

## **2014 Apr 1 Tue: Lenten Weekday**

*Ez 47: 1-9. 12/ Ps 46: 2-3. 5-6. 8-9/ Jn 5: 1-16*

Do you want to grow in holiness and be like Christ? Ezekiel prophesies that a river of life will flow from God's throne in the Temple. This water will transform everything it touches bringing life, healing, and restoration. Jesus offers himself as the source of this living water which he will pour out upon his disciples in the gift of the Holy Spirit. The signs and miracles which Jesus performed manifest the power and presence of God's kingdom and they demonstrate the love and mercy God has for his people. In the pool at Bethzatha we see an individual's helplessness overcome by God's mercy and power. On this occasion Jesus singles out an incurable invalid, helpless and hopeless for almost forty years. He awakens hope when he puts a probing question to the man, "Do you really want to be healed?" And he then orders him to "get up and walk!"

God wants to free us from the power of sin and make us whole. But he will not force our hand against our will. The first essential step towards growth and healing is the desire for change. If we are content to stay as we are, then no amount of coaxing will change us. The Lord manifests his power and saving grace towards those who desire transformation of life in Christ. The Lord approaches each of us with the same probing question: "Do you really want to be changed, to be set free from the power of sin, and to be transformed into my holiness?"

That helpless disabled man, close to the water, does not remind you of our own helplessness to do well? How can we dare solving by ourselves that which has a supernatural scope? Don't you see, every day, around you, a big crowd of disabled ones that are "moving" themselves a lot, while being totally unable to get rid of their lack of freedom? Sin paralyzes man, grows him old, kills him... We have to fix our eyes in Jesus. We need him —his Grace— to plunge us into the waters of prayer, of confession, of the opening of our spirit. You and I may be eternal disabled persons, or, on the contrary, bearers of his light instruments.

**2014 Apr 2 Wed: Lenten Weekday/ Francis of Paola, h**

*Is 49: 8-15/ Ps 145: 8-9. 13cd-14. 17-18/ Jn 5: 17-30*

God's actions reveal his mercy and his justice. Do you recognize his action in your life, his saving grace and love, and the purifying fire of his Spirit who convicts us of sin and transforms us in his holiness? The religious authorities refused to accept Jesus' authority to heal and to speak in the name of his heavenly Father. They charged Jesus as a "Sabbath-breaker" and as a "blasphemer". They wanted to kill Jesus because he claimed the same authority and power as God. He claimed equality with God— something no mortal could say without blaspheming.

Jesus answered their charge of breaking the Sabbath law by demonstrating God's purpose for creation and redemption— to save and restore life. God's love and mercy never ceases, even on the Sabbath. Jesus continues to show the Father's mercy, even on the Sabbath day of rest. When they charged that Jesus was making himself equal with God, he replied that he was not acting independently of God because his relationship is that of a Father and Son relationship. If we wish to see how God reacts to sin and how he responds to our sinful condition, then we must look to Jesus. The mind of Jesus is the mind of God, and the words of Jesus are the words of God. Jesus also states that his identity to the Father is based on complete obedience. Jesus always did what his Father wanted him to do. His obedience was not based on submission or power, but on love.

The unity between Jesus and the Father is a unity of love. We are called to submit our lives to God with the same love and obedience which Jesus demonstrated for his Father. Jesus states that to accept him is life and to reject him is death. Are you ready to follow the Lord and to leave behind whatever is false and contrary to his will?

God could give life, judge, and raise the dead. Jesus worked a miracle on the Sabbath, and he appeals to the fact that he was following his Father! He also claims that his Father has given all judgment over to him. Finally, he says that he will raise the dead! Through baptism, we become members of Christ's own Body, temples of his Spirit, sharers of his life. Through baptism, the divine life of the Son flows into us. Let us be awed by our dignity.

## **2014 Apr 3 Thu: Lenten Weekday**

*Ex 32: 7-14/ Ps 106: 19-20. 21-22. 23/ Jn 5: 31-47*

In the first reading we listen to a conversation between Moses and Yahweh. When God decided to punish Israelites Moses takes courage and pleads for them. Moses was for the people and was ready to take the risk of pleading with God and was successful in changing the mind of Yahweh. Most often we are faced with such situations in life. Sometimes people who are very close to us can make mistakes. During such occasions we need to understand them and support them as much as possible. Very often the tendency is to judge and keep such people away. Moses challenges to have more concern for our brothers and sisters with whom we relate. Their problem should be our problem too.

In the Gospel reading St. John invites us not to seek praise from one another, instead of seeking the Glory that comes from God only. The Gospel reading speaks of the intimacy with the father and the Son. Jesus' intimacy with the father was strong that he was not worried about the fact some people refused to believe in him. When we have strong and deep intimacy with God the energy for all our activity will be derived from Him. The readings call us to have a deep intimacy with God so that we are strengthened to the extent that we are not disturbed by the refusal of others in our life. Our intimate relationship will enable us to even plead for the needs of others. Let us be united and strengthened in God through our prayer life and be open to derive strength and energy for our life.

## **2014 Apr 4 Fri: Lenten Weekday/ Isidore of Seville, bp, dr. Day of abstinence from meat (age 14 and up).**

*Wis 2: 1a. 12-22/ Ps 34: 17-18. 19-20. 21 and 23/ Jn 7: 1-2. 10. 25-30*

Chapter 7 and 8 of John's Gospel are centered on the theme of light and life and are related to feast of tabernacles. The feast of Tents was the most popular autumn harvest festival of the Jews. The discourses of Jesus are set in the context of controversy. Even the relatives of Jesus refused to believe in him.

For our salvation it is very important to know who Jesus is and where he comes from. If he is only a more man, he cannot save humankind; but if he comes from God, he can offer us the unheard gift of sharing in the very life of God. In order to attain salvation, each of us has to discover Jesus personally by a prayerful and sincere searching after truth. Only after discovering for ourselves who Jesus is, will we be able to help others to come to Him.

The Jews claim to have known Jesus and where he comes from (7:27). But in fact with their pride they remain in darkness interpreting everything according to their human views and closing their heart to the truth. Only a humble seeker can discover who Jesus is. Unless we have a humble and pure heart like that of the poor of Yahweh, our seeking after the divine Saviour will not yield fruit. Let us pray for the grace of humility as seek to discover the person of Jesus in a deep and intimate way.

