



SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2016 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER Traveling mercies

Believers have always been a people on the move! From our earliest forebears to the present time, traveling has been a way to share the faith. Although the modes of travel have changed enormously over time—from walking for days from town to town to flying cross-country in a few hours—travel still presents opportunities to witness to the faith and encourage others in theirs. Today, whether you're traveling a short distance or far away, how might you proclaim the Good News among the people you encounter on the journey?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 14:21-27; Revelation 21:1-5a; John 13:31-33a, 34-35 (54)*. "Then they traveled through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. After proclaiming the word at Perga they went down to Attalia."

MONDAY, APRIL 25 FEAST OF MARK, EVANGELIST Are you a light sleeper?

Tradition had it that lions slept with their eyes open (perhaps because no one was able to sneak up on one without being detected!). The lion became a symbol of the Resurrection, conveying the sense that though Jesus died he slept lightly, so to speak, before awakening to eternal life. Mark the evangelist, the traditional author of the gospel that bears his name, is also often depicted as a lion. Pull up a chair and read the gospel that bears Mark's name—it's short enough to be read in its entirety in an afternoon. And it's a real eye-opener!

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Peter 5:5b-14; Mark 16:15-20 (555)*. "Clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another."

TUESDAY, APRIL 26 EASTER WEEKDAY Never say die

Saint Paul may have been a late bloomer (he persecuted early Christians before [seeing the light—literally](#)), but once he came around, he was a tireless promoter of the new faith. His enthusiasm led to many conflicts with the powers that be—whether with Jewish hierarchs concentrated in Jerusalem or civil authorities scattered throughout the Roman Empire. He risked life and limb, and eventually is believed to have been beheaded in Rome because of his faith. Along the way, he even survived a stoning and kept on going. How do you handle obstacles and opposition? Don't throw in the towel if you meet resistance. If your motivations are sincere, trust and persevere.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 14:19-28; John 14:27-31a (286)*. "They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead."

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27 EASTER WEEKDAY Mercy vs. justice

It can seem like a wrestling match of cosmic proportions. How can God, who is infinitely just, also be infinitely merciful? It seems evident to us that in most matters, God will have to choose which "mood" to demonstrate, since one can't exercise both at the same time. Priest, writer, and theologian Henri Nouwen assessed that the problem lies in us and not in God: While we can't master both attributes, God's mercy doesn't weaken divine justice, nor does God's justice harden divine compassion. Celebrate that God's will is done when mercy and justice are one!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 15:1-6; John 15:1-8 (287)*. "Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own, so neither can you unless you remain in me."

THURSDAY, APRIL 28 FEAST OF PETER CHANEL, PRIEST, MARTYR Do something beautiful for God

Pope Saint John Paul II reminded us that persecution and martyrdom were elements not only of the early church but also of our own times under many repressive powers. Martyrdom is the "most eloquent proof of the truth of the faith, for faith can give a human face even to the most violent of deaths and show its beauty even in the midst of the most atrocious persecution." Peter Chanel, a 19th-century missionary, became the first martyr of the South Seas witnessed to Christ (*martyr* means "witness"). Have you felt the sting of witnessing to Christ lately?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 15:7-21; John 15:9-11 (288)*. "As the Father loves me, so I also love you."

FRIDAY, APRIL 29

FEAST OF CATHERINE OF SIENA, VIRGIN, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH Live your faith large

"Do not be satisfied with little things, because God wants great things!" These words from Catherine of Siena in the 14th century remind us that we're all called by God and have gifts and talents to make a difference in the world. As a young woman, Catherine likely didn't imagine that one day she would become a Third Order Dominican, establish a monastery, communicate with the papacy, and leave a rich spiritual legacy as a Doctor of the church. She attuned her heart to God, trusting that God was at work in and through her life. Walk with Catherine today, celebrating God's great activity in your life!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 15:22-31; John 15:12-17 (289)*. "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain."

SATURDAY, APRIL 30 FEAST OF PIUS V, POPE, RELIGIOUS Semper reformanda—always reforming

You might not see much connection between Pope Pius V 400 years ago and Pope Paul VI in our own time. Yet both led the church to implement reforms—the former after the Council of Trent, the latter after Vatican II—and both faced serious resistance from within. Pope Francis likewise faces resistance to shaping a church for the poor. We will always be "in these times of transition." Are you change-repellant or willing to reform yourself in a concrete way as Christ leads you?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 16:1-10; John 15:18-21 (290)*. "You do not belong to the world."



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

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