



Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Easter, or Sunday of Divine Mercy (C)

April 28, 2019

Encountering Our Teacher and Master

By Mary Katharine Deeley

In our time, seven days have passed since we celebrated Christ's rising. But in the Church's reckoning, it is still Easter. We may have gotten on with our earthly lives, but our spiritual calendar and reality remain steeped in awe, wonder, and gratitude that God incarnate walked among us and gave his life for us. The readings of the Easter octave offer a taste of what it is like to live in God's time—in his presence and kingdom—as he calms our fears,

strengthens our faith, and fills us with the Spirit.

Much happens after Mary Magdalene visits and leaves the tomb. Other women who come to anoint Jesus meet him, embrace him, and obey his command to spread the good news. Mary herself obeyed and ran to tell the apostles—though she mistook the Lord for a gardener until he spoke her name. Two disciples on the road out of town listen to Jesus' teaching and finally know him in the breaking of bread. Jesus eats with others and assures them of the Father's promise. There is another miraculous catch of fish and a breakfast with the disciples on the Sea of Galilee.

Within the scriptural context of this weeklong feast, we realize that the risen Christ is everywhere, with all of us, existing throughout and beyond time. He appears when we least expect him; he is our teacher and our master; he feeds us with heavenly food; and he is there when we break bread together. May this knowledge strengthen our faith that Christ lives and will in time carry us home. +

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Sunday Readings

Acts 5:12-16

Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles.

Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19

When I caught sight of him, I fell down at his feet....He touched me with his right hand and said, "Do not be afraid."

John 20:19-31

Jesus said to [Thomas], "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

A Word from Pope Francis

The death penalty is contrary to the meaning of *humanitas* and to divine mercy, which must be models for human justice. It entails cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment, as is the anguish before the moment of execution and the terrible suspense between the issuing of the sentence and the execution of the penalty.

—Letter to International Commission
Against the Death Penalty,
March 20, 2015



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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- Can I take comfort in times of trial, knowing that Christ will calm my fears and strengthen my faith?
- The risen Christ is everywhere. How has his presence impacted my life?

You Are Hereby Invited

By Alice Camille

I admit to turning down a few dinner invitations in my life, sometimes with white-lie excuses that must have been transparent to the hostess: “Wednesday is my laundry night.” “I promised to call my aging mother (who’s not that old).” Having used the technique of ditching social obligations, I can spot a faker a hundred yards off.

Take the folks in the parable of the Great Feast (Luke 14:15–24). What amateurs! As the story goes, somebody decides to throw a terrific bash and invites everybody who’s anybody to come. But one by one the guests offer their lame regrets.

One person just invested in some real estate and says she has to go look at it. *Go look at it?* You tell me she bought a piece of property sight unseen? The second guest comes up with a similar bit of jive: He has bought some farm animals and has to inspect them—like he didn’t do that *before* he signed the contract. And the last one is the biggest laugher of all. A man recently married; that’s it. So, he can’t leave the house to go to dinner? He can’t bring his wife?

In the story, the host is enraged by these tattered attempts at dodging the party. He reissues his invitation, this



time to the most unlikely folks in town—those too poor or unfortunate to be included on any society A-lists. And even when they arrive, there is still room at his table. So the final invitation goes out, this time to total strangers encountered on the road and sleeping in the bushes.

Just Picture It

Somewhere in the corridors of art history, there must exist a painting of this rollicking, serendipitous feast. I haven’t seen it, but I love to envision it: people with missing teeth, missing limbs, or both; those who’ve ended up on the sad side of violence; folks just out of jail or on their way to it; victims of poor health, demons, and addictions; those without money, luck, or brains; lots of people with a story to tell, just like yours and mine, but for one fatal bend in the road.

Some of the guests at a table like this will make it back on top, with or without help. Some will never see daylight again. But the moral of the story is that somewhere there’s a celestial table to which these folks, by name or en masse, have been invited, and they will be welcomed there as heartily as if they were celebrities. And a lot of people who think of themselves as desirable

dinner companions will not be welcome, because they already had their chance and turned it down.

Make Your Reservations

Someone dining with Jesus on the night he told this story remarked, “Blessed is the one who will dine in the kingdom of God” (Luke 14:15). Absolutely—if you don’t mind rubbing elbows with those who’ve been shunned by the best people in all the finest places.

The only way for us to get a seat at this table is to befriend the second- and third-tier guests right now, and to become comfortable and familiar with their company. Because in all honesty, this is one dinner party we don’t want to miss. No gathering could be more real, no menu more exquisite, and no celebration more compelling than this one. So drop what you’re doing, forget the laundry, get the spouse and kids, and reserve your seats now. +

PRAYER

Risen Lord, your resurrection renewed the face of the earth and gave us hope. Make me eager to use my gifts and talents to rebuild people’s lives and give them hope.

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 29-May 4

Monday, St. Catherine of Siena:
Acts 4:23–31 / Jn 3:1–8

Tuesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 4:32–37 / Jn 3:7b–15

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 5:17–26 / Jn 3:16–21

Thursday, St. Athanasius:
Acts 5:27–33 / Jn 3:31–36

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

Saturday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 6:1–7 / Jn 6:16–21