

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Boldly Confess

God of power and might,
by crushing death on the cross,
your Son, Jesus,
revealed your majesty and restored
us to life.

Give us ears to hear your voice,
and call us out of the darkness
of the tomb.

Help us, like your servant Martha,
to boldly confess our faith in Jesus.
May the Holy Spirit
rouse us to share the Good News
so others might know of your mercy.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, April 6, 2025

Instead, You Could Have . . .



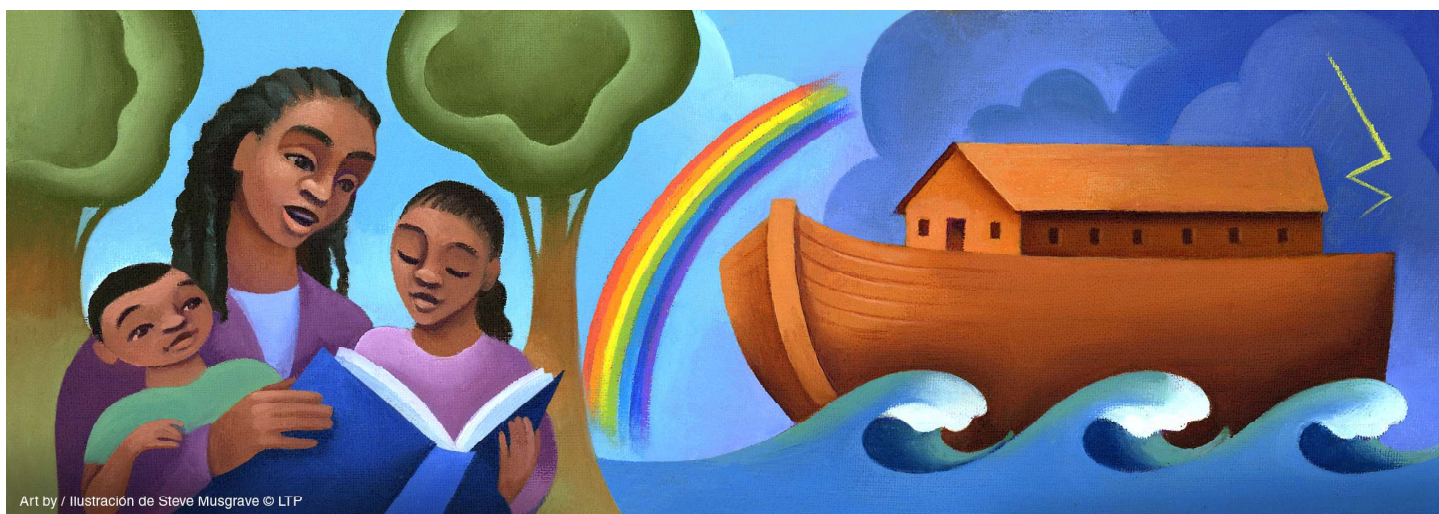
*Today's readings: Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126;
Philippians 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8.*

No other book of the Bible talks about love the way John talks about love. Even if a person doesn't know another thing about this gospel, never went to vacation Bible school, sang a hymn, sat in a pew, or stared at a stained-glass window, chances are good they will perk up at familiar echoes of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world."

Love is leaking out of this gospel book like water from a hose with no gasket, and who knows where it all goes? "I love you, you should love me," Jesus says. And love one another too—colleagues and culprits, defamers and defenders, the near and the far, bullies, bandits, and bores. "Love." It is Jesus' nonnegotiable command. So, you'd expect that the hangers-on, the stick-arounds, the learners and leaders and even the laggards-behind whose names and faces and brief bios show up in John's chapters would be specialists in the art of loving.

Some of those gospel characters were together one night in Bethany, a little village just over the hills from Jerusalem. A dinner (it was holiday time) was being hosted in the home of Jesus' friends Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. But the festive gathering was menaced. They were on edge in the intimacy of the room. Uneasiness stirred in the streets, rebels' causes brewed in shadows and braved daylight. Rumors and plots swirled as they do in troubled times—times that ignore commands, are deaf to pleas, and mislay impulses to love.

When love does not know what to do or how to act; when it struggles with itself and feels imperfect or too thin, unfinished and inadequate; when the campaigns and monuments and funds and meals and letters seem not enough . . . look at Mary. She leads the way by kneeling at the feet of love itself. There we find the path toward love.



This Week at Home

Monday, April 7

Share mercy

Today's gospel calls us to "be merciful." Merciful actions beget mercy. "The measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you," Jesus tells the disciples. Act on one of the seven corporal works of mercy: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead, give alms to the poor.

Today's readings: Daniel 9:4b–10; Psalm 79:8, 9, 11; Luke 6:36–38.

Tuesday, April 8

Speaking this way

"Many came to believe in him [Jesus]" because of the way he spoke. His preaching focused on radical service, compassionate forgiveness, and always pointed to God the Father. How do you speak and carry yourself? Does it point to God? How can you speak in a way that is pleasing to God? *Today's readings: Numbers 21:4–9; Ps 102:2–3, 16–21; Jn 8:21–30.*

Wednesday, April 9

Be free

Jesus responds to the Jews: "Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin." To be free from sin, we must actively choose to turn to God, repent, and resolve to do better. As we approach Holy Week, take time for confession and reconciliation with God and neighbor. Prepare yourself with an examination of conscience or as Luthe suggested, a reflection upon the 10 Commandments. Consider journaling as a part of your prayerful reflection. Indeed, the truth will set us free! *Today's readings: Daniel 3:14–20, 52–56, 91–92; John 8:31–42.*

Thursday, April 10

Friendship with Jesus

Jesus answers the religious leaders who are persecuting him: he tells them that he knows the Father. They continue to challenge him and, in today's gospel, throw stones at him. Set time aside today to reflect on your friendship with Jesus. What have you done to cultivate a friendship with him? What have you done to "throw stones" at him? As a part of your reflection, resolve to an action you can commit that will help you grow in relationship with Jesus: consider daily prayer, spending time serving someone who is impoverished, reading the Bible regularly, or visiting the elderly. *Today's readings: Genesis 17:3–9; Psalm 105:4–9; John 8:51–59.*

Friday, April 11

He heard

Joining the psalmist today, we proclaim: "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice." The Lord is with us in our joys and sorrows. Before you go to sleep tonight, pray with today's psalm. Read the psalm once to familiarize yourself with it. Read it a second time, paying attention to what the psalmist calls God: strength, fortress, shield. *Today's readings: Jeremiah 20:10–13; Psalm 18:2–7; John 10:31–42.*

Saturday, April 12

Preparing

The end of Lent is near. Holy Week begins tomorrow with the Palm Sunday procession and reading out of the Passion. Reflect on your Lenten journey today. Before Holy Week begins, check when Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services are being held. Add them to your calendar and participate in these liturgies. *Today's readings: Ezekiel 37:21–28; Jeremiah 31:10, 11–13; John 11:45–56.*