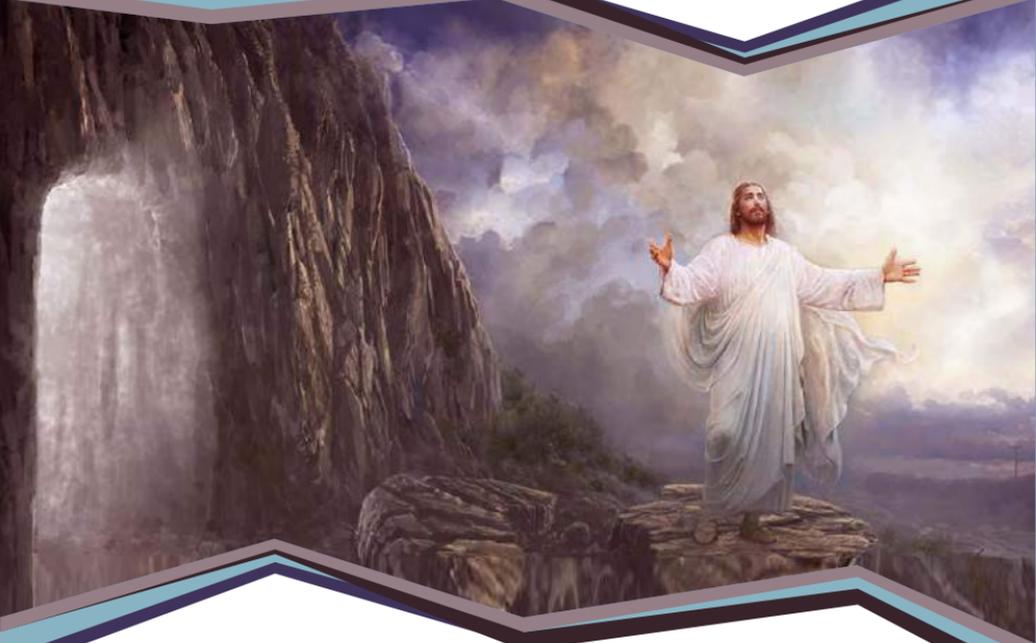


ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



Resurrection

Easter Sunday: 09 April

APRIL 2023 | DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

APRIL
2023

“Jesus, the Crucified One, is risen! He stands in the midst of those who mourned him, and says: “Peace be with you!”.

At the end of a Lent that has seemed endless,...let us allow the peace of Christ to enter our lives, our homes, our countries!”

Pope Francis

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EASTER 2023

A blessed, happy and peaceful Easter.

“The Easter message does not offer us a mirage or reveal a magic formula. It does not point to an escape from the difficult situation we are experiencing. The Easter message speaks concisely of the event that gives us the hope that does not disappoint: “Jesus who was crucified has risen”. It speaks to us not about angels or ghosts, but about a man, a man of flesh and bone, with a face and a name: Jesus. The Gospel testifies that this Jesus, crucified under Pontius Pilate for claiming he was the Christ, the Son of God, rose on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, just as he had foretold to his disciples. The crucified Jesus, none other, has risen from the dead. God the Father raised Jesus, his Son, because he fully accomplished his saving will. Jesus took upon himself our weakness, our infirmities, even our death. He endured our sufferings and bore the weight of our sins. Because of this, God the Father exalted him and now Jesus Christ lives forever; he is the Lord. The witnesses report an important detail: the risen Jesus bears the marks of the wounds in his hands, feet and side. These wounds are the everlasting seal of his love for us. All those who experience a painful trial in body or spirit can find refuge in these wounds and, through them, receive the grace of the hope that does not disappoint.” (Pope Francis)

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

Saturday April 1

Fifth Week of Lent

Ezekiel
37:21-28

Jeremiah
31:10-13

John
11:45-56

The Lord Jesus died for the whole world.

Tomorrow, we begin the most important week in the liturgical calendar—Holy Week. Today’s first reading tells us about the prophecy of how God will save his people and unite them under one shepherd — Jesus. The Gospel proclamation describes an incident that took place after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. The Sanhedrin were planning what they will do about the problems they saw Jesus causing for the rest of the Jewish people. Caiaphas, the high priest says something remarkable: “It is better for you that one man should die instead of the people, so that the whole nation may not perish.” Even in God’s eyes, he allowed his Son to take the fall and die for us, so that one man would die for the sins of the whole world. We believe that Jesus died to redeem the whole world. When he hung on the cross, he carried not only the sins of the people of that time but also the sins of the whole world till the end of time. He bore this heavy weight, that we may enjoy the forgiveness of sins and always be connected to God.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for saving us from sin and death.
Amen.

Sunday April 2

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Isaiah
50:4-7

Psalms 22:
8-9, 17-20, 23-24

Philippians
2:6-11

Matthew
26:14-27, 66

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Life as we know it, has its highs and lows and we see our Lord going through similar circumstances in today's readings. He is accepted and exalted one day and rejected and crucified the next. Today as we celebrate Palm Sunday and begin our journey through Holy week, we commemorate the final days of the life of our Saviour.

