



HOLY FAMILY
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
inviting all to new life in Christ

***LECTIONARY
BASED
SMALL
CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITIES***

*1st Sunday of Lent
February 21, 2021*

through

*Pentecost Sunday
May 23, 2021*

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*“For where
two or three
have gathered
together
in my name,
I am there
in their midst”*

(Matthew 18:20)



Covenant Prayer

Loving God,

we ask You to send Your Spirit to guide us
as we gather in the name of Jesus, Your Son.

May we hear Your voice in the Sacred Scriptures
and be open to each other as we pray together and share our lives.
Help us to be in covenant with You, our God, and with one another
by committing to being here as often as we can,

sharing from our heart,

respecting confidentiality

and being Church with and for each other.

May our time of prayer and reflection
deepen our love for You

and strengthen us to go forth to live our lives
rooted in the Good News that we have shared.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen



Small Christian Community Guide

1st Sunday of Lent – Pentecost Sunday

1 st Sunday of Lent FEBRUARY 21, 2021	5	2 nd Sunday of Easter APRIL 11, 2021	23
2 nd Sunday of Lent FEBRUARY 28, 2021	7	3 rd Sunday of Easter APRIL 18, 2021	25
3 rd Sunday of Lent MARCH 7, 2021	9	4 th Sunday of Easter APRIL 25, 2021	27
4 th Sunday of Lent MARCH 14, 2021	11	5 th Sunday of Easter MAY 2, 2021	29
5 th Sunday of Lent MARCH 21, 2021	13	6 th Sunday of Easter MAY 9, 2021	31
Palm Sunday – The Passion MARCH 28, 2021	15	Ascension Sunday MAY 16, 2021	33
Easter Sunday APRIL 4, 2021	21	Pentecost Sunday MAY 23, 2021	35



Gathering of the Small Christian Community

Fostering a Prayerful Environment

- Lighting the Candle
- Music, Silent Prayer
- Covenant Prayer

God Sightings

- How has anyone experienced God's presence or the movement or will of God in the events of your life or our world since the last time we met?

Breaking Open the Sacred Scripture

- Readings
- DVD Reflection
- Faith Sharing Questions

Responding to God's Word

- What am I going to do, concretely, to live the message of the Scriptures this week?
- What can we do, as a Small Christian Community, short-range or long-term, to transform society in light of the Scriptures we have heard proclaimed?
- What outreach or social justice mission should we embrace as a group?

Closing Prayer

- Petitions
- Our Father



1st Sunday of Lent February 21, 2021

FIRST READING

Genesis 9:8-15

A reading from the Book of Genesis

God said to Noah and to his sons with him:
"See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you: all the birds, and the various tame and wild animals that were with you and came out of the ark.

I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all bodily creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth."

God added:

"This is the sign that I am giving for all ages to come, of the covenant between me and you and every living creature with you:

I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the covenant I have made between me and you and all living beings, so that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all mortal beings."

SECOND READING

1 Peter 3:18-22

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Peter

Beloved:

Christ suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the Spirit.

In it he also went to preach to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water.

This prefigured baptism, which saves you now. It is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.



1st Sunday of Lent • February 21, 2021

GOSPEL

Mark 1:12-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert,
and he remained in the desert for forty days,
tempted by Satan.

He was among wild beasts,
and the angels ministered to him.

After John had been arrested,
Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of
God:

“The is the time of fulfillment.

The kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. In Genesis, God promised to never again destroy all flesh with a flood. Is it possible that God has used other methods, such as COVID, to get our attention?
2. God uses the rainbow as a reminder of His covenant with us. Have you experienced a sign(s) that revealed God’s covenant with you?
3. Peter tells us that Noah’s flood prefigured baptism. How does our own baptism link us to Noah and the righteous survivors of the flood?
4. In our Gospel, the angels ministered to Jesus. When have angels ministered to you?
5. Our theme at Holy Family this season is:
Now is the time.
How can we use this sacred time of Lent as a call to action that will last beyond Easter?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

Jesus was called out into the desert where there is no place to hide from the temptations from Satan. What temptation is keeping you from going to the desert which might reveal what you fear the most?



2nd Sunday of Lent February 28, 2021

FIRST READING

Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

A reading from the Book of Genesis

God put Abraham to the test.

