



# Bringing Home the Word +

Third Sunday of Easter (C)

May 1, 2022

## His Love Casts Out Fear

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

When we receive the power of the resurrection and experience its effects, then we become transformed Christians. Somehow we like to hold on to our fears and failures. They are what we know, and in some way they can make us feel strangely secure. Yet Jesus wants to free us from old fears and set us on a mission motivated by love.

All of the apostles, after encountering the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit, show new courage in proclaiming his name. Whether before politicians, church leaders, or before their fellow Jews, they had no fear of the consequences of

preaching the Way. Why? Because Jesus showed them death wasn't something to fear. He had received the fullness of evil's wrath and, by rising victorious, proved love is stronger. The apostles had seen him tortured and dead, and then they saw him alive. Jesus had promised that same power to his followers. It is with this confidence and trust that they travel throughout Judea and all of the Roman Empire. Perfected love casts out all fear.

Although the apostles had failed Jesus and denied his friendship, each had experienced his mercy and forgiveness. Jesus didn't blame them for their sin. He reassured them of his confidence in them. Once we have experienced love, there is no stopping us. We have seen it in a small way when we have fallen in love with someone or set our hearts and minds passionately on a goal. Once our hearts have been captured and we believe, everything else is absorbed into that gravitational pull. +

## Sunday Readings

### Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41

So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name.

### Revelation 5:11-14

And [the angels] cried out in a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

### John 21:1-19 or John 21:1-14

So [Jesus] said to them, "Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something."

*Jesus wants to free us  
from old fears and  
set us on a mission  
motivated by love.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

Mutual forgiveness is the fruit of an interior resolve that comes to maturity in prayer.... It is a gift born of the grace poured out by Christ upon married couples whenever they turn to him and allow him to act. Christ...is always waiting for you to open your hearts to him, so that he can sustain you....

Letter to married couples for the "Amoris Laetitia family" year, December 26, 2021



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do I need to forgive someone? What stops me?
- Is there someone whose forgiveness I need to seek? What is stopping me?

# The Freedom of Forgiveness

By Joy McCuen

It was 1980. Since the fall of South Vietnam to the Communists, many refugees had arrived in the United States. Commonly called “boat people” because many fled Vietnam by boat, the refugees escaped to camps in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. They then were relocated to various countries.

Some boat people came to Philadelphia and were temporarily housed in a condemned seven-story apartment building in the city’s Logan section. They had no jobs, spoke no English, and mostly had just the clothes on their backs as their only possessions.

Supported by our church, my husband and I left our home and moved into the seventh floor of this building. We had a toddler and I was pregnant. The elevator was broken, so we climbed the stairs to get to our apartment. Some called us crazy, but God immediately gave us an incredible love for these refugees who had come so far and had suffered so much.

With interpreters, drawings, and charades, we began to learn the stories of the people we came to help. One woman said her sister’s hand got chopped off because the soldiers wanted the jade bracelet she had worn since she was small. Other survivors told of dangerous journeys on overcrowded, unsafe boats. While escaping, they faced constant danger from storms and pirates. Some described treacherous treks through



dense jungles. Torture, rape, and devastating losses were also common. Almost everyone had witnessed loved ones killed by the Communist regime. Most survivors we talked with had spent many months in stark, dangerous conditions in refugee camps. Each individual tragedy felt overwhelming.

In the relative safety of north Philadelphia, we began to help our new friends learn English and navigate the city. We shared our Christian faith, telling of Jesus’ love for them and that through him they could find peace. We also discussed a central tenet of Christianity—forgiveness, a difficult concept in this circumstance.

How do you forgive a man who cut off your hand? How do you forgive

a mob of soldiers who gang-raped you? How do you forgive officers who murdered your parents before your eyes? How do you forgive a government that took all you owned? How could we ask people to forgive those who committed unthinkable wrongs against them?

Forgiveness never lets the wrongdoer off the hook. Forgiveness frees the forgiver. Forgiveness releases us from the bitterness and anger that come from gripping the hurt and anger. Jesus showed us we must forgive those who have hurt us. While dying on Calvary, he forgave those who falsely accused him, beat him, and nailed him to that cross.