It is important to remember that this is not merely a celebration of a historical event, but this is the celebration of our story here and now. As we struggle with our human weakness, our Lord carries it and nails it onto the Cross every single time. As we cry out caught up in the world, our Lord is right there beside us, accompanying us along. When we fall into the trap of believing that God is against us, our Lord assures us otherwise, through his humble obedience to the Father's will.

We may be enjoying the privileges of high recognition and acceptance in society or may be hiding away from a world that had treated us cruelly. No matter where we are today, we are called to draw consolation and strength from our Lord who had gone through it all and emerged victorious.

Along with attending the liturgies during Holy week, we are also invited to place ourselves in the midst of the story that is unfolding over the next few days.

Where am I in all the action? Do I see myself cheering the Lord as he enters the city of Jerusalem or do I simply pass him by, too busy to pay any attention? Am I among the angry mob who shouts 'crucify him' or among the fearful disciples who ran away into hiding? Am I too conscious of the opinion of others and try to please them like Pilate did? Do I recognise the Lord for who he really is as he stumbles under the weight of the cross? Am I ready to step up to help him carry his cross or do I go about my own business?

The answers to these questions should not cause feelings of guilt within our hearts or make us hang our heads in shame but rather be a call to action and conversion. The upcoming week would bring us ample opportunities to turn our lives around in the right direction and let us pray for the grace to be open to this leading of the Spirit.

"Let us think about someone who...injured, offended or disappointed us...How often we spend time looking back on those who have wronged us! Today, Jesus teaches us not to remain there, but...to break the vicious circle of evil and sorrow...As disciples of Jesus, do we follow the Master or do we follow our own desire to strike back?" (Pope Francis)

Prayer: Abba Father, may we enter the Holy Week with deep faith and experience a conversion of heart. Amen.

Monday April 3

Monday of Holy Week

Isaiah
42:1-7

Psalm
27:1-3,13-14

John
12:1-11

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Many times we deviate from God's plan by following our own desires and plans. Then we feel sad and anxious. Today's readings depict the quality of discipleship that pleases God. "My servant with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my Spirit". As children of God we are expected to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and it should be evident in our words and actions. We must allow the Holy Spirit to control our thoughts and emotions as well. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will be led by the Spirit. "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God." (Rom 8:14) Today's Gospel proclamation presents a unique character, a person who challenges us by lowering herself before Jesus without any hesitation. We are called to practice such humility in our discipleship. In a nutshell; the words, deeds, feelings and emotions of a servant of God, have to please God, despite any situations and circumstances. We are called to please God. Our primary purpose in life is to be with God.

Prayer: Abba Father, may my life be pleasing to you.
Amen.

Tuesday April 4

Tuesday of Holy Week

Isaiah
49:1-6

Psalm
71:1-6,15,17

John
13:21-33,36-38

A new beginning.

Today's Gospel proclamation talks about the betrayal of Jesus. Judas listened to Jesus and witnessed many miracles. Though Judas accompanied Jesus in his mission his heart was not in it. He was later used by Satan to betray our Lord. Satan entered into Judas enabling him to carry out his betrayal. We may go for many services but our hearts remain closed. If Judas had believed that Jesus loved him despite all his weaknesses he would not have taken his life. We follow many rituals but remain unchanged. We carry hatred, regret, addictions, envy and malice in our hearts. We need to surrender our lives to the Lord. He will give a new life and a new beginning no matter how great our sins might have been. St. Peter believed in the love and forgiveness of the Lord. Though he denied Jesus, his conversion led him to be the leader of the apostles who carried the Gospel message to the world. Judas could not believe in this forgiveness and died. The Lord has placed life and death before us, what are we going to choose?

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to open my heart to you.
Amen.

Wednesday April 5

Wednesday of Holy Week

Isaiah
50:4-9

Psalm 69:
8-10,21-22,31,33-34

Matthew
26:14-25

Lean not on your own understanding.

We have performed the acts of Lent - fasting, praying and giving alms. Tomorrow we go for Holy Mass, sit at the table with Jesus, and commune with him. Are we like the apostles? Do we love Jesus deeply? Do we desire to be with him? Or are we like Judas? More interested in a few pieces of silver. Maybe Judas knew that his betrayal will lead to Jesus' death, but did he know that it would lead to his own death? Has the sacrament of confession become an excuse for us to sin again and again? Are we so accustomed to sin that we justify it, blame it on someone else or think that no one sees or knows? Judas may have had doubts in his heart, he may have not been open to hearing and experiencing what Jesus was trying to teach and it left him susceptible to the temptations of Satan. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we have God's divine nature and are beloved sons/daughters of God. So even if we do not feel or understand it, let us repent and believe this truth. Let us allow the Holy Spirit to make us truly alive.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to overcome sin for
I am your beloved son/daughter. Amen.

Thursday April 6

Holy Thursday - Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper

Exodus
12:1-8,11-14

Psalm
116:12-13,15-18

1 Corinthians
11:23-26

John
13:1-15

Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers, that you do to me.

