

Readings and Reflections for the Week

Saturday 11 April - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

Sunday 12 April - SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Reading 1, Acts 2:42-47, Psalm 117(118)

Reading 2, 1 Peter 1:3-9, Gospel, John 20:19-31

Eight days later, Jesus came again and stood among them

Monday 13 April -Monday of the Second Week of Eastertide

Reading 1 Acts 4:23-31, Psalm 2

Gospel, John 3:1-8

Unless a man is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God

Tuesday 14 April- Tuesday of the Second Week of Eastertide

Reading 1, Acts 4:32-37, Psalm 92(93)

Gospel, John 3:7-15

No-one has gone up to heaven except the Son of Man who has come down from heaven

Wednesday 15 April -Wednesday of the Second Week of Eastertide

Reading 1, Acts 5:17-26, Psalm 33(34)

Gospel, John 3:16-21

God sent his Son into the world so that through him the world might be saved.

Thursday 16 April -Thursday of the Second Week of Eastertide

Reading 1, Acts 5:27-33, Psalm 33(34)

Gospel, John 3:31-36

The Father loves the Son and has entrusted everything to him

Friday 17 April -Friday of the Second Week of Eastertide

Reading 1, Acts 5:34-42, Psalm 26(27)

Gospel, John 6:1-15

The feeding of the 5000

Saturday 18 April -Saturday of the Second Week of Eastertide

Reading 1, Acts 6:1-7, Psalm 32(33)

Gospel, John 6:16-21

They saw Jesus walking on the Lake

Saturday 18 April - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

Sunday 19 April - THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Reading 1, Acts 2:14,22-33, Psalm 15(16)

Reading 2, 1 Peter 1:17-21, Gospel, Luke 24:13-35

They recognised him in the breaking of the bread

United with Churches together in St Albans this week we pray for all members of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

Saint of the Week - 13 April - Saint Martin I Pope, Martyr

Pope Martin I, also known as Martin the Confessor, served as the 74th Bishop of Rome from 21 July 649, until his death on 16 September 655. When he became pope in 649, Constantinople was the capital of the Byzantine empire and the patriarch of Constantinople was the most influential Church leader in the eastern Christian world. The struggles that existed within the Church at that time were magnified by the close cooperation of emperor and patriarch.

A teaching, strongly supported in the East, held that Jesus Christ had no human will. Twice, emperors had officially favoured this position: Heraclius by publishing a formula of faith, and Constans II by silencing the issue of one or two wills in Christ. Shortly after assuming the office of the papacy – which he did without first being confirmed by the emperor – Saint Martin I held a council at the Lateran in which the imperial documents were

censured, and in which the patriarch of Constantinople and two of his predecessors were condemned. In response, Constant II first tried to turn bishops and people against the pope.

Failing in this and in an attempt to kill the pope, the emperor sent troops to Rome to seize Saint Martin I and to bring him back to Constantinople. Already in poor health, Martin offered no resistance, returned with Calliopas, the exarch of Constantinople, and was then submitted to various imprisonments, tortures, and hardships. Although condemned to death and with some of the imposed torture already carried out, Martin was saved from execution by the pleas of a repentant Paul, patriarch of Constantinople, who was himself gravely ill. Finally, on 15 May 655, Pope Martin was banished to Cherson, which is located in modern-day Ukraine. Tortures and cruel treatment having taken their toll, Saint Martin I died shortly thereafter. He is the last of the early popes to be venerated as a martyr.

REFLECTION

The real significance of the word *martyr* comes not from the dying but from the witnessing, which the word means in its derivation. People who are willing to give up everything, their most precious possessions, their very lives, put a supreme value on the cause or belief for which they sacrifice. Martyrdom, dying for the faith, is an incidental extreme to which some have had to go to manifest their belief in Christ. A living faith, a life that exemplifies Christ's teaching throughout, and that in spite of difficulties, is required of all Christians.

Martin refused to cut corners as a way of easing his lot, to make some accommodations with the civil rulers.

REFLECTIONS ON SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Taken from The Wednesday Word{ www.wednesdayword.org}

Gospel John 20:19-31

This passage from St John's Gospel has all the more significance because it brings the Gospel to a close. The story of a breakfast-party with the Risen Christ on the shore of the Lake of Galilee is a sort of appendix. The story-line of the main Gospel ends with Thomas blurting out 'My Lord and my God'. The Gospel therefore ends as it began, with the only two unmistakable declarations in the New Testament of the divinity of Jesus. 'The Word was God' and 'My Lord and my God' bracket the Gospel, indicating the purpose and angle of the whole Gospel which is to show that Jesus is God. John's Gospel complements the other Gospels: they show a man who is also God, whereas this Gospel shows God who is also a man. It is with the divine authority that Jesus confers on his Church the divine power to forgive. Real forgiveness is indeed Godlike. It is not simply 'forgive-and-forget', but forgiveness in the knowledge that a hurt has occurred. Just as a bone, broken and merged together again, can be stronger than it was before it was broken, so forgiveness can create a real link of love on both sides, a treasured secret of divine graciousness between forgiver and forgiven.

How have you experienced real forgiveness in your life?

First Reading Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47

The first readings throughout Easter time this year are about the earliest community of the followers of Jesus at Jerusalem (before they had acquired the name 'Christians'). Luke is the author of this history of the earliest spread of the Christian message which we call 'The Acts of the Apostles': from time to time he gives a summary of these earliest 'Christians'. This passage is the first of these summaries, placed just after the birth of the Church at Pentecost. It paints a picture of peace, generosity and devotion, summed up in grateful praise of God. Luke is showing us the quality of a community where the Spirit of God is given free play; he is giving us an ideal to strive for. It is a community to which anyone would wish to belong, a community where love prevails, where each member is attentive to the needs of others. It is not then surprising that the number in the community was constantly on the increase. Perhaps, as in any community we experience, there were tensions beneath the surface but the warmth of trust in the Lord breathes through the account and promises a solution to every problem.

Second Reading 1 Peter 1:3-9

Throughout the Easter season this year we read this First Letter of Peter. Whether it was actually written by the fisherman, the enthusiastic and impetuous leader of the Twelve, or simply attributed to him, is still discussed by scholars. The answer makes little difference to the positive message of the Letter, which is full of the optimism of the new Christian movement, the love, confidence and joy of looking forward to the promised inheritance. Traditionally, the Easter Vigil is the time for new baptisms, and so new births into the Church. Even if we were baptised long ago, we can still benefit from the celebration of the season to refresh our newness in Christ. New birth into Christ brings with it the promise of inheritance into eternal life. Just as an earthly inheritance can change a whole situation and way of life, even a change of personality, so does our entry into Christ. Of course, baptism brings with it responsibilities and duties, and the reading mentions the trials which test us like gold. I know that I, for one, still have a lot of dross which needs to be purged away before I can stand before the Lord and in his name, claim my inheritance as a son of God.