



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

SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 2008

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER; DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY Whose sins you forgive

In the Genesis story it says that God breathed upon the church to carry on the work of the new creation, a spiritual kingdom freed from the corruption of sin and death. So, with every breath we take, forgiveness is ours and we in turn exhale God's mercy into the world around us. What a gift! But with the gift comes the responsibility to forgive as we have been forgiven. Just think of all the people in your life who need to be forgiven. And you have the power to do it.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31*
"Jesus breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

MONDAY, MARCH 31 ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD Full of grace

Luke's gospel is the only one of the four to tell the story of the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary of the coming birth of Jesus. Much has been written—and painted—about this moment, especially her acceptance of her great vocation to give birth to God in a human person. But the angel has an often-overlooked line, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you." We usually think the Spirit didn't show up until Pentecost. The Spirit's here, though, from the beginning, with Mary. In a way she not only brings the Son into the world but also the Spirit. Pray today for the Spirit to enter your life: "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10; Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38*
"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."

TUESDAY, APRIL 1 EASTER WEEKDAY; APRIL FOOL'S DAY Keep it simple

Mark Twain said of April 1: "This is the day upon which we are reminded of what we are on the other three hundred and sixty-four." Well perhaps we don't make fools of ourselves every day, but we all have our moments, especially when it comes to love. We rush in and out of it before we really understand it. We misdiagnose, misconstrue, and miss opportunities. Love in its myriad forms is the key to our salvation. Yet we frequently fail to embrace it. We analyze, weigh, measure, and judge whether or not to give and receive it. Why complicate things? Just follow Jesus' lead: Love always.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 4:32-37; John 3:7b-15*
"Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul."

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2

FEAST OF FRANCIS OF PAOLA, HERMIT, FOUNDER One and many

The funny thing about hermits is that they tend to attract a crowd. Born in southern Italy in 1416, Saint Francis of Paola lived as a hermit for five years before gathering some companions with whom he founded a branch of Franciscans called the "Minims"—the "minis," the least. He wasn't the first person whose desire to focus on God attracted people who wanted the

same thing. Try to find a balance between solitude and sociability, between encountering God one-on-one and with others.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 5:17-26; John 3:16-21*

"Those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

THURSDAY, APRIL 3 EASTER WEEKDAY In and out

Garbage in, garbage out is the message of today's gospel. Hmm . . . does that mean that faithfully watching *American Idol* or the 20th rerun of a favorite *Law and Order* episode is less innocuous than we might have hoped? What about celebrity gossip, office chatter, and daily political intrigues, or video games, shopping networks, and text messages? They're all fascinating and fun, but they often distract us from the more important work of care and compassion: A problem goes unsolved, a loved one is neglected, a friend gets snubbed. Allot a block of time each day to go above and beyond earthly things, and concentrate on the ins and outs of your faith.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 5:27-33; John 3:31-36*

"The one who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks about earthly things."

FRIDAY, APRIL 4 FEAST OF ISIDORE OF SEVILLE, BISHOP, DOCTOR Sacred sites

When the church was looking around for a patron saint of the internet, it hit upon Isidore. One of the most learned people of his time (the sixth and seventh centuries), Isidore, among his many accomplishments as a church leader, also put together a 20-volume encyclopedia covering just about everything from agriculture to grammar. His position at the center of this "web" of knowledge made him the most likely candidate to be patron of the internet. To find saintly protection for something new, the church looked to someone very old. May Isidore guide you wisely on the World Wide Web!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 5:34-42; John 6:1-15*

"Jesus told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.'"

SATURDAY, APRIL 5 FEAST OF VINCENT FERRER, PRIEST Wisely sorry

Reconciliation means bringing things or people into some kind of harmony. Bringing peace to conflict. Allowing people to resolve or at least put aside their differences and move on. The Dominican Saint Vincent (1350-1419) practiced reconciliation on many levels. He traveled around preaching repentance and also had a role in trying to do something about the Great Schism, when the papacy divided into two. "When you have realized your true worth," he said, "you will be able to judge your faults sanely . . . and the faults of your neighbor will remain in shadow." Seeing the shortcomings of others, Vincent reminds us, begins with seeing our own limitations clearly. That perspective can then lead us to gracefulness in accepting criticism and tact in giving it.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 6:1-7; John 6:16-21*

"They saw Jesus walking on the sea and were terrified. But he said, 'It is I; do not be afraid.'"

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