

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER



Resurrection

Loving Father,
you raised Jesus from the dead
and in that moment offered new life
to the whole world.
Creation was made anew in you.
Help us to see your work in the world

in the countless ways you transform every
dark thing
and bring it into the light of your love.
Transform our hearts,
enlighten our minds,
and help us to hope in you.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

April 18, 2021

Always Hope



Today's readings: Acts 3:13–15, 17–19; Psalm 4:2, 4, 7–8, 9; 1 John 2:1–5a; Luke 24:35–48. In Jesus, the Scripture texts about the suffering messiah are fulfilled. The people expected a different kind of messiah, a ruler who would overthrow the Romans, so many were not sure what to make of Jesus. After his death, many were no longer interested in him. Yet his disciples continued to proclaim his death and resurrection.

It is interesting that the disciples continued to emphasize Jesus' death. In today's world, people are uncomfortable with suffering and prefer that others overcome theirs quickly. An individual who has undergone a difficult experience might be told to "get over it" as quickly as possible. They might begin to understand that others do not want to share in their pain, leaving them to process the grief and

deal with their troubles in isolation. When suffering is something to get over and forget about, it has no possibility of being redeemed. No chance for hope is offered.

The Church has a tremendous gift to offer our culture. She offers the knowledge that suffering does not have the last word—that pain and death, and any darkness can be transformed. That suffering can be transformed does not diminish the pain. Imagine the terrible pain Jesus experienced on the cross. Nothing about that was okay. But we believe that pain can be transformed. That is the essence of resurrection. When we unite our sufferings to Jesus, when we invite him into them with us, we realize the possibility of resurrections in our lives.

Always there is hope.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, April 19

Stephen Speaks the Truth

One way to carry the Easter season forward is to look at the life of the early Christian community. In Acts, we hear how St. Stephen, the first martyr, was in conflict with the religious leaders because of his work in the name of Jesus. This story would be wonderful for children to turn into a play or for adults to journal as a first-person account, envisioning themselves as participants in the story. *Today's readings: Acts 6:8–15; Psalm 119:23–24, 26–27, 29–30; John 6:22–29.*

Tuesday, April 20

Saul

By Saul's presence at the stoning of Stephen, Saul gave his consent to the first martyr's execution. Saul, however, allowed God to transform him. As an apostle, Paul used his gifts to build up the Body of Christ. Think of the ways he brought the light of Christ to others. He was initially one of the Church's persecutors. No matter what we have done, God is always ready with mercy and forgiveness. God is always ready to call us to do his work in the world. *Today's readings: Acts 7:51–8:1a; Psalm 31:3cd–4, 6 and 7b and 8a, 17 and 21ab; John 6:30–35.*

Wednesday, April 21

The Bread of Life

Jesus is the Bread of Life, and in him is our hope. He shares his very self with us in the Eucharist, that we might have eternal life. When you attend Mass, receive this gift, listening for what God is calling you to do as you are given food for your journey. The Eucharist is called the source and summit of our faith. How can you make it more central in your life? *Today's readings: Acts: 8:1b–8; Psalm 66:1–3a, 4–5, 6–7a; John 6:35–40.*

Thursday, April 22

Bread from Heaven

Jesus shows the people that God has been preparing them for him. As he explains that life comes through eating the bread that is his Body, his very self, he recalls the manna that brought life to the people of Israel in the desert. When Catholics read Scripture, we look at the law and the prophets and the whole of salvation history in light of what has happened in Jesus. Read Exodus 16. Think about how it enriches your understanding of Jesus' words. Then bake a loaf of bread. Think about what it might mean for Jesus to be such a fundamental food. *Today's readings: Acts 8:26–40; Psalm 66:8–9; 16–17, 20; John 6:44–51.*

Friday, April 23

Saul, Why Do You Persecute Me?

St. Paul's conversion story is frequently depicted in art. Read Acts 9:1–20 aloud. Spend an hour with your family, each drawing or painting what you hear and sharing your art reflection with one another. You could also choose to act out the scene. Search online for other depictions of this moment in history, and see how your reflection is similar to those of other artists. *Today's readings: Acts 9:1–20; Psalm 117:1bc, 2; John 6:52–59.*

Saturday, April 24

Trusting the One Who Gives Life

In today's Gospel, many turn away from Jesus because his teachings are difficult. Peter says, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." I personally have often found comfort in Peter's words. It is not always easy to follow Jesus. Sometimes his teachings are difficult. How can Peter's words become your words? How can they become your prayer? *Today's readings: Acts 9:31–42; Psalm 116:12–13, 14–15, 16–17; John 6:60–69.*

