



Bringing Home the Word

Fifth Sunday of Lent (C)

April 6, 2025

“Do Not Sin Any More”

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

At first reading of today’s gospel, one might think that those who brought the adulterous woman to Jesus were concerned about observance of the law. Halfway through the story, this error is corrected: “They said this to test him” (John 8:6). They thought any answer he would provide would anger his audience. If he directed them to stone her, his teaching about mercy and forgiveness would sound hollow, and people would turn away from him. If he spoke against stoning, he would appear to be setting himself above the law, which required that particular

punishment for adultery. They must have thought they had Jesus cornered.

Not to be undone by them, Jesus traced his finger on the ground. Was he listing the sins of the woman’s accusers? Was he using silence to make them feel uncomfortable? Was he choosing his words carefully? Was he simply doodling? We don’t know. But his words cut to the core: “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her” (John 8:7). Who would dare step forward to execute the sentence? They left, beginning with the elders, because the custom was to throw the stones according to age—eldest first.

Had Jesus undermined his teaching about mercy and forgiveness? No. Had he denigrated the law? No. Did he leave the woman with the impression that her sin was not serious? No. He left her with an admonition: I will not condemn you to death, but you have to change your life. †

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 43:16–21

Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; See, I am doing something new!

Philippians 3:8–14

I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus.

John 8:1–11

[Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees,] “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”



**“They said this to test him.”
They thought that any answer [Jesus] would provide would anger his audience.**

A Word from Pope Francis

Brothers and sisters...at any time our individual and communal religiosity can conceal *the worm of hypocrisy and the urge to point the finger* at others. We can always run the risk of failing to understand Jesus, of having his name on our lips but denying him by the way that we live.

HOMILY, MALTA, APRIL 3, 2022



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS
QUESTIONS
REFLECTION

- How quick am I to point out the failings of others?
- How do I demand more of others than of myself?



Seeing Others with Resurrection Eyes

Paige Byrne Shortal

A rabbi asked a question of his disciples: “When does night end and day begin?” “When it becomes light

enough to walk along the path without the use of a lantern,” said one. “When you can see someone approaching in the distance,” said another. “When the stars fade from the sky,” said a third. The rabbi shook his head. “When you look into a stranger’s face,” he said, “and recognize him or her as your dear brother or sister, only then has the day begun.”

Every person we meet is placed on our path by God. If we listen closely, perhaps we can hear God introducing us to each other: “Meet my beloved son or daughter. I will be so happy if you love each other.” When we look at each other with our resurrection eyes, we see people as Jesus sees them. Of all the human beings who

have ever lived, Jesus’ mother, Mary, saw him the most clearly—her child, the God-man Jesus. We can pray to Mary to help us see clearly, to find Jesus in the faces of each other, to find brothers and sisters even among our enemies, to find God’s creative love in the world around us.

We can pray to Mary to help us see clearly, to find Jesus in... each other.

Practice seeing this way, particularly people you either don’t like so much or don’t really see—the customer service representative whose first language is not English, the driver in the next lane, the person behind you in line. How can you put this new kind of seeing into action? Is

there someone you’ve failed to acknowledge or thank? Someone you’re avoiding? Someone you won’t forgive? Make plans to change that, won’t you? †

From *Live Lent at Home: Daily Prayers and Activities for Families* by Paige Byrne Shortal, (818691). Available from Liguori Publications. To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From “Lent Day by Day: Seeing the Face of God in Others” by Rev. Paul Turner

When we see a crowd of people, we see just that—a crowd. But God sees each person. I invite you to look at others the way God sees them. When people state a real concern, we need to be ready to reply. When they talk long, we have to listen slow. Throughout this Lent, in addition to practicing sacrifice and prayer, it is customary to practice charity. If we seek the face of God, we can find it in many people.

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.



Lord Jesus, so that we may see others as you see them, even those we find difficult, we pray—
Lord, let us be like you.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 7–12

Monday, Lenten Weekday: Dn 13:1–9, 15–17, 19–30, 33–62 or 13:41c–62 / Jn 8:12–20

Tuesday, Lenten Weekday: Nm 21:4–9 / Jn 8:21–30

Wednesday, Lenten Weekday: Dn 3:14–20, 91–92, 95 / Jn 8:31–42

Thursday, Lenten Weekday: Gn 17:3–9 / Jn 8:51–59

Friday, Lenten Weekday: Jer 20:10–13 / Jn 10:31–42

Saturday, Lenten Weekday: Ez 37:21–28 / Jn 11:45–56



Bringing Home the Word

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord (C)

April 13, 2025

He Cannot Save Himself

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Some of us might wonder, as did many of the bystanders on the way to Calvary, why Jesus allowed matters to reach the point they did. We might ask: *He saved others; why didn't he save himself?* Jesus certainly had the power. He demonstrated it often as he traveled the villages and countryside of Israel. Through the centuries, theologians have turned that question over and over, upside down, and inside out. Hadn't he done enough to reveal his identity?