He called to him, “Abraham!”

“Here I am!” he replied.

Then God said:

“Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah.

There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you.”

When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it.

Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.

But the Lord’s messenger called to him from heaven, “Abraham, Abraham!”

“Here I am!” he answered.

“Do not lay your hand on the boy,” said the messenger.

“Do not do the least thing to him.

I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son.”

As Abraham looked about, he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket.

So he went and took the ram and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son.

Again, the Lord’s messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said:

“I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing –
all this because you obeyed my command.”

SECOND READING

Romans 8:31b-34

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all,

how will he not also give us everything else along with him?

Who will bring a charge against God’s chosen ones? It is God who acquits us, who will condemn?

Christ Jesus it is who died – or rather was raised – who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.



2nd Sunday of Lent • February 28, 2021

GOSPEL

Mark 9:2-10

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them.

Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus.

Then Peter said to Jesus in reply,

"Rabbi, it is good that we are here!

Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified.

Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice,

"This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."

Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them.

As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Like Abraham, in what ways have you been tested by God? How has this made your faith stronger?
2. When has God's plan surprised you, because it was better than the plan you had for yourself?
3. Paul tells us that through God we have everything. But in reality, we don't always feel that way. How can we reconcile what Paul is telling us during tough times?
4. On the mountain, Peter, James, and John were terrified. How hard is it to make sense of things when you're scared?
5. In our Gospel, the voice of God says: "*This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.*" What can you do during this holy period of Lent to listen to Jesus more?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

Imagine being in the presence of the Lord. What would Jesus call you to this Lent?



3rd Sunday of Lent March 7, 2021

FIRST READING

Exodus 20:1-17

A reading from the Book of Exodus

In those days, God delivered all these commandments:

“I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery. You shall not have other gods besides me.

“You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or worship them.

For I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their fathers’ wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation; but bestowing mercy down to the thousandth generation on the children of those who love me and keep my commandments.

“You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.

For the Lord will not leave unpunished the one who takes his name in vain.

“Remember to keep holy the sabbath day. Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord, your God.

No work may be done then either by you, or your son or daughter, or your male or female slave, or your beast, or by the alien who lives with you.

“In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested.

That is why the Lord has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

“Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you.

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything else that belongs to him.”

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 1:22-25

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike,

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom,

and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.



GOSPEL

John 2:13-25

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace." His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, Zeal for your house will consume me.

At this the Jews answered and said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. For those of us old enough to remember, the Sabbath *was observed* on Sunday. Should we try to recapture the quiet reflection of Sundays past that revolved around Church and Sunday dinner?
2. How do the 10 commandments allow room for God's grace and mercy?
3. Like the Jews and the Greeks in our second reading, why is it that we look for "signs" and "wisdom" rather than relying on faith?
4. Jesus showed anger in dealing with the money-changers. What was he telling those who witnessed this, and what is he telling us?
5. During the feast of Passover, Jesus is fully aware of the shortcomings and weakness in human nature. What opportunity does Lent offer us to look at and improve what is inside of us?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

Jesus said he will destroy the temple to cast out what didn't belong. What is the clutter in your life that may be blinding you to your own prejudices?



4th Sunday of Lent March 14, 2021

FIRST READING

2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23

A reading from the second Book of Chronicles

In those days, all the princes of Judah, the priests, and the people added infidelity to infidelity, practicing all the abominations of the nations and polluting the Lord's temple which he had consecrated in Jerusalem.

Early and often did the Lord, the God of their fathers, send his messengers to them, for he had compassion on his people and his dwelling place.

But they mocked the messengers of God, despised his warnings and scoffed at his prophets, until the anger of the Lord against his people was so inflamed that there was no remedy.

Their enemies burnt the house of God, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, set all its palaces afire, and destroyed all its precious objects.

Those who escaped the sword were carried captive to Babylon, where they became servants of the king of the Chaldeans and his sons until the kingdom of the Persians came to power.

All this was to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah: "Until the land has retrieved its lost sabbaths, during all the time it lies waste it shall have rest while seventy years are fulfilled."

In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord inspired King Cyrus of Persia to issue this proclamation throughout his kingdom, both by word of mouth and in writing:

"Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia:

All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord, the God of heaven, has given to me, and he has also charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Whoever, therefore, among you belongs to any part of his people, let him go up, and may his God be with him!"

