

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



The Way

Eternal God,
you sent your Son to become one of us
and teach us how to be in relationship
with you.

Thank you for showing us the way
to you through Jesus.

He is the great gift of our lives.
Help us remain close
to one another in Christian friendship.
Strengthen the bonds of love in
our family.

Unite us as one in our faith community
and assist us as we seek
to show others the way, the truth,
and the life.

Through Christ the risen Lord. Amen.

Sunday, May 7, 2023

The Way, The Truth, The Life

Today's readings: Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 33:1-5, 18-19; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12. When we read the words of Jesus with two thousand years of salvation history in our rearview mirror, it all seems clear. Jesus repeatedly tells the disciples exactly who he is, who sent him, and where he is going. He promises his disciples, whom he loved with human and divine power, that they will remain close for all eternity. Human death will not destroy the bonds of love and relationship.

This promise, first spoken to the disciples shortly after Jesus washed their feet, extends to believers across the generations as well. He offers a compass so that we can always stay close. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). There it is: we remain close to God by remaining close to Jesus. Last Sunday, Jesus told us that he is the sheep gate. Today he tells us he is the "way" and the "truth" and the "life." Follow his way. Believe his truth. And you will have life eternal.

At that moment of revelation, the disciples responded with questions and confusion. But with the advantage of knowing the full story, we can proceed with confidence, faith, and trust. In our prayer today we ask God to "constantly accomplish the paschal mystery* within us" that we baptized Christians may "bear much fruit" in our lives and eventually "come to the joys of life eternal." Persevere in following the footsteps of Jesus, confident they lead to eternal joy with him.

*In dying he destroyed our death; and in rising he restored our life. Now every death gets a resurrection.



Art by / Ilustración de James B. Janknegt © LTP

This Week at Home

Monday, May 8

God First

Our message for today is captured in the response to Psalm 115, “Not to us, LORD, not to us / but to your name give the glory” (115:1). Across all time people fall into the trap of worshipping false gods and the temptation has only grown with the emergence of social media and celebrity. The first commandment that God gave so long ago spells it out clearly. The first disciples and all those who follow are called to point the way to the Triune God. Attend to how you spend your time and where you place your energy: Who or what do you place first in your life? If not God, is it time for realignment?

Today’s readings: Acts 14:5–18; Psalm 115:1–4, 15–16; John 14:21–26.

Tuesday, May 9

Be Persistent

Paul and Barnabas demonstrate unstoppable persistence in their single-focused mission to bring the good news to all who will listen. They tenaciously give witness to all the ways God has accompanied and supported them through trials and tests. Our primary call as baptized Christians is to live in such a way that we are constantly giving glory to God. Small gestures count as much as large gestures. How do you give glory to God in the small details of your day? *Today’s readings: Acts 14:19–28; Psalm 145:10–13, 21; John 14:27–31a.*

Wednesday, May 10

Remain

God deeply desires to be close to us. Jesus reveals this desire when he proclaims that he is the vine and we are the branches. Read John 15:1–8 carefully and count how many times Jesus uses the word *remain*. Jesus ardently implores his disciples and all of us to remain close to him. We can see the closeness of God in the new spring growth of branches, leaves, and flower buds. Jesus uses the familiar image of the vine and the branches to help us visually comprehend the closeness he desires. He is the vine; we are the branches. Look for the signs of God in creation. Can you see them? *Today’s readings: Acts 15:1–6; Psalm 122:1–5; John 15:1–8.*

Thursday, May 11

Love and Joy

Jesus’ words to his disciples read like a Christmas card. He encourages them to know and feel the love of God that he knows with his Abba (father). Place yourself in the room with the disciples. Jesus wishes this knowledge of love for each of us. Receive it as a gift and allow it to unwrap great joy in your heart. Follow his example and tell someone you love them today. *Today’s readings: Acts 15:7–21; Psalm 96:1–3, 10; John 15:9–11.*

Friday, May 12

Love One Another

Jesus’ words move from invitatory to commanding. In this next passage from John’s Gospel he tells the disciples straight out, “This is my commandment: love one another” (John 15:12). Parents say it to their children. Marriage counselors say it to husbands and wives. Pastors say it to parishioners. We are called to stick together as a family with love as the binding agent. Tack the commandment on a note card where you will see it over and over again. *Today’s readings: Acts 15:22–31; Psalm 57:8–12; John 15:12–17.*

Saturday, May 13

Called and Chosen

When walking as a disciple feels hard, remember the assurances Jesus offered to his followers in John 15:19, “I have chosen you.” God calls and chooses us to be joyful and courageous witnesses in the communities where we are planted. We are not alone; God walks with us. Look for an opportunity to share your faith with someone new today. *Today’s readings: Acts 16:1–10; Ps 100:1–5; John 15:18–21.*