Every answer offered has thrown a bit of light on the question. Still, no answer

has adequately resolved the issue. The question of Jesus' suffering and death is a mystery of our faith. Holy Week offers us an opportunity to reflect on this mystery, to discover something that might deepen that faith and transform our lives—if only a bit.

For example, the goal of Jesus' ministry was the establishment of the reign of God. Everything he said and did pointed to this goal. He never faltered, never backed down in the face of opposition. He was steadfast in his commitment to what he believed was God's will for him, regardless of the price he might have to pay. And pay a tremendous price he did. Jesus' faithfulness to God's will is a model for us. We have responsibilities, some of which might make significant demands of us. Do we hold fast, or do we look for a way out? Holy Week calls us to follow him in his commitment. †



Jesus' suffering and death is a mystery of our faith. Holy Week offers us an opportunity to reflect on this mystery.

Sunday Readings

Luke 19:28–40

They proclaimed: / "Blessed is the king who comes / in the name of the Lord. / Peace in heaven / and glory in the highest."

Isaiah 50:4–7; Philippians 2:6–11

[Christ Jesus] emptied himself... becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

Luke 22:14—23:56 or 23:1–49

[Jesus prayed,] "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done."

A Word from Pope Francis

On Calvary, two ways of thinking collided. In the gospel, the words of the crucified Jesus are in sharp contrast with the words of those who crucified him. The latter keep saying: "Save yourself."... This is the constant refrain of the world that crucified the Lord.... The mantra "save yourself" collides with the words of the Savior who offers his self.

HOMILY, ROME, APRIL 10, 2022



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How can I unite my suffering, my crosses, with the cross of Jesus?
- How can suffering be in itself a prayer?



Join the (Right) Crowd

Paige Byrne Shortal

At our parish on Palm Sunday, we begin the Mass outside with the blessing of palms and the gospel about Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. Then, we process into church as everyone

waves palm branches and the choir leads us in singing "Hosanna to the Son of David." It's always a bit chaotic as people try to walk and sing and keep track of their kids and then find a seat. Maybe because of the chaos, it feels like a happy occasion, even though we know that the same crowd of people who yelled, "Hosanna!" will, in just a few days, yell, "Crucify him!"

It's human nature to go along with the crowd. That's why it's important to hang out with the right crowd in the right situations and teach our children to do the same. There are a lot of sinful influences in our world—

influences that may lead us or our children to do what we don't want to do. There's a crowd of people gathering this week. All over the world, Christians are coming together to celebrate Holy Week. This is one time when it's a good idea to "join the crowd."

Today, do whatever you need to do so that the whole family can join your church community at the Triduum celebrations this week. Get the clothes ready. Prepare meals ahead of time. Then really enter into Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. Those who pay very close attention during the Triduum celebrations can learn almost all they need to know about being a follower of Jesus. †

It's important to hang out with the right crowd in the right situations.

From *Live Lent at Home: Daily Prayers and Activities for Families* by Paige Byrne Shortal, (818691). Available from Liguori Publications. To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Mary at the Foot of the Cross: A Role Model for Peace" by Fr. Michael Rennie

How can we find peace in a world that appears so hopelessly unpeaceful? When wars and violence seem to flare up all around us, when society seems to be increasingly hostile, when our relationships are seemingly more difficult to maintain, and when our own souls are roiled by turmoil? Peace isn't achieved by conquering the world or by fighting violence with violence. Rather, if we want peace, we should make our way to the foot of the cross. Here, we will join Mary. Here, we kneel with our Mother Mary and gaze on the source of all our peace. Christ is the only one who can heal our conflicted hearts and our broken world.

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Lord Jesus, so that we may greet suffering with courage, perseverance, and trust, we pray—
Lord, let us be like you.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 14–19

Monday of Holy Week:

Is 42:1–7 / Jn 12:1–11

Tuesday of Holy Week:

Is 49:1–6 / Jn 13:21–33, 36–38

Wednesday of Holy Week:

Is 50:4–9a / Mt 26:14–25

Holy Thursday: Ex 12:1–8, 11–14 /

1 Cor 11:23–26 / Jn 13:1–15

Good Friday: Is 52:13–53:12 / Heb 4:14–16; 5:7–9 / Jn 18:1–19:42

Holy Saturday: Gn 1:1–2:2 or 1:1, 26–31a / Gn 22:1–18 or 22:1–2, 9a, 10–13, 15–18 / Ex 14:15–15:1 / Is 54:5–14 / Is 55:1–11 / Bar 3:9–15, 32–4:4 / Ez 36:16–17a, 18–28 / Rom 6:3–11 / Lk 24:1–12



Bringing Home the Word

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord (C)

April 20, 2025

I Can't Believe It!

