



SUNDAY, MAY 7, 2017

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER; GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY
Your calling awaits

Jesus calls us by name to follow him. The question for any Christian then becomes, How? What path will lead me closest to God? What way can I best serve? Determining one's calling, or "vocation" (from the Latin *vocare*, "to call"), is not always easy. But each of us can take certain helpful steps: 1) pray and reflect on what you feel drawn to and where your talents lie; 2) talk to a pastoral minister or spiritual director; 3) confide in trusted friends or family members who can help you consider your options objectively; 4) commit yourself to various practices (Eucharist, service, establishing and maintaining healthy relationships) that will strengthen your spirit and keep you from becoming self-absorbed.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 2:20b-25; John 10:1-10 (49)*. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

MONDAY, MAY 8 EASTER WEEKDAY

Clean up your act

The notion of what is "clean" and "unclean" is important in Judaism, especially among Orthodox Jews. Purification rituals are observed for a variety of occasions, and many of them require the ritual washing of the hands, or at times a full immersion. Some say that Baptism represents a form of ritual purification adapted from Judaism, and that even the dipping of fingertips in holy water upon entering church is part of that tradition. The apostle Peter, however, helped the early church develop a different definition of purity. Spend some time today reflecting on what helps you feel "clean and pure" spiritually, and then practice it.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 11:1-18; John 10:11-18 (279)*. "What God has made clean, you must not call profane."

TUESDAY, MAY 9 EASTER WEEKDAY

The good book is also a good read

If you want to focus on what the church is really about, learning a little something about the first decades and centuries of the church can help, such as reading the Acts of Apostles, the book in scripture that tells the early church's story. Things like preaching and proclaiming the message of Jesus, believing and being faithful, teaching, and gathering together. It's doing things like these that make people Christians, then and now.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 11:19-26; John 10:22-30 (280)*. "It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called 'Christians.'"



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

© 2017 TrueQuest Communications. TakeFiveForFaith.com; mail@takefiveforfaith.com. All rights reserved. Art may be subject to additional copyright. Noncommercial reprints permitted with the following credit: Reprinted with permission from TakeFiveForFaith.com. Scripture citations from the New American Bible Revised Edition. For more information about TAKE FIVE and our regular contributors, go to PrepareTheWord.com. Free daily email and app available online at TakeFiveForFaith.com/subscribe.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10 EASTER WEEKDAY

Lighten up

Here's a practice you can incorporate into your daily prayer. At the end of your day, recall anything that happened during the day that still troubles you. Rather than carry over the residue of that worry into the next day, try this: Imagine Jesus standing in a beam of light. Now imagine placing your worries into that circle of light—into Jesus' care. This is a way to practice trust and faith. Try this on a daily basis, and more of your life will be brought out of the darkness and into the light of Christ's love and care.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 12:24—13:5a; John 12:44-50 (281)*. "Everyone who believes in me should not remain in darkness."

THURSDAY, MAY 11 EASTER WEEKDAY

Add a dash of forgiveness

Home cooking is great, but sometimes we are hurt the worst by the folks who share food at our table. Our spouses, our siblings, our children, and our grandchildren often betray the family trust and cause us pain that's hard to forgive. But just as Jesus forgave his closest disciples, those who betrayed him, denied him, and abandoned him in his hour of need, we have the power to forgive our family members for their offenses against us. Peace, like charity, begins at home.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 13:13-25; John 13:16-20 (282)*. "The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me."

FRIDAY, MAY 12 EASTER WEEKDAY

Listen up

In the gospels Jesus' words are often directed to a particular group of people—to the Pharisees and scribes, the crowd, his disciples. Most of us regularly hear the word of God in a large group, the liturgical assembly where, Vatican II reminds us, the presence of Christ is as real as the Eucharist. But faith can also be enlivened in other gatherings such as Bible study groups, small Christian communities, a men's or women's group, in the family. Paying attention to what Jesus says when we pray with an open Bible, or with a group of believers, can help to assure that we are becoming more transparent to the Christ within.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 13:13-25; John 13:16-20 (283)*. "Whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me."

SATURDAY, MAY 13 EASTER WEEKDAY

Hang in there

Persecution has been part of the life of Christians since the church began. Paul and the first disciples faced beatings, imprisonment, mockery, and derision. Yet something about their experience of God was so compelling that they couldn't help but preach and live the Good News. The early disciples persevered and, as scripture records, they were "filled with joy and the Holy Spirit." Today we still face emotional and sometimes physical persecution from folks who don't quite get the gospel, including those with "high standing" in our lives. Let us pray for the courage of our foremothers and forefathers to resolutely live the gospel.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 13:44-52; John 14:7-14 (284)*. "[They] . . . stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region."