**2014 Apr 5 Sat: Lenten Weekday/ Vincent Ferrer, p, r, ms**

*Jer 11: 18-20/ Ps 7: 2-3. 9bc-10. 11-12/ Jn 7: 40-53*

Both the readings of today speak about the rejection by one's own people. In the first reading we have the Prophet Jeremiah to whom the Lord makes known that his people are against him for whatever he said was from God and all appeared for them as foolish and madness of the prophet. Their wicked plan to destroy his life is done by his own community members. Their intention was to make sure that there was never been such person in the community. The words of prophet's were sign of accepting the plan of God in his life so as to be led like a gentle sheep taken for sacrifice. Knowing this truth of what is going on, the prophet places his trust in his God for he knows his God was a true and righteous one and who will save him from any danger that is laid on his path.

In the gospel reading, we see the division among the people about who was Jesus to them. Some accepted him as prophet and some as Messiah. The question of 'from where the Messiah was to come' further conflicts the situation. The knowledge of the person of Jesus and his birth place was not in the awareness of the Pharisees that they were thinking that Jesus was from Galilee. In fact the truth was that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the city of David. The answer of the police guards surprised the Pharisees to the extreme that they were even afraid that many of their own

higher authorities might be influenced by Jesus. Though some authorities and officials did believe in Jesus yet they did not reveal it public for they were afraid of being rejected from their post or from their community. Those who knew Jesus as the one who came from God were afraid to lay hands on him to arrest him. The plot of arresting Jesus was the only concern of the Pharisees. Thus Jesus too faces the rejection and persecution from the authority of his own community. What are we to derive from these two readings today? Rejection and persecution is possible not necessarily by the outsiders but by our own people especially when we stand for truth and justice and take the cause of others standing by the side of God. All that we must remember is that God is by our side. It is he who inspires and calls anyone whom he wishes to choose. When he is the one to choose us then who are we to afraid? Persecution and rejection is necessarily to be met by the one whom God loves to entrust his mission. So we pray for the grace that we stand by God and his mission while focusing on our eyes on the promise of God that he would be with us.

**2014 Apr 6 SUN: FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT. Third Scrutiny of the Elect.**

*Ez 37: 12-14/ Ps 130: 1-2. 3-4. 5-6. 7-8/ Rom 8: 8-11/ Jn 11: 1-45*

All the three readings speak about new life and the resurrection. In the first reading we see the prophet speaking God's word to a field of dry bones, and they came to life. The prophet interpreted this event. He said, "O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them," because they were going their own way and not paying attention to God. His words were words of life which could raise the dry bones into living beings. What is this all about that God wants to reveal to us? it is out of our sinful nature that we have fallen away from his relation and became like dead and dry bones in the valley. But God in his love and faithfulness to his promise promises the redemption from condemnation and punishment for he loves his own whom created as the crown of all creation.

In the second reading we see Saint Paul assuring us that those in whom the Spirit of God dwells will be his own possession. All are created in his image and likeness therefore all share the same Spirit of God who dwells in all people.

Today in the gospel we have Jesus talking to a dead man, saying “Lazarus, come forth.” And the dead man actually heard the words of Jesus. Others thought Jesus was insane to talk as he did about someone who had been dead for four days. It’s the same lesson as the first reading, the lesson of the vision of the dry bones and the man born blind. The dead hear better than the living. It’s just the opposite of what you expect. But it’s the way God works. God is telling us something here.

### **The Struggle**

Behind these examples of opposites there is an even bigger lesson. You see it again and again in the story of Jesus and in the rest of the Bible.

There is a struggle going on all around us. It’s the conflict between good and evil, God and Satan. We are caught up in it ourselves. We have no choice but to be part of it. God and Satan, good and evil, are total opposites. Where do you stand? Of course, you’re with God and on the good side. There is no question here. Maybe none of us are perfect, but we know where we want to be.

Our readings today start to tell us how to win. There will be more as we approach Easter next week. But last week and this week the gospel readings are an orientation for us.

They show us how God works. They show us how he carries out the battle. And of course, if we are with him, we should work the same way. Let’s look at how the forces of good and the forces of evil struggle against each other.

### **The Characteristics of Those Seeking Power**

The weapon of the evil forces is power. They try to be strong, forceful, violent. They crush everything in front of them. They never have enough power. They always want more. They need total control. Free choice does not matter. Rather, they crush everything in their way. Their appetite for power is unlimited.

The “weapon” of good is just the opposite. It is love. You don’t usually think of love as the opposite of power, but it is. It respects freedom. It is not forceful. Rather than crush, it nourishes and builds up.

The strongest example is the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Look at the characters surrounding the passion and confronting Jesus. We'll hear the gospel stories starting next Sunday, but review them now a little in your mind, or think about the caricatures and stereotypes in Mel Gibson movie about the Passion.

It's a classic example of confrontation between power and love. On the side of power, the political system was corrupt. They were making all kinds of back-room deals. They were working under cover at night. They bribed and they plotted. They wanted to look good, for example by observing the Sabbath, but they did not let the rules keep them from their goal of exterminating Jesus.

In addition to those who were corrupt, many were cowards. They are the ones you see in the crowd, letting others take the lead. But look at them. A few days before, they were welcoming Jesus to Jerusalem in a great parade. In the passion they were shouting for his death. They were cowards.

A few of those on the side of power were fanatical. They would stop at nothing to get Jesus. They were so obsessed with getting rid of him that they would do anything. Jesus had driven them crazy. As you saw last week and this week, they were blind and deaf to all the good Jesus was doing and to his message from the Father.

### **The Forces of Good**

Jesus faced all this. He did not buy into it for a second. He took a completely different approach. God simply is not like the group working against him. What is God's secret "weapon"? Love! And love works in just the opposite way to what you expect. It shares power, it yields, it seems weak, it is willing to give up everything.

But love never gives in to what is wrong. It never yields to temptation. It never sins. It is consistent with itself by never engaging in a struggle for power. Power is the weapon of the enemy, not the tool of good.

Look at Jesus in his passion. He never fought back, but he never gave in either. He is infinitely powerful, but he never used his power. Everyone on the other side used their power and craved more power, but Jesus was simply silent. He surrendered totally without giving in. As we go

through Holy Week starting next Sunday, watch how it unfolds. Follow the story and see how love responds to power.

We know how it ends. Look at what happened. After being defeated and killed, Jesus came back and won. It was just the opposite of what you expect. He used love and not power at every moment. And it worked. It certainly seemed doomed to failure along the way, but it succeeded spectacularly. And it succeeded not just then, but it succeeds now, in our midst today.

Look at the struggle between good and evil in the scripture readings the Church gives us these next two weeks. Look at the struggle between good and evil in your own life. Choose between the struggle for power and the way of love. Ultimately, power will fail, but love will prevail.

There is a beautiful picture at the end of the gospel today. “The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, ‘Untie him and let him go.’ ” Power will bind you up, but love will set you free.

