



Ministry of Praise

3-9
May

Weekly Intentions:

~For those receiving their first Communion today.

~For our school children as they finish their last few weeks of school.

~For those who are considering their vocation, may they hear God's call.

~That God will help us to know and complete our mission for the Church.

~For our own intentions.



SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2009

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER; WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Wanted: More shepherds

Today the church invites us to pray for vocations. Consider starting with a prayer about your own religious vocation. Have you considered religious life, holy orders, or lay ministry? Living a life of Christian witness carries with it much responsibility, but when practiced with humility and compassion it engenders a life of great joy. The church needs you and your commitment to serve. Be open to unexpected options, and in the words of Pope John Paul II, "Trust Christ, because he trusts you."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 4:8-12; 1 John 3:1-2; John 10:11-18*

MONDAY, MAY 4

EASTER WEEKDAY Cleanliness and godliness

The notion of what is "clean" and "unclean" is very important in Judaism, especially among Orthodox Jews. Purification rituals are observed for a variety of occasions, and many of them require the ritual washing of the hands, or at times a full immersion. Early Christianity had to struggle with questions of purity as it grew and encountered the Gentile world. Some say that baptism represents a form of ritual purification adapted from Judaism, and that even the dipping of fingertips in holy water upon entering church is part of that tradition. The apostle Peter helped the early church move beyond a narrow definition of purity. Spend some time today reflecting on

what helps you feel "clean and pure" spirituality, and then practice it.
TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 11:1-18; John 10:1-10*

TUESDAY, MAY 5

EASTER WEEKDAY

Do as I do

In Elizabethan England many Catholic priests traveled in secret; if captured, they faced possible death at the hands of the government. At one such execution, of the Jesuit Edmund Campion, a young man standing at the front of the crowd was struck by Campion's blood. That man, Henry Walpole, became a Jesuit himself and in his time a martyr. At another execution much earlier in the history of the church, that of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, stood another bystander, then a leading persecutor of Christians and later one of its greatest saints: Paul. In these stories the sacrifice of one inspired a life of sacrifice in another. Isn't that the calling of Christians in all times: to see in Jesus' sacrifice the model for giving oneself to God and others?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 11:19-26; John 10:22-30*

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

EASTER WEEKDAY

Your mission, if you choose to accept it

One of the most important questions we can ask ourselves is "What is my mission in life?" Perhaps no question is as critical to living a life of purpose as this one. The author Frederick Buechner wrote, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." So ask your-



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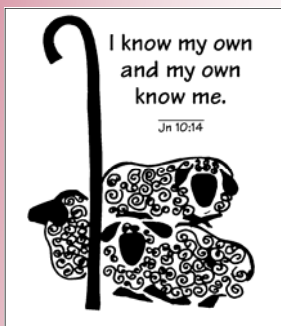
“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

“What God has made clean, you must not call profane.”

“Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch.”

“Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.”



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self, *What do I love to do? What feels life-giving, as opposed to life-draining? What would be most helpful to my family, my community, the world?* If, after answering these questions, you still don't know what your mission is, ask God to help you find it. Then prepare to be amazed.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 12:24-13:5a; John 12:44-50*

THURSDAY, MAY 7 EASTER WEEKDAY

“Are you talking to me?”

In the gospels Jesus' words are often directed to a particular group of people—to the Pharisees and scribes, the crowd, his disciples. Most of us regularly hear the Word of God in a large group, the liturgical assembly where, Vatican II reminds us, the presence of Christ is as real as the Eucharist. But faith can also be enlivened in other gatherings like Bible study groups, small Christian communities, a men's or women's group, in the family. Paying attention to what Jesus says when we pray with an open Bible, or with a group of believers, can help to assure that we are becoming more transparent to the Christ within.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 13:13-25; John 13:16-20*

FRIDAY, MAY 8 EASTER WEEKDAY

Help in troubled times

What is troubling your heart today? What causes anxiety? The economy? Keeping a job? A family member or friend in difficulty? Loneliness? In Christ we have the foundation no trouble can shake. Jesus spoke of his troubled

heart in the garden before his crucifixion. Yet not even death could keep him from the fulfillment God the Father promised. The disciples worried about their world that came apart when Jesus was arrested and put to death. Even after they encountered the risen Christ, they were fearful. Yet he promised them “another Advocate,” the Spirit that would uphold them and sustain them through hard times—and will support you through any trouble.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 13:26-33; John 14:1-6*

SATURDAY, MAY 9 EASTER WEEKDAY

Somebody's got to do it

Living the gospel can be a thankless job. In fact, it can be downright dangerous. Persecution has been part of the life of Christians since the church began. Paul and the first disciples faced beatings, imprisonment, mockery, and derision. Yet something about their experience of God was so compelling that they couldn't help but preach and live the good news. Though understandably discouraged at times, and probably even doubtful, the early disciples persevered and, as scripture records, they were “filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.” Today we still face emotional and sometimes physical persecution from folks who don't quite get the gospel, including those with “high standing” in our lives. Let us pray for the courage of our foremothers and forefathers to resolutely live the gospel.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 13:44-52; John 14:7-14*