As this truth became clear to our Southeast Asian friends, they slowly began entering a place where they could forgive. It wasn’t easy. Days were filled with weeping and unimaginable pain. But gradually we began seeing once-hardened faces soften through God’s healing miracle of forgiveness. We felt blessed to witness firsthand the power of forgiveness under horrific circumstances. +

## PRAYER

*Risen Lord, you share with me  
God’s gifts of peace and  
forgiveness. Open my heart  
to share your peace and  
forgiveness with all people.*

*From Hopeful Meditations for Every Day  
of Easter Through Pentecost,  
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney*

## WEEKDAY READINGS

May 2–7

**Monday,** St. Athanasius:  
Acts 6:8–15 / Jn 6:22–29

**Tuesday,** Sts. Philip and James,  
Apostles: 1 Cor 15:1–8 / Jn 14:6–14

**Wednesday,** Easter Weekday:  
Acts 8:1b–8 / Jn 6:35–40

**Thursday,** Easter Weekday:  
Acts 8:26–40 / Jn 6:44–51

**Friday,** Easter Weekday:  
Acts 9:1–20 / Jn 6:52–59

**Saturday,** Easter Weekday:  
Acts 9:31–42 / Jn 6:60–69

Bringing Home  
the Word 

May 1, 2022

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# Bringing Home the Word

Fourth Sunday of Easter (C)

May 8, 2022

## The Dangers of Jealousy

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Paul and Barnabas were preaching to the Jewish people in synagogues, but today's reading reveals why they changed audiences and began preaching to the Gentiles. After initial interest was shown by the Jews, their leaders became jealous and stirred up a persecution against the apostles.

Jealousy is a powerful thing. It deafens us from perceiving the good things God wants to give us through others and turns our neighbor into an enemy. It makes us critical, unsatisfied, bitter, and discouraged. Rather than find support in our brother or sister, we lose that gift

and alienate ourselves. God and peace are never found in jealousy.

As a result, God sent Paul and Barnabas to preach to the Gentiles and to bring his good news to souls who were open to hearing his voice. Humility is the virtue that helps us see the good of others and appreciate it as if it were our own.

The good shepherd was speaking to his flock and wanted to lead them to greener pastures, but only the humble were able to hear him and be led to those springs of life-giving water.

Beware of the dangers of jealousy and pride that make us rebellious sheep who are unable to be led and taught by those who love us most. We think we know better than God, his word, and his Church, separating from the flock and the shepherd. May God grant us a listening and humble heart, open to discovering his truth through the Good Shepherd who constantly wants to speak it to us. +

### A Word from Pope Francis

A world that looks to the future without a mother's gaze is shortsighted. It may well increase its profits, but it will no longer see others as children....The human family is built upon mothers. A world in which maternal tenderness is dismissed as mere sentiment may be rich materially, but poor where the future is concerned.

Homily, January 1, 2019



## Sunday Readings

### Acts 13:14, 43-52

When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and with violent abuse contradicted what Paul said.

### Revelation 7:9, 14b-17

I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue.

### John 10:27-30

[Jesus said,] "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

*Jealousy is a powerful thing.  
It deafens us from perceiving  
the good things God wants  
to give us.*

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Is jealousy keeping me from being truly happy about another's good fortune?
- Have I counted my blessings with a grateful heart?

# Here's Jesus, Here's Me: What's the Diff?

By Paige Byrne Shortal

I once heard a homilist suggest the simplest of exercises to keep us on the right path. He said we should look at Jesus and then look at ourselves and notice the difference.

I'm reminded of those activity books my young granddaughter likes—the ones with word finds, mazes, connect the dots, and so on. There's one activity we like to do together that we call, "What's the Diff?" There are two almost identical



pictures, and we race each other to identify the slight differences. She very often beats me—young eyes, open mind.

What if we listened to the Gospel with the intention

of playing "What's the Diff?" We would have to listen attentively in order to form a clear picture of Jesus. We would have to listen with the open mind of a child.

## On Holy Thursday —

- Here's Jesus, kneeling before each of his disciples, washing their feet.
- Here's Jesus, presenting himself in the simplest of elements, offering himself as bread broken, as wine poured out, willing to be consumed in order to serve us and save us.

*Here's Jesus. Here's me. What's the diff?*

## On Good Friday —

- Here's Jesus, rejecting the violence of Peter's sword even to protect himself from those who would send him to a horrific death.
- Here's Jesus, standing before his accusers without protest or defense.
- Here's Jesus, carrying his cross, accepting help and comfort from those who love him, struggling on, even while he feels abandoned.
- Here's Jesus, hanging on the cross, in pain, but still forgiving those who have so harmed him.