### **2014 Apr 7 Mon: Lenten Weekday/ John Baptist de la Salle, p, rf**

*Dn 13: 1-9. 15-17. 19-30. 33-62 or 13: 41c-62/ Ps 23: 1-3a. 3b-4. 5. 6/ Jn 8: 1-11*

Today, the church celebrates the feast of st. John Baptist de la salle a confessor. Widely acclaimed as the father of modern pedagogy. Born on 30 of April 1651, was made a canon of the cathedral there at the age of 16 and ordained to the priesthood at 27. A model of piety and humility he was gradually drawn through his love for the poor, into what was to become his life work. Died on 7 April 1719 was canonized in 1900 by Pope Leo xiii and declared patron of all teachers in 1950.

God’s ways and human ways are different. What human being condemns God forgives, what human being considers illegal and sinful God turns a blind eye. God’s love has no boundary; it crosses the boundaries set up by human being. God’s love and compassion is revealed in today’s gospel reading. Jesus says to the woman caught in adultery, “Neither do I condemn you, go away and don’t sin again”. This is a beautiful experience and beautiful encounter between the woman and Jesus. It is because of this experience that made this woman later on to become the follower of Jesus. Therefore, each Christian has to encounter and experience personally the compassion,

love and forgiveness of God and so as to share this experience with others. Only such an experience will transform a person. The moment st. Paul encounters with God he takes a u turn and change his life totally.

In the Jewish society, the woman has no role in social life. Her status is very low and they have no say. And in today's gospel we see, a woman was caught in adultery. Hence, this woman has no say to defend herself and to justify. She is just being led to the slaughter house like a lamb. But God is close to the broken hearted and come to the rescue from the clutches of evil.

Today, we being the followers of Jesus in the world we ought to act as a prophetic sign in our daily life. To defend the right of the poor, the weak and the marginalized section of the society. Jesus challenges us today to listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and to act favorably on behalf of the weaker section of society.

### **2014 Apr 8 Tue: Lenten Weekday**

*Nm 21: 4-9/ Ps 102: 2-3. 16-18. 19-21/ Jn 8: 21-30*

In today's gospel we see the conflict and tension that is being built between Jesus and the Pharisees. The Pharisees were holding on to the laws of Moses and becoming stubborn and heartedness. They become stiff necked and becoming deaf to the teaching of Jesus. They have become blind and refuse to accept the truth and to see the light that Jesus has brought. And because of this that Jesus spoke vehemently against the Pharisees. In other words the Pharisees fail to understand Jesus and accused him for many reasons. We see that Jesus says repeatedly three times the words" you will die in your sins". This is the consequence and the result of heartedness and stubbornness of heart. "And you shall die in your sins unless you believe that I am he." Unless we believe in Jesus and his message we all shall die in our darkness of sins. Believe in Jesus includes changing of one lives, and to change our life does not mean that a person has to change his or her religion and works of life. Rather to change the attitude and conform oneself to the values of the kingdom of God. To go beyond these worldly things and to strife for the things that will last forever .The problem with the Pharisees is that they fail to conform to the values of the kingdom of God; the law has becoming more important than human being. Hence they fail to listen to Jesus and as a result it leads to misunderstanding and tension.

At times we also behave like the Pharisees when we deal things with the simple people. We fixed rules and regulations and stick on to that. The rules that we fix makes us to be blind to the sufferings and pain that people undergo. We fail to see the situation and context of the people and hence, we place the rules and regulations above the people. The rules and regulations should help us to serve the people better because this is what we are called for. As the Pharisees becoming deaf to the teaching of Jesus we too will become deaf to the cry of the poor when we don't understand the feeling of the people.

Jesus challenges us today to change our attitude and mindset towards the reality of life. To strive for a higher value and to let go the things that limits us from achieving the values of the kingdom. The rules and regulations should serve the needs of human being and not human being for the rules and regulation.

### **2014 Apr 9 Wed: Lenten Weekday**

*Dn 3: 14-20. 91-92. 95/ Dn 3: 52. 53. 54. 55. 56/ Jn 8: 31-42*

Today, when we are only a few days from the Holy Week, our Lord is asking us to fight to live some very specific things, small, but at times, not very easy. We shall explain them throughout this commentary: basically, it is a matter of persisting with his word. How important it is to always refer our life to the Gospel! Let's ask us: What would Jesus do in this situation I have to face now? How would He treat this person whom I find so specially difficult to treat? Which would be his reaction before this circumstance? A Christian must be —according to Saint Paul— “another Christ”: “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (*Gal 2:20*). How is it, our Lord's reflection, on our daily life? Am I his mirror?

Our Lord assures us that, if we persist in his word, we shall know the truth, and the truth will make us free (cf. *Jn 8:32*). To be truthful is not always easy. How often do we tell small lies, how often do we pretend, how often do “we act dumb”? We cannot deceive God. He sees us, He contemplates us. He loves us and follows us, in our day-to-day routine. The eighth Commandment teaches us not to bear false witness nor not to tell lies, no matter how small, even if they look trivial to us. “White lies” are not permitted either. Jesus Christ tells us in another moment: “Let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’” (*Mt 5:37*). That trend to do good, which is freedom, is

very much related to truth. Sometimes, we are not free enough because there is a double bottom in our life, we are not clear. We must be convincing! The sin of lie enslaves us.

Our Lord says “If God were your Father you would love me” (*Jn* 8:42). How can we make it come true our daily desire to get to know the Master? With what kind of devotion do we read the Gospel, even though we may have little time at our disposal? Which sediment will it leave in my life, in my day? When looking at me can it be said, that I read Christ's life?

### **2014 Apr 10 Thu: Lenten Weekday**

*Gn* 17: 3-9/ *Ps* 105: 4-5. 6-7. 8-9/ *Jn* 8: 51-59

Today, Saint John places us before Jesus' revelation in the Temple. Our Savior reveals something unknown to the Jews: that Abraham looked forward and rejoiced when he saw Jesus' day. They all knew God had made a promise to Abraham, by assuring him of great promises of salvation for his seed. However, they were unaware of how far God's light could reach. Christ reveals them that Abraham did see the Messiah in the day of Yahweh, which Jesus calls my day.

In this revelation, Jesus appears as having God's eternal vision. But, above all, He appears as someone preexistent and present in Abraham's time. Later, in the heat of the discussion, when the Jews said to Jesus that He is not yet fifty years old, He tells them: “Truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am” (*Jn* 8:58). This is a notorious statement of his divinity, which they could perfectly understand, and which they could have also believed, had they better known the Father. The expression “I am” is part of the holy tetragram Yahweh revealed to Moses in mount Sinai.