In commemorating the events of Holy week, we not only recall Christ's suffering, but also celebrate his life and share in his victory. Through his passion, death and resurrection, Jesus accomplished the mission to which his Father called him. He conquered sin and restored humanity to the justice of God. On this night, the Lord gives us an image of what the church is supposed to look like, feel like and act like. After he washed the feet of the disciples, he gave them bread and wine that had been transformed into his body and blood. Once he cleanses us, he gives us his own body and blood for us to consume, so that a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual transformation will take place in us. The broken bread symbolizes his broken body and the wine, the blood he poured out. Cleansed by the Lord, we move to a place of freedom that allows us to wash the feet of others; washing their feet by not only serving those who do not deserve to be served, but accepting them and loving them to the end, the way the Lord did.

Prayer: Abba Father, wash me whiter than snow so that I may wash the feet of those you have placed in my life. Amen.

Friday April 7

Good Friday of the Passion of the Lord

Isaiah
52:13-53,12

Psalm 31:
2,6,12-13,15-17,25

Hebrews
4:14-16; 5:7-9

John
18:1-19,42

The Cross of Christ: sign of hope and salvation.

The invitation to live under the power of the cross is an underrated privilege. Because Jesus willingly endured nakedness, we get to live fully covered by grace. Because he accepted brutal torture, we have access to perfect healing. Because he suffered condemnation and rejection, we are chosen, accepted and loved. He shouldered an undeserved pain so that we may be spared from one we deserved. A perfect lamb was sacrificed for the salvation of blemished ones. If this isn't Love, what is? We have made love boastful and ornamental. But his love was humble, meek and real. His love imposed no conditions nor prerequisites. On this day of grace, let us remember that because of what Love did on that cross, we not only get to be loved by Jesus but also love as Jesus. Let us ask him to show us the lies we have been believing about his love, repent for overcomplicating and distorting it, and relearn the ways of his love. May we then share the message of salvation we inherited through the cross with those we encounter.

Prayer: Abba Father, teach me the ways of your love.
Amen.

Saturday April 8

Holy Saturday

The power of one's death that freed us all.

On Holy Saturday we enter into a divine mystery. The God of the universe has chosen to die for us. The one who holds all creation is himself held in the tomb. The Church herself feels empty. In keeping with an ancient tradition, the church refrains from celebrating the Eucharist until the night of Easter. If you have doubted the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, walk into a church this morning and sit for a few minutes, and you will feel the absence of the Eucharistic Lord. What does this stillness or quietness mean? God became human and chose to die for us so that we could live a life of freedom in him. He descended into hell so that we would no longer be bound by darkness, sin and death. St Paul says, all of us baptised into Christ, have been buried with Jesus into death (Rom 6:3). In this nothingness, anticipating his resurrection we are given the promise of new life. In the emptiness, surrendering our lives to Jesus, crucifying our flesh onto the cross and dying to our selfish ways we receive newness of life. Together with the Blessed Mother let us wait in joyful hope for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord.

Prayer: Abba Father, as we have been buried with Christ in baptism, help us to crucify negative thoughts and sinful ways on to that Cross. Amen.

Sunday April 9

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

Acts
10:34,37-43

Psalms 118:
1-2,16-17,22-23

Colossians
3:1-4

John
20:1-9

Jesus went about doing good.

Firstly, Happy Easter to all of you, who take the time to read these reflections. May the Risen Lord fill you with his love and peace.

The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles says that Peter opened his mouth and testified about the life of our Lord Jesus. In essence, the Lord went about doing good and God was with him.

In his earthly life, the Lord unleashed his heavenly power and authority on certain occasions like restoring life and calming a storm. He displayed his authority when he walked from town to town proclaiming the Word and finally he endured the pain of the cross and with much suffering gave up his spirit for the sins of the world.

The psalmist says, "This is the day the Lord has made let us rejoice in it." And so it is, the day when Easter dawns, because it is at this point that the life, power and impact of our Lord changes. How does it happen? The Risen Lord whom we celebrate is no longer limited to earthly restrictions and conditions.

When the Centurion begged our Lord Jesus to heal his servant, the Lord said: I will come to your home. The Centurion believed in Jesus' supernatural power and authority and told him to just say the word and the servant would be healed. These are the words we repeat at every Holy Mass even today. Our Lord resorted to the supernatural and a mighty miracle was performed.

After his death and resurrection, the Lord is eager to answer the cries of our hearts. He is alive. We are no more orphans. We have the ability and grace to carry him individually in our hearts. Like St. Paul said, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Gal 2:20).

It makes it easier for the Lord to go about doing more good. Through us he is able to minister to millions of people thirsting for his presence across the world. We have an easier access to him and his power is being made more and more real in our lives.

We can experience him and meet him in our prayer time, at the Eucharist and on our journeys. We have the treasure of the Eucharist where we can encounter the real presence of Jesus. We too carry the presence of Jesus wherever we go, we need to be aware of this.

We can also meet the Risen Christ in our darkest moments...at the grave of emptiness and despair, where his disciples encountered him and assumed all was lost but behold he was there, making all things new and assuring them of his eternal presence and comfort.

Prayer: Abba Father, may the power of the resurrection of Jesus come alive in me and lift me higher. Amen.

Monday April 10

Monday within the Octave of Easter

Acts
2:14,22-33

Psalm
16:1-2,5,7-11

Matthew
28:8-15

Jesus is alive.

