

APRIL

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**CYCLE C
YEAR II**

Friday, April 1, 2016
(Lec. 265)

- 1) Acts 4:1-12
- 2) John 21:1-14

FRIDAY
WITHIN THE OCTAVE
OF EASTER

FOCUS: The truth is the Truth.

As disciples of Christ, we are called to be witnesses to the truth. We witness with our lives. Our testimony in Jesus' name may not bring about a miracle, as it did with Peter and John. But the truth is powerful, especially when one testifies to it in the presence of nonbelievers.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading John and Peter, confronted while held in custody by the Jewish leadership, testify to the truth: They were able to heal in the name of Jesus Christ, *the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone*. In the Gospel, the risen Jesus appears again to his disciples. This time it is at the sea of Tiberias, where he shares breakfast with them.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Seeking to be raised up to a newer and fuller life in the risen Lord Jesus, let us, with conviction and confidence, offer our prayers of petition to God, our Father.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may he continue to inspire the faithful to be zealous, joyful proclaimers of the saving work of Jesus Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For lawmakers, may they form and enact policies that protect and safeguard the dignity and sanctity of human life from conception until natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are persecuted for their Christian faith, may they turn to the Holy Spirit for the strength, grace and courage to remain faithful witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For members of this faith community, may we be strengthened and nourished at this Eucharistic banquet so we may continue to boldly profess our faith to all those we encounter today, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died marked with the sign of faith, may their witness to the Gospel during their earthly life merit them eternal salvation in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God Almighty, hear the prayers we offer to you today with confidence that you will grant them according to your holy will. Through Christ, our Lord.

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Saturday, April 2, 2016
(Lec. 266)

- 1) Acts 4: 13-21
- 2) Mark 16:9-15

SATURDAY
WITHIN THE OCTAVE
OF EASTER

FOCUS: Experiencing the truth sets us free.

It appears that our readings today discuss different sets of Apostles. In the Gospel, they do not believe the accounts of those who have experienced the resurrected Christ. In the first reading, they remain faithful to Christ despite being threatened. What is the catalyst for the change? They experienced the resurrected Christ, the Truth, who banished their mourning and weeping. It is one thing to hear about something, it is quite another to experience it.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading from Acts tells of the Sanhedrin ordering Peter and John never to speak or teach about Jesus again. They respond to the Sanhedrin by saying that it would be impossible for them not to speak about him. The Gospel reading recounts Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalen. The Apostles, upon hearing Mary's news, do not believe her. Jesus also appears to two disciples who were traveling, and finally appears to the eleven Apostles. He rebukes them for their unbelief.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As Easter people, we celebrate the salvific work of Christ who has won victory over sin and death. We are set free by the truth. Let us offer our prayers with joy-filled hearts and assured hope that God will grant them according to our need.

- 1) For the Church, the mystical body of Christ, may she, like the Apostles, continue to proclaim the Gospel with boldness and zeal to all those who have yet to be set free by the truth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, may they open their hearts to hearing the truth, and enact laws and policies that help bring about greater peace and justice in their nation and in the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are mourning and weeping as a result of losing loved ones to violence, war or natural disaster, may they garner hope and courage through the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of the Good News from Christian disciples, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For each of us, may we, having been nourished by Jesus in word and sacrament, be strengthened and emboldened to share the Good News with others through our actions of kindness, love and compassion, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, may they come to enjoy eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God and Father, hear and answer our prayers according to your will. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 2016

(Lec. 45)

- 1) Acts 5:12-16
- 2) Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19
- 3) John 20:19-31

**SECOND SUNDAY
OF EASTER or
DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY
- SOLEMNITY**

FOCUS: We are to bear a faithful witness to the Gospel by the example of our lives.

We have come to believe in the risen Lord through the witness and example of faithful Christians, the testimony of sacred Scripture, and through the graces of the sacraments. Blessed with such a great gift which imparts upon us an abundance of blessings, let us, through the example of our lives, bear a faithful witness to the Gospel.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of the Apostles working many signs and wonders among the people in Jerusalem. The second reading tells of the personal price John the Apostle paid for preaching the Gospel message. In the Gospel, Jesus invites Thomas to put his finger in his hand and his side so Thomas may believe he has truly risen.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With faith in the risen Lord, let us petition the Father with humility and bring him our needs.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all the bishops of the Church, may they continue to courageously bear witness to the truth of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders, may they turn to the Lord for guidance, and work to foster peace and cooperation in their communities, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are ill and for those who care for them, that they may be strengthened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all those received into the Church on Easter, may their faith increase and may their God-given gifts be a blessing to the Church and to this community, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, that they may see the resurrected Jesus face-to-face, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear the prayers we bring before you. Through Christ, our Lord.

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Monday, April 4, 2016
(Lec. 545)

- 1) Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10
- 2) Hebrews 10:4-10
- 3) Luke 1:26-38

**THE ANNUNCIATION
OF THE LORD
- SOLEMNITY**

FOCUS: Mary is the model of Christian humility, fear of the Lord and faithfulness.