Christianity is much more than a collection of high moral norms, as can be perfect love, or even, forgiveness. Christianity is faith in one person. Jesus Christ is True God and True Man. “Perfect God and Perfect Man”, says the Athanasian Symbol. Saint Hilary of Poitiers writes in a beautiful prayer: “Give us, therefore, a way to express ourselves in an adequate and dignified manner, to enlighten our intelligence, and make also our words to express our faith, that is, that we, who, through the prophets and the Apostles, had come to know You God Father and the unique Lord Jesus Christ, may also celebrate You as our God, in which there is no unicity of person and confess your Son, in everything equal to You”.

**2014 Apr 11 Fri: Lenten Weekday/ Stanislaus, bp, mt. Day of abstinence from meat (age 14 and up).**

*Jer 20: 10-13/ Ps 18: 2-3a. 3bc-4. 5-6. 7/ Jn 10: 31-42*

As the Jews were ready to stone him, Jesus reminded them of his many good works. It would be difficult to believe that he is the son of God only by his word; but it would be easier to believe it on the evidence of the works he has accomplished. But their minds were closed to the truth. Jesus escaped to the other side of Jordan where people believed in him. The reality of Jesus Christ impresses those who do not lose their eyes in front of the evidence of facts. The humble and the simple welcome the mystery of Christ and become the temple of the lord. Let us also look at our own very lives and see to where we belong. At times we too are far from being in touch with our own selves and the purpose of our living as a child of God. Are we humble enough to acknowledge that we can't do a thing without Him who created us? Let us open ourselves and be ready to welcome the lord in every situation we are in so as to make our preaching about him a reality.

**2014 Apr 12 Sat: Lenten Weekday**

*Ez 37: 21-28/ Jer 31: 10. 11-12abcd. 13/ Jn 11: 45-56*

The faith in Jesus that sprang up in many Jews on account of the raising of Lazarus alarmed the Jewish leaders all the more, and they gather in their great religious council and decide to put him to death. They concluded that killing him was preferable to disturbing the status quo. They were interested not in doing the will of god, but in maintaining the existing order. Though the proposal of Caiaphas was inspired by nationalistic interest, in God's plan, the sacrifice of Jesus was for the salvation of all peoples and nations. The Good Shepherd was to lay down his life for his sheep. When we look at the situation of Jesus and the society he lived in we too can place ourselves in many sides: the good and the bad. However, we often ourselves on the side of the Jewish leaders who have no attitude to the one doing good, come what may. They are ready to take life than learning from it. We too keep busy ourselves criticizing or evaluating people in our day-to-day life failing to just sit and think what to do with all that we learn in action. Let us not forget that whatever you give to life, it gives you back.

## **2014 Apr 13 SUN: PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION**

*Procession: Mt 21: 1-11. Mass: Is 50: 4-7/ Ps 22: 8-9. 17-18. 19-20. 23-24/ Phil 2: 6-11/ Mt 26: 14 – 27: 66*

We begin Holy Week today. During Holy Week we remember the last week before Jesus' death. Holy Week is the prototype of all the weeks of the year. Thursday is always a good day for Eucharistic Adoration, since it was on Holy Thursday at the Last Supper that Jesus instituted the Eucharist. Every Friday of the year is a day of abstinence from meat. In addition to this small sacrifice, each Friday in general ought to be devoted to a more serious attitude, since Good Friday was the day that Jesus died for our sins. Every Saturday is devoted to the Blessed Mother and to silence, since it was on Holy Saturday that Jesus' body lay in the tomb silently, and it was on Holy Saturday that our Blessed Mother was at home, mourning for her son, believing that he would rise. Every Sunday is a day of rejoicing, since on Easter Sunday Jesus rose from the dead. For this reason, we all come to Church every Sunday in hopes that we too will rise.

Why do we today then, on a Sunday, read out the Passion of Jesus Christ? It seems out of place, since Jesus did not die on Palm Sunday and it seems inappropriate, since Sunday is supposed to be a day of rejoicing. Partly, the reason is just practical: not everyone can be here on Good Friday and the Gospel next Sunday, on Easter, will not make much sense without the Gospel today. Jesus cannot rise without having first died. This is not the whole reason though.

It is indeed fitting to read the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ today. We must realize that the triumphant arrival of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem was one with his death on the Cross. On Palm Sunday, Jesus climbed up Mount Zion; in his passion, he climbed Mount Calvary. On Palm Sunday, Jesus was carried into Jerusalem; in his passion, he walked carrying his cross. On Palm Sunday, a crowd lined the streets to praise our Lord; a crowd lined the way of the cross too. On Palm Sunday, the crowd took off their cloaks and laid them on the road to honor Jesus; before the cross, Jesus was stripped of his cloak. On Palm Sunday, everyone praised Jesus, calling out "Hosanna!" In his passion, Jesus was insulted, mocked, and laughed at.

Palm Sunday is the key to understanding the Passion, and the Passion is the key to understanding Palm Sunday. We stand with palms in our hands because we want to worship God and give him the honor that is his due. We also stand as sinners. We are the reason that Jesus died on the cross.

We praise God and ask forgiveness. On the one hand, we imagine that we are already up in heaven praising Jesus. On the other hand, we allow the demons to pull us down to Hell. Are we part of the crowd praising Jesus or are we part of the crowd demanding that he be crucified? Both. Let us not imagine that we are so good that we would never have gone along with his death. Every time we commit sin, we stand with the crowd yelling, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Indeed, his blood is on us, and that blood saves us. Let us pray for the strength to stand by Jesus side till the end of life. Amen.

### **2014 Apr 14 Mon: Monday of Holy Week**

*Is 42: 1-7/ Ps 27: 1. 2. 3. 13-14/ Jn 12: 1-11. Chrism Mass: Is 61: 1-3a. 6a. 8b-9/ Ps 89: 21-22. 25. 27/ Rv 1: 5-8/ Lk 4: 16-21.*

All of us are citizens of this world. Unfortunately, in this world millions of people suffer. They experience the devastation of war, the sorrows of oppression, the decimation of disease, the slow death of starvation, and the indignity of poverty. Beyond the physical conditions, millions of people live in spiritual darkness. They are crushed by a load of sin and habits that torment them. The light of truth has not yet dawned in their lives.