*Here's Jesus. Here's me. What's the diff?*

## On the Sundays of Easter —

- Here's Jesus, his tomb empty, leaving the trappings of death behind and rising to new life.
- Here's Jesus, appearing to his frightened disciples, offering peace, spreading calm and confidence.
- Here's Jesus, simply serving breakfast on the seashore, loving and asking only for our love and that we love each other.
- Here's Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the one who watches out for the little, the lost, the ones who don't matter in this world.
- Here's Jesus, praying for us, longing for us to be one people, one family, his brothers and sisters.

*Here's Jesus. Here's me. What's the diff?*

## And all year long —

Here's Jesus, teaching us, exhorting us:

- to believe, even when it seems like nonsense, even when those who have been examples of faith disappoint us; to believe the impossible;
- to stop grabbing and clutching and instead to let go of the unnecessary, to share with others, to live simply so that others may simply live;
- to recognize everyone placed on our path as our neighbor;
- to seek to be last, to put others first, to serve instead of waiting to be served;
- to forgive, even our enemies, even those who have so hurt us so much that we think we'll never recover.

*Here's Jesus. Here's me. What's the diff?*

We'll never be Jesus, but this exercise—practiced as a daily examination of conscience—might take our focus off the faults of others and help us grow in holiness.



*Risen Lord, give me the courage  
to be a loving shepherd  
and advocate for the poor  
and vulnerable.*

From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

May 9–14

**Monday**, Easter Weekday:

Acts 11:1–18 / Jn 10:1–10

**Tuesday**, Easter Weekday:

Acts 11:19–26 / Jn 10:22–30

**Wednesday**, Easter Weekday:

Acts 12:24–13:5a / Jn 12:44–50

**Thursday**, Easter Weekday:

Acts 13:13–25 / Jn 13:16–20

**Friday**, Easter Weekday:

Acts 13:26–33 / Jn 14:1–6

**Saturday**, St. Matthias, Apostle:

Acts 1:15–17, 20–26 / Jn 15:9–17



# Bringing Home the Word

**Fifth Sunday of Easter (C)**

**May 15, 2022**

## God's Reign in Heaven and on Earth

*By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC*

The trumpeters in the center of the huge Sistine Chapel wall fresco declare the new reign of God, the coming of the new Jerusalem, which was sent from heaven from God most high. This new heaven and earth is the civilization of love brought about by Christ's passion, death, and resurrection.

It's not an abstract ideal or some faraway lost city. Rather, it is a city that now exists in heaven around the throne of the Lamb and also grows by means of the Church as God's kingdom on earth.

Just as Paul and Barnabas appointed elders and the Church took on a stable, hierarchical structure, we are reminded of the historical growth of this city of love—God's Church on earth. From the beginning it was founded on faith. The apostles prayed, fasted, and commended these elders to the Lord. It was their common faith in Christ that was the foundation of this new kingdom of God.

The glory of this kingdom isn't in church buildings or organizations, but it's the glory that Jesus mentions in today's Gospel. "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him" (John 13:31). It's the glory that comes from Jesus' faithful love toward the Father and his disciples, leading him to be enthroned on the cross and rule as the Lamb that was slain yet still stands. It is the new commandment of love that is their glory. Thus, the bride that is the Church will be great to the degree that it loves like Jesus, its husband and King. +

***It was their common faith in Christ that was the foundation of this new kingdom of God.***

### ***A Word from Pope Francis***

The Father is pleased when we love one another and we forgive each other from the heart. Then, he gives us his Spirit. Let us...take the first step, in prayer, in fraternal encounter, in concrete charity. In this way, we will be more like the Father, who loves without counting the cost. And he will pour out upon us the Spirit of unity.

Homily, Geneva, June 21, 2018



## Sunday Readings

### **Acts 14:21–27**

They...reported what God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

### **Revelation 21:1–5a**

The one who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

### **John 13:31–33a, 34–35**

[Jesus said,] "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I look for what I have in common with another person? Or do I dwell on the differences?
- How willing am I to love another person despite our differences?



# Tending to the Tension

By Fr. Donald Willard, CSsR

The world appears to be increasingly polarized, a condition that seems to have entered every aspect of life. For example, the rich and the poor still exist, but the gap between them is greater, and the middle class is disappearing. Polarization is found not only in the financial realm but increasingly in politics, business, family relationships, and even in the Church. Polarization is based on conflict and division. It is an overemphasis on the differences between people at the expense of the unity that makes us who we are as a community. The end result is radical individualism.