Mary's response to being told that she is to be the mother of God – an honor beyond imagining – is one of true humility, wonder and awe. Her fiat is the first “yes” to Christ. It resounds throughout history in the echoes of every other “yes” spoken by disciples of Christ. She is the model for us to emulate in our discipleship.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah tells Israel that *the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel*, prophesying the birth of Jesus. The second reading from Hebrews emphasizes that animal sacrifices no longer suffice. Jesus is the one perfect sacrifice for the atonement of sins. In the Gospel, the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will conceive and bear a son, whom will be *great and rule over the house of Jacob forever*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: In confidence and trust, let us join in offering our prayers to our loving Father in heaven for our needs and those of the world.

- 1) For members of the Church, may they, through their devotion to Mary, the mother of God, be moved to live as more faithful disciples of her son, Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all humanity, may Mary continue to intercede on our behalf and draw us closer to her son, Jesus Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For parents who are struggling with saying “yes” to unplanned pregnancies, may the model of Mary's fiat banish fear and offer assured hope that God's graces, gifts and mercies abound for them and their unborn child, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the members of this faith community, may we, inspired by Mary, take time today to offer anew a resounding “yes” to living as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they be welcomed into the heavenly kingdom where they, along with Mary and all the saints and angels, offer an eternal hymn of praise before the throne of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we ask that you hear and answer our prayers and grant us the grace and strength to needed to do your will. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

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Tuesday, April 5, 2016
(Lec. 268)

- 1) Acts 4:32-37
- 2) John 3:7b-15

TUESDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF EASTER
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Vincent Ferrer, Priest)

FOCUS: Our belief draws us into communion with Christ and one another.

Belief in Christ – his life, death and resurrection – is the central tenet of all Christianity. While faith is a personal act, our journey toward eternal life is not to be traveled alone. The early Christian Church grew out of the love Jesus' followers had for him, and also from the love they had for one another.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's first reading describes the lives of those who made up the early Church. They prayed together, shared with one another and were blessed abundantly by God. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches, *Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Seeking to make God the ruler of our lives and hearts, let us join in offering our prayers to the Lord for our needs and those of the world.

- 1) For members of the Church, may we continue to be inspired by the Holy Spirit to proclaim Christ's love throughout the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For citizens around the world, may we strive to be better stewards of the earth's resources, and work to distribute them equitably, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are hungry or homeless, may they be comforted in their need by the assistance of compassionate Christians in this Jubilee Year of Mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those who are sick in body, mind or spirit, may they receive their hope from the Lord and trust in his compassion, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they experience the presence of the Father in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, hear the prayers of your people. Grant us what is necessary to do your will. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Wednesday, April 6, 2016
(Lec. 269)

- 1) Acts 5:17-26
- 2) John 3:16-21

WEDNESDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF EASTER

FOCUS: Love conquers all.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis states, "I wish to insist that love always proves more powerful." (LS 149) He can make such an emphatic statement because God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son. God loved first. He loved us into being, and through an act of love he redeemed and saved us. Love is of God. It will always prove more powerful.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the imprisoned Apostles are set free by an angel of the Lord. The angel commands them to preach the Gospel in the Temple area. They do so. The Gospel states: *God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.* Jesus came not to condemn the world, but to save it.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Emboldened by the knowledge that God is loving, merciful and compassionate, let us offer our prayers of petition to him.

- 1) For Church leaders, both clergy and lay, may they continue to serve the faithful with hearts of love that inspire us to perform acts of love and service, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those in diplomatic corps on behalf of their countries, may they carry out their diplomacy in humility and peacekeeping, confident that love is always more powerful than might and power, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those families who experience the pain of separation, may they remain steadfast in knowing that God's love, at work in their lives and families, is more powerful than anger, abandonment and fear, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here, may we always be a welcoming, loving community for those who join in our worship and communal life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died marked with the sign of faith, may they come to enjoy perfect happiness in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God almighty, you are the source of our life and love. Hear the prayers we lovingly offer today, and in your generosity and mercy answer them according to your will. Through Christ, our Lord.

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Thursday, April 7, 2016
(Lec. 270)

- 1) Acts 5:27-33
- 2) John 3:31-36

THURSDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF EASTER
(OBL. MEM
Saint John Baptist de la Salle,
Priest)

FOCUS: Belief in Jesus, God's beloved son, leads to eternal life.

Jesus was sent from heaven to earth by the Father. He reveals God to us and speaks God's words, but not everyone accepts him. The Father loves the Son and has put everything in his hands. If we believe in Jesus and live according to his teachings, as Saint John Baptist de la Salle did, we are given the promise and hope of eternal life.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of the Apostles being ordered by the members of the Jewish high court to stop teaching about Jesus. The Apostles respond by saying they cannot stop because they must be obedient to God rather than men. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that whoever places their faith in him will come to have eternal life.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting that God in his goodness and love provides for what we most truly need, let us join together in offering him our prayers and petitions.

- 1) For all those who serve the Church and devote their lives to bringing others to Jesus, that their efforts may be blessed with success, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For Christians everywhere who are enduring persecution, that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, they may have the courage and love to persevere in their faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer from chronic illness, that they may experience the presence of Jesus through the compassionate actions of those who care for them and comfort them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those new to the Church and those beginning preparations to join the Church, that they may experience the graces the Lord rains down upon all who seek to draw near to him, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our deceased loved ones and all who have died, that they might come to share eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of peace and grace, hear the prayers of your people and grant our petitions through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Friday, April 8, 2016
(Lec. 271)

- 1) Acts 5:34-42
- 2) John 6:1-15

FRIDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF EASTER

FOCUS: Ministry centered on Christ will bear fruit.