While we are in this world, a battle rages for our spiritual allegiance. On the one hand, Satan and his allies vie for our attention and loyalty. On the other hand the body of Christ, led by our Lord, reaches out with love to all of us. The members of the body want others to be included. Through accepting Christ, we can become members of the Kingdom of God. Jesus was concerned about the Kingdom of God and our membership in it. Jesus is deeply concerned about poor people. Here, Jesus means those who are impoverished economically. Does this mean that He is not concerned about the wealthy or the common people who are not poor? No, it does not. He just did not have to express that concern here. His audience would have understood that a leader would be concerned about those who are better off. By focusing on the most needy, He includes all who have needs. Thus, He begins by expressing concern for those who were despised by others. It would not be politically correct to speak against the poor today. Yet the actions of some people signal their contempt for them. If they only worked as hard as we do, they say, they would not be poor. We often are not eager to bring the poor to our services. They don't dress as

well as we do. Even in a dress casual environment, their casual clothes are not of the designer type. Unspoken, yet this is a powerful silent testimony to a wrong attitude.

Our text gives us more details about the mission. The mission of Jesus was to reach out to the poor, to deliver the captives, to restore sight to the blind, and to lift up the downtrodden. This mission is as relevant today as it was then. Was there an economic message to the poor? Captives, blind and the down trodden? Yes there was. Jesus is concerned about captives. According to Robertson, the captives are those who have been captured at spear point. We can think of them as prisoners of war. Jesus was concerned primarily with those who were enslaved by Satan. They were prisoners of Satan in a spiritual war. Millions of people today are Satan's captives. They are under his influence. They may be captives of habits, attitudes, and lifestyles that they cannot control. You may be one of them. The captives, however, are not limited to people who are in spiritual darkness. Some believers are captives of oppressive forces. This, too, is a form of enslavement by Satan, for the oppressors are the servants of Satan. Some researchers estimate that there are more persecuted Christians today than ever before in the history of the church. Jesus is concerned about blind people. The primary reference no doubt was to people who were physically blind. However, we cannot overlook the spiritually blind. When you sit and listen to the commentators of the world, the talk shows, you know that millions are spiritually blind. They have no idea of spiritual truth. The eyes of their souls cannot see. They live in darkness.

Jesus is concerned about the downtrodden, who have been bruised by life. The bruising can be both in body and in spirit. Many are broken and crushed spiritually and physically. The Spirit empowers Jesus to bring the benefits of the Kingdom of God into life on earth. Jesus was set apart and sent by the Spirit to set at liberty those who are downtrodden and bruised. While He was on the earth, He delivered men and women from the oppression of their spirits and bodies.

### **2014 Apr 15 Tue: Tuesday of Holy Week**

*Is 49: 1-6/ Ps 71: 1-2. 3-4a. 5ab-6ab. 15 and 17/ Jn 13: 21-33. 36-38*

We are in the Holy Week and today in the first reading Isaiah spoke about his Call to make the people know The Light of the World which signifies Jesus Christ our Lord. It was God who has given him strength to carry on his Call in his life time as God's will. And indeed Jesus today

wanted to show us that as his disciples we need to live and act as His will and plan. Yet as we are recalling his passion, Jesus made his disciples a tough test as He prepared to make the final and ultimate sacrifice of his own life for their sake and for each one of us. And today we see the difference between Peter and Judas. Judas deliberately betrayed his Master while Peter, in a moment of weakness, denied him with an oath and a curse. Jesus knew both the strength of Peter's loyalty and the weakness of his resolution. He had a habit of speaking with his heart without thinking through the implications of what he was saying. The treachery of Judas, however, is seen at its worst when Jesus makes his appeal by showing special affection to him at his last supper. John says that Satan entered into Judas when he rejected Jesus and left to pursue his evil course. In our lives too and in our personal experience we have to be more careful for many good and wonderful things can take us to Evil ways. Satan always if not often takes us from the good deeds to a sense of pride and sinful ways. Therefore, we need to pray and let the Holy Spirit give us grace and strength in our time of testing. If we submit to Jesus we will walk in the light of his truth and love. If we turn our backs on him we will stumble and fall in the ways of sin and darkness. Are you ready to follow Jesus in his way of the cross? Are we really his true disciples? Are we aware of what we are truly known as "Christians"?

### **2014 Apr 16 Wed: Wednesday of Holy Week**

*Is 50: 4-9a/ Ps 69: 8-10. 21-22. 31 and 33-34/ Mt 26: 14-25*

We remember today the actions of Judas Iscariot, the friend of Jesus who betrayed him for 30 pieces of silver. We know that Judas was greedy, the first words out of his mouth today are "What are you willing to give me?". And since then he was looking to do anything at all to get that 30 pieces of silver at the cost of the life of His master.

However, Jesus makes it clear that he knows about the betrayal. But the disciples were not aware that any one of them could be. Then it is Judas's turn. He says, "Is it I, Lord." Jesus responds with his great wisdom, "You have said so." Judas was free to make a decision. When he said that he was not the betrayer, he had the power to not be the betrayer. Even at that late stage, nothing forced him to betray Jesus. He could have confessed everything right there. He could have begged forgiveness. He would have been forgiven. Jesus told him the consequences of betrayal: "The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of

Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born." This is not a threat but a true assessment of the situation that Judas had chosen. How did he hear these words and then still go out and betray Jesus? Even if he had no scruples about betraying an innocent man for money, he ought to have feared for himself.

So as Christians and followers of Jesus we need to learn something from the Gospel today. In our lives, it is never too late to do what is right even if it means that we will be considered disgraced in our community, even if it means that we will lose all our money, our freedom, even our life. Therefore, as we reflect on the passion of our Lord let us take to heart and draw strength from him who has conquered the sufferings of this world for our salvation that we may too be like him in our response to God's Holy Will.

**2014 Apr 17 Thu: Holy Thursday. At evening, begin Easter Triduum of the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection.**

*Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper: Ex 12: 1-8. 11-14/ Ps 116: 12-13. 15-16bc. 17-18/ 1 Cor 11: 23-26/ Jn 13: 1-15*

Jesus washed his disciples' feet, showing them his Humility and the symbolic connection between washing feet to cleansing the soul from pollution of sin. It was one more instance of the respect and humility that imbued his life, values, which even his own disciples, did not understand till after his death and resurrection. So it is today: all of us, who are spiritually washed by Christ, have a life in Him; He justifies us and washes us in sanctity. Christ cleanses us from sin and warns us to be on watch against anything that defiles our way of life. From yesterdays pardon, we are strong against today's temptation. We should learn the lesson, which Christ taught us here: duty is a mutual obligation. We must accept help from others and give help to others. When we see Jesus serving others, we can but realize how bad we are, whenever we try to dominate others. Divine love, which led Christ to ransom and reconcile his enemies, leads Him to unite us all in peace, today. We only have to try and live as humbly as He did to experience god's love for us.

