



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

SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 2008

EASTER SUNDAY, THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD Let's make history

In a year when the air is filled with talk of historical firsts in the nation's presidential race, it is important to remember that when it comes to our faith, we all have the opportunity to carve a niche in salvation history by being the first to introduce the good news to a new generation or to a single soul starved for love or hungering for justice. In the end, though, what is really noteworthy is not being the first but giving witness no matter when we come on the scene. Each day provides us with a fresh opportunity to play a part in the Christian story. Easter is brimming with possibilities.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 10:34a, 37-43, Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8; John 20:1-9*
"Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb."

MONDAY, MARCH 24 MONDAY OF THE OCTAVE OF EASTER My body will be eternal?

When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary encountered an angel proclaiming the Resurrection over Jesus' tomb, the two responded with fear. We, too, can relate to their reaction in the midst of this fantastic narrative. But why should the two be terrified? After all, the angel reminded them, the Resurrection was exactly what Jesus had foretold. Still, who could imagine that it actually could occur? More than any of Jesus' miracles, his Resurrection needed to be seen before being believed. Indeed, the Resurrection, while a simple idea, appears to be one of the most unimaginable parts of the Christian faith. But think of how each Sunday we proclaim that our bodies will be resurrected just the same as Christ's, that this fantastic event will be ours.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 2:14, 22-33; Matthew 28:8-15*
"The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said.'"

TUESDAY, MARCH 25 TUESDAY OF THE OCTAVE OF EASTER Not so fast

Now that Easter is over, our inclination this week might be to start thinking about what's next on our agenda. Making plans to celebrate a family member's birthday perhaps, or planting those spring bulbs before it's too late. There certainly is a lot to do.

That is the temptation. This year, though, consider not giving in to the demands of the calendar so soon after Easter. Wait. Stay. Take a few moments today to read the Easter story one more time. It was, after all, the one who "stayed weeping by the tomb" after everyone else had left who first saw the risen Christ.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 2:36-41; John 20:11-18*
"Mary told them, 'I have seen the Lord!'"

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26 WEDNESDAY OF THE OCTAVE OF EASTER Sing praises to the Octave

The Octave of Easter, in which we are immersed this week, is an eight-day celebration that takes place the week (and particularly the Sunday) following Easter Sunday. Each of the days in the Octave of Easter is celebrated with the rites of Easter Sunday, which is why Easter Week is sometimes referred to as the Week of Sundays. The tradition whereby feasts were assigned octaves developed in the early church and flourished in the Middle Ages. By the early 20th century, the liturgical calendar contained

octaves of various types and ranks and had become unwieldy. As part of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, all octaves except for Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost were done away with. Do something special each day this week to commemorate the Octave.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 3:1-10; Luke 24:13-35*

"When he was at table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened."

THURSDAY, MARCH 27 THURSDAY OF THE OCTAVE OF EASTER Get a grip—on the Bible

Getting your hands on the Bible was harder in Jesus' day than now. For one thing, not many people had one. The few precious scrolls around were held under lock and key. No complete collection of Hebrew scripture was to be had anywhere. And of course the New Testament hadn't even been written yet—those events were still being played out in real life! Nowadays the Bible is one of the easiest books to find, from the many versions available in megabookstores to many a hotel room nightstand. Today it's a lot easier to open our Bibles—and our minds—to scripture.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 3:11-26; Luke 24:35-48*

"These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you." ... Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures."

FRIDAY, MARCH 28 FRIDAY OF THE OCTAVE OF EASTER Catch the excitement

Despite knowing that he had hurt Jesus deeply and forsaken him in his hour of need, Peter does not cower in Jesus' presence. In fact, he is thrilled to hear that the risen Jesus has come to break bread with the disciples. Peter's joy at the coming of the Lord is a signature Christian trait. Peter truly believes he is forgiven and that nothing can keep him from the love of God, so he is not afraid. Yet many of us have not reached that level of faith. We are ashamed of our failings and try to run from God's gaze. It's time to acknowledge your sins and move on. Don't keep Jesus waiting.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 4:1-12; John 21:1-14*

"When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea."

SATURDAY, MARCH 29 SATURDAY OF THE OCTAVE OF EASTER Good news too good to be true?

It's almost the end of Easter week, and the news is getting around: Christ is risen! But when some of the first disciples got the word, they were a little, well, skeptical. In Mark's gospel Mary Magdalene delivers the message and is not believed. Then two others come back with the same story and are dismissed. Why all the negative responses? The answer lies in another story, when Jesus appears to the eleven and chews them out for the usual reason: lack of faith. Often we look for gospel truth only from approved sources and refuse the good news when it comes from an unexpected messenger.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 4:13-21; Mark 16:9-15*

"But when the disciples heard that Jesus was alive and had been seen by Mary Magdalene, they would not believe it."

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Scripture quotes come from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.
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