There is an adage that states, "Good ministry multiplies itself." Good ministry is Christ-centered ministry, not minister-centered ministry. Ministry that is rooted in prayer, Scripture and obedience to Christ will bear fruit. In essence, this is what Gamaliel alludes to in today's first reading, and it is evidenced in Christ's multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Christ alone satisfies the needs and hungers that sustain ministry.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Gamaliel, a respected teacher, warns the Sanhedrin to be careful of their treatment of the Apostles. He states that if their preaching is of human origins, it will destroy itself. *If it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy them; you may even find yourselves fighting against God.* In the Gospel, Jesus performs the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fishes.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Relying on Jesus to satisfy the hungers and longings of our hearts, let us offer our prayers of petition, trusting they will bear fruit for the Church, our world and ourselves.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may his humility and faith-filled conviction continue to inspire people to return to the Church and the practice of the faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of governments, may they turn to God for guidance, and view their leadership through the lens of service, not power, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who work tirelessly in the ministries of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, may they continue to rely on prayer, Scripture and obedience to Christ to sustain them in their ministry, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those involved in the ministries of this faith community, may they continue to grow in their relationship with Christ and always be mindful that their ministry is on behalf of Christ and his Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they rest in eternal peace in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious God, in your goodness and love we ask that you hear and answer our prayers, which we offer you through Christ, our Lord.

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Saturday, April 9, 2016
(Lec. 272)

- 1) Acts 6:1-7
- 2) John 6:16-21

SATURDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF EASTER

FOCUS: *It is I. Do not be afraid.*

As followers of Christ, we may be challenged by the unexpected. Like the Apostles, we can have a deep desire to follow Christ, but that may not prepare us for experiencing his power, especially when it is presented in ways that defy logic. We can take heart that in our fear and doubt, Christ does not abandon us. He assures us by reasserting: *It is I. Do not be afraid.*

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the Acts of the Apostles, to accommodate the Church's growth, the Apostles appoint seven individuals to tend to the corporal needs of the community so that they can continue their ministry of prayer and preaching. In the Gospel, the Apostles, adrift on the sea, experience a storm. Jesus walks on the water and assures them: *It is I. Do not be afraid.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting that Christ remains present to us in our fears, doubts and longings, let us confidently offer our prayers of petition to the Father for the Church, the world and ourselves.

- 1) For bishops, priests and deacons, may their firm faith in Christ continue to serve as a model to the faithful to take heart in times of doubt, fear and disillusionment, trusting that Christ is always present in his Church and in their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may their leadership, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, model a compassion and mercy that inspires those they govern to overcome mistrust, thereby building civic communities of hospitality and understanding, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are suffering in body, mind or spirit, may they place their trust and hope in Christ, so they may receive the strength needed to persevere amidst their trials and experience healing and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those present here today, may we trust in the promises of Christ in times of struggle and crisis, overcoming any fear that may separate us from the love of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died marked with the sign of faith, may they come to enjoy eternal peace in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, hear the prayers offered to you today. Grant them according to your divine will for our lives. Through Christ, our Lord.

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SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 2016

(Lec. 48)

- 1) Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41
- 2) Revelation 5:11-14
- 3) John 21:1-19 or 21:1-14

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

FOCUS: Our Eucharistic celebration resounds with a bold proclamation: *Worthy is the Lamb*.

The second reading offers a vibrant visual of what is taking place during our Sunday Mass. As the *Catechism* says, "In the earthly liturgy we share in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy." (CCC 1090) Like the Apostles in the first reading, we, through our prayer and ritual action, boldly profess Jesus as Lord. Again, according to the *Catechism*, we "join the unending praise that the Church in heaven, the angels and all the saints sing." (CCC 1352)

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Peter and the Apostles are again ordered not to preach in Jesus' name. They boldly proclaim, *We must obey God rather than men*. In the reading from Revelation, John shares a vision of witnessing all of creation giving praise and honor to the Lamb who was slain. The Gospel recounts a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to the disciples, where Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Emboldened by the love God has for his Church and confident in his generosity, let us offer our prayers of intercession, bound with those of the communion of saints, as we pray for the Church, the world and ourselves.

- 1) For the Church, the mystical body of Christ, may her continual liturgical hymn of praise inspire those who have abandoned their faith to return to God and his infinite mercy, compassion and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, may they seek opportunities for mercy and reconciliation with other nations that bring about communion among peoples and peaceful resolutions to strife and war, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are considering ending life through abortion, euthanasia or other actions, may they turn to the Holy Spirit during their decision-making and come to realize the love, God has for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those of us gathered here today, may we offer heartfelt prayers of gratitude and praise for the blessings God has given and those yet to come, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead and all who have died, may they join the angels and saints in singing God's praises for all eternity in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God almighty, we offer you our unending hymn of praise. We are witnesses to your love and mercy, which gives us the confidence to offer our prayers of petition. Grant them according to your divine will, through Christ, our Lord.

Monday, April 11, 2016
(Lec. 273)

- 1) Acts 6:8-15
- 2) John 6:22-29

MONDAY OF
THIRD WEEK OF EASTER
(OBL. MEM. Saint Stanislaus,
Bishop and Martyr)

FOCUS: We are to stand steadfast in faith, come what may.