**2014 Apr 18 Fri: Good Friday. Day of fast (ages 18-59) and abstinence from meat (age 14 and up).**

*Mass is not celebrated today. Celebration of the Lord's Passion: Is 52: 13 -- 53: 12/ Ps 31: 2. 6. 12-13. 15-16. 17. 25/ Heb 4: 14-16; 5: 7-9/ Jn 18: 1 -- 19: 42*

Today is the most painful day of the year for Christians of all persuasion: on this day we have to remember how Jesus suffered and was put to death for our sins. Never was any person in history ever so innocent as was Jesus. Attempts to fix blame for His death, however, have led to horrible acts of spiritual depravity. And the Jews have borne the brunt of this blame. Their implication in the death of Christ has resulted in hideous persecutions of them, down through the centuries. "CHRIST KILLERS" has been the epithet hurled at them.

The Nazis cited this epithet as justification for the genocide of six million Jews, during the Holocaust of world War II. Hitler brainwashed his followers into exterminating the Jews, on the trumped-up charge of murdering Christ. Sadly, though, this concept was not a Nazi invention. For two thousand years, Christianity took an equally anti-Semitic position. The truth is that Jesus came into this world knowing he would be killed. Because each of us has sinned, Jesus died for every one of us. None of us innocent of crime. Today is the perfect day for us to reflect upon this bad truth!

**2014 Apr 19 Sat: Holy Saturday**

*Readings for the Easter Vigil, which is an Easter Sunday Mass: Gn 1: 1 -- 2: 2 or 1: 1. 26-31a/ Ps 104: 1-2. 5-6. 10. 12. 13-14. 24. 35 or Ps 33: 4-5. 6-7. 12-13. 20-22/ Gn 22: 1-18 or 22: 1-2. 9a. 10-13. 15-18/ Ps 16: 5. 8. 9-10. 11/ Ex 14: 15 -- 15: 1/ Ex 15: 1-2. 3-4. 5-6. 17-18/ Is 54: 5-14/ Ps 30: 2. 4. 5-6. 11-12. 13/ Is 55: 1-11/ Is 12: 2-3. 4. 5-6/ Bar 3: 9-15. 32 -- 4: 4/ Ps 19: 8. 9. 10. 11/ Ez 36: 16-17a. 18-28/ Ps 42: 3. 5; 43: 3. 4 or Is 12: 2-3. 4bcd. 5-6 or Ps 51: 12-13. 14-15. 18-19/ Rom 6: 3-11/ Ps 118: 1-2. 16-17. 22-23/ Mt 28: 1-10*

Today's readings aim at defining The Resurrection of the Lord which is also a way of defining that through the resurrection of Jesus the human emotions of Joy and Fear, Doubt and Wonder are totally finding their true and full purpose. Mary Magdalene who appears at the tomb in all four Gospels comes to the tomb while it was still dark, alone and empty-handed, a picture of boldness and daring symbolizing the human craving for God. This is to show that how God really answer those to crave for him by calling them by their name.

And when Mary Magdalene finally does encounter the Risen Lord it takes her some time to figure out what is going on. She is still confused and uncertain, until finally Jesus calls her by name this image is the human element of experiencing the resurrection and it is the part of the story that speaks to our experience of taking two steps forward and one step back, over and over again in life.

The resurrection comes to us when we least expect it. It sometimes comes in very surprising ways, and the trick for us is to not give up hope. In order to really experience the resurrection, we need to keep walking through the necessary pain and confusion that precedes it, to keep believing in it even if we can't see or feel it.

As Jesus sends Mary Magdalene to tell the other disciples; and she goes with enthusiasm, crying out "I have seen the Lord!" we too through the message of the resurrection are invited to go everywhere and proclaim the joy of Easter in our lives.

**2014 Apr 20 SUN: EASTER SUNDAY. The Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

*Acts 10: 34a. 37-43/ Ps 118: 1-2. 16-17. 22-23/ Col 3: 1-4 or 1 Cor 5: 6b-8/*

*Sequence Victimae Paschali Laudes/ Jn 20: 1-9 or Mt 28: 1-10 or, at an afternoon or evening Mass, Lk 24: 13-35 Easter Triduum ends after Evening Prayer.*

Today what strikes me from the first reading is this sentence "but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" which is taken from Acts 10:35. This sentence gives the heart of what should be our attitude after we have experienced the risen Lord. Unless we experience the risen Lord our will not be disposed to doing the will of God and we will never be able to mend our ways and turn back to Him.

While the message of the Second reading is found in 1 Cor 5: 7 which say "Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed". This means that we can never be lazy or lethargic if we really want to live a new Christian life. We have to mend our old ways, cut off those habits which are not helpful to our lives and find new ways and means to live the gospel. To experience the risen Lord we have to take our own initiatives, no one can give or do that for us.

Lastly the message of the gospel for us today is the message of being a messenger of the good news just like Mary of Magdala who went and announce the good news about the risen Lord to the other disciples. Like, Mary of Magdala our ways of spreading the good news should be filled with enthusiasm and should be spread to as many people as possible.

## **2014 Apr 21 Mon: Easter Monday**

*Acts 2: 14, 22-33/ Ps 16: 1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11/ Mt 28: 8-15*

Are you prepared to meet the Risen Lord? The disciples of Jesus were as unprepared for his resurrection as they were for his death. The empty tomb made them fearful and joyful at the same time. Where did they put the body or did he really rise just as he predicted? Even though Jesus had spoken to them before of his death and rising, they could not believe until they saw the empty tomb and met the risen Lord. Aren't we the same? We want to see with our own eyes before we believe! The guards brought their testimony to the chief priests and elders who met the news with denial. They were resolved to not believe that Jesus had risen and they bribed the guards in the hope of keeping others from believing.

What is the basis of our faith in the resurrection? The scriptures tell us that faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to us. Our faith is a free assent to the whole truth which God reveals to us through his word. Faith is *certain* because it is based on the very word of God who cannot lie. Faith also seeks understanding. That is why God enlightens the "eyes of our hearts" that we may know what is the hope to which he has called us (Ephesians 1:18). Peter the Apostle says we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3). Through the gift of faith, the Lord reveals himself to those who believe in his word and he fills them with "new life in his Holy Spirit". Do you live in the joy and hope of the resurrection? And do you recognize the presence of the Risen Lord in his word, in the "breaking of the bread", and in his church, the body of Christ?

## **2014 Apr 22 Tue: Easter Tuesday**

*Acts 2: 36-41/ Ps 33: 4-5, 18-19, 20 and 22/ Jn 20: 11-18*

In the first reading taken from the Acts of the Apostles, we hear about invitation by Peter to repent and believe in the Gospel. Repentance is a positive concept, a change of mind and heart toward God reflected in the actual goodness of one's life. It is in accordance with the apostolic teaching derived from Jesus and ultimately recorded in all four Gospels. Luke presents baptism in Acts as the expected response to the Apostolic preaching about Jesus and associates it with confessing of the spirit. To repent meant to turn away from one's sinful ways and turn to God, to

be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ was a visible expression of one's repentance and faith. Today the first reading challenges each one of us to see how strong our faith in the Risen Lord Jesus is.

