



Monday, April 25, 2011

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 16

This psalm emphasizes trust in God for all our needs and in all circumstances of life. The psalmist expresses confidence that God is always present – guiding, comforting, defending, and blessing those who are faithful and obedient.

**REFLECT-**

- Think of a time in your life where you were afraid, uncertain of what lay ahead, or suffering in some way? How did God provide comfort and guidance for you in that time? Did that provide assurance for you that God is indeed always faithful?

**PRAY-**

Lord, I thank you for your constant companionship in my life and for providing exactly what I need at the right times. Help me to trust you completely and follow your guidance. Amen.

Tuesday, April 26, 2011

**READ-** Acts of the Apostles: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Peter is speaking at Pentecost to a crowd of Jewish listeners here. He pulls no punches in identifying Jesus as the Messiah foretold by King David and put responsibility for his death squarely on the shoulders of the Jewish people in the crowd. He then asserts that God has raised Jesus from the death to complete his plan of salvation, despite their evil deeds.

**REFLECT-**

- Compare this Peter to the one who denied Christ three times before the Crucifixion. Something remarkable – the resurrection of Christ – has completely transformed Peter into a man of great boldness and courage. Can you be bold and courageous for Christ in your words and actions today?

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to share my faith today in what I say and do so that others may come to know you. Amen.

Wednesday, April 27, 2011

**READ-** The Epistle: 1 Peter 1:3-9

This letter was written by Peter to Christians in Asia Minor who were experiencing great persecution for their Christian faith. He reminds them of Christ's suffering and resurrection and assures them of eternal joy through their faithfulness to Christ.

**REFLECT-**

- Suffering is unfortunately just part of the human condition. It is hard for us to understand, particularly when some seem to have more than their fair share. Yet we must hold fast to our faith, remembering that Jesus suffered in his human walk and prevailed by the power of God in his resurrection. And so will we.

**PRAY-**

Father, help me when I am weak and my burdens feel too heavy to bear. Hold me up with your strong right hand and give me your peace. Amen.

Thursday, April 28, 2011

**READ-** The Gospel: John 20:19-31

Although Mary had already seen Jesus alive and had told the other disciples, they were not convinced. So they were locked away in fear when Jesus came to them. They saw and believed and he gave them the power of the Holy Spirit to spread the news and forgive sins.

**REFLECT-**

- Thomas often gets a bad rap for his refusal to believe without seeing Jesus himself. Yet the other disciples did not believe Mary's testimony. We all have times of doubt in our faith walk. Jesus comes to us many times and in many ways so that our faith is encouraged, just as he did for these first disciples.

**PRAY-**

O God, thank you for the faith and obedience of these courageous men and women who saw Jesus, believed and shared that faith with the whole world so that we may also believe. Amen.

Friday, April 29, 2011

**ACT-**

**Focus Verse:** John 20:23

**If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.**

Learning to forgive is difficult. Yet Jesus here is talking about more than us personally forgiving someone who has wronged us. He is challenging us to offer God's mercy and forgiveness to others by sharing with them the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection so that they may believe and be saved from the consequences of their sin. Jesus empowered and sent his disciples out to share the story of what they had seen and heard and then offer the forgiveness they had received to others who believed in Jesus as Savior. We are offered that same power through the Holy Spirit to share what God has done for us so that others may receive God's mercy. Watch for opportunities to do that with those you encounter today.