Each day, we are confronted by pressures of various sorts to act in ways that are not in accord with our faith and values. We are urged to seek happiness in the things of this world. Let us be steadfast in our faith, and recognize that our true treasure lies in heaven.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells how some faithful Jews, because they were not able to contend with the wisdom and the grace with which Stephen taught, stirred up resistance against Stephen, which ultimately led to his martyrdom. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches the crowd not to work for food that perishes, but rather food that endures for eternal life.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As believers in the risen Christ, let us present our needs to our heavenly Father, with confidence they will be heard and answered.

- 1) That Pope Francis may be blessed with the grace to preach the Gospel to the world, and encourage us to live that message each day of our lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That our nation's leaders may recognize their responsibility to work for the passage of laws that will uphold the dignity and sanctity of human life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are suffering from physical or mental illness may feel the touch and healing power of Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That our parish's neophytes, who entered the Church at the Easter Vigil, may continue to grow in faith and holiness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the faithful departed may enjoy eternal peace in the kingdom of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, hear and answer our prayers. For we offer them to you through Christ, our Lord.

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Tuesday, April 12, 2016
(Lec. 274)

TUESDAY OF
THIRD WEEK OF EASTER

- 1) Acts 7:51—8:1a
- 2) John 6:30-35

FOCUS: All our hungers are satisfied in Jesus.

Jesus performed many miracles, but people continued to ask for signs that he was sent by God. Do we act similarly? Do we believe that Jesus is the bread of life, and that if we come to him we will never hunger? What does that mean in our lives? What is the hunger Jesus removes from our lives? How much do we trust him?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's first reading tells of Stephen being stoned for blasphemy because he was teaching the Jews about Jesus. Saul consents to the execution. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that he is the bread of life, sent from heaven, and that those who come to him will never hunger.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting that God watches over us and provides for our needs, let us join in offering him our prayers and petitions.

- 1) That the example of those who minister in the Church may help others see that Jesus can satisfy the deepest hungers and yearnings of their hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That world and national leaders may turn to God for guidance and direction to discover ways to resolve conflicts and disputes nonviolently, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are suffering as a result of war or natural disasters may obtain peace through the help of people of good will, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That each of us may have a deeper reverence and respect for the Eucharist, and see it as a grace-filled means of growing in faith and holiness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may be granted a seat at the heavenly banquet, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, hear our prayers and grant what is consistent with your plan for our lives. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

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Wednesday, April 13, 2016
(Lec. 275)

- 1) Acts 8:1b-8
- 2) John 6:35-40

WEDNESDAY OF
THIRD WEEK OF EASTER
(Opt. Mem. Saint Martin I,
Pope and Martyr)

FOCUS: Let us remember that Jesus came to save all people, and that we are called to see his face in all whom we meet.

Out of personal bias, we might discount the faith of another person. Similarly, some of the early disciples did not expect Samaritans or pagans to believe in Jesus, and yet some of them did. This reminds us we are to give others the benefit of the doubt, that we are to strive to see the face of Christ in all we meet, and that Jesus came to save all people.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading recalls the dire persecution of the Church in Jerusalem. This resulted in many faithful followers fleeing the city and carrying the message of Jesus to the surrounding regions. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that everyone who believes in him will one day come to enter into eternal life in heaven.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Firmly trusting in the promise of Jesus that, if we remain steadfast in faith, we will come to share eternal life in heaven, let us join in offering our prayers to the Lord.

- 1) For all ministers in the Church, both clergy and lay, may they work tirelessly to spread the Good News and bring others to Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all people throughout the world, may we work to preserve God's gift of nature for future generations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer discrimination, may they find strength in their faith and seek to find peace through forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may we always reach out to welcome the stranger among us as we imitate Christ's compassion and love for all people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they see Jesus face-to-face in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear our prayers and strengthen us with your grace so we may lead lives that bear good fruit for you. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, April 14, 2016
(Lec. 276)

THURSDAY OF
THIRD WEEK OF EASTER

- 1) Acts 8:26-40
- 2) John 6:44-51

FOCUS: The Good News of Jesus, who is the bread of life, can vanquish the hunger of our world.

The joy of Easter continues to permeate the liturgy of the Church. We revel in this sacred joy in our lives, as we remain open to the mystery of the risen Lord present in our midst. The fifty days of Easter give us time to deepen our experience of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, the paschal mystery.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In our first reading today Philip the deacon, not to be confused with the Apostle Philip, instructs the Ethiopian eunuch in the text from the prophet Isaiah. Our passage from the Gospel of John is taken from the bread of life discourse, in which Jesus reveals to the crowds that he is *the living bread that came down from heaven*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Calling on our merciful God, let us offer our prayers and petitions on behalf of those in need throughout the world.

- 1) For all who are called to serve the Church, that their efforts to share the Good News of the risen Lord will bear much fruit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, that they will govern justly and work to uphold the dignity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have received the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist during this Easter season, that they may be filled with the joy of the risen Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the victims of violence or war, that they may find reason to hope in a better life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they find rest and know the peace of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, grant these prayers and all that we hold in the silence of our hearts, in the name of Jesus your son.

