



SUNDAY REFLECTION

Prophetic literature interprets the future in light of the past and present. Apocalyptic literature interprets the present in the light of the future.; John's Revelation tells us what the future might be like and in light of that future challenges us to live differently in the present. This is the focus of all three readings today and a central theme for our liturgy. We all have some ideas about the future and know that sooner or later we must stand on our own feet and responsibly and maturely proclaim our faith in Jesus no matter the cost.

Peter had dedicated himself to Jesus with some ups and downs in his commitment. Jesus had told him to expect persecution. For decades Peter had believed that God's will was discovered primarily through the guidance of his nation's religious leaders. But today's reading shows that, like devout believers of every generation, he needs to personally accept responsibility for his decisions and life. He cannot hide behind a belief that religious leaders are always right. They had put Jesus to death to preserve the status quo, and Peter stands up and courageously proclaims his faith in Jesus. He proclaims the genuine values of the faith he holds – Jesus is Lord, Savior, and the only source of forgiveness. Peter says "we are witnesses to all this, we and the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32). This is one of only

a few occasions in the New Testament when “we” meaning Church is identified with the Holy Spirit. Those who with the guidance of the Holy Spirit catch glimpses of the future have a better understanding of how to live in the present.

Today’s Second Reading is the preparation for the opening of the seven seals on the book of human destiny. When the Lamb breaks the first four seals we see the destructive forces that will come upon humanity; when the Lamb breaks the remaining three seals we see the judgments of God upon the same humanity. In light of what lies ahead we must all take a stand today. Revelation will constantly remind us that the Lamb who controls the future is the Lord to whom believers have pledged their lives. If they live faithfully they have no worries. They must live in the present in light of the future.

Today we reflect again on the appearances of the risen Lord. A major theme today is proclaiming our faith in Jesus no matter what the cost might be. Peter is persecuted by the very religious leaders He has been trained to obey. John’s Lamb opens the seals on a future full of destruction and judgment, not unlike our world today with all its problems, war, hatred and persecution. In the gospel, Jesus tells Peter rather vaguely “somebody else will take control of your life.” Each of us knows something of the future even though not the details. We know that we must show the quality of our faith and it is never proved when things are easy. Today let us look to the future we can all expect and let that future challenge us on the way we live in the present.

STEWARDSHIP: In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells Peter again and again, “If you love Me, feed my sheep.” He says the same to each of us, “If you love Me, use the gifts I have given you to serve your brothers and sisters.”

READINGS FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

8 MAY ‘22

Acts 13:14, 43-52: The joyful message of the Gospel is undeterred even when it meets with resistance. Today’s reading from the Acts of the Apostles shows it moving beyond the confines of its Jewish origins to the pagans. The Gospel is for everyone.

Rv. 7:9, 14-17: Our Sunday worship is a sharing in the continual worship of heaven and earth before God’s throne. The author of the book of the Apocalypse pulls back the veil to give us a glimpse of what is really happening.

Jn. 10:27-30: We are the Lord’s flock, gathered together by the Good Shepherd. But we are not just a crowd. He knows each one of us personally and, deep down, we know Him and recognize His voice.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

As the Church journeys through the Easter Season, we continually celebrate Jesus’ Resurrection. But it’s important to keep in mind that the point of this joy is the feast celebrated at Easter’s end: the holy feast of Pentecost. Pentecost, celebrated on the fiftieth and final day of the season of Easter, is a celebration of God the Holy Spirit flooding the hearts, minds, and souls of those who wish to live as members of the Body of Christ.

So Pentecost is the end of Eastertide in two senses. Pentecost is the final day of the Season of Easter. But more importantly, Pentecost is the end of Easter in the sense of being the goal of Easter.

Each Sunday of Easter, in its own unique way, helps us prepare for Pentecost. Jesus' appearances in His Risen Body alert us more and more to the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church, of which God calls us to be full members.

Last Sunday, we heard that on the very evening of the Resurrection, Jesus appeared to the apostles—except Thomas—and breathed upon them the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that they might be able to forgive the sins of fellow human beings. Just days earlier Jesus had died on the Cross for the forgiveness of sins. Yet on the evening of the Resurrection, by giving to the apostles what St. John in the *Book of Revelation* calls "**the keys of death and the nether world**", Jesus gave the apostles the power to free men and women from the prison of sin.