Hearing the good news of salvation proclaimed by the apostles, many turned to God with a repentant heart and committed totally to the person of the Risen Lord. Their baptism signified that they now belonged to this new community of believers in Christ. The first reading reminds us that in our faith journey we are not alone. It is as a community we need to experience the Christ. We need to be united in peace to all others. It is a gift that the Risen Lord offers.

In the Gospel reading we hear about Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene like a true devotee cannot live without a vision of her beloved master. She stays and does not leave the tomb as Peter and John do, without achieving this vision. Jesus rewards her perseverance. It is to her that the Risen Lord first reveals himself and she hold on to him. Jesus invites Mary Magdalene to ascend further and achieve a more intimate divine communion. Only then can one enjoy the fullness of resurrection event and participate in the glory of the word. This gift will be provided only when Jesus ascends, when he goes to the Father and send the Spirit. Hence Mary Magdalene is asked not to cling to the Risen Lord as though in this physical attachment lies the full reality of resurrection. How strong is my desire to experience the Risen Lord? Do I have perseverance like Mary Magdalene?

### **2014 Apr 23 Wed: Easter Wednesday**

*Acts 3: 1-10/ Ps 105: 1-2. 3-4. 6-7. 8-9/ Lk 24: 13-35*

The first reading speaks about Peter healing lame man. His lameness reminds us that we live literally by relying on God to provide for us our every need. Today we feel empowered by the actions of Peter and John. They, like us, had neither gold nor silver but they had something that neither gold nor silver can buy. They had faith and we know that is the greatest gift. We too like Peter and John must be ready to reach out and share what we have. It is more beautiful thing to know what we have and be given an opportunity to share it. And so we proudly stand up and share with others in our faith because our belief is in our gracious God. Above all, when you bless somebody else with your faith, your smile, your patience or your gold and silver, you are the one who will be doubly blessed. Remember you are powerful beyond measure and you have

a special gift in you that will change somebody's life. Nobody is too poor not to have something to give.

In the gospel reading we see Jesus travelling with two of his disciples to Emmaus. His entry was an unusual yet brought surprise when he was talking to the on the way. Only when he broke the bread their eyes were opened and they recognized him as the true risen Lord. Our ignorance is what makes us blind from knowing the truth and what God wants to reveal to us. When we are open to the Spirit of the Lord then our eyes will be opened so that we may see the glory and God and work for his kingdom as his witnesses. As spiritual beings we strive to be in line with the spirit, to be open to the spirit and occasionally to receive the gift of recognizing the movement of the spirit in our lives.

### **2014 Apr 24 Thu: Easter Thursday**

*Acts 3: 11-26/ Ps 8: 2ab and 5. 6-7. 8-9/ Lk 24: 35-48*

At the outset that Jesus appeared to his apostles he greeted them with a peace. The reason is because the apostles have no peace because they live in fear of the Jews. They still could not reconcile that Jesus whom they expect to be their king was crucified and died. Their hope was shattered and their plan has come to nothing. Therefore, Jesus gave them his peace so that their hope and plan will be restored once again. Before disappeared from them he commissioned them to be the witness of all that has happened. Today too, as Christians we have the same mission to be the witness of Jesus in our fellow brothers and sisters.

Jesus was reborn to a glorious life form the day of his resurrection. He has already in the fathers' glory, but wanted to be with his disciples on various occasions in order to convince them that his new condition was not a lesser life or something ghostly, but rather a supper life. Jesus uses these encounters to clarify the meaning of his brief and intense mission for his apostles. He saves us form sin which means nothing less than reordering history to resurrect humankind.

“Every thing written about me in the Law of Moses, in the prophets and in the psalms must be fulfilled.” What the prophets announced, about a savior who would be rejected by his people and take the sin of his people upon himself, had to be fulfilled. Everyone's sins but also the violence of the whole Jewish society at the time of Jesus. This was the sin that brought him to the cross.

As a matter of fact, this way of death and resurrection was not reserved only for Jesus, but for his people also. In that precise period Israel, subject to the Roman Empire had to accept the death of its earthly ambitions, autonomy, national pride, the religious superiority of the Jews over other people.

“Repentance and forgiveness in his name would be proclaimed.” Christian conversion is not passing from one party to another, from one religious group to another; it is a recasting of the person. Therefore, the preaching to the nations means also the education of the nations and even international society.

### **2014 Apr 25 Fri: Easter Friday**

*Acts 4: 1-12/ Ps 118: 1-2 and 4. 22-24. 25-27a/ Jn 21: 1-14*

Today, for the third time, Jesus reveals himself to his disciples after his rising. Peter has gone back to his old fisherman job and the others have decided to join him too. It stands to logic that, if he was a fisherman before following Jesus, afterwards, he gets back to his old job; and there still are those who are surprised to see it is not necessary to leave one's honest work to follow Christ.

That night they caught nothing! And when the day breaks and Jesus appears, they do not recognize him until He asks them for something to eat. When they tell him they have nothing, He just points out where they are to throw their net. And, even though fishermen seem to know all the answers and they had spent the night to no avail, they obey him. “O the power of the obedience. The lake of Tiberias was refusing its fish to Peter's nets. An entire night in vain. — But now, obedient, he returns the net to the water and they caught (...) a full load of fish. — Believe me: the miracle repeats itself daily” (Saint Josemaria).

The Evangelist points out “It was full of big fish —one hundred and fifty-three” (*Jn 21:11*) but, in spite of being so many, the net was not torn. These are details to bear in mind, as Redemption, amid normal work, has taken place with responsible obedience.

They all “knew it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them” (*Jn 21:12-13*). He did the same with the fish. If we obey him we shall not lack either the spiritual or

the material food. He taught it to his closest followers and John Paul II said it too: “When starting the new millennium, our heart reverberates with those words which Jesus (...) invited the Apostle with to put out into the deep, and let down the nets for a catch: ‘*Duc in altum*’ (Lk 5:4). Peter and the first disciples trusted Christ's word (...) and when they had this done, ‘they enclosed a great multitude of fishes’ (Lk 5:6). This word resounds for us to day too”.

For the obedience —like Virgin Mary's obedience— we ask the Lord to go on conceding his Church his apostolic fruits.