Friday, April 15, 2016
(Lec. 277)

FRIDAY OF
THIRD WEEK OF EASTER

- 1) Acts 9:1-20
- 2) John 6:52-59

FOCUS: God blesses and sustains us as we walk our pilgrim journey of faith.

Sometimes, we need something out of the ordinary to occur to wake us up. A surprise revelation or the death of a loved one might lead us to rethink the way we are living. No matter the circumstances, God is with us always on our journey of faith, giving us the grace and strength needed to persevere. However, we need to be open and trust in him.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's first reading tells of the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus. This results in Saul being transformed from a great persecutor of Christians to an Apostle, sent by Christ to preach the Gospel message to the Gentiles. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that those who eat his flesh and drink his blood will have his life within them.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring our needs before our merciful God, with confidence that he knows what we need.

- 1) That members of the Church, in mercy and in love, continue to reach out to those who have gone astray, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That world leaders will work to bring about peace between nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That parents and grandparents support and encourage their children and grandchildren in witnessing to their faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That those in our community who face difficult or unexpected pregnancies may receive the support they need to choose life for their babies, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died, and our beloved dead, might be with God for all eternity in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God and Father, we ask that you hear and answer our prayers. For we offer them to you through your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Saturday, April 16, 2016
(Lec. 278)

SATURDAY OF
THIRD WEEK OF EASTER

- 1) Acts 9:31-42
- 2) John 6:60-69

FOCUS: We must renew our faith often, asking the Lord for the strength to persevere.

As long as we are alive, we are never finished growing in faith. We must work each day to strengthen our love for Jesus. Understanding these realities, and that Jesus alone has the words of everlasting life, let us renew our commitment to Jesus this day and every day, so we may come to share eternal life in heaven.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles tells of the early Church being at peace, and steadily being built up in numbers. In the Gospel, many disciples depart from Jesus and return to their old way of life. But Peter speaks on behalf of those who remain, stating they are convinced that Jesus is the *Holy One of God* who has the words of eternal life.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting that the Lord watches over us and provides for our needs, let us join in offering him our prayers for our needs and those of the world.

- 1) That all members of the Church may be effective witnesses to the Gospel and proclaim Jesus' message of hope, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That all government officials may seek the Lord and call on his grace for assistance, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That all who are sick or suffering may turn to the Lord and seek the healing power of Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That those in our faith community may be open to the workings of the Holy Spirit in their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may come to enter into eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, in your goodness and love, hear and answer our prayers according to your will. For we ask them in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 2016

(Lec. 51)

- 1) Acts 13:14, 43-52
- 2) Revelation 7:9, 14b-17
- 3) John 10:27-30

**FOURTH SUNDAY
OF EASTER**

FOCUS: *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.*

Jesus Christ promises eternal life to all who follow him. We follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd, by recognizing his voice in Scripture and in the teachings of the Church, by listening to him speaking to our hearts in prayer, and by practicing his teachings in our daily lives. When the situation is appropriate, we share our faith with others.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of Paul and Barnabas shifting their focus to preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. The second reading offers a prophetic vision of a multitude of believers of every nation, race, people and tongue praising the Lamb of God in heaven. In the Gospel, Jesus promises eternal life to all who believe in him and walk in his way of love.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in the promises of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, we place our prayers before the Lord.

- 1) For leaders in our Church, that they may be good shepherds to those to whom they minister, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the leaders of nations, that they may support religious freedom, peace and justice for all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick of our community, that they may be comforted by the caregiving and compassion of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, that we may welcome strangers and be effective witnesses to the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may share eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to shepherd us into the kingdom of heaven. We ask that you hear our prayers this day, through Christ, our Lord.

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Monday, April 18, 2016
(Lec. 279)

MONDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF EASTER

- 1) Acts 11:1-18
- 2) John 10:1-10

FOCUS: Jesus is the gate through which we enter into eternal life.

Love is the fundamental criterion for being a Christian. This love is given to us freely by God, and we, in turn, are to love others and accept them with similar generosity. We are to manifest this love by helping one another follow the teachings and example of Jesus, who is the gate through which we enter into eternal life.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's first reading, Peter explains to the Jewish disciples why the Gentiles are to be granted baptism, and why their love of Jesus is to be the only criterion for membership in the Church. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that he is the gate through which we must pass through to be saved.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us stand together and offer our petitions to the Father, confident that he hears our prayers and provides what we need.

- 1) For priests, deacons and religious, that the example of their lives may continue to help us follow the teachings and example of Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders throughout the world, that they may serve their communities with integrity and wisdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer from discrimination or stigma, that they may be welcomed as contributing members of our community and comforted by compassionate Christians, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For each of us, may we strive to give of ourselves more generously in humble love and service to God and others, in imitation of our Lord and Savior Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they rest forever at peace in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we ask that you hear and answer our prayers. For we offer them to you through your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Tuesday, April 19, 2016
(Lec. 280)

TUESDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF EASTER

- 1) Acts 11:19-26
- 2) John 10:22-30

FOCUS: The work of all disciples is to believe in Jesus, hear his voice and follow him.