In today's first reading St Peter declares the resurrection of Jesus. Death could no longer hold him, he defeated death and rose again and lives forever. The apostles who were hiding in fear met the Risen Lord and were transformed into courageous people who took the good news to the ends of the earth. We are often caught up in anxiety, worry, sinfulness and hopelessness. Do we see God's love in things around us? Beautiful flowers, the songs of birds and the magnificent sky remind us that God loves us. Instead of seeing this truth we sometimes focus on negative things and problems. The Risen Lord promises that we too can experience his presence. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to open our inner eyes to see Jesus who is ever present with us. He is holding us close to his heart. Let us live in this reality and witness to our families, friends, and the rest of the world that our Lord is alive. Through our inner responses when we face struggles, storms and problems we can experience the power of the Risen Lord.

Prayer: Abba Father, open our inner eyes to see your presence in us.
Amen.

Tuesday April 11

Tuesday within the Octave of Easter

Acts
2:36-41

Psalm
33:4-5,18-20,22

John
20:11-18

Be attentive and listen.

In today's first reading we see how St. Peter invited the people to repent and be baptised. We need to turn from our sins in answer to the Gospel. Baptism is the outward sign that we have died to our old nature and risen to new life in him; a simple step of faith accepting that he is the Lord of all. As we take this step of repentance, he meets us with forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. Our sins are washed away by the blood of Christ because of God's grace. Because we are weak and incapable to live God's way in our own human strength, he places his Spirit in us. Our choice to follow Jesus starts a new life, a gift from God. Today's Gospel proclamation speaks to us about Mary waiting outside Jesus' tomb. How often have we gone looking for Jesus? When we face difficult moments, we also have been desperate to find Jesus and experience his presence. At times, life is more than we can handle on our own. Jesus will call us by name and wait for us to reply. Will our minds and hearts be open to hear Jesus' call?

Prayer: Abba Father, I will strive to keep my heart alert and my ears open.
Amen.

Wednesday April 12

Wednesday within the Octave of Easter

Acts
3:1-10

Psalm
105:1-4,6-9

Luke
24:13-35

Recognize Christ among us.

The first reading invites us to ponder on the question: What should we offer others? Our spouse, children, parents, relatives, friends, and colleagues expect different things from us on a daily basis. Though we try to do our best, it may still not be enough for them and we may sometimes be upset about this. The first reading reminds us that we may have plenty of things to offer to our loved ones, but the most important thing is the presence of God. Whatever words we speak or actions we do, we can always give Christ to others. To do this, first we need to recognize Christ in our lives. He may be talking to us through different people and experiences in life. But are we open to this? As Catholics, our lives revolve around the Sacraments, and it is important that we understand their true value and participate in them wholeheartedly. It is in the breaking of the bread that the disciples recognized Christ. It shows the importance of us being bound to the church and her Sacraments.

Prayer: Abba Father, help us to see what you want us to see and hear what you want us to hear. We are nothing without you. Amen.

Thursday April 13

Thursday within the Octave of Easter

Acts
3:11-26

Psalm
8:2,5-9

Luke
24:35-48

Become a new creation.

In today's Gospel proclamation, the Lord is inviting us to repent. Jesus loves us and forgives our sins, but we need to purify our mind, our actions and our thoughts. If we look at the scriptures the Lord invites us to repent. We need to be aware of our actions, otherwise it would distract us from our aims and add issues to our journey. As believers we should focus on holiness, since our God is holy. It is not an easy path to reach holiness, however we need to depend on God and ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome our sinfulness. We should also make use of the sacrament of reconciliation for our spiritual lives to become more fruitful. We will then become new creations of our Lord and bring his fire to the ends of the world. As Catholics, if we have any addictions or attachments to particular sins, let us take up some spiritual exercises such as the Rosary. As we receive the grace of intercessory prayer our struggles will become easier to overcome. And we know that we are more than victorious because of Jesus who loves us.

Prayer: Abba Father, make us holy.
Amen.

Friday April 14

Friday within the Octave of Easter

Acts
4:1-12

Psalm
118:1-2,4,22-27

John
21:1-14

We are called to be missionaries.

When Peter, a Galilean fisherman delivered his speech with undaunted courage addressing the powerful and wealthy people in the land he spoke as a judge. He was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. This was the court that condemned Jesus to death, but with a spirit of determination he was able to go on despite the danger of a worse outcome. Today's Gospel proclamation says that 153 fish were caught. Saint Jerome says that this number symbolizes the gathering of the people of all the nations. The nets did not break despite the large haul. Jesus is always present with us and within us. We are called to be missionaries in the circle of influence God has placed us. If we set out on that mission with surrendered hearts and purpose driven lives based on Kingdom values, we too will preach the Gospel with our lives. The impact we can have on our families, the place we live in, our communities, the country and the world is enormous. Our lives can be shining examples of God's unconditional love.

Prayer: Abba Father, may the power of the resurrection make a difference in the world we live in. Amen.

Saturday April 15

Saturday within the Octave of Easter

Acts
4:13-21

Psalm
118:1,14-21

Mark
16:9-15

Let us announce the Good News to others.

