

SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2016

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SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Put out the welcome mat

There's an old saying, "You can't go home again," taken from the title of a novel by Thomas Wolfe. It means things change and sometimes people get disconnected from their pasts. During this Year of Mercy, Catholics are called upon to remedy this notion and welcome back anyone who has been away from the church or who feels alienated for any reason. Open your heart and arms and invite everyone to come together for Christ's own return as well as ours to an eternal home.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 15:1-2, 22-29; Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23; John 14:23-29 (57)*. "I am going away and I will come back to you."



MONDAY, MAY 2, 2016

FEAST OF ATHANASIUS, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Devotion will see you through

Back in 325, it must have seemed to Athanasius that life was nothing but conflict and headache. As a leader of the early church of the influential city of Alexandria, he had heresies to put down and emperors to resist. He was known as *Athanasius Contra Mundum* (Athanasius Against the World) but soon after his death he was called "Pillar of the Church" by early leaders who followed. He was known as a pastoral man of deep devotion, with the heart of a monastic. Make sure you have devotional practices that sustain you when the going gets tough.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 16:11-15; John 15:26—16:4a (291)*. "I have told you this so that you may not fall away."

TUESDAY, MAY 3, 2016

FEAST OF PHILIP AND JAMES, APOSTLES

Show me the way to go home

Philip and James were called by Jesus to join the band of followers we have come to know as the apostles. The relics of these two men were rediscovered together during a 19th-century reconstruction of Rome's Basilica of the Twelve Apostles. Tradition holds that James was clubbed to death for preaching the Good News; today he is considered the patron saint of the dying. You could think of Philip as the patron saint of all who need direction. His human need for guidance and reassurance is encouragement to never give up—even at the risk of appearing foolish—in your efforts to find the Lord.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; John 14:6-14 (561). "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough."

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2016

EASTER WEEKDAY

God's mercy knows no limits

After his visit to "pagan" Athens, Saint Paul wrote, "As I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed, 'To an Unknown God,' " at which point he goes on to preach the Risen Christ. Our church has moved well beyond persecution of those who believe differently or do not believe at all—and beyond mere tolerance as well, to nonjudgmental acceptance. Pope Francis said, "This is the fundamental thing—that God's mercy has no limits . . . The issue for those who do not believe in God is to obey their conscience. Sin, even for those who have no faith, exists when people disobey their conscience." Does your personal attitude toward nonbelievers reflect God's mercy?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 17:15, 22—18:1; John 16:12-15 (293)*. " 'In Him we live and move and have our being,' as even some of your poets have said."

THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2016

EASTER WEEKDAY

READING: ACTS 18:1-8' Ps 98:1-4; JN 16:16-20

FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2016

EASTER WEEKDAY

Honor those who brought you the gospel

Saint François de Laval (1623-1708) was the first bishop of New France, a territory that included most of what is now Canada, much of upper New England, and all the Mississippi Valley. He was committed to evangelization and education and was a great pastor, especially among the native peoples. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1980 and granted "equivalent canonization" on April 3, 2014 by Pope Francis, who said on the occasion of the canonization, "Honoring those who endured suffering to bring us the gospel means being ready ourselves to fight the good fight of faith with humility, meekness, and mercy in our daily lives. And this bears fruit." Who brought the gospel to your home? Honor them and you will bear fruit.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 18:9-18; John 16:20-23 (295)*. "Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2016

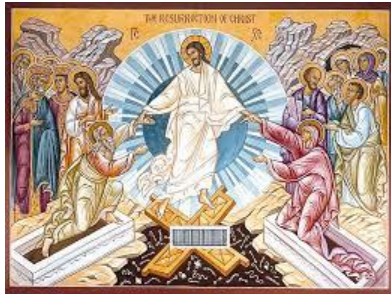
EASTER WEEKDAY

Sing Alleluia!

Tradition has it that Saint Gregory the Great heard angels chanting the first three lines of the Marian antiphon, *Regina Caeli*, on Easter morning. "Joy to you, O Queen of Heaven. / The One you were worthy to bear / has risen as he said. / Pray for us to God," with each line followed by "Alleluia!" That last word—Hebrew for "praise God!"—even sounds joyous, especially after not hearing it all of Lent. Pulled out your rosary lately? Let Mary share with you her exultation, and let a joyous mood wash over you today, for others' sake. You can hear this brief chant at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8W4351sW14>.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 18:23-28; John 16:23b-28 (296)*. "The Father himself loves you, because you have loved me."



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**TAKE FIVE FOR
FAITH**

DAILY RENEWAL FOR BUSY CATHOLICS



**THE SIXTH WEEK OF
EASTER**

For May 1 – 7, 2016



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

NOTE: THESE REFLECTIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE EVERY WEEK. YOU MAY PICK UP A PRINTED COPY FROM THESE PLASTIC FOLDERS, READ THEM ONLINE ON THE OLV WEB PAGE (WWW.PARISHESONLINE.COM/FIND/OUR-LADY-OF-VICTORY-CHURCH-44278), OR HAVE THEM E-MAILED TO YOU EACH WEEK BY SENDING AN A MESSAGE TO MMATUSZ@OURLADYOFVICTORY.NET AND SAYING "ADD ME TO THE TAKE FIVE LIST". LET US KNOW IF YOU'VE REGULARLY USED & ENJOYED THESE REFLECTIONS.