In today's Gospel, Jesus makes it very clear who will come to enjoy eternal life. He states quite frankly that those who do not believe are not among his sheep. When those who believe in him – his sheep – hear his voice, they will follow him and never perish.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles recounts Barnabas being sent to give a word of encouragement to the believers in Antioch. It was there that believers in Jesus were first called Christians. In the Gospel, Jesus gives the assurance that those who listen to him and follow him will come to enjoy eternal life in heaven.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As believers in Jesus, let us gather together in confidence, asking the Father to hear and answer our prayers.

- 1) For all leaders in the Church, may their work of evangelization draw many to Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those seeking public office, may they seek to uphold the sanctity of life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have yet to believe the Gospel message, may they hear and follow the voice of the Good Shepherd, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those suffering from addiction, may they be open to God's grace and healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they experience peace and everlasting life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, giver of all that is good, we trust in your mercy and love. We ask that you hear our prayers, through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Wednesday, April 20, 2016
(Lec. 281)

WEDNESDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF EASTER

- 1) Acts 12:24—13:5a
- 2) John 12:44-50

FOCUS: By allowing the light of Christ to shine in and through us, we can help bring healing and peace to the world.

Among the first disciples, Jesus was experienced as the risen Lord, the bearer of the light of God. Today, as Jesus' disciples, we are called to help bring healing and peace to the world. We are called to bring the light of Jesus into every place and every situation where darkness seems to diminish people's lives.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles recalls how the first disciples were *sent forth by the Holy Spirit* to carry the message and teachings of Jesus. The Gospel proclaims how Jesus came into the world as light, revealing God's commandment of eternal life for all who believe in the teachings of Jesus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Jesus, the risen Lord, invites us to bring the Light of God to the world. Thus, we offer our prayers and petitions to our heavenly Father.

- 1) That those who shepherd the Church may continue to carry out Christ's mission throughout the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That world leaders may attempt to solve the most difficult problems with justice and fairness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That all who feel alone as they face life's difficulties might be strengthened to persevere amidst their trials, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That we, as members of this faith community, may grow in our commitment to meet the risen Lord in prayer each day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the faithful departed may join with the angels and saints in heaven and rest in eternal joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O God, you gave us the risen Lord that we might see the fullness of your light in our own lives. We ask that you grant us what we need, in the name of your son, Jesus.

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Thursday, April 21, 2016
(Lec. 282)

- 1) Acts 13:13-25
- 2) John 13:16-20

THURSDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF EASTER
(Opt. Mem. Saint Anselm,
Bishop and Doctor of the Church)

FOCUS: The Gospel message comes to us in many ways, and through many people.

Good news comes in many forms: a telephone call, a letter, an Internet posting, or a friend's excited shout. The Good News of salvation can be shared in the same ways – God is not limited in his ability to share it with and through us. When we accept the Good News of salvation, we accept the One who authors it. Understanding this, let us strive to open our hearts more fully to the Gospel, so we may continue to grow in our faith and love for the Lord.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading recalls Paul preaching in Antioch in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Paul's teaching was clearly to show that Jesus truly was the Messiah, and Savior whom God had promised to send based on the Hebrew Scriptures, and other events in the history of Israel. In today's Gospel, after washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus reminds us of our call to humbly serve the needs of others.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in God's providence, we bring these prayers before him.

- 1) For all who minister and teach in the Church, may they continue to be guided by the light of the Holy Spirit and the strength of God's mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all who govern or have authority over others, may their decision making be prudent and just, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those suffering in mind or body, and for all who care for them, may they find consolation, peace, and strength through Christ's healing presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of faith, may we embrace our call to serve one another with compassion and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they enjoy eternal rest and peace in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious God, we praise you and thank you for all that you give us. Grant us, please, in your mercy, these prayers we have placed before you, through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Friday, April 22, 2016
(Lec. 283)

FRIDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF EASTER

- 1) Acts 13:26-33
- 2) John 14:1-6

FOCUS: Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

Jesus' passion, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven won forgiveness for our sins and opened the way to eternal life in heaven. His teachings and example reveal the way we are to live so we might come to share eternal life in heaven. Understanding this each day, let us walk in Jesus' way of love, for he is the way, the truth and the life.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Paul proclaims the Gospel in the synagogue in Pisidia by telling the group assembled about Jesus and the fulfillment of Scripture. In the Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples that he is going to prepare a place for them.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Brothers and sisters in Christ, with the knowledge of our heavenly Father's deep love, let us humbly offer our prayers and petitions for our needs and those of the world.

- 1) For members of the Church, that we may proclaim the Gospel message to all whom we meet, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the people of the world, that they may turn away from sin and hear and accept the Good News of salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are persecuted for proclaiming the Gospel, that they may find strength to continue their witness to the Good News, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our parish family, that the joy of the resurrection may continue to inspire us to proclaim the Gospel, both within our parish and in our communities, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may come to enjoy eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we ask that you hear and answer our prayers. For we offer them to you through your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Saturday, April 23, 2016
(Lec. 284)

- 1) Acts 13:44-52
- 2) John 14:7-14

SATURDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF EASTER
(Opt. Mem. Saint George, Martyr;
Saint Adalbert, Bishop and Martyr)

FOCUS: Share your faith with patience and perseverance.

Sharing our faith with others is not always easy. At times, we may be rejected. On other occasions, people may become angry and even push us away. And finally, there will be people who will sincerely try to understand, even if they are a bit confused at first. We need to show them patience, knowing that God comes to those who seek him.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of Paul and Barnabas focusing their energy and efforts on preaching the Gospel message to the Gentiles. In the Gospel, Philip asks Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus explains that whoever sees him also sees the Father, because Jesus and the Father are one.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us offer our prayers to God the Almighty Father, confident that they will be heard and answered according to his most holy will.