This, however, is not how the Church is supposed to be. We are not only called to have a personal relationship with God but a unifying relationship with one another. Although tension does exist, it can be beneficial. Diversity devoid of division and unity without blind conformity allow us to grow without sacrificing fidelity. There is only one way to accomplish this healthy tension—the answer is through Jesus Christ.

If I recognize that I am not God, that I don't have all the answers, and that I don't set the standard by which the world is measured, I must begin to seek answers outside myself. I soon realize that other people in the world have different gifts, talents, views, and personalities. In an effort to understand and relate to this diversity, I am pushed to find some standard by which to



measure reality. Some conclude that such a standard doesn't exist and enter into a form of individual or cultural relativism. However, if we look to Jesus Christ and acknowledge him as the true Son of God, then we see we do have a standard who provides a unifying factor in the midst of diversity—Christ.

Therefore, in an ecumenical dialogue (a conversation among Christians), the belief that Jesus Christ is the Messiah is the commonality in the discussion. By acknowledging who Jesus is, we recognize all Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ. This creates the possibility for an environment of mutual respect and dignity. Although we may not agree, we can actively listen, continuously learn, and strive together

to discover the truth within the fullness of the revelation of Jesus. Looking to Jesus for the answers we need in our world lays a foundation on which people of goodwill can exist in a healthy tension that seeks truth, allowing us to build community. The various gifts that each has to offer should make the community, the body of Christ, reflect evermore. And this elevates individuals. The fullest expression of who we are exists in the midst of a community of people seeking the face of Jesus Christ in all we say and do. +

***We are not only called  
to have a personal  
relationship with God  
but a unifying relationship  
with one another.***

## PRAYER

***Risen Jesus, you command us  
to love as you have loved.  
Cleanse my heart of pride,  
selfishness, and prejudice so that  
I may love unconditionally.***

From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

May 16–21

**Monday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 14:5–18 / Jn 14:21–26

**Tuesday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 14:19–28 / Jn 14:27–31a

**Wednesday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 15:1–6 / Jn 15:1–8

**Thursday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 15:7–21 / Jn 15:9–11

**Friday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 15:22–31 / Jn 15:12–17

**Saturday**, Easter Weekday:  
Acts 16:1–10 / Jn 15:18–21



# Bringing Home the Word

Sixth Sunday of Easter (C)

May 22, 2022

## Interpreting Christ's Teachings Today

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The passage of Acts in Sunday's readings shows us something about the early Church that we often overlook. Paul, Silas, and the other apostles felt a responsibility to preserve the true doctrine passed on to them. When they understood that certain Christians were teaching demands that didn't come from the Holy Spirit, they corrected that doctrine by sending a letter and endorsing the true interpretation.

Even in the earliest Church, there was an evolving hierarchy that interpreted what was God's will for the Christian

community. This charism of the proper interpretation of Christ's teaching continues in today's Catholic Church through the pope and the bishops.

Jesus declared to the apostles at the Last Supper that the Holy Spirit would remind them of all he told them. Jesus gave this gift to the Church, and it's something we should value. How often do we search a subject online to learn about it and then trust what a few articles say? Yet, are we as quick to look up what the Holy Father and the bishops say on different subjects in order to be guided by that light?

We are not sheep without a shepherd but have bishops and priests who preach the word of God and lead us toward the truth. When the bishops, in communion with the Holy Father, exercise their teaching office (the magisterium), they help us understand God's revelation in faith and morals. This is the way the early Church developed and the way the Church still lives today. +

## Sunday Readings

### Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

It is the decision of the holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities.

### Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light.

### John 14:23-29

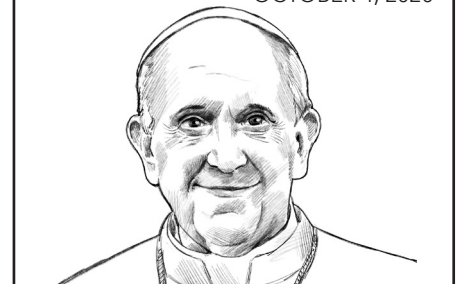
[Jesus said,] "The holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you."

*Even in the earliest Church, there was an evolving hierarchy that interpreted what was God's will for the Christian community.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

[J]esus says that true authority is when one performs service; it is in serving, not exploiting others. The vineyard is the Lord's, not ours. Authority is a service, and as such should be exercised for the good of all and for the dissemination of the Gospel. It is awful to see when people who have authority in the Church seek their own interests.

