



Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday of Easter (C)

May 4, 2025

Do You Love Me?

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Three times, Jesus asked Simon Peter: “Do you love me?” (John 21:16). This is the same Peter who earlier had sworn three times that, even if everyone else deserted Jesus, he never would. He was so sure of himself. Now, realizing the unreliability of his loyalty to Jesus, Peter is not so quick to answer with such self-confidence. Note that Peter did not reply with a straightforward “Yes!” Rather, he amplified each response with the telling words, “You know...”. With these words, Peter acknowledged that Jesus could read his mind and heart, that Jesus knew

Peter’s genuine love of him despite his all-too-human weakness. This itself was an act of faith.

This simple exchange did not humiliate Peter. That was not Jesus’ way. They both understood what Peter had done, and they both knew how brokenhearted it had left him. Peter was humbled—not by Jesus but by the recognition of his own human frailty. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, Jesus commissioned Peter to be leader among his followers. Another person might have chosen a more reliable man. However, there is great strength and wisdom in a leader who has learned from experience how circumstances might cause otherwise brave people to turn their backs on their responsibilities and run from danger. Such a leader will challenge while being compassionate and stand firm while being understanding. This is the kind of leader Jesus chose, for he knew that Peter would be that kind of leader. †



**Peter was humbled—
not by Jesus but
by the recognition of
his own human frailty.**

A Word from Pope Francis

Do you love me? Jesus asks you, me, us, who have empty nets and are often afraid to start again; to you, me, and all of us who do not have the courage to dive in and have perhaps lost our momentum.... May Our Lady, who readily said “yes” to the Lord, help us to rediscover the impulse to do good.

REGINA CAELI, ROME, MAY 1, 2022



Sunday Readings

Acts 5:27–32, 40b–41

So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name.

Revelation 5:11–14

And [the angels] cried out in a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.”

John 21:1–19 or John 21:1–14

[Peter answered Jesus,] “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” [Jesus] said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What have I learned about myself from my mistakes?
- Do I recognize the second chances I’ve been given?



Embracing Our Differences

John Paul George

We live in a society in which some feel the need to bully others because of the way they look, the way they live, or what they believe, among other things. I hope my

story encourages those who bully to think twice before committing this awful act. To those who are suffering or who have suffered from the effects of bullying, my goal is to be an inspiration, so you can see that you are amazing just the way you are. We are all different and unique. God made us that way; that's what makes us special.

I am different because I live each day with a life-threatening disability. This is my cross, but I own it. I share my story so that others, no matter what they may be going through, can

relate to certain feelings and catch that glimmer of hope. I have learned to deal with the struggle and fear of being different. I think many can identify with that. Living with half a heart is also not my only obstacle. I am very short for my age—most people think I am eleven years old when, in reality, I am twenty. When I go into a restaurant, I'm still offered a kid's menu and crayons. These issues are difficult, but I own them, and that's what makes me John Paul. I'm happy to be alive, doing the will of God. I thank him for allowing me to be in the world and, hopefully, to help others through the telling of my story. I can't change who I am, but I can change the world as I am. ‡

***We are all different
and unique.
God made us
that way.***

From *Heart of a Lion: A Story of God's Grace and a Family's Hope* by Derek and John Paul George, Liguori Publications (825453). To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "St. Joseph: The Christian Model" by Fr. Larry Toschi, OSJ

Do you see work as an expression of love for God and others? Without that perspective, it's easy to see work as nothing more than a means of financial reward—an incomplete and shallow definition indeed. As patron of workers, Joseph helps those who are out of work, those deciding on an educational or career path, and those in established occupations. He's a model for all forms of work, not only for employees and employers but also for stay-at-home parents, elderly volunteers, and young children in school. Where there is work to be done, Joseph will protect, equip, and guide us in all of our needs. Go to him.

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PRAYER

Lord Jesus, give me
the insight to recognize
my mistakes,
the wisdom to learn
from them,
and the humility to
seek forgiveness.
Amen! Alleluia!