We are people of the resurrection and are children of the living God; therefore we are bold and courageous like Peter and John. We are called, chosen and pre-destined to be witnesses of the Risen Lord. Today's Psalm is our victorious song. We are the people of "Alleluia". Do we believe that we are victorious children of the living God? We often live defeated lives. Let us remember that suffering does not end in death but in resurrection. We are called to sing the song of Alleluia and step out of our comfort zones. We are witnesses of Jesus. Mary Magdalene became the first evangelist. The two disciples whom the Lord Jesus met in the countryside became the next evangelists. Their proclamation was that Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, has risen! This is the Kerygma (proclamation) of Christianity; Jesus is risen and alive. We are called to experience Jesus and become his witnesses. The Lord says to us; "Go into the world and proclaim the Gospel to all creatures", let us obey the command of Christ as his disciples did.

Prayer: Abba Father, I prostrate at your feet and say;
"I was born to do your will, O God". Amen.

Sunday April 16

Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)

Acts
4:42-47

Psalm 118:
2-4,13-15,22-24

1 Peter
1:3-9

John
20:19-31

Let us share God's mercy.

In today's readings we see how the early church devoted themselves to fellowship: holding things in common - sharing together. There was a wonderful sense of community, of harmony, of belonging to each other. That is the fellowship which is the intended life for the body of Christ. God has designed that his life should be evident through a community. If the body is not operating, then his life is not manifest. That means there is no power because the life of God is always power.

At a time when the world seems to be plundered by such routine violence, we can easily allow fear and maybe even retaliation to remove any notion of gratitude. Whether we are reading about local gang violence, or global terrorism, the effects of our sin is before us. What is there to be grateful for when we see so much wickedness daily? Today's psalm speaks to those who are on an emotional high as well as those who are down low. It speaks to those who are experiencing the joy of their salvation, as well as those who are fighting to get out of bed. We can always give thanks because of the love of God.

Death could not hold Jesus and fear could not hold his disciples. This is the promise of our own restoration at the end of time, and the reality of reconciliation with God and other people here and now. Like the disciples, we encounter Jesus risen from the dead, freeing us from the fear of death, and freeing us from all other fears that dominate our lives. Jesus often astonishes us, as he did those disciples in the upper room. He may come to us where we least expect him, even the secret depths of our soul. Christ comes to set us free. We can give to him the chains of fear that hold us, and he will break them by the power of his resurrection.

"Jesus makes us see the wounds of our brothers and sisters. In the midst of our own crises and our difficulties, divine mercy often makes us aware of the sufferings of our neighbour. We think that we are experiencing unbearable pain and situations of suffering, and we suddenly discover that others around us are silently enduring even worse things. If we care for the wounds of our neighbour and pour upon them the balm of mercy, we find being reborn within us a hope that comforts us in our weariness. Let us ask ourselves whether of late we have helped someone suffering in mind or body; whether we have brought peace to someone suffering physically or spiritually; whether we have spent some time simply listening, being present, or bringing comfort to another person. For whenever we do these things, we encounter Jesus." (Pope Francis)

Prayer: Abba Father, may we develop a community of love so that people will be eager to find you. Amen.

Monday April 17

Second Week of Easter

Acts
4:23-31

Psalm
2:1-9

John
3:1-8

New life.

Today's Gospel proclamation presents an eligibility criterion to enter the Kingdom of God. What is the Kingdom of God? In Luke 17:20-21, Jesus explains that the Kingdom of God is within us. Jesus is the best role model for one to understand the attributes of the Kingdom. Loving our enemies like we love ourselves, turning the other cheek when one slaps us on one, forgiving the one who insults us... the list goes on. These are the attributes we need to endeavour to build within us so we can be part of the Kingdom of God. The question is how can one achieve this? How can one transform? Not unless one is born from above. We need the Holy Spirit to be reborn from within. We need to make a conscious choice to go 'as we are' to our Lord Jesus and seek forgiveness with all our heart. We need to repent for what we have done and let go of our past, worries and fears. We need to surrender ourselves to divine providence and allow the Holy Spirit to make us reborn in the Spirit.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I become a worthy sanctuary to host your presence.
Amen.

Tuesday April 18

Second Week of Easter

Acts
4:32-37

Psalm
93:1-2,5

John
3:7-15

To remain connected to who I come from.

I listened to my prayer partner who testified to the tangible miracles she had witnessed. Her life's work is reaching out to strangers and bringing them healing and life in the name of God. She is generous with her time, energy, and the love and knowledge she has of God, so that she reaches many in need. The Spirit prompts and she runs. The first reading talks of the generosity of the first community of believers. With great power the apostles were bearing witness to the resurrection. We see God's grace at work in all those who have heard. In the Gospel proclamation, Jesus invites us to be born again, where the Spirit gives birth: the Spirit that comes down from heaven, keeping us connected to our heavenly Father. In seeking to be open to the leading of the Spirit, we can testify to the heavenly things on earth. Just as we do not see the wind but the effects of it, we can live as witnesses to the effects of the Spirit in our life. We do not need to be materially rich to help further the kingdom of God.

Prayer: Abba Father, open my ears so that I may hear your prompts and follow your leading. Amen.