### **2014 Apr 26 Sat: Easter Saturday**

*Acts 4: 13-21/ Ps 118: 1 and 14-15ab. 16-18. 19-21/ Mk 16: 9-15*

The evangelist St Mark summarizes all the post resurrection apparitions of Jesus starting with Mary Magdalene. She had the privilege to see the risen Lord first, perhaps, because she had loved him much. Hence, love for the lord is the most important single element which gives us the privilege to meet him. This encounter with the lord is never a single event, but the beginning of a chain of actions that are to follow. Mary Magdalene was asked to announce the good news of resurrection to the disciples of Jesus; the two disciples narrated their Jesus-experience; the disciples had to “go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation”. (Mark 9:15). If we were to ask by the people we lived with and serve in our mission centers about how many times we have met Jesus in our life time. What must be our answer? I doubt if we have one or two. This simply shows how much we love him and do HIS will. Mary Magdalene is an example set before us today to follow. Though a sinner she never give up her love for Jesus. Our mission first and foremost is to know him, to love him and to do his will. We know this true and true since child hood days. How far this has grown in us as we grow in age? The answer is the Lord himself. Let us turn to him in prayer.

## **2014 Apr 27 SUN: SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER**

*Acts 2: 42-47/ Ps 118: 2-4. 13-15. 22-24/ 1 Pt 1: 3-9/ Jn 20: 19-31*

We have been celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ for the past week. Today we celebrate one particular aspect of the Resurrection: Divine Mercy. We see divine mercy at work in the appearances of Jesus. First the angel announced his Resurrection, but no one believed. Then he himself appeared to Mary Magdalene, to Cleopas and another disciple, in Emmaus, to Peter. Then he appeared to a group including nine other apostles. But not to his mother for she knew all that was happening. When Jesus says, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe”, he meant her above all. She believed in the Resurrection before anyone else. She did not even go to the tomb on Easter morning. She knew that no one was there. Only Thomas was left out now. With all these people testifying to the Resurrection,

It says in the Gospel that one week passed before Jesus appeared again. Thomas was still sad, still mourning the death of Jesus; everyone else was celebrating the Resurrection and wondering. Perhaps Thomas thought that everyone was playing some elaborate practical joke. Everyone must have seemed crazy. Thomas could not leave in case Jesus appeared again, but it must have been very hard to stay when everyone around him was celebrating what he thought was a mass delusion.

God is merciful. Not only does Jesus appear to Thomas, but he tells him to put his finger in his hands and his hand in his side. Whatever it takes, Jesus is willing to do, but Thomas was wrong. He did not need to touch Jesus to prove to himself the reality of the Resurrection. As soon as he sees Jesus, he falls down and says, “My Lord and my God.” Nevertheless, Jesus was willing to undergo any humiliation Thomas needed.

This is mercy. Our God is not aloof. He does not stand far off and tell us to make the arduous journey to him. He comes right down to us. He stands inches away and asks us to take one step. We have to make the journey, but he will be with us every step of the way. He will not put up with us living in sin, but he will do everything he can to help us out.

Jesus tells the apostles, “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” He gives this immense power to them for one reason: because we need forgiveness. They do not receive this power to increase their importance. They passed this power

on to their successors and assistants, the bishops and priests. Even today, every priest in the world can forgive sins. God has made it so easy to have our sins forgiven.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. If we look around nowadays and worry about where things are headed, it is nothing like 2100 years ago. Life was hopeless. There was no solution. Then God, in his mercy, did what no one expected, what no one had dreamed of, and thereby changed the direction of the world forever. Mercy has done amazing things, and mercy will yet do more.

**2014 Apr 28 Mon: Easter Weekday/ Peter Chanel, p, r, ms, mt/ Louis Mary de Montfort, p**

*Acts 4: 23-31/ Ps 2: 1-3. 4-7a. 7b-9/ Jn 3: 1-8*

The encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus brought to us new insight that Jesus will give about the new ways of being with him as Children of God. Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night. He confesses to Jesus that they know that he comes from God for he says, “We know that you have come from God.” Because he is one of the ruler, so he might have represent his whole kingdom, with the intention to make a friendship with Jesus.

But Jesus as a man of God who knows the mind of every person does not seem to take full advantage of the offer. Instead of discussing possible political strategies with Nicodemus, he answers with an obscure teaching about being born again. Nicodemus is open to the teaching and tries to understand what Jesus means. Clearly Jesus is not saying that we need to be born again physically, for it is a process that a person can only go through once. Jesus clarifies that he is not talking about a physical birth. He means that a person must be born again by water and the Holy Spirit. Jesus might have referred this to the Baptism as practiced those days but with him bringing a new perspective in and through the work of the Spirit.

Therefore, when we were born physically, our physically life changed as we grow. So too when we are born again of water and the Holy Spirit, our spiritual life changes and need to have a new impact in corresponds to God’s laws of love. There is a difference, however. We had no choice about being born physically, and once we were born, we grew up as a matter of course. It just happened. We may or may not have chosen to be baptized, but growing up spiritually is our

choice, which is needed to take up daily in life. So, if we want to become mature Christians, good people of God, we need to go beyond being born again: we need to grow up again in loving God and neighbor as commanded by Jesus our Master and Lord.

**2014 Apr 29 Tue: Catherine of Siena, v, dr M**

*Acts 4: 32-37/ Ps 93: 1ab. 1cd-2. 5/ Jn 3: 7b-15*

Today what the readings convey to us is the message of rebirth in the spirit; they also confront our human failure in totally believing in the Lord. The readings tells us that whatever worldly degrees we may have, or however brilliant we may be in the worldly undertakings, unless we have faith we can never really experience the blessings of God

This is to show the blessings of god come to us daily and we need to be open to recognize them in our daily lives. The blessings of God come to us as a kind of revelation from God and we need to read them with the eyes of faith. To be “form” again with the water and the spirit means to surrender oneself to God through our eyes of faith.

Finally the readings reminds us that in our daily lives we need to live and practice our gifts of being born in water and the spirit by reading the signs of the time and act accordingly especially when someone is in need of our help and companionship.

**2014 Apr 30 Wed: Easter Weekday/ Pius V, pp, r**

*Acts 5: 17-26/ Ps 34: 2-3. 4-5. 6-7. 8-9/ Jn 3: 16-21*

At this early stage in the life of the Church, miracles were necessary to attest to the truth that was being taught by the apostles; and the power of miracles was abundantly bestowed upon them. When we pray to God for recovery from sickness, and God answers our prayers, it is not so that we may enjoy the comforts of life, but so that God may be honored by the service of him in our life. We must speak to all, for all the concerned. Speak the words of life, which God puts in our mouths! Speak all the words of this divine life, with which our present, earthly life cannot compare.