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 5–10

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** 

May 4, 2025

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Bringing Home the Word

Fourth Sunday of Easter (C)

May 11, 2025

Every Nation, Race, People, and Tongue

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Today's readings tell us of the Church's universality. The Church might have been born of the people of Israel, but, from its beginning, it was meant to spread throughout the world—and it has.

The first reading describes the success that Paul and Barnabas enjoyed in cities in what today is Turkey. Believing that Jesus was the fulfillment of Jewish expectation, these missionaries naturally went first to the synagogues, where they preached to the Jewish people and those who had recently converted to Judaism.

The next week, the entire city came to hear them. This angered many of the

Jewish people. The text says that this was because they were jealous of Paul and Barnabas. Jealous of what?

We know that many Jewish Christians believed that converts had to accept the practices of Judaism before they were considered full members of the Jesus movement. (See Acts 15:1.) They maintained that everyone should be the same. Mention of converts in this story suggests this may have been the issue. Whatever the problem might have been, the movement spread, adapting itself as it did.

The vision reported in Revelation assures us that, in the end, the spread of the gospel will see completion. It will have been preached to and accepted by "every nation, race, people, and tongue" (7:9). This speaks of genuine universality rather than uniformity. This is unity among diversity. The distinctiveness of nation, race, people, and tongue will be respected, because what really unites them is the "blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14). †

The Church from its beginning was meant to spread throughout the world—and it has.

A Word from Pope Francis

What do those who follow Christ do? They go where he goes.... They go to seek those who are lost...take to heart the situation of those who suffer... they reach out their hands to their neighbors.... May the Holy Virgin help us listen to Christ, know him always more, and follow him on the way of service.

REGINA CAELI, ROME, MAY 8, 2022



Sunday Readings

Acts 13:14, 43–52

The word of the Lord continued to spread through the whole region.

Revelation 7:9, 14b–17

I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue.

John 10:27–30

[Jesus said,] "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How open am I to people of other nations, races, or languages?
- What could I learn from people with different backgrounds?



Truly Encountering the Poor

Anthony J. Gittins

People on the margins of society, whose voices are not commonly heard in theological circles, may have as much to offer as they have to receive. Because they can “tell it

like it is,” we simply cannot claim not to have heard the cries of the poor of which the psalmist speaks so often (Psalms 10:12; 34:7; 130:1). God’s own poor—the *anawim*, the remnant, the virtually invisible and usually overlooked—can help remove the scales from our eyes and allow us to look into their faces. These are, after all, the faces, in our own time and place, of the very people Jesus privileged in his. They can become the catalyst for our own conversion.

[The poor] can become the catalyst for our own conversion.

At its heart, ministry is encounter. Viktor Frankl was exactly right: to love, you must encounter. People of faith must do better than acknowledge “the poor” as a class: we must make the invisible visible by our encounters. Ministry is also attending to. The homeless poor have a human right to the care, compassion, and attentiveness of others. All who desire to be among those others must move beyond notional Christianity; they will soon discover how difficult it is truly to encounter others and to love their neighbor as they love themselves. †

From *Where There’s Hope There’s Life: Women’s Stories of Homelessness and Survival* by Anthony J. Gittins, Liguori Publications (814105). To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From “Building Communion in Culturally Diverse Parishes” by Hosffman Ospino, PhD

Culturally diverse parishes are defined as faith communities that normally celebrate Mass in at least two languages—most in English and another language—and have large concentrations of immigrant Catholics and/or Catholics who self-identify with non-majority racial/ethnic groups. During the latter half of the twentieth century and the first two decades of the twenty-first, millions of Catholic immigrants came to the United States. Today, immigrants represent about 25 percent of US Catholics. Most originate from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Euro-American, English-speaking Catholics now share parishes with Catholics from various language and cultural groups. Today, nearly 40 percent of all Catholic parishes in the country are culturally diverse, representing nearly 6,500 parishes.

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Lord Jesus, please give me the grace to greet each person I meet as part of your flock—a person you love and invite me to welcome into my life. Amen! Alleluia!

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 12–17

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

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

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

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

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Bringing Home the Word

Fifth Sunday of Easter (C)

May 18, 2025

What's New?