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

This sentence can mean two very contradictory things. It might express skepticism, similar to “You’ve got to be kidding!” Or we might marvel at something we think is magnificent, far beyond our expectations. Here, it means “I’m speechless!”

Lest we think that the empty tomb alone is proof of Jesus’ resurrection, today’s gospel shows us that even his closest friends had initial problems with

the idea. When Mary of Magdala found the tomb empty, she did not immediately conclude that Jesus had risen. She thought his body had been taken. In the first reading, Peter describes how, later, several of Jesus’ followers experienced him alive. This experience certainly changed their thinking. Like Peter, they then went out and proclaimed the truth of the resurrection. However, only those who had the experience were sure.

Neither empty tomb nor someone else’s personal experience is by itself certain evidence of the resurrection. Then, what is? We find the beginning of an answer in the even later writing of Paul. Speaking to the Colossians, he says, “For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (3:3). In other words, the real proof of the resurrection is the faith of centuries of Christians whose lives have been changed by that faith. In other words, the way you and I live proclaims whether Jesus is alive and well in us. I can hardly believe it. †

The real proof of the resurrection is the faith of centuries of Christians whose lives have been changed by that faith.

Sunday Readings

Acts 10:34a, 37–43

This man God raised (on) the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

Colossians 3:1–4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b–8

Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.

John 20:1–9 or Luke 24:1–12

Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb.

A Word from Pope Francis

The astonishment of the women is our astonishment as well: the tomb of Jesus is open, and it is empty! From this, everything begins anew! A new path leads through that empty tomb... the path of life in the midst of death, the path of peace in the midst of war, the path of reconciliation in the midst of hatred, the path of fraternity in the midst of hostility.

URBI ET ORBI MESSAGE, ROME, MARCH 31, 2024



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What deaths along the way have I suffered?
- What resurrection experiences have I been blessed with?



A Ray of Hope

Gary Zimak

In my younger days...when forced to do something uncomfortable, I would always plan to do something pleasant afterward. If I had to give a presentation in class, I would plan to buy a new comic book or magazine. If I had to get a medical test, I would plan to go out for junk food afterward. Although the rewards weren't elaborate, they enabled me to divert my attention from what was frightening me and gave me a ray of hope. Although I still practice this technique, I have learned to rely more on prayer, spiritual reading, and the sacraments to provide comfort.

In our life on earth, it is inevitable that we will encounter many difficulties. We'll all experience our share of flat tires, medical emergencies, and personal tragedies. As followers of Christ, however, we understand the necessity of these burdens.... I once heard a priest proclaim that "Jesus never said, 'Come join the party!'" Instead, he promised us daily

crosses in this life and the possibility of eternal happiness in the next. (See Luke 9:23.) If we concentrate too much on our trials and tribulations, we can easily get beaten down and end up straying from the path that leads to heaven.

When we're dealing with adversity on a daily basis, it's difficult not to focus on our problems. One simple trick that works for me was suggested by my friend Michelle. She shared that whenever she saw the sun, she thought of the Son. The rays of sunlight represent his love for each of us. Although it sounds simple, it really works for me. I can't tell you how many times I've been driving in the car, worrying about something, when I see the sun and recall Christ's love for me. Before long, I find myself thinking less about my problems and more about God's providence in my life. I begin to speak with the Lord instead of worrying, and my sense of peace is restored. Suddenly, I've gone from worrying to praying. †

A Worrier's Guide to the Bible: 50 Verses to Ease Anxieties by Gary Zimak, (821639). Available from Liguori Publications. To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

I have learned to rely more on prayer... to provide comfort.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Easter Redemption: Celebrating the Power of the Resurrection" by Fr. Gregory Wiest, CSSR

Jesus taught that the love of God rises like the sun on both the good and the wicked and pours like rain on saints and sinners without discrimination.... (See Matthew 5:45.) Redemptive grace is available, inexhaustible, and abundant, never what we simply earn, and always more than what we can imagine. [Easter] is the season that illustrates perfectly the motto chosen for the Redemptorists by its founder, St. Alphonsus Liguori: "*Copiosa apud eum redemptio*," which means "With [God] there is plenteous redemption" (Psalm 130:7). Saint Alphonsus wanted this motto...to be a seal on Redemptorist hearts, to represent the Redemptorist charism, and to shape the lives of its members and the order's mission.

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Lord Jesus, as you have been raised, rise in us that we may love others as we are loved and rejoice in this beautiful life. Amen! Alleluia!

