

Sunday, Apr 15, 2018

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Love fully

One thing Jesus never could stomach is a hypocrite. In the stories, he always prefers sincere sinners to religious fakers. It's easy to slip into the role of a synthetic disciple without even noticing. Our religious routines—prayer, Mass attendance, lip-synched proper responses to moral issues—can go on autopilot. Meanwhile, self-congratulation, nasty judgments, self-involvement, and the unwillingness to forgive can turn our hearts to stone under the surface. How we love is far more important than how we look.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 3:13-15, 17-19; 1 John 2:1-5a; Luke 24:35-48 (47). *"Those who say, 'I know him,' but do not keep his commandments are liars."*

Monday, Apr 16, 2018

EASTER WEEKDAY

For everything there is a season

In order to bring something new into the world something about the old has to change. Prospective parents give up a lot of freedom when they invite a child into their family. To move to a new place you have to surrender the old one. When Jesus inaugurated "the way, the truth, and the life" in his ministry, it threatened business-as-usual for the contented synagogue-goers around him. They feared the destruction of the old practices and didn't cheerfully anticipate the arrival of the new. Change is always intimidating. Pray for the grace to make room for the new.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 6:8-15; John 6:22-29 (273). *"This Jesus the Nazorean will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us."*

Tuesday, Apr 17, 2018

EASTER WEEKDAY

Focus on the good—in everyone

Just as Mother Teresa had her critics, so also Father Damien was maligned after his death. It was novelist Robert Louis Stevenson, however, who visited the island leper colony where Damien ministered in 1889 and set the record straight. When a Honolulu pastor publicly called Damien a "coarse, dirty man" whose leprosy should be attributed to his "carelessness," Stevenson rebutted: "You are one of those who have an eye for faults and failures; that you take a pleasure to find and publish them; and that, having found them, you make haste to forget the virtues and the real success which had alone introduced them to your knowledge. It is a dangerous frame of mind." Not all are called to Damien's heroism, but every Christian must reject a narrow-mindedness that sees only the faults and failures of others.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 7:51—8:1a; John 6:30-35 (274). *"Lord, do not hold this sin against them."*

Wednesday, Apr 18, 2018

EASTER WEEKDAY

Hang out the welcome mat

Christians who define their faith in limiting terms—"who's out and who's in," for example—appear to have missed the memo from Christ that all are welcome at his table. Too often throughout history, and today as well, a desire for "religious purity" ends up hurting a lot of people who don't fit the mold. Avoid exclusionary ideology; remember that everyone else

doesn't have to be wrong for you to be right with God. Christ is bigger than that, and we can be, too.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 8:1b-8; John 6:35-40 (275). *"I will not reject anyone who comes to me."*

Thursday, Apr 19, 2018

EASTER WEEKDAY

One life to live

"Forever is a long time," our mothers reminded us when we moaned about how it would take that long to do our homework or chores, or for summer to come again. But somehow the homework and the chores got done, and summer arrived—but forever never did. How will we know when forever begins? Technically, it already has; that is, the idea of everlasting life is not something for the future but is a continuation of the life we now enjoy. When the priest prays at Mass, "Lead us to everlasting life," he is really saying, "Keep us in everlasting life." Time to start living life for keeps!

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 8:26-40; John 6:44-51 (276). *"Whoever eats of this bread will live forever."*

Friday, Apr 20, 2018

EASTER WEEKDAY

Follow the light

Impressionist painter Claude Monet, a master at capturing the effects of light on landscapes, often found the process harrowing. He would paint the same scene with a dozen canvases and still not be satisfied. While trying to capture the color of an Italian landscape, Monet wrote: "I'm afraid what I'm doing is just dreadful and yet I really am understating it; the light is simply terrifying." Monet's *Water Lilies*, his final masterpiece in the study of light, was completed well after he had lost most of his sight. In the end, he had overcome his fears and learned to be the light. Our mission as Christians is similar: to painstakingly master our doubts and become one with the Light of Christ.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 9:1-20; John 6:52-59 (277). *"He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'"*

Saturday, Apr 21, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ANSELM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

To know God is to love God

"Faith seeking understanding" is the motto of Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109). Anselm saw faith that "merely believes what it ought" as no faith at all. For Anselm, an active love of God, or faith, seeks a greater knowledge of God. That belief led him into the heady world of philosophical theology in search of a single proof for the existence of God. He finally came up with what he believed to be an irrefutable argument: "God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived." Although immediately criticized by a contemporary philosopher, Anselm's argument continues to be considered in any discussion of the existence of God. What steps can you take to deepen your knowledge of God?

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 9:31-42; John 6:60-69 (278). *"You have the words of eternal life."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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