Wednesday April 19

Second Week of Easter

Acts
5:17-26

Psalm
34:2-9

John
3:16-21

The Spirit of God sets us free.

Today's Gospel proclamation starts with a verse that speaks of the depth of God's love for his children. This love is a supernatural power that has the ability to change and transform lives. In today's first reading we see how the apostles who had been touched by this amazing love, became changed men. Their lives had been transformed. They no longer fear people rather they fear displeasing God. What does it mean to fear God? It is a respect for God and for his awesome presence and power. It is a deep-seated desire to not displease him in any way, and to put him first in whatever we do. The fear of God makes us free within, because it frees us from our own damaging self-centred thoughts. It also frees us from being afraid of the world and its opinions. This is what happened to the apostles. The Sanhedrin on the other hand were driven by their envy and by the opinions of the crowd. As we reflect on today's readings it may be a good time to see where we stand. Are we swayed by the opinions of others, or do we fear God?

Prayer: Abba Father, we lay our thoughts and opinions at your feet.
Purify us. Amen.

Thursday April 20

Second Week of Easter

Acts
5:27-33

Psalm
34:2,9,17-20

John
3:31-36

"We must obey God rather than humans beings."

We live in a world where value systems change daily. We keep drifting away from a life that is rooted in the Word of God. Often we blame it on the "Change in times". We adopt different lifestyles to adapt and conform to the pattern of the new world that we are responsible for. There is such a drastic change in family life over the years. For example look at family meal times and how families gathered together. Today, each has their own schedule: parents prioritise work and children prioritise tuition classes over family meals. This was an example to illustrate how the family dynamic has changed and how we subtly allow the norms of the world to be absorbed into our lives. How much more then are we away from spiritual exercises that calls for time of prayer and reflection, and following God's will. We have adopted lifestyles centred on things that do not matter. Look at St. Peter and the apostles: "We must obey God rather than people." It is a call to examine our hearts. We have to be vigilant and purposeful in our calling.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we be so connected to you that we are not swayed by the world. Amen.

Friday April 21

Second Week of Easter

Acts
5:34-42

Psalm
27:1,4,13-14

John
6:1-15

Finding true joy.

Today's Gospel proclamation describes the miracle of feeding the five thousand. The hidden character of this miracle is the insignificant little boy who said "yes" and co-operated in the miracle that the Lord Jesus performed. In our lives, how many times have we been that insignificant person that the Lord had reached out to stand in the gap for someone in need? Have we been able to say yes and co-operate for the Lord to do a miracle? How many times have we turned a blind eye or a deaf ear to someone in need? In the first reading we see how the Lord's apostles were joyful after being set free by the Sanhedrin even though they were flogged. This is the joy of belonging to God and saying yes to him at all times. They lived with the Lord and experienced the mighty miracles and witnessed his resurrection. We have the same calling and we have the Holy Bible that gives us the strength to do the will of God no matter how insignificant we are. Let us be instruments in the hands of the Lord and share the Good News.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to be humble and to listen to you attentively.
Amen.

Saturday April 22

Second Week of Easter

Acts
6:1-7

Psalm
33:1-2,4-5,18-19

John
6:16-21

Healthy choice.

We live in a world full of choices; these choices are to be made from the time we get up to the time we wind up in bed. The choices we make or the choices that are best for us, we call: "healthy choices". Psalm 33 teaches us that the word of the Lord and his works are trustworthy. As followers of Jesus we are to have God as the centre of our lives and make choices aligned with God's word for upright living, which is often difficult. We have multiple answers for the same question, so how will we choose? As we see in Acts 6, the disciples made a choice to follow the word of God and to designate others to serve the people and to take care of the needy. We too need to discern our calling. We can all contribute for the spreading of his Kingdom. In this world full of nicely packaged choices let us make up our mind to make a choice in partnership with the word of God. This is the pathway to become the chosen ones of the creator. In his image we are created and to him we would return.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we have your Word in our hearts.
Amen.

Sunday April 23

Third Sunday of Easter

Acts
2:14,22-33

Psalm
16:1-2,5,7-11

1 Peter
1:17-21

Luke
24:13-35

Stay with us O Lord.

In today's Gospel proclamation we read how on the day of his resurrection, Jesus meets two of his disciples who were going away from Jerusalem. He shares and interprets the Word and breaks bread with them. This is a celebration of the Eucharist.

The breaking of the bread is his body and blood offered on the cross, given up for all humanity. He offered himself on the cross to restore our divine sonship and bring us back from our fallen nature and restore the image and likeness of God within us, which we lost due to sin.

How important is the Eucharist in our lives? We who are baptized, and have received the identity of divine sonship, which Jesus' victory on the cross won for us, must hold onto that identity. For this, we need Holy Communion which is Jesus himself. He comes to live in us, to transform us from within.

The Gospel writer says that the disciples' hearts burnt as they listened to the Scriptures and that their eyes opened to recognize Christ in the breaking of the bread. What was the result? They took a u-turn and changed the direction they were going, and returned to Jerusalem. When Jesus met them they were going away from Jerusalem.

We too at times have gone away from the Lord or done our will. We may have failed to recognize the purpose of our lives, in our busy daily schedules and social activities .