SECOND READING

Ephesians 2:4-10

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ – by grace you have been saved – , raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast.

For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.



GOSPEL

John 3:14-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed.

But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Chronicles shows this human pattern: *People sin – God is merciful – people continue to sin – divine punishment follows.* In the end, God shows the depth of His mercy and forgiveness. Is this pattern still true today? How does God’s mercy continue to impact our lives?
2. King Cyrus is a surprising figure in Chronicles. Like him, it is often a person or situation we least expect that reveals God’s mercy to us. Have you ever received God’s mercy through an unexpected source?
3. As Paul tells us: *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God.”* In light of this, why are the good works that we do still so important?
4. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.”* This may be the most widely known Gospel quote. Why is this message so powerful? What does it mean to you?
5. As we start to emerge from the year of COVID, did we do a good job of keeping His light bright in our lives and for those around us?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

Christ brings light to the world. Lack of affordable housing in the Northwest suburbs keeps many people from achieving their potential. How can you bring light to public life by advocating for more affordable housing?



5th Sunday of Lent March 21, 2021

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:31-34

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant, and I had to show myself their master, says the Lord.

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives how to know the Lord. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the Lord, for I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no more.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 5:7-9

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

In the days when Christ Jesus was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.



5th Sunday of Lent • March 21, 2021

GOSPEL

John 12:20-33

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus."

Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.

Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.

Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me.

"I am troubled now. Yet what should I say, 'Father, save me from this hour'?"

But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour.

Father, glorify your name."

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."

The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, "An angel has spoken to him."

Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come for my sake but for yours.

Now is time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out.

And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself."

He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. A covenant is defined as an agreement, promise or pledge. Do you view your relationship with the Lord as a covenant?
2. The second reading tells us that Jesus learned obedience from what He suffered. Has hardship or suffering changed your relationship with God? If so, in what way?
3. In our Gospel, Jesus says that when a grain of wheat dies, it produces much fruit. What fruit has been produced in your life, as a result of loss?
4. In the Gospel, some heard God's voice as thunder, others as angels. Have you heard God's voice, when others around you did not?
5. Next Sunday is Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion. Do you feel more prepared this year - or less - for the holiest days that lie ahead?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

When a grain dies, it produces much fruit. As Catholics, we are committed to bringing change through non-violent actions. Have you had a "dying" experience that reshaped your views on violence in our society?



Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord March 28, 2021

FIRST READING

Isaiah 50:4-7

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue,
that I might know how to speak to the weary
a word that will rouse them.

Morning after morning, he opens my ear that I
may hear;
and I have not rebelled, have not turned back.

I gave my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;
my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.

The Lord God is my help,
therefore I am not disgraced;
I have set my face like flint,
knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

SECOND READING

Philippians 2:6-11

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God something to be
grasped.

Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a
slave, coming in human likeness; and found
human in appearance, he humbled himself,
becoming obedient to the point of death, even
death on a cross.

Because of this, God greatly exalted him and
bestowed on him the name which is above every
name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should
bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under
the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus
Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*Note: As a group, consider taking turns reading
the Passion in parts and take time to reflect on
the scenes in the narrative.*

PALM SUNDAY – THE PASSION

Mark 14:1 – 15:47

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread
were to take place in two days' time.
So the chief priests and the scribes were seeking
a way to arrest him by treachery and put him to
death.

They said, "Not during the festival, for fear that
there may be a riot among the people."

When he was in Bethany reclining at table in the
house of Simon the leper, a woman came with
an alabaster jar of perfumed oil, costly genuine
spikenard.

She broke the alabaster jar and poured it on his
head.

There were some who were indignant.

"Why has there been this waste of perfumed oil?
It could have been sold for more than three
hundred days' wages and the money given to the
poor."

They were infuriated with her.

Jesus said, "Let her alone.

Why do you make trouble for her?

She has done a good thing for me.

The poor you will always have with you, and
whenever you wish you can do good to them,
but you will not always have me.

She has done what she could.

She has anticipated anointing my body for
burial.

Amen, I say to you,
wherever the gospel is proclaimed to the whole
world, what she has done will be told in memory
of her."



Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord • March 28, 2021

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went off to the chief priests to hand him over to them. When they heard him they were pleased and promised to pay him money. Then he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you carrying a jar of water. Follow him.

Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"

Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready.

Make the preparations for us there."

The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he came with the Twelve. And as they reclined at table and were eating, Jesus said,

"Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."

They began to be distressed and to say to him, one by one, "Surely, it is not I?"

He said to them,

"One of the Twelve, the one who dips with me into the dish.

For the Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.

It would be better for that man if he had never been born."

While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body."

Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.

"Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will have your faith shaken, for it is written:

I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be dispersed.

But after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee."

Peter said to him,

"Even though all should have their faith shaken, mine will not be."

Then Jesus said to him,

"Amen, I say to you, this very night before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times."

But he vehemently replied,

"Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you."

And they all spoke similarly.

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed.

Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death.

Remain here and keep watch."

He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you.

Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will."



Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord • March 28, 2021

When he returned he found them asleep.
He said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping?
Could you not keep watch for one hour?
Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test.
The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."
Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing.
Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him.
He returned a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come.
Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners.
Get up, let us go.
See, my betrayer is at hand."

Then, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.
His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely."
He came and immediately went over to him and said, "Rabbi." And he kissed him.
At this they laid hands on him and arrested him.

One of the bystanders drew his sword, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear.
Jesus said to them in reply,
"Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to seize me?
Day after day I was with you teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me; but that the scriptures may be fulfilled."
And they all left him and fled.
Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body.
They seized him, but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked.

They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together.

Peter followed him at a distance into the high priest's courtyard and was seated with the guards, warming himself at the fire.

The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none.

Many gave false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree.

Some took the stand and testified falsely against him, alleging: "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands.'" Even so their testimony did not agree.

The high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus, saying, "Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?"

But he was silent and answered nothing.

Again the high priest asked him and said to him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"

Then Jesus answered, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.'"

At that the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further need have we of witnesses?

You have heard the blasphemy.

What do you think?

They all condemned him as deserving to die.

Some began to spit on him.

They blindfolded him and struck him and said to him, "Prophesy!"

All the guards greeted him with blows.

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the high priest's maids came along.

Seeing Peter warming himself, she looked intently at him and said, "You too were with the Nazarene, Jesus."

But he denied it saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about."



Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord • March 28, 2021

So he went out into the outer court.
Then the cock crowed.
The maid saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them."
Once again he denied it.
A little later the bystanders said to Peter once more, "Surely you are one of them; for you too are a Galilean."
He began to curse and to swear, "I do not know this man about whom you are talking."
And immediately a cock crowed a second time.
Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times."
He broke down and wept.

As soon as morning came, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council.
They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.
Pilate questioned him,
"Are you the king of the Jews?"
He said to him in reply, "You say so."
The chief priests accused him of many things.
Again Pilate questioned him,
"Have you no answer?"
See how many things they accuse you of."
Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast he used to release to them one prisoner whom they requested.
A man called Barabbas was then in prison along with the rebels who had committed murder in a rebellion.
The crowd came forward and began to ask him to do for them as he was accustomed.
Pilate answered,
"Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?"
For he knew that it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed him over.

But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead.
Pilate again said to them in reply,
"Then what do you want me to do with the man you call the king of the Jews?"
They shouted again, "Crucify him."
Pilate said to them,
"Why? What evil has he done?"
They only shouted the louder, "Crucify him."
So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort.
They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him.
They began to salute him with,
"Hail, King of the Jews!" and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him.
They knelt before him in homage.
And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him.

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

They brought him to the place of Golgotha – which is translated Place of the Skull –.
They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it.
Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take.
It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him.
The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews."



Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord • March 28, 2021

With him they crucified two revolutionaries,
one on his right and one on his left.
Those passing by reviled him, shaking their
heads and saying,
“Aha! You who would destroy the temple and
rebuild it in three days, save yourself by coming
down from the cross!”

Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes,
mocked him among themselves and said,
“He saved others; he cannot save himself.
Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down
now from the cross that we may see and
believe.”
Those who were crucified with him also kept
abusing him.

At noon darkness came over the whole land
until three in the afternoon.
And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud
voice,
"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?"
which is translated,
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Some of the bystanders who heard it said,
“Look, he is calling Elijah.”
One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put
it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink saying,
"Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him
down."
Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from
top to bottom.
When the centurion who stood facing him
saw how he breathed his last he said,
“Truly this man was the Son of God!”