- 1) For all the faithful, may each of us become more engaged in doing our part to further the work and mission of the Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our youth, may they be supported and encouraged to consider vocations to the priesthood, religious life and lay ecclesial ministry, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who live with chronic mental illness, may they be blessed with the support and assistance they need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For members of this faith community, that we may answer God's call to service with humility, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may enjoy eternal peace in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious and loving God, we ask that you hear and answer our prayers this day. For we offer them to you through Christ, our Lord.

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SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2016

(Lec. 54)

- 1) Acts 14:21-27
- 2) Revelation 21:1-5a
- 3) John 13:31-33a, 34-35

**FIFTH SUNDAY
OF EASTER**

FOCUS: Behold, God has made all things new.

In this Easter season, we celebrate the timelessness of God's creation and loving intercession in the world: from the covenant with the Jews, through the incarnation of the Word, to our celebration of the Eucharist today. God's sacrificial love has redeemed us, creating a new heaven and a new earth, wiping away sin and death.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's Scriptures tell of God's love making all things new. In the first reading from Acts, we hear of the covenantal promise of salvation offered, for the first time, to the Gentiles. In the second reading from Revelation, we are given a new vision of this salvation. In today's reading from the Gospel of John, we receive a summation of the two great commandments, into one: Love one another as I have loved you.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With the assurance of God's abundant and ever-present love, let us place our needs before him.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may we be bearers of God's light and love to a world broken and divided by violence and indifference, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all leaders of communities and nations, may they be guided by a vision of integrity and a respect for the dignity of the human person, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who carry the cross of living with chronic illness, may they be blessed with appropriate health care to assist them in their need, and find strength in joining their sufferings to Christ's for the salvation of the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the members of this community, may our sharing of Word and sacrament strengthen us in our ability to heed Christ's command to love one another, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died in Christ, may they rise with him to new life in the heavenly Jerusalem, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God the Father of love and mercy, we present our prayers to you this day. Look with compassion upon our needs and grant these things according to your will, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Monday, April 25, 2016
(Lec. 555)

**SAINT MARK,
EVANGELIST – FEAST**

- 1) 1 Peter 5:5b-14
- 2) Mark 16:15-20

FOCUS: We are to love Jesus above all things, and give a courageous and faithful witness to the Gospel.

Today, the Church honors Saint Mark the Evangelist, whom tradition holds was a companion to both Saints Peter and Paul. Mark's Gospel encourages and exhorts us to love Jesus above all things, and to give a courageous and faithful witness to the Gospel. Let us take this charge to heart and live it out each day.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading urges us to be sober and alert so we may avoid falling into the snares of sin and selfishness. In the Gospel, Jesus commissions the eleven Apostles to preach when he tells them: *Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With hearts and minds lifted up to the Lord, let us humbly present our petitions.

- 1) That all members of both the clergy and laity will continuously seek ways to show God's love by effectively witnessing to the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That national and international leaders will seek to meet the basic needs of all those whom they govern, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who have not heard God's word will hear the Gospel message and believe, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That we, as a local parish community, will continue to grow in love for the Lord and be responsive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That our beloved dead, and all who have died, may come to enjoy eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we ask you to hear and answer our prayers. For we offer them to you through Christ, our Lord.

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Tuesday, April 26, 2016
(Lec. 286)

TUESDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK OF EASTER

- 1) Acts 14:19-28
- 2) John 14:27-31a

FOCUS: *We must undergo many hardships.*

Most of us can't imitate Saint Paul literally, in his arduous work spreading the Gospel and in the incredible hardships he endured for the sake of the Gospel. But with Christ's love and peace in our hearts, and with the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us, we can do our part to help build up God's kingdom in our corner of the world.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading reminds us we must be willing to undergo trials in order to enter into the kingdom of God. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches his disciples that the gift of peace he offers to them, and all who believe, is one the world cannot give.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Recognizing the gift of peace that Jesus offers, let us approach our heavenly Father with our needs and the needs of our world.

- 1) For Pope Francis, our bishop and our pastors, that with Jesus' peace in their hearts, they might be strengthened to undertake their task of leading the people of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, that they may strive for peaceful resolution of conflicts that plague their nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For victims of violence and war who are undergoing great hardships, that they may know the love and mercy of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, that we may continue to welcome strangers and newcomers to our house of worship, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, that they might rejoice forever in the glory of God and in fellowship with the angels and saints in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, hear the prayers we offer this day, in the name of Jesus Christ, your son.

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Wednesday, April 27, 2016
(Lec. 287)

WEDNESDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK OF EASTER

- 1) Acts 15:1-6
- 2) John 15:1-8

FOCUS: Christ is the vine ... we are the branches.

Christ is the vine, and the one who provides strength, nourishment, support and growth in our life of faith. Those who abide in him will have true life.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of Paul and Barnabas traveling to Jerusalem to meet with the Apostles concerning the issue of whether Gentile believers in Jesus needed to be circumcised and follow the Mosaic Law to be saved. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that if we remain in him and his love, we will bear good fruit for God and come to enjoy eternal life.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting that God watches over us and provides for us, let us join in offering him our prayers for our needs and those of the world.

