



SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 2016

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY)

Ministry is not for the sheepish

Good Shepherd Sunday, also celebrated as Vocations Sunday, is a day to give thanks for those who have dedicated their lives to ministry. But don't get too romantic an idea of what that means; rather keep in mind that religious life is often compared to the gritty task of shepherding. Being a shepherd is very tough work, with long hours, physical demands that involve getting your hands dirty, and some pretty long stretches of alone time that can get downright lonely. A life of ministry likewise has its challenges and lonely moments. Let someone who ministers in your faith community know how much you appreciate their efforts.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 13:14, 43-52; Revelation 7:9, 14b-17; John 10:27-30 (51)*. "All who were destined for eternal life came to believe."

MONDAY, APRIL 18 EASTER WEEKDAY

Invest in mercy

Saint Alphonse Ligouri described spiritual reading as the "reading of holy books [beyond scripture], not in a passing way and for a short time, but regularly and for a considerable time." Eastertide seems an especially opportune time to invest yourself in the "mystery of faith." Pope Francis' latest book, *The Name of God Is Mercy*, is so stunning that it is often difficult to keep reading because the last sentence you read was so powerful. Don't let the time after Easter slip by without investing yourself in the "mystery of faith."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 11:1-18; John 10:1-10 (279)*. "I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved."

TUESDAY, APRIL 19 EASTER WEEKDAY

Facing the new with apostolic zeal

Starting something new is never easy, and the early church certainly faced challenges—namely that the disciples were called to live and proclaim the Good News, not just in their own lives but throughout the world! There was no CEO, no strategic plan, no budget—just a mission and women and men on fire with the Holy Spirit to serve it. What new beginnings are you embarking on? How might you bring the early church's same apostolic zeal and perseverance to this new moment?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 11:19-26; John 10:22-30 (280)*. "The hand of the Lord was with them."



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

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 EASTER WEEKDAY

Engage in some light reading

Where would we be without light? Sunlight fills our sky by day and brings color to all that is around us. And electric light is such a central part of our evening activities it's hard to imagine a world without it. It's also hard to imagine a world without the light that Jesus brought through his life, mission, and timeless message. His illuminating words light a path we can walk day or night, at noon or at midnight. How important is the light of faith? The Bible seems to take it seriously. [Here are 98 biblical quotes about light](#). Pull up a chair and shed some light on the subject.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 12:24—13:5a; John 12:44-50 (281)*. "I came into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me might not remain in darkness."

THURSDAY, APRIL 21

FEAST OF ANSELM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Faith brings understanding

Often referred to as the "Father of Scholasticism," Saint Anselm is best known for the eloquent way he reconciled faith and reason, not as contrary factors but as two complementary parts of the gift of belief. "I do not seek to understand in order to believe," Anselm wrote, "but I believe in order to understand. For I believe this: Unless I believe, I will not understand." At times, faith can be a difficult thing to sustain, yet when we strive to see and understand the world with eyes of faith, we discover that reasons to believe abound around us.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 13:13-25; John 13:16-20 (282)*. "I am telling you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I AM."

FRIDAY, APRIL 22

Three cheers for Mother Earth!

"When we can see God reflected in all that exists," Pope Francis writes in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, "our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them." *Laudato Si'*, which means "Praise be to you," underscores that the call to care for all creation is universal. Praising our God means preserving and protecting our common home. Today, on Earth Day, why not consider how praising God and caring for Earth are deeply connected. Work to more consciously praise God in actions that will help the earth.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 13:26-33; John 14:1-6 (283)*. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

SATURDAY, APRIL 23 EASTER WEEKDAY

Walk closer with God

Today marks the first full day of the Jewish Passover. In Jesus' time, Passover was a festival of pilgrimage for the Jewish people, when the entire population made a pilgrimage to the Temple of Jerusalem. Have you ever been on a pilgrimage? Those who take the time to do so often say it has changed their lives forever. The [Camino de Santiago](#) to the shrine of Saint James the Great in Santiago de Compostela, Spain is a pilgrimage with the power to change lives, according to countless firsthand accounts. Learn about it and consider the possibilities. Who knows—maybe it's time you go take a hike!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 13:44-52; John 14:7-14 (284)*. "Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do."