ANGELUS, ST. PETER'S SQUARE,  
OCTOBER 4, 2020



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Are there things I can let go of to make my home more peaceful?
- Are there attitudes I can let go of to make my heart and mind more peaceful?

# Spring Cleaning

By Paige Byrne Shortal

In my part of the world, May is not a time to think about personal self-improvement and other interior matters. We do that in January, in Lent, maybe in September, but not in May. In rural Missouri, May is when the weather is reliably warm. It's time to raise the storm windows and let in the fresh air. It's time for spring cleaning the house, for throwing out the accumulation of winter.

It's astounding what we hold on to. The shirt we never wear but might someday. The books we never read but might someday. The platters, plastic storage containers, pots with no lids, lids with no pots, that old brown purse, the shoes that never fit, unused tools, half-completed projects, that cluttery stuff!

It's too much! Let's go yard-sale-ing instead. Sale signs are popping up everywhere along with the violets. There might be some good deals. But first, what about the cost of too much stuff?

In our house we try to control too much stuff by adhering to the wisdom of designer William Morris, who said, "Have nothing in your homes that you do not know to be useful and believe to be beautiful." My husband is better at it than I am. He has a rule for himself—when something comes in, something must go out. Give him a shirt, he gives a shirt away. He has one small closet, one bureau drawer. I cheat. I put clothes in a cedar chest so I can decide later what to do with them.



Here's a sobering fact. The self-storage industry claims over 39 billion dollars in annual revenues and construction spending on self-storage has increased by 584 percent from January 2015 to January 2020. Self-storage is an apt name. For we give a little bit of ourselves to each thing we own—our time and energy to buy it, clean it, walk around it, store it, wonder what to do with it. And someday, someone we love will inherit all this. Lucky them.

A home can hold only a few beautiful and useful things. Too much and they cease to be beautiful or useful. The same is true for our hearts and minds. We can only hold so much. If our homes are cluttered, chances are our hearts and minds will be cluttered, too.

In the Easter stories, we hear about the disciples hiding in the upper room or walking on the road to Emmaus or meeting Jesus on the shore. Keeping a low profile, they would have traveled light, and they were feeling empty inside after the death of their friend and teacher. Each time Jesus appeared to them, they didn't recognize him—who would? He was dead!—but they had room for him and his words. Their eyes were opened, their hearts burned within them, and his words changed their lives.

Do we have room for life-changing words? Do we have time for the risen Jesus? For Jesus to rise in us, anything that is not of Jesus has to go. Let's do what comes naturally in May. Let's spring clean. But while we're cleaning out the closet, let's let go of whatever is holding us back from being the person we're meant to be. As we jettison the outgrown clothes or unused kitchen items, let's also surrender the grudges, anxieties, selfishness, envy, pessimism, cynicism, anything and everything about which the Spirit is whispering in our ear: "*Oh come on, you don't need that. Let it go. Trust me.*" +

## PRAYER

*Risen Lord, your death and resurrection brought peace to the world. Help me to be an instrument of your peace to others.*

*From Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney*

## WEEKDAY READINGS

May 23–28

**Monday, Easter Weekday:**  
Acts 16:11–15 / Jn 15:26–16:4a

**Tuesday, Easter Weekday:**  
Acts 16:22–34 / Jn 16:5–11

**Wednesday, Easter Weekday:**  
Acts 17:15, 22–18:1 / Jn 16:12–15

**Thursday, St. Philip Neri:**  
Acts 18:1–8 / Jn 16:16–20

**Friday, Easter Weekday:**  
Acts 18:9–18 / Jn 16:20–23

**Saturday, Easter Weekday:**  
Acts 18:23–28 / Jn 16:23b–28

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# Bringing Home the Word

*Ascension of the Lord (C)*

May 29, 2022

## Jesus Awaits Us

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

In the Apostles' Creed we pray, "He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father." Jesus lived forty days in his glorified body after the resurrection, but at the end he rose into heaven where he awaits each of us. It was planned all along that he who came down from heaven would return there. "No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man" (John 3:13).

The amazing truth is that he has opened heaven for us, cheering on each of us to join him forever! "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come

back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be" (John 14:3). So we're not only striving to get to heaven, but Jesus is there interceding with his power for an ongoing outpouring of his Holy Spirit upon each of us (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 667).

Imagine Jesus as your intercessor in heaven, pleading your case as a brother before our loving Father! If God is for us, who can be against us?

