach others what we have learned.

After Jesus rose from the dead and before he ascended into heaven, he gave his disciples a mission to carry out. Their mission was to be a sign of Jesus' presence in the world, to gather people together into one family, and to teach them how to love one another. At baptism, we received the same mission. God's mission must be reflected in our lives and in our work. We have been called in the risen Jesus to be God's presence, to build community, to love and serve others. †

From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost* by Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney, (821417) available at Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From "Who Is the Holy Spirit" by Elizabeth A. Johnson

Who is God? A typical Catholic woman or man would probably answer this question by referring to God the Father and to Jesus Christ. A few might speak of God as "Mother." Only the rare person would answer, "The Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is often forgotten among Catholic Christians, especially in the Western world. To downplay the Holy Spirit is to diminish our sense of God's presence and activity among us in the world today. For the Holy Spirit is God's own self in outreach to the world. The Holy Spirit is God's presence and activity among us. The Holy Spirit is God continuously drawing near and passing by to vivify, renew, and love us and all of creation. †

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PRAYER

Lord Jesus, fill us with your Spirit and give us this day what we need to be fearless, truthful, loving witnesses to the gospel, we pray. Amen! Alleluia!

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 20–25

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


Tuesday, Weekday: Jas 4:1–10 / Mk 9:30–37

Wednesday, Weekday:
Jas 4:13–17 / Mk 9:38–40

Thursday, Weekday:
Jas 5:1–6 / Mk 9:41–50

Friday, Weekday:
Jas 5:9–12 / Mk 10:1–12

Saturday, Weekday:
Jas 5:13–20 / Mk 10:13–16

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May 19, 2024

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Bringing Home the Word †

Most Holy Trinity (B)
May 26, 2024

Wow!

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Some might think that “Wow!” is an inappropriate, even irreverent response, when talking about God. But what words would be appropriate? There are no words, there are no precise doctrinal statements that even come close to identifying God. The readings for today’s feast invite us to ponder, not define, this mystery.

The people at the time of Moses had no concept of a Trinitarian God. However, they were convinced God worked in their lives. They believed they had been delivered from bondage by God, invited into a special relationship

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.”

with God and promised by God a long and fruitful life in a land they could call their own. In other words, they were cared for by God, who demonstrated again and again they were loved. The Gospel story tells of how Jesus entrusted his disciples with the mission he himself had exercised during his lifetime. What once might have been considered the special privilege of the nation of Israel was now seen as a promise for all nations.

All people could now rely on God’s care for them and God’s ever-present love. Saint Paul identifies this privilege as the spirit of adoption. Today’s readings may not paint a clear picture of God or provide a precise definition—God is far beyond any picture or definition. However, each reading gives us a glimpse of the way God works in our lives—inviting us into intimacy, caring for us, loving us. Wow! †

*Today’s feast invites us
to ponder, not define,
this mystery.*



A Word from Pope Francis

The Trinity is not a theological riddle, but rather the splendid mystery of God’s closeness. The Trinity tells us that we do not have a solitary God above in heaven, distant and indifferent; no, he is *Father* who gave us his *Son*...and... to help us bear the burdens of life, sends us his very *Spirit*.

HOMILY, CAMERINO, JUNE 16, 2019



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS
REFLECTION

- How has your image of God changed through the years?
- Do you find it easier to pray alone or with a community?

A Community in the Image and Likeness of God

Paige Byrne Shortal

I have to confess I have Luddite tendencies. I hated to give up my vinyl records. I was proud when I made the move from my old typewriter to a computer. (You remember typewriters? They never sent you error messages.) And only because folks I work with kept asking for my email address, did I finally enter the world of the internet.

That was years ago. Now I regularly “talk” with people all over the world. In response to published work, I’ve been contacted by old friends and new readers from India, Peru, Maine, and Moberly, Missouri. Human ingenuity has made the world a smaller place and the essential connections between people are becoming more manifest.

Trinity Sunday is a celebration of the revelation that God is a community—a



connection of three persons who are individual and yet bound together as one. In Genesis, we read that we are created in the image and likeness of God (See Genesis 1:26). Therefore, part of

our nature, our essence, is that we are created as individuals who are connected to everyone else. Never before has there been such an opportunity for living in the human community, crossing the boundaries of nation, race, creed, and culture.

While each of us is a unique expression of God, only together do we reflect all the faces of God. This includes folks we don’t like very much, people who have hurt us, and those we’ve never met. It includes those gone before us and those who will come after us. When we sign ourselves in the name of the Trinity, let’s remember that each of us is created in the image of God and that only together are we the image of the Triune God. †

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From “The Trinity: Mystery at the Heart of Life” by Leonard Foley, OFM

The Trinity is not a mystery in the sense of being a puzzle that some genius will someday solve. Mystery in the religious sense is deepest reality, beyond anything we can experience. It is something like “love” or “grace.” Vivid as our experiences are, we know there is always something “more,” not mathematically, but mysteriously. Even in heaven we will not have God all figured out, as if our minds could comprehend. What kind of God would that be? Our happiness in heaven will be eternal ecstasy within the infinite wonder of God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—a communion of love—are the ultimate expressions of our Creator’s love for us. †

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Creator of all—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—may we grow in wisdom and holiness so that we may live in a worldwide community of peace and love, we pray. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 27—June 1

Monday, Weekday:
1 Pt 1:3–9 / Mk 10:17–27


Tuesday, Weekday:
1 Pt 1:10–16 / Mk 10:28–31

Wednesday, Weekday:
1 Pt 1:18–25 / Mk 10:32–45

Thursday, Weekday:
1 Pt 2:2–5, 9–12 / Mk 10:46–52

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

Saturday, St. Justin:
Jude 17, 20b–25 / Mk 11:27–33

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