There were also women looking on from a
distance.

Among them were Mary Magdalene,
Mary the mother of the younger James and of
Joses, and Salome.

These women had followed him when he was in
Galilee and ministered to him.

There were also many other women who had
come up with him to Jerusalem.

When it was already evening, since it was the
day of preparation, the day before the sabbath,
Joseph of Arimathea, a distinguished member of
the council, who was himself awaiting the
kingdom of God, came and courageously went
to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.
Pilate was amazed that he was already dead.
He summoned the centurion and asked him if
Jesus had already died.
And when he learned of it from the centurion,
he gave the body to Joseph.

Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down,
wrapped him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a
tomb that had been hewn out of the rock.
Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the
tomb.
Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses
watched where he was laid.



FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. In Isaiah we hear: *“The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary.”*

Who have you encouraged, and who has encouraged you?

2. Have you ever “set your face like flint” and followed your convictions when your faith has been challenged? Did you feel God’s strength?

3. Paul tells us that Jesus humbled himself. What role does humbling ourselves play in helping those trying to recover from this past year?

4. As you read the Passion Gospel of Mark, what one or two passages moved you the most? Please share what they were and why they moved you?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

What needs to be emptied from your life before you can walk in the shoes of another person suffering an injustice from an act of violence in any form?



Easter Sunday April 4, 2021

First Reading

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter proceeded to speak and said:

“You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power.

He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead.

To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Second Reading

Colossians 3:1-4

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians.

Brothers and sisters:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.

GOSPEL

John 20:1-9

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb.

So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him."

So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb.

They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.

When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.

Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed.

For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.



Easter Sunday • April 4, 2021

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Peter began spreading the Good News of Christ. Have you had a conversation with a non-believer? What was that experience like?

2. Paul asks us to: *“Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.”* How do we stay focused on this when the Easter season ends?

3. Women were the first to witness the Resurrection in all four Gospels. What is the significance of this?

4. Has God “rolled back the stone” in any aspect of your life?

5. As we begin the joy of the Easter season, how would you describe this year’s Lenten journey?

6. Our theme at Holy Family this season has been: *Now is the time.*

Answer this question:

Now is the time for _____.

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

What “deaths” have you experienced that actually brought new life to you or a loved one? How can that experience shape your actions bringing new life to another, especially the disadvantaged?



2nd Sunday of Easter April 11, 2021

FIRST READING

Acts 4:32-35

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common.

With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all.

There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

SECOND READING

1 John 5:1-6

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

Beloved:

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the Father loves also the one begotten by him.

In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments.

For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments.

And his commandments are not burdensome, for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world.

And the victory that conquers the world is our faith.

Who indeed is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood.

The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth.

GOSPEL

John 20:19-31

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord."

But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them.

Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe."

Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!"



2nd Sunday of Easter • April 11, 2021

Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. In the Early Church, believers were of “one heart and mind.” How does participation in the various ministries at Holy Family allow us to be of “one heart and mind”?
2. Many converted during the Early Church because the movement was remarkable. What is our role in keeping the Christian movement remarkable today?
3. Our second reading ends with: “*The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth.*” How does the Spirit work through you?
4. When Jesus first appears to the disciples, he gives them the power to forgive sins. What might His reason be for doing this right away?
5. How do you relate to Thomas? Are there times when you have felt or expressed doubt? What brought you back?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

In times of uncertainty, there are great doubters. What truth and wisdom do all Americans need to hear right now? What truth and wisdom do you need to hear right now?



3rd Sunday of Easter April 18, 2021

First Reading

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter said to the people:

“The God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,
the God of our fathers has glorified his servant
Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in
Pilot’s presence when he had decided to release
him.

“You denied the Holy and Righteous One and
asked that a murderer be released to you.
The author of life you put to death, but God
raised him from the dead; of this we are
witnesses.

“Now I know, brothers,
that you acted out of ignorance, just as your
leaders did; but God has thus brought to
fulfillment what he had announced beforehand
through the mouth of all the prophets,
that his Christ would suffer.

“Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your
sins may be wiped away.”

Second Reading

1 John 2:1-5a

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

My children, I am writing this to you so that you
may not commit sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate
with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one.
He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins
only but for those of the whole world.