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Everyone gets a bit excited with the prospect of something new, whether it's a new job, a new car, or a new phone. This new thing might simply be a replacement. However, when it is a new model, an upgrade, we get even more excited. Revelation uses a distinctive Greek word, *kainós*, for this second kind of newness. The new heaven, the new earth, the new Jerusalem (and the new commandment mentioned in the gospel) suggest radical newness—the kind resulting from an act of God. Centuries earlier, the prophet Isaiah had promised a new

heaven and a new earth. (See Isaiah 65:17.) This metaphor pointed to a time of eschatological peace and fulfillment, a time when the covenant relationship between God and the people would be renewed and last forever. This was a promise the people held dear.

How are we to read this passage from Revelation today? Is it referring to a time in this life? Or after this life? It may actually refer to both. We believe that, with his death and resurrection, Jesus inaugurated this time of fulfillment. However, its full establishment is not yet complete, hence the new commandment to “love one another” (John 13:34). When we truly follow this commandment and love each other, we actually make present the new heaven and new earth; we make real the new Jerusalem, God’s covenant partner. However, the ultimate fulfillment will come when God finally brings all things to completion. That is when everything will be new. †

Sunday Readings

Acts 14:21–27

They...reported what God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Revelation 21:1–5a

The one who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.”

John 13:31–33a, 34–35

[Jesus said,] “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.”

***When we follow this
commandment and
love each other,
we actually make present
the new heaven
and new earth.***

A Word from Pope Francis

The love that we receive from the Lord is the force that transforms our lives. It opens our hearts and enables us to love.... As I myself am loved, so I can love others.... “As” he loved me, so I can love others. The Christian life is just that simple. Let’s not make it more complicated.

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 15, 2022



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How has the love of other people made me a better person?
- In what ways does my love for others strengthen them?



Planting Seeds

Br. Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourrette

The simple act of sowing and planting seeds in due season is a powerful and most rewarding one for both gardeners and farmers. The power comes from the fact that in cooperating

with the Creator, we build up our own food security and that of those who partake of our table. We basically garden to feed ourselves naturally, inexpensively, and in a healthy manner, and there is always the added joy when the fruit of our work is shared with others.

It is a command from the revealed word of God not to hurt the environment and to care for the land, the water, and all living things, God's own creation. And among these living things we include not only all human

beings but also the kingdoms of animals and vegetation. Planting continues in earnest in our gardens during the early May days: we divide and transplant certain herbs and perennials, and ceaselessly we continue planting seeds in the vegetable garden: carrots, beets, turnips, radishes. There is a perennial mystery in the propagation of plants from tiny, almost microscopic, seeds. Again the Lord provides human beings with this wonderful gift, this unique reality called a seed. And from the seeds, all our food in the vegetation kingdom is raised weekly, monthly, yearly. As a Chinese proverb tells us: "All the flowers (and all the vegetables) of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today." †

***The Lord provides
human beings with
this wonderful
gift...a seed.***

From *Walk in His Ways: A Monastic Journey of Life and Light* by Br. Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourrette, Liguori Publications (822858). To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "The Communion of Saints: People Who Need People" by Leonard Foley, OFM

There is a deadly attitude that can poison my life. It can be expressed very logically: my salvation depends on me. I am the one who has to work hard, try and try again, be faithful. Then, someday I will get my reward. I hope you get your reward, too, but that's your problem, not mine. We are not saved as isolated individuals. We go to God together, or we don't go at all. Isn't that absurd? Aren't we to create a safe zone around ourselves where we are protected from people we don't want to deal with? The fact is, God could not make people who would be "normal" human beings living that way. God couldn't make people who don't need people.

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Lord Jesus, teach me
to act lovingly even when
I do not feel loving;
to be compassionate with
those I find difficult; and
to never take for granted
my family and dear friends.
Amen! Alleluia!

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 19–24

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


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

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Bringing Home the Word

Sixth Sunday of Easter (C)

May 25, 2025

Times Are a-Changin’

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Today’s gospel expands on a theme mentioned on the fourth Sunday of Easter, namely, change in religious practice. Many good people find some Second Vatican Council changes difficult to accept. For example, they may not like the new Mass form or leniency in Church discipline. This dissatisfaction is not necessarily because they are stubborn or unbending. It could be they were taught that the truth of the Church is eternal and unchanging, and they want to see that reflected in the liturgy.

