

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Make Us Peacemakers

Father,
you sent your Son into the world
to bring us into deeper relationship with you.
You know our hearts,
and you know our desire to be known
and loved.
Help us to bring reconciliation, peace,
and compassion

into a world that lacks in all three.
Give us the strength to say: thank you,
I'm sorry, and I forgive you.
Grant that we might be peacemakers
in our families, our communities, our nation,
and the world.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

May 16, 2021

The Family: A School for Holiness



Today's readings: Acts 1:15–27, 20a, 20c–26; Psalm 103:1–2, 11–12, 19–20; 1 John 4:11–16; John 17:11b–19. In today's epistle, we hear once again a proclamation: the Father sent the Son as Savior of the world. We hear what it means to remain in God and for God to remain in us. We must believe in Jesus and through him in God's love for us. Then we must love one another.

Pope Francis has often spoken about families as a school for holiness because they offer endless opportunities to forgive, love, and serve. In fact, it is often with our families that it is hardest to do those things. Most of us probably know a family, if it is not our own family, that is divided by conflict. It seems impossible that reconciliation can occur.

Families are complicated and messy. Mental and physical illness, financial trouble, addictions, anxiety about the future, and day-to-day frictions are part of family life.

Into this mess, the mess of what it means to be human, God came. God did not abandon us in our troubles, but experienced them with us. He offered us a different possibility: that we remain in love, offering mercy, forgiveness, and compassion because we have received it. Sharing the peace that he has given us, God remains in us and we in God. The Holy Family can inspire us. By becoming part of a human family, God makes all families holy. Is there a person in your family with whom you need to reconcile? What is the first step in repairing that relationship?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, May 17

Transformed by the Spirit

In the reading from Acts, the men begin to speak in tongues after Paul lays hands on them. Our lives should also look markedly different because the Holy Spirit is within us. Where do you see the Holy Spirit at work in your life? When making big decisions, do you rely on the guidance of the Spirit? How can you invite God to be part of your process of discerning your best way forward? *Today's readings: Acts 19:1–8; Psalm 68:2–3ab, 4–5acd, 6–7ab; John 16:29–33.*

Tuesday, May 18

Bearing Witness

As Paul looks at the possibility of his future martyrdom, his words echo the words of Jesus before the passion. Both focused on the people they served, the people who were their mission. Jesus, sent by God, and Paul, sent by the risen Christ, both call all people into the light so that the plan of God might be fulfilled. God is always sending us too. How are you called to “bear witness to the gospel of God’s grace”? *Today's readings: Acts 20:17–27; Psalm 68:10–11, 20–21; John 17:1–11a.*

Wednesday, May 19

Spring and New Life

As spring progresses in the northern hemisphere, the natural world abounds with beauty. Take some time to walk in nature and experience the beauty of God’s creation. Is this a time when it is easy for you to experience God’s presence? How can you take more time for listening in this way? Care of creation is one of our duties as human beings, to whom God entrusted the natural world. Is there something simple you can do to care for God’s creation today? *Today's readings: Acts 20:28–38; Psalm 68:29–30, 33–35a, 35bc–36ab; John 17:11b–19.*

Thursday, May 20

Peacemakers

The reading from Acts portrays an event in which religious people react to Paul’s actions out of their conviction. So stirred up are the factions that they have a difficult time responding peacefully. Sometimes people who love the Church can be like this. Strong emotions arise when people become defensive, when it seems like their ways of being in relationship with God are challenged. Yet we are called to be peacemakers, even as we are called to speak the truth and give prophetic witness. Christ’s peace is received in the Eucharist. How can you live out this call to make peace within the Church? *Today's readings: Acts 22:30, 23:6–11; Psalm 16:1–2a and 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11; John 17:20–26.*

Friday, May 21

Our Lives as a Gift

The number of times Peter declares his love for Jesus corresponds to his three denials of the Lord before the crucifixion. With these affirmations, Jesus tells Peter to “feed my sheep.” No matter what we have done in the past, God is waiting to redeem it. Everyone’s life can be offered as a gift to God, the giver of life. *Today's readings: Acts 25:13b–21; Psalm 103:1–2, 11–12, 19–20ab; John 21:15–19.*

Saturday, May 22

Preparing for Pentecost

Consider planning a celebration for Pentecost. Gather party supplies in red, the liturgical color of the day. The celebration could be a birthday party, since Pentecost is often considered the birth of the Church. Decorate with doves or tongues of fire. Prayer cards could highlight the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fear of the Lord, piety, and fortitude. *Today's readings: Acts 28:16–20, 30–31; Psalm 11:4, 5 and 7; John 21:20–25.*