Today let us reflect upon our lives and bring to the Lord those areas that we have not yet surrendered to God. Can we hold on to the Word of God that ministers, reveals and assures, in that area of our lives? If we are not at peace, but anxious about certain things, that exactly is the area, that needs to come under the Lordship of Christ.

Jesus died and thus ransomed us from the futile ways we have inherited from our ancestors. We must strive to live as people of the resurrection, holding on to his promises and believing in them, even when the environment we live in, has no proof of it.

Just as the disciples' hearts burnt when the Scripture was interpreted by Jesus, the Word of God is the light unto our path.

Let us live in the plea of the psalmist "Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge." What a beautiful imagery: when we take refuge in God no harm can come our way, because the Lord will keep us safe. He will protect and guard us.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to live under your refuge and not to turn away from you. Amen.

Monday April 24

Third Week of Easter

Acts
6:8-15

Psalm 119:
23-24,26-27,29-30

John
6:22-29

Believe in the one he sent.

In the Lord's Prayer, we say: "give us this day our daily bread". "Bread" refers to the "Bread of life" who is Jesus himself. Only Jesus can satisfy the deepest yearnings of our heart. He is the missing piece to the puzzle that made us so vexed trying to complete ourselves. Jesus is speaking to us through the scriptures. He is inviting us to hunger for spiritual nourishment. He is challenging us to strengthen our faith, to seek him, even in chaotic situations, as beautifully presented in the first reading, through the life of St. Stephen. Seek God's voice - his word - logos. As we meditate upon the scriptures, let us strive to encounter Christ through the word of God. Let us fulfil God's mission that has been entrusted to us by delighting in Jesus' presence. We are truly blessed to be able to read God's word and meditate upon it. Let us seek an outpouring of his love, grace and mercy. Let us allow his word to guide us and empower us. May his word enlighten our path to seek him in every step we take.

Prayer: Abba Father, shower your blessings and graces upon me.
Amen.

Tuesday April 25

Feast of Saint Mark, Evangelist

1 Peter
5:5-14

Psalm
89:2-3,6-7,16-17

Mark
16:15-20

The Lord must increase and I must decrease.

Today's first reading points out to us why we should be humble: because God opposes the proud. We have heard the saying "Pride goes before a fall". Humility is an important virtue. The more we humble ourselves before God, we can be sure that we will be exalted by him. Humility challenges many of us. When we are wrong how difficult it is for us to apologise? It is time for us to sow seeds of humility in our broken relationships. Pope Francis, once knelt and kissed the feet of two South Sudanese leaders imploring them to pursue peace. That was an act of profound humility. Imagine the beauty we can bring about and the kingdom joy we could experience if we could apply this to our lives. Let us make this choice empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out the words of our Lord, "Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole of creation". As Christians signs of God's power will accompany us. As pride is a sin, and is a cause for disobedience, let us remove this trace of sin in our lives through humility.

Prayer: Abba Father, empower us by your Holy Spirit to be humble.
Amen.

Wednesday April 26

Third Week of Easter

Acts
8:1-8

Psalm
66:1-7

John
6:35-40

Turning our curses into blessings.

We see today's Gospel Proclamation being fulfilled in the First Reading. The Lord Jesus had a desire to not lose anyone that was given to him. Further, we know that it is only after his resurrection that the Holy Spirit came powerfully upon the apostles, and baptised them in the Spirit. Thus, God's fire and zeal soon spread from the apostles to others. The First Reading narrates signs and wonders, but also describes the persecution that followed. It is persecution that ultimately made the church grow stronger. The persecution that took place in Jerusalem, scattered the disciples. But, this turned out for good, as the people of Samaria were blessed by the power of God. The circumstance we are walking in, may look like a curse. However, God is waiting to turn that curse into a blessing. He is inviting us to fall at his feet, and give complete control back to him. Our humility, will then be an avenue through which our circumstances turn into blessings not just for us but for others as well.

Prayer: Abba Father, I fall at your feet.
Here I am, lead me according to your will. Amen.

Thursday April 27

Third Week of Easter

Acts
8:26-40

Psalm
66:8-9,16-17,20

John
6:44-51

Hungering for the bread of life.

The Ethiopian eunuch hungers for God. He goes to Jerusalem to worship God. On his way back he is reading the scriptures. God intervenes and through Philip reveals the Good News of Jesus to him. The result is fulfilment: baptism of the Holy Spirit. He continues full of joy on his way back home. Emptying himself leads him to Jesus. In our lives too, it was when the things of this world fell apart that we heard God's voice and encountered Jesus. Our human nature is to hold onto ourselves and the things of this world. God in his mercy followed us every moment of our lives and at the right moment, drew us to Jesus. Let us remember, that deep within us we hunger for the love of God, we hunger for the Spirit of God. It is God alone who can fulfil this desire in our life. Nothing and nobody in this world can fulfil it. Yet, we find ourselves trapped in the things of this world. Let us ask for the grace of God to hunger for him, to hunger for the bread of life that will lead us to eternal life.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for never giving up on me and drawing me to your Son, the Lord Jesus, the bread of life. Amen.

Friday April 28

Third Week of Easter

Acts
9:1-20

Psalm
117:1-2

John
6:52-59

Be nourished.