The way we may be sure that we know him is to
keep his commandments.

Those who say, "I know him," but do not keep
his commandments are liars, and the truth is not
in them.

But whoever keeps his word,
the love of God is truly perfected in him.



3rd Sunday of Easter • April 18, 2021

Gospel

Luke 24:35-48

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

The two disciples recounted what had taken place on the way, and how Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost.

Then he said to them, "Why are you troubled?

And why do questions arise in your hearts?

Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.

Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have."

And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

While they were still incredulous for joy and were amazed, he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?"

They gave him a piece of baked fish; he took it and ate it in front of them.

He said to them,

"These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled."

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

And he said to them,

"Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things."

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. In our first reading, Peter is a powerful witness. Can you recall a homily or testimony that made a difference in your faith life?
2. Peter tells the people he knows that they acted out of ignorance, but still need to repent. Why do we need to repent even when we have acted in ignorance?
3. John tells us that Christ is our Advocate with the Father. In the Gospels, the Holy Spirit is also an Advocate. Who do you pray to and why?
4. Why was it important for Jesus to eat a piece of fish in the presence of everyone?
5. In Luke, Jesus states that everything written about Him had to be fulfilled. How does this knowledge strengthen and secure your faith?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

Where have you recently recognized the peace of Jesus? How did you share that peace with others?



4th Sunday of Easter April 25, 2021

First Reading

Acts 4:8-12

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said:

“Leaders of the people and elders:

If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a cripple, namely, by what means he was saved, then all of you and all the people of Israel should know that it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, in his name this man stands before you healed.

“He is the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved.”

Second Reading

1 John 3:1-2

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

Beloved:

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are.

The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Gospel

John 10:11-18

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said:

“I am the good shepherd.

A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them.

This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep.

“I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep.

“I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold.

These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd.

“This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own.

I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again.

This command I have received from my Father.”



FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. In our first reading, the Holy Spirit emboldened Peter as he preached to the leaders and the elders. When have you felt the presence of the Holy Spirit? How did His presence strengthen you?

2. As he preaches, Peter uses a memorable analogy in describing Jesus as a cornerstone. What other terms have been used to describe Jesus that resonate with you?

3. In our second reading, John says “*we are God’s children now.*” It’s easy to feel like this in Church, but how can we keep this feeling inside of us in our daily lives?

4. Jesus says: “*I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead.*” Who is Jesus referring to? How can we help?

5. In the Gospel, Jesus points out that the owner of the sheep – not the hired hand – has a greater interest in their welfare. What can we do to be more like the owner, and less like the hired hand?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

Jesus laid down his life for all and became the cornerstone. Who do you feel called to shepherd in their time of need?



5th Sunday of Easter May 2, 2021

First Reading

Acts 9:26-31

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When Saul arrived in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

Then Barnabas took charge of him and brought him to the apostles, and he reported to them how he had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

He moved about freely with them in Jerusalem, and spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord. He also spoke and debated with the Hellenists, but they tried to kill him. And when the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him on his way to Tarsus.

The church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers.

Second Reading

1 John 3:18-24

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything.

Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us.

Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.



5th Sunday of Easter • May 2, 2021

Gospel

John 15:1-8

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to his disciples:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower.

He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit.

You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you.

“Remain in me, as I remain in you.

Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

“Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.

By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Saul’s conversion was a dramatic transformation, as converts are often the most fervent in their faith. Has your faith been strengthened in knowing someone who converted to Christianity?
2. When Saul became Paul, he began his letters to the early churches. How has his story and/or his letters impacted you?
3. In the second reading, John teaches us to “*love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.*” How is this a call to action?
4. We hear in our Gospel that a branch must be pruned to bear more fruit. In keeping with this thought, consider the following:
 - What needs to be pruned in you?
 - What needs to be pruned in the Church?
 - What needs to be pruned at Holy Family?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

John’s letter reveals that love in word and speech is not enough. It must also be in deed and truth. What deed revealed your love for another recently?



6th Sunday of Easter May 9, 2021

First Reading

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and, falling at his feet, paid him homage. Peter, however, raised him up, saying, "Get up. I myself am also a human being."

Then Peter proceeded to speak and said, "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him."