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 21–26

Monday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 2:14, 22–33 / Mt 28:8–15
Tuesday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 2:36–41 / Jn 20:11–18
Wednesday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 3:1–10 / Lk 24:13–35

Thursday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 3:11–26 / Lk 24:35–48
Friday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 4:1–12 / Jn 21:1–14
Saturday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 4:13–21 / Mk 16:9–15



Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy) (C)

April 27, 2025

Take My Word for It

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

This is easier said than done. Growing up, we insisted on doing things ourselves, learning from our own experiences, developing a sense of our own abilities. We came to know that there are times when we should—in fact, we must—take someone else’s word for something. If we refuse to do this, we might be called a “doubting Thomas.” Is that fair to us? Is it fair to Thomas?

As today’s gospel passage reports, gathered in a room, several disciples of Jesus experienced him truly among

them. Thomas was absent. When the others told Thomas what had occurred, he refused to take their word for it. To believe, he also would have to experience Jesus. It is unfair to credit them with faith and label him a doubter. After all, their experience probably convinced them, an event Thomas did not enjoy with the other disciples.

The point of this story is not Thomas’ eventual visit by Jesus or his subsequent profession of faith. Rather, it is the source of such a confession. Thomas was unwilling or unable to accept the truth of the resurrection unless he saw Jesus and touched him. Jesus told him, “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed” (John 20:29). Blessed are you and me, who have come to know Jesus and the truth of his resurrection on the word of others—our parents and teachers, pastoral ministers and friends—those who have come to know him and who witness to this in their lives. †



Thomas was unwilling or unable to accept the truth of the resurrection unless he saw Jesus and touched him.

Sunday Readings

Acts 5:12–16

Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles.

Revelation 1:9–11a, 12–13, 17–19

Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys to death and the netherworld.

John 20:19–31

Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

A Word from Pope Francis

Let us ask ourselves: do I believe in the power of the resurrection of Jesus...? Do I believe in his victory over sin, fear, and death? Do I let myself be drawn into a relationship with the Lord, with Jesus? And do I let myself be prompted by him to love my brothers and sisters, and to hope every day?

REGINA CAELI, ROME, APRIL 7, 2024



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- How do I share my faith with others and listen when they share?
- How can I be quick to forgive and to seek the forgiveness of others?



Witnessing to God's Mercy

Redemptorist Mass Companion

Today, the Church celebrates the feast of Divine Mercy, inviting us to reflect on the boundless mercy of the Lord. The devotion to Divine Mercy is deeply rooted in the revelations given to

Saint Faustina Kowalska, who was told by Jesus that he embodies “Love and Mercy.”

Sister Faustina was instructed by Jesus to paint an image of him with the inscription: “Jesus, I trust in You.” Although she had concerns about the painting’s accuracy, Jesus emphasized that the significance lay not in the image itself but in the message it conveyed. The message is clear: God’s mercy is so profound that he cannot punish even the greatest sinner if they sincerely appeal to his compassion. No soul that seeks his mercy is ever turned away.

Today, the Divine Mercy image and its associated devotions

are widespread, embodying the call to trust in Jesus’ merciful love and to practice mercy in our own lives, as highlighted in Luke 6:36: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” The gospel emphasizes that faith must be accompanied by action.... Our faith should translate into tangible acts of charity. While not everyone needs financial assistance, a kind smile,

a compassionate word, or a supportive gesture can make a significant impact. Mother Teresa of Kolkata famously said, “Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.” As we celebrate this feast, let us embrace Jesus’ invitation to dwell in his merciful love and extend that mercy to others through our

actions and kindness. In doing so, we make the mercy of Christ tangible and impactful in our daily lives. †

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**Let us embrace
Jesus’ invitation
to dwell in
his merciful love.**

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From “We Believe in the Resurrection” by Thomas H. Groome

Jesus’ resurrection was not just wishful thinking on the part of his disciples. To begin with, they clearly were not expecting it; those two disciples on the Emmaus road spent a whole day with him before recognizing who he was. Others, upon his appearance, were “startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost” (Luke 24:37). If this were a made-up story, they surely would have represented themselves better. Then, the disciples were transformed by their conviction that God had raised him up, many giving their lives in witness to this truth; such commitment is impossible from a conspiracy of fond hopes. The disciples knew that his resurrection was real because Jesus had shown them the wounds in his body—even inviting Thomas to touch them. (See John 20:24–29.)

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Lord Jesus, when I find it hard to believe, live in me and show me the way to live until I believe again. Amen! Alleluia!

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 28—May 3

Monday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 4:23–31 / Jn 3:1–8

Tuesday, St. Catherine of Siena:

Acts 4:32–37 / Jn 3:7b–15

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 5:17–26 / Jn 3:16–21

Thursday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 5:27–33 / Jn 3:31–36

Friday, St. Athanasius:

Acts 5:34–42 / Jn 6:1–15

Saturday, Sts. Philip and James:

1 Cor 15:1–8 / Jn 14:6–14

Bringing Home
the **Word** 

April 27, 2025

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