In today's Gospel proclamation Jesus directs us to eat his flesh as the bread of life. To eat bread means to accept Christ into our lives and become united with him. We are united with Christ in two ways: first, by believing in his death (the sacrifice of his flesh) and resurrection and second, by devoting ourselves to living as he requires, depending on his teaching for guidance, and trusting in the Holy Spirit for power. The idea of drinking any blood, let alone human blood, was repugnant to the religious leaders because the law forbade it (see Leviticus 17:10, 11). Jesus was not talking about the blood of animals. He was referring to his blood that would be poured out for the salvation of the world. He was saying that his life had to become their own, but they could not accept this concept. Sadly even today many find it hard to believe in the Eucharist. In this season of Easter let us humbly approach the table of the Lord and receive nourishment, because it is his body and blood that will sustain us for eternity.

Prayer: Abba Father, I long for you.
Amen.

Saturday April 29

Third Week of Easter

Acts
9:31-42

Psalm
116:12-17

John
6:60-69

The Church is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Today's first reading speaks about the steady progress of the Church through the working of the Holy Spirit. We read about the miraculous healing of Aeneas, a paralysed man who had been bed ridden for 8 years and the raising of Dorcas. These signs attracted many people to believe in the Lord and many people were added to the Church. In the Gospel proclamation when Jesus talks about his Eucharistic presence, people exclaim: "This sort of talk is hard to endure! How can anyone take it seriously?" However, Jesus refuses to re-phrase the revelation of his Eucharistic presence. He insists that the issue is not his words but our faith in his words. He challenges us to not think about his words merely with our human capabilities, for "the flesh is useless" and his words "are spirit and life". Even today signs and wonders are the gateway for countless non-believers to encounter the living God. As believers, by hearing God's word in the light of the Spirit, we can grow in our faith in Jesus' Eucharistic presence.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I hear your Word
and rejoice in the signs and wonders that I see. Amen.

Sunday April 30

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts
2:36-41

Psalm
23:1-6

1 Peter
2:20-25

John
10:1-10

Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

The Master proclaims that he alone is our shepherd. He calls out and leads his sheep. Jesus boldly declares that anyone who attempts to lead his sheep in other paths is a thief. The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. It is the Lord who came to give us life to the fullest.

“Jesus the Good Shepherd defends, knows, and above all loves his sheep. And this is why he gives his life for them (cf Jn 10:15). Love for his sheep, that is, for each one of us, leads him to die on the cross because this is the Father’s will — that no one should be lost. Christ’s love is not selective; it embraces everyone.” (Pope Francis)

God’s Word could not have been any clearer. Hence we should take time to reflect on who we are following. Is it Jesus, the Good Shepherd? Or is it money, ambitions, fame, power, lust, or even relationships however good they are? The Holy Spirit will speak to our hearts as we open the closed rooms of our hearts to him.

It is none other than St Peter, to whom the Lord handed over his Church, who instructs us. It is noteworthy that Peter raised his voice when addressing the crowd, he was not whispering or mumbling, careful to not offend anyone. Instead he preached courageously.

He boldly announced that God has made the crucified Jesus, the Lord and Messiah. How much more clearly shall we hear the same truth from the Holy Spirit. He will surely convict us gently that we too have been following other lords.

The instructions are simple; repent of our current lifestyles and mindsets in the ocean of his mercy. “Be baptised” means to be plunged into living water. In baptism our old nature died with Christ and we were raised up as a new creation. Through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, we renew the same truth of our new birth and are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Let us choose to respond to our Good Shepherd who carried our sins in his body, and allowed himself to be nailed to a cross, nailing our sinful nature along with him.

St. Peter assures us that by Jesus’ wounds we have been healed already. Let us receive this truth in faith for us and our dear ones, far and near. “This promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off...” (Acts 2:39)

I desire this life of divine love and power, following the Good Shepherd. I want my loved ones to have the same joyous lifestyle, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Do you also desire to follow the Good Shepherd?

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for sending your only Son to suffer what we deserved, so that we can enjoy everything he deserved. Amen.

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Easter Quotes



“The glory of God is that man lives. Behold, man lives in Christ. Here is the moment in which what he, Christ, said is accomplished: ‘I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live’ (John 11:25).” - St. John Paul II, 1990

“But the greatest of all [feast days] is Easter Day, the day of the Lord’s Resurrection, because today assurance was given to us to obtain eternal and immortal life in soul and body. Christ gave it to us through his resurrection, which is the cause and the assurance of our resurrection.”
St. Vincent Ferrer

“Why do you think that everything is hopeless, that no one can take away your own tombstones? Why do you give in to resignation and failure? Easter is the feast of tombstones taken away, rocks rolled aside. God takes away even the hardest stones against which our hopes and expectations crash: death, sin, fear, worldliness.”
Pope Francis, 2019



On Our Knees - In His Hands is a book of reflections and aid to prayer, based on the daily readings of the mass. Its purpose is to help Catholics and other Christians engaged in the normal hustle and bustle of life to discover God’s presence and direction in the practical situations they are placed in. This is made possible by a group of writers who themselves are lay people living at the heart of busy day-to-day life.

