



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2008 SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER/THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD
The torch has been passed

Whether or not we're asked to believe that in the celebration of the Ascension of the Lord

Jesus literally levitated to the clouds, we can still understand the imagery. We've seen film taken from rockets as the launch pad grows smaller and gradually we see more and more of the earth, even to its entirety. The higher you go, the more is within your range of view. So also the message of Christ begins in a tiny country 2,000 years ago, but its purpose and effect go out, wider and wider, to all the world. How? The angels charmingly tease the disciples: "Why are you standing there looking at the sky?" In other words, "You who are church, you who are the body of Christ on earth: Get going. You've got work to do." Christ is no longer here in his flesh, but Christ is here in yours.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Seventh Sunday: Acts 1:12-14; 1 Peter 4:13-16; John 17:1-11a/Ascension: Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:17-23; Matthew 28:16-20*

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem . . . to the ends of the earth."

MONDAY, MAY 5 EASTER WEEKDAY
Empty or full?

What is Saint Paul's problem? He seems to be splitting hairs in Acts when he insists that the baptism rendered by John the Baptist isn't as good as the baptism in Jesus' name. But remember: John baptized folks for the sake of repentance. This emptied you of former sins. Meanwhile, the baptism of Jesus fills us with his Spirit. Jesus once warned about the danger of sweeping your house clean of demons and leaving it vulnerably empty. It's never enough to get rid of the bad. We've got to embrace the good. Open your heart to the Spirit of goodness.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 19:1-8; John 16:29-33*

"Paul said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?'"

TUESDAY, MAY 6
Worldly wisdom

In various faith circles you will hear the call to be "in the world but not of it." What does being in the world suggest to you? Perhaps it evokes images of our mortality, our limitations, the fact that we all fall under the laws of nature. Or perhaps it evokes images of overreaching materialism, of the desire for worldly possessions. But might the words also lead us to ponder the incarnate (literally, "enfleshed") nature of our faith and our God? No other tradition brings the divine and the human together in quite the same way as Christianity does, where the two realities coexist in one person. Perhaps this is what it can mean to be "in the world but not of it."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 20:17-27; John 17:1-11a*

"And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world . . ."

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7 EASTER WEEKDAY
And the work goes on

At his death, Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa said, "Don't let it end like this. Tell them I said something," a hope to be remembered by at least a memorable word. As Easter continues to echo in 2008, we have not only noble words and mighty deeds

by which to remember the Risen One, but a monumental task because he did not wish to leave only what he said and did, but that the Father's work continue through our own hands. He had been sent; he sends us—perhaps with memorable words or deeds of our own but assuredly with the task of loving one another. If we do, his transforming love will not end.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 20:28-38; John 17:11b-19*

"As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world."

THURSDAY, MAY 8 EASTER WEEKDAY
See how they smile

"I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together." So goes the opening line of the Beatles hit "I Am the Walrus." Who's to know if "the eggman" is an Easter reference or if John is the walrus? But the verse bears an uncanny resemblance to the Lord's words in the gospel: "I in them and you in me, that they may be . . ." together! Togetherness is a sweet goal; it is the joy of relationships, family, and community. It is the unity of the Holy Spirit poured out at Pentecost. Pray for the love of God and you might be the walrus!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 22:30; 23:6-11; John 17:20-26*

"And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

FRIDAY, MAY 9 EASTER WEEKDAY
The God of second chances

The story of Saint Peter is one of the most fascinating in the New Testament. He veered between misunderstanding and understanding, denial and faith, but always came through in the end. He got second chances and took advantage of them. Having breakfast with the risen Jesus and the other disciples, he had the opportunity to reverse his earlier three denials of knowing Christ when Jesus asked him—three times—if Peter loved him. To each of Peter's professions of love, Jesus responded with "feed my sheep, tend my lambs": Jesus the good shepherd was telling Peter to be the same for the community. Despite life's failures, God always holds out the offer of return. Be like Peter and accept it.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 25:13b-21; John 21:15-19*

"Jesus said to Peter; 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'"

SATURDAY, MAY 10 EASTER WEEKDAY
Limited options

We only have one choice as disciples: Follow Jesus. We can whine and rail and question and doubt, but in the end our task remains the same: Follow Jesus. What does it mean to follow Jesus? To be willing to give our lives for the sake of others. It sounds extreme, but most of us do this every day as we care for our families, serve in our communities, and provide dedicated work on the job. Giving of yourself doesn't require anything in return. So nothing can stop the process. No waiting around for gratitude or favors or comparing who got what. Just follow Jesus.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; John 21:20-25*

"Jesus said to Peter; 'If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!'"

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