He is also there inaugurating his messianic kingdom. He told Pilate that his kingdom wasn't of this world. He has now taken the throne of his kingdom and will draw all peoples to himself. You and I will become witnesses to this kingdom with no end.

So, let's live with newfound confidence. Jesus is in heaven today interceding for us, inaugurating his kingdom, and preparing our eternal home. +

## Sunday Readings

### Acts 1:1-11

"[Y]ou will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth."

### Ephesians 1:17-23 or Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23

And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church.

### Luke 24:46-53

As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven.

*The amazing truth is  
that Jesus has opened  
heaven for us,  
cheering on each of us  
to join him forever!*

## A Word From Pope Francis

[Jesus] is like a roped guide climbing a mountain who, on reaching the summit, pulls us up to him and leads us to God. If we entrust our life to him, if we let ourselves be guided by him, we are certain to be in safe hands, in the hands of our Savior, our Advocate.

General Audience, April 17, 2013



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- Do I live like a person who is aware that I'm on my way to heaven?
- How can I live this week with a more heavenly perspective?

# Threads of Time

By Joanne Bennardo

I never imagined that stitches on a canvas could lead to prayer, but that's exactly what happened when I found a long-forgotten sewing project I had packed up in 1987 as our family prepared to move. Finding the project tucked away in a drawer evokes many memories of Ed and me and our three little boys.

I carefully take out this piece of my past. My arthritic fingers ply the labeled green yarns that had been gathered by younger, more flexible digits. I survey the canvas and find that only four colors of the total twenty-four had been worked: black, white, brown, and the first shade of green. This resonates. My younger self thought in black and white, right and wrong. Unlike today, back then there wasn't much time given to life's gray areas.

I study the diagram and the stitch directory and separate the huge bulk of unused threads. Slowly I guide the material between the two round stretchers. My needle resumes its rhythmic in and out, up and through.

This piece is creating an extraordinary bridge between my younger and present selves. Memories cascade through my very being with each stitch. I smile as I recall leaving Kevin's stuffed panda bear under the blankets in a hotel bed during



the move. The hotel staff mailed us the wayward bear, and our youngest was full of glee when he opened the soft package. I can still picture the bulky lettering of the thank you note he sent to the thoughtful staff.

I outline three white buds with a dark lime green. The green of today is anchored by

the white of yesterday. I wonder what else I did on the day I filled in the white buds. I picture the room where I sewed after boys and teddy bears had all been tucked into bed. I feel the old comfy couch where I cuddled my babies and played peek-a-boo. I hear the constant commotion of laughter and antics meshed with endless tasks. Back then, I could only imagine the day the canvas would boast a completed vase of colorful flowers.

I sew and remember, remember and sew, and God's grace helps me realize that my project may have been interrupted, but God's creativity never missed a stitch. The years I spent as a young mother are an integral part of my life canvas. The finished crewel holds the blessings of loosely held French knots as well as tight ones. Each is necessary and part of the whole picture. Weaved together, the varied threads of my

relationships and experiences have created a tapestry of light, shape, density, and form.

Throughout it all, God has been present in my ordinary and extraordinary days. He is present in the mundane and in crisis, ever-present in the packing and unpacking, sewing and unraveling of our lives.

The rhythm of my current season includes a daily walk. I savor the smell of the grass and the sound of birdsong. I meet young parents for whom I breathe a slow prayer. Some push strollers, others tug at muddy tricycles, and one beams as she receives an imaginary "vamella" ice-cream cone from a small, clenched fist. The past and present entwine, interconnect, and transform.

God gave me the ability to see the significance of old yarns. The pastel pink strands mingle with the deep purple in the same way lightheartedness and toil then and now caress and expand the contours of my life. I pray, *"Thank you, creator God. I knocked, and you answered."* +

## PRAYER

*Risen Lord, your resurrection and ascension give witness to God's power. May my life bear witness to God's love, compassion, forgiveness, and peace.*

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

May 30 – June 4

**Monday**, Easter Weekday:

Acts 19:1–8 / Jn 16:29–33

**Tuesday**, Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

Zep 3:14–18a or Rom 12:9–16 / Lk 1:39–56

**Wednesday**, St. Justin:

Acts 20:28–38 / Jn 17:11b–19

**Thursday**, Easter Weekday:

Acts 22:30; 23:6–11 / Jn 17:20–26

**Friday**, St. Charles Lwanga and Companions:

Acts 25:13b–21 / Jn 21:15–19

**Saturday**, Easter Weekday:

Acts 28:16–20, 30–31 / Jn 21:20–25