- 1) For Church leaders, that they may continue to help God's followers recognize the fruits of the Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, that they may recognize the dignity of all people and work to enact just laws that uphold the sanctity of human life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, that they may be nourished and strengthened by the loving care of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For families in our parish, that they may support one another in growing in God's love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may come to enjoy peace in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, in your goodness and love we ask that you hear and answer our prayers. For we offer them to you through Christ, our Lord.

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Thursday, April 28, 2016
(Lec. 288)

- 1) Acts 15:7-21
- 2) John 15:9-11

THURSDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK OF EASTER
(Opt. Mem. Saint Peter Chanel,
Priest and Martyr;
Saint Louis Grignion de Montfort, Priest

FOCUS: We are united in our belief that God is the source of all guidance.

Keeping Jesus' commandments was imperative for his followers. Did that mean Gentiles needed to convert to Judaism to do so? Relying on prayer, Scripture and debate, the Apostles sought the answer. Unity requires prayer, discernment and mutual respect. It fosters an understanding that God is the one to whom to turn for guidance in a faith-filled community.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the Apostles discern what are the requirements for the Gentiles to be converted to the faith. They decide, through prayer and discernment, that Gentiles should *avoid pollution from idols, unlawful marriage, the meat of strangled animals, and blood*. In the Gospel, Jesus states that those who keep his commandments, as he has kept his Father's, will remain in his love.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Striving to live in greater love and unity with God and one another, let us join in offering our prayers and petitions to God the almighty Father.

- 1) For the Church universal, a mosaic of peoples and cultures yet one in the body of Christ, may she continue to model to others humble acts of service and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, may they seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help them govern wisely and justly, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who experience discrimination or alienation, may they receive the grace and strength needed to overcome any hardship they may have suffered and remain compassionate of heart, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, as faith-filled followers of Christ, may we remain in his love and extend that love to all with whom we come in contact, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they come to enjoy perpetual peace and joy in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God almighty, in your mercy and generosity, please hear the prayers we offer. Grant them according to your divine will, through Christ, our Lord.

Friday, April 29, 2016
(Lec. 289)

- 1) Acts 15:22-31
- 2) John 15:12-17

FRIDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK OF EASTER
(OBL. MEM. Saint Catherine
of Siena, Virgin and
Doctor of the Church)

FOCUS: By whose authority?

It seems with access to instant news and social media, anyone with an opinion can act as an authority on a topic. Whom are we to believe? The early Church faced mixed messages and preachers who went out *without any mandate*, as we heard in the first reading. Today we have the teachings of the Church to guide and strengthen us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the Apostles send a message to the Church at Antioch to clarify a misunderstanding as to which rules Gentile believers are obliged to follow. In the Gospel, Jesus gives the disciples his commandment: *Love one another as I love you.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Confident that God knows our intentions and deepest desires, let us now offer him our prayers of petition, trusting that in his infinite mercy and goodness he will hear them.

- 1) For Pope Francis, bishops, priests and deacons, may they continue to seek the wisdom of God and openness to the Holy Spirit, as they demonstrate fidelity and leadership through their lives of devotion and service, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those in positions of power on all levels, from international to local, may they seek opportunities for understanding through collaboration, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are unjustly burdened or penalized by false accusations, lack of understanding or miscommunication, may they seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For members of this faith community who have left the Church, may they be inspired by the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit to re-engage and return, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they be welcomed into the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious and loving God, receive the prayers offered to you today. May you answer them according to our needs and your divine will for our lives. We pray through Christ, our Lord.

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Saturday, April 30, 2016
(Lec. 290)

- 1) Acts 16:1-10
- 2) John 15:18-21

SATURDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK OF EASTER
(Opt. Mem. Saint Pius V, Pope)

FOCUS: Let nothing discourage our proclamation of the Gospel.

Proclamation of the Gospel is imperative – even when faced with persecution. Focusing on possible persecution can inhibit us from making our voices heard. Jesus stated that there will be those who keep his words, and those who don't. We can take comfort that our proclamation of the Gospel will be received by many, and trust that Jesus will be with us in our times of need.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Paul and Timothy persevere in spreading the Gospel, city by city. While dreaming, Paul has a vision that he is called to spread the faith in Macedonia. In the Gospel, Jesus shares with the disciples a foretaste of what they will experience by spreading the Gospel – both success and persecution.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We need to rely on God's grace and mercy to remain steadfast in proclaiming the Gospel. Understanding this, let us join in offering our prayers of petition for our Church, the world and ourselves.

- 1) For those priests who have been appointed Missionaries of Mercy by Pope Francis during this Year of Mercy, may they persevere in spreading the message of God's mercy, giving hope to those who are separated from the Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may they work to build just and peaceful societies rooted in faith, hope and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those suffering in mind, body or spirit, may they, especially during this Year of Mercy, find comfort through the care and compassion of their Christian neighbors, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For members of this faith community, may we turn to the Holy Spirit for the grace and strength needed to proclaim the Gospel in our families, workplaces and schools, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they be welcomed into the merciful, loving embrace of God in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God almighty, hear the petitions we have offered and in your grace and mercy, answer them according to your will. Through Christ, our Lord.

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