While Peter was still speaking these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word.

The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God.

Then Peter responded, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have?" He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Second Reading

1 John 4:7-10

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.

In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.



6th Sunday of Easter • May 9, 2021

Gospel

John 15:9-17

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to his disciples:

“As the Father loves me, so I also love you,
Remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments, you will remain
in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s
commandments and remain in his love.

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in
you and your joy may be complete.
This is my commandment: love one another as I
love you.
No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one's life for one's friends.

“You are my friends if you do what I command
you.
I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does
not know what his master is doing.
I have called you friends, because I have told
you everything I have heard from my Father.

“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose
you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that
will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father
in my name he may give you.
This I command you: love one another.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. In our first reading, Peter tells Cornelius:
“*Get up. I myself am also a human being.*”
Today, there’s an abundance of hero worship.
What does Peter’s statement say about this?
2. As a Jew, Peter usually did not enter a
Gentile’s house. In terms of your faith journey,
what is something that you are now more open
to, that you weren’t in the past?
3. In our second reading, John tells us that
“*God is love.*” When younger, many of us were
taught to fear God. When did you first realize
how much God loved you?
4. In our Gospel, Jesus says:
“*No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one's life for one's friends.*”
Have you experienced a selfless act of love?
5. Do you consider yourself Jesus’ servant or
friend, and why?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

In what ways does the love you have for your
family spill over into the love for another,
especially someone that may be a stranger?



The Ascension of the Lord May 16, 2021

First Reading

Acts 1:1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for “the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

When they had gathered together they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight.

While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.”

Second Reading

Ephesians 4:1-13

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters,
I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace:
one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call;
one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
one God and Father of all,
who is over all and through all and in all.

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it says:
He ascended on high and took prisoners captive; he gave gifts to men.

What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended into the lower regions of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ,
until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ.



Gospel

Mark 16:15-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Go into the whole world
and proclaim the gospel to every creature.
Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved;
whoever does not believe will be condemned.

"These signs will accompany those who believe:
in my name they will drive out demons,
they will speak new languages.
They will pick up serpents with their hands,
and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not
harm them.
They will lay hands on the sick, and they will
recover."

So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them,
was taken up into heaven
and took his seat at the right hand of God.
But they went forth and preached everywhere,
while the Lord worked with them
and confirmed the word through accompanying
signs.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. In our first reading, Jesus presented himself alive to the apostles by many proofs. For us today, what proofs have we witnessed that strengthen us?
2. Since we don't know "*the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority*" is this better than knowing? When you think about it, where do your thoughts lead you?
3. In our second reading, Paul tells us that "*grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*" What is your gift and how do you share it with others?
4. In our Gospel, Jesus commissioned the eleven to: "*Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.*"
The initial work of the Apostles enabled our faith to grow for 2,000 years. How can we continue this mission today?
5. The Gospel speaks of the many signs that will accompany those who believe. Do you have a recent God Sighting that you can share?

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to proclaim the good news. What good news will you share with someone you know who is suffering from an injustice?



Pentecost Sunday May 23, 2021

First Reading

Acts 2:1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were.

Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them.

All they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem.

At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

They were astounded, and in amazement they asked,

"Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans?"

Then how does each of us hear them in his native language?"

We are Parthians, Medes, Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit;

there are different forms of service but the same Lord;

there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.

To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.



Gospel

John 20:19-23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.
The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”
And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,
“Receive the Holy Spirit.
Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. The Apostles used a wide variety of languages to communicate their faith to others. What tools do you use to share your faith?
2. Pentecost brings the Easter season to a triumphant conclusion. Why is Pentecost so significant?
3. Paul tells us that “*all the parts of the body, though many, are one body*” in Christ. As this message encourages diversity, how are we doing as a church, a community and as a country?
4. The Apostles were given the ability to forgive or retain sins. Why is forgiveness so elusive? How can we do a better job of forgiving in the coming year?
5. As this Easter season draws to a close, reflect back on our theme at Holy Family:
Now is the time.
“Now is the time for who or what or ...?”

SOCIAL JUSTICE QUESTION

On Pentecost, we reflect on receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. In that gift is the power to intentionally forgive or retain the sins of another. How might you be a gift to someone in need of forgiveness? What obstacles do you need to overcome before offering forgiveness?