The fundamentals of our faith as expressed in the Creed have not changed,

but the ways we understand or practice our faith have gradually developed. For instance, the Mass is still the Mass, with two essential parts. Yet, the wording of some prayers has changed, and, at Mass, we stand more and kneel less. Most are cultural changes, but there are some changes in theological understandings, too. We now recognize the religious value of other faith traditions; interfaith marriage is allowed with special permission; and we understand the teachings of the Bible in new ways.

Today’s reading from Acts shows that, from its beginning, the Church changed. Paul and Barnabas did not require Gentile believers to conform to circumcision—a Jewish, not Christian, practice. Dissension arose. But, the Holy Spirit helped the leaders in Jerusalem move beyond long-standing past practices and into a new way of being faithful. We believe the Holy Spirit continues to work through believers to ensure that the gospel is always faithful, yet newly meaningful. †

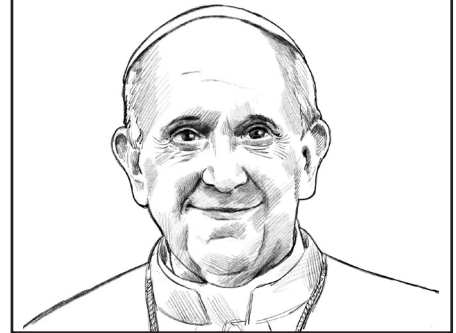


The fundamentals of our faith as expressed in the Creed have not changed.

A Word from Pope Francis

No sin, no failure, no grudge should discourage us from insistently asking for this gift from the Holy Spirit who gives us peace.... The more we sense we are nervous, impatient, angry inside, the more we need to ask the Lord for the Spirit of peace. Let us learn to say every day, “Lord, give me your peace, give me your Holy Spirit.”

REGINA CAELI, ROME, MAY 22, 2022



Sunday Readings

Acts 15:1–2, 22–29

It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities.

Revelation 21:10–14, 22–23

The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light.

John 14:23–29

[Jesus said,] “The Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Have there been changes that make me feel afraid or anxious?
- What do I need the Holy Spirit to help me with?



Peace on Earth Starts at Home

Barbara Canale

If only there could be peace on earth, or at least no war. On Memorial Day, let us remember all of the men and women who died while serving our country. Let us ponder the

sacrifices they and their families made to ensure our freedom and the freedom of others. If only we could achieve world peace. To begin, we must have peace within our own families. Consider how peaceful your home is living with a teenager.

Your home is supposed to be a sanctuary. It isn't easy to create a tranquil environment with kids in the house. Teenagers tend to be synonymous with noise and mess.

**To begin, we must
have peace
within our own
families.**

Quell the racket by listening to relaxing music. Clear out the clutter, and some of the chaos might go, too. Close your teenager's bedroom door if the room is messy. Get involved in a hobby or community service. Sometimes, too much togetherness or boredom creates tension in families. When there's a hobby, project, or place where you can seek asylum, it's easier to feel peaceful. Be mindful of your family's daily stresses. It's easy to take your family for granted, but show respect for them and remember that they have feelings, too. Pick your battles carefully with teenagers. Let the little things go. Instead, challenge the important issues. †

From *Hope and a Whole Lotta Prayer: Daily Devotions for Parents of Teenagers* by Barbara Canale, Liguori Publications (825828). To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

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

Who is the Spirit? The Spirit is simply God, present and active everywhere, pervading our lives. This basic but profound reality bears repeating today because so many do not experience God's nearness but think of God as quite distant. This is most unfortunate. For God is with us always and everywhere: past, present, in and out of religious settings. Through the Spirit, the risen Christ is present with us everywhere and in every moment, as pervasive as the air we breathe, the sun and the rain that come down on us, the wind that blows around us, the life that flows through our veins. This is the God we're talking about when we speak of the Spirit.

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Lord Jesus, as you promised your Spirit to comfort, guide, and protect your Church, please open my mind and heart to the promptings of your Spirit. Amen! Alleluia!

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 26–31

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

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