Today we hear how Christ extended the gift of reconciliation to one of the apostles in a particular way. Like all the gifts that God gives, this gift of reconciliation was given to Saint Peter so that he would be a better disciple of Christ Jesus in his own particular manner. After commanding St. Peter in regard to the miraculous catch of fish—itsself a symbol of the apostles' ministry to be "**fishers of men**"—Our Risen Lord asks Peter a very simple question. This question aims at reconciliation.

"Simon, son of John, do you love me?" The fact that Jesus addresses this question to "**Simon, son of John**" instead of to "Peter" is significant. St. John the Evangelist, before the answer to Jesus' question is given, refers to this man as "**Simon Peter**"; after the answer is given, the evangelist refers to him simply as "**Peter**". We know that the name Peter means "rock", and that it is upon this rock that Jesus built His Church. Nonetheless, until Peter repented publicly three times, in order to make up for his three-fold public denial of Jesus, Peter could not serve as Jesus wanted.

Only by assuring Jesus that he loved Him could he accept the name "**Peter**". But notice also that in Jesus accepting Peter's repentance, He also gives Peter a new command. Jesus commands him not only to be faithful to proclaiming His Name, as he had failed to do after the Last Supper. Jesus' new command for Peter was something greater: "**Feed my sheep.**" Peter was not only to be "rock-solid", so to speak, in preaching the Gospel. Peter was to be the Rock at the very heart of the Church, upon which the entire Church would rest. Just as the Israelites in the desert struck the Rock and found a source of living water, so the Church finds in the Rock of Peter the assurance that the words the Church teaches are the words of Jesus Himself. This reconciliation between Jesus and Peter had to take place before Jesus could ascend to Heaven. Without the Rock of Peter to rely upon, the Church could not begin its mission at Pentecost.

Why is this office of Peter—the office of the pope—so important? Many Christians find the office of Peter a stumbling block to Christian unity, but in fact it is an assurance of the Church's unity, because at the heart of this office is love. The Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son. Only this love can unite the Church here on earth. This love is the key to living out the Gospel, and is in fact the key to the kingdom of Heaven.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

THIRD WEEK OF EASTER

2 - 7 MAY 2022

Monday 2 May Day Off

Tuesday 3 May F St. Philip & James Apostles

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Saints, Gloria, Preface of Apostles II, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Rosey LaRosa RIP)

Wednesday 4 May Easter Weekday 3

6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention: Richard Day Family)

7:00 – 8:00 a.m. Confessions

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention: Jeff Kelleher RIP)

12:00 p.m. Mass Portsmouth Naval Hospital

Thursday 5 May Easter Weekday 3

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Nebrido Nocon, Jr.)

5:00 – 6:30 p.m. Confessions

6:30 p.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Raymond Alvarez RIP)

Friday 6 May Easter Weekday 3 First Friday

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface IV, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention: Jim Castaldo RIP)

12:00 p.m. Portsmouth Naval Hospital Mass

5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Adoration & Confessions

7:00 p.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface IV, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention: Felicidad Labrador RIP)

Saturday 7 May Easter Weekday 3

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface V, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention: Greg & Matt Mytych)

10:00 a.m. First Communion Mass

2:00 p.m. First Communion Mass

5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass Fourth Sunday of Easter

Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface V, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention: Eric Wanamaker RIP)

Sunday 8 May Fourth Sunday of Easter

7:00 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface V, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention: Parish of St. Stephen, Martyr)

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface V, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Maryjo Mazure)

11:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface V, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Linda Zagame RIP)



"OUT OF THE DARKNESS OF MY LIFE, SO MUCH FRUSTRATED, I PUT BEFORE YOU THE ONE GREAT THING TO LOVE ON EARTH: THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. THERE YOU WILL FIND ROMANCE, GLORY, HONOUR, FIDELITY, AND THE TRUE WAY OF ALL YOUR LOVES ON EARTH."

-J.R.R. TOLKIEN



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