

Readings and Reflections for the Week

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

Monday 20 April –Monday of the Third Week of Eastertide

Reading 1 Acts 6:8-15, Psalm 118(119)
Gospel, John 6:22-29
Do not work for food that cannot last, but food that endures to eternal life

Tuesday 21 April– Tuesday of the Third Week of Eastertide

Reading 1, Acts 7:51-8:1, Psalm 30(31)
Gospel, John 6:30-35
It is my Father who gives you the bread from heaven

Wednesday 22 April –VIGIL MASS OF ST GEORGE

Reading 1, Acts 8:1-8, Psalm 65(66)
Gospel, John 6:35-40
It is my Father's will that whoever sees the Son, should have eternal life

Thursday 23 April –FEAST OF ST GEORGE

Reading 1, Revelation 21:5-7, Psalm 125(126)
Reading 2, 2 Timothy 2:8-13;3:10-12,
Gospel, Luke 9 23-26
Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it

Friday 24 April – St Erkenwald and St Mellitus

Reading 1, Acts 9:1-20, Psalm 116(117)
Gospel, John 6:52-59
My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink

Saturday 25 April –St Mark, Evangelist

Reading 1, 1 Peter 5:5-14, Psalm 88(89)
Gospel, Mark 16:15-20
Go out into the whole world, proclaim the good news

Sunday 26 April -FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Reading 1, Acts 2:14,36-41, Psalm 22(23)
Reading 2, 1 Peter 2:20-25, Gospel, John 10:1-10
I am the gate of the sheepfold

United with Churches together in St Albans this week we pray for all members of the Cornerstone Church.

Saint of the Week 23 April Saint George, Martyr

It is uncertain when Saint George was born, however, his death date is estimated to be 23 April 303 AD. George was born to a Roman officer and a Greek native of Lydda. Both were Christians and George was raised to follow their faith. He joined Diocletian's army and by his late 20s, he served as an imperial guard for the Emperor. On 24 February 303 AD, Diocletian announced that all Christians should be arrested but George refused to do this. Diocletian was angry but, valuing his friendship with George's father, tried to convert George. He offered him a fortune in exchange for offering a sacrifice to the Roman gods but George refused. Finally, Diocletian ordered George's execution. George was tortured several times but still he did not turn from God. On 23 April 303 AD, George was beheaded. His body was sent to Lydda for burial. Saint George stands out among other saints and legends because he is known and revered by both Muslims and Christians. King Edward III appointed St George as the patron saint of England around 1350. Although he never visited England, he became a symbol of chivalry, with his red-cross-on-white flag a symbol widely used during the Crusades becoming the English flag and his image central to the Order of the Garter.

Saint George and the Dragon

In the Western version of the story, a dragon or crocodile made its nest at a spring that provided water to Silene, thought to be modern-day Cyrene in Libya. As the people could not collect water they tried to remove the dragon. It would leave its nest when offered a sheep but when no sheep were left, the people decided that a maiden would be just as effective. They chose the victim by drawing straws until one day the princess was drawn. She was offered to the dragon but, before she could be devoured, George appeared. He protected himself with the sign of the Cross, and slayed the dragon. After this, the citizens abandoned their paganism and all converted to Christianity.

Readings and Reflections for the Week

Prayer to Saint George

O God, who granted to Saint George the strength to sustain the torments he received for our holy faith; I beseech You to prevent my faith from wavering, so that I may also faithfully serve You with a sincere heart unto death. I ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

REFLECTIONS ON THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER Luke 24:13-35

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

This attractive and delicate narrative is the story of the journey to faith in the Risen Christ: it occurs in any Christian instruction, and especially in the Eucharist, which begins with the teaching of the scriptures, and then is brought to its fulfilment in the Sacrament. The two disciples (are they man and woman, as so often in Luke, perhaps Cleopas and his wife?) start off deep in depression and disappointment. But they are open-minded and willing to learn as the Stranger explains to them from scripture the meaning of events. Their hearts burn within them at the Stranger's words, but their eyes remain closed. It is only in the sacramental meal that they recognise the Risen Christ. This is the story of any Christian instruction, culminating in the Eucharist, for the Eucharist is a sacrament of initiation, bringing us to the intimate, personal encounter with Christ. Once they have been enlightened and have learnt the profound meaning of the events, the truth of the scriptures and the resurrection, then the disciples return to the Holy City and carry on their own Christian apostolate by spreading the news of the resurrection. This is the shape of the Christian vocation which we all receive, to assimilate and pass on the meaning of Christ's resurrection.

How can we share the message of Jesus this week?

First Reading Acts of the Apostles 2:14. 22-33

Pentecost was the birthday of the Church, the moment when the Christian Church was born. This reading from Peter's speech at Pentecost explains not so much the actual event of the gift of the Spirit, but the event which lies behind it, the Resurrection. Peter sees it as predicted in the psalm: the Holy One of the Lord can never remain lying in the corruption of the grave; his resurrection is the revelation of true and permanent life. It brings to a conclusion the whole plan of God for the world. The scriptures of the Old Testament teach us the ways of God with the struggling and recalcitrant human race: they tell us about the highs and the lows, our fidelity to the Lord and our betrayals. We can see ourselves in every stage of this history, as it mirrors our own hopes, our promises and our failures. But running through it all is the certainty that God will fulfil his pledge to Eve to bring good out of evil. So the resurrection of Christ is God's acceptance of the loving obedience of his Son, expressing and renewing the loving obedience of the human race, which we, unaided, could not provide for ourselves. By raising Christ to life God shows his final acceptance of Christ's re-dedication to him of our human loyalty.

What does it mean to say that you share Christ's risen life?

Second Reading 1 Peter 1:17-21

In the Middle Ages, when ransoming was a current practice for setting captives free, theologians debated to whom the ransom of Christ's blood was paid: was it to God or to the devil? However, the real context of this passage is Old Testament sacrifice, and particularly sacrifice for sin. In these rites the blood is valuable not for the pain it represents but for life. There can be no reconciliation without blood, according to Leviticus 17:11, for blood represents life. The blood of a living creature belongs to God because it represents the God-given life. Once the blood is shed there is no more life. So in Hebrew thought the blood is a cleansing and enlivening agent, renewing life: it takes away and overrides the deadness of sin. The blood of Christ cleanses us since it represents the divine life which is given to us. So in the Book of Revelation the garments of the martyrs are washed white (the colour of victory) in the blood of the Lamb, that is, they receive new life. This also explains the importance of the Eucharistic Blood of Christ, which gives us Christ's own divine life and enables us to live with his life.

What is the significance of the Blood of Christ which is offered for us in the Mass