



St. Pius V
COMMUNITY EASTER REFLECTIONS

May 22-28 2022

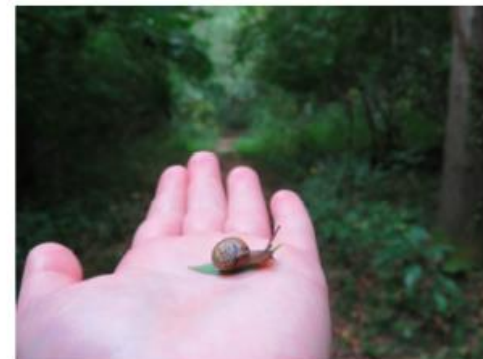
Sunday, May 22, 2022
Linda Karins

Today's reading from Revelations teaches us that God's love is boundless. Its radiance is "like that of a precious stone, like jasper, clear as crystal". We learn that in contrast to historic Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem is of God, not of humans. It is eternal. That is a huge concept, and can feel hard to grasp, even overwhelming.

If we know – and remember - how to look, we will see Christ in others, and daily.

I have a friend whose son was diagnosed with a cruel, terminal illness. She spends her days caring for him, lovingly. It is hard. Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you". My friend handles this gift of inner peace delicately, with intention. She knows how to listen in silence. She spends time with nature and somehow carves out moments to be creative with her gifts. She eagerly and easily shares those gifts with others. This is what Jesus wants for us: to view his sacrifice through the lens of all that is good within it ... and to spread that joy. That's not easy to do. Like all of us, my friend struggles some days, but she gives herself grace.

Be still. Breathe. See, touch, and smell the beauty of life all around you. Be patient with yourself. When you remember how to see it, God's radiance is like that of a precious stone, like jasper, clear as crystal.



Monday, May 25, 2022
Melody Gee

In today's reading, Jesus names the Advocate, who we know as the Holy Spirit. By contrast, in Revelation, the devil is named "the accuser." I find these names helpful when I'm trying to listen for the voice of God amid all the voices vying for my attention.

Often God's voice doesn't sound the way I expect. It sounds like my children needing me at an inconvenient moment. It sounds like feedback I would rather not hear. It sounds like a request to change my plans. Similarly, the accuser's voice can easily sound like my ally, telling me that someone else, and definitely not me, is in the wrong or at fault.

The names Advocate and accuser help me discern who is really speaking to me, and who I need to listen to. The Advocate is on my side *and* on everyone else's side. The Advocate speaks up for me as vigorously as everyone I love and everyone I am in conflict with. The Advocate stands with me and everyone who has run out of patience with me.

What helps me discern is asking, "Does this voice want me to blame either myself or someone else, or does this voice want me to elevate their dignity?" I don't always like the answer. I don't always like what the Advocate's voice is asking me to do. But the voice of my Shepherd is the one I want to belong to and the one I'm learning to recognize.



PRAY FOR 20/20 VISION

Let this sink in for a moment.
In the presence of God, in defiance of Satan,
Jesus Christ rises to your defense.

**Do you trust your Advocate or your
Accuser?**

Tuesday, May 24, 2022
Vince Estrada

Today's reading from the Act of the Apostles touches on several powerful themes that continue to resonate in 21st century life: Inequities in the criminal justice system; the power of non-violence and love when faced with injustice; the intersectionality of forgiveness and restorative practices.

To place this account in context, Paul and Silas had just helped a young slave girl exorcise her demons. This angered her owner for she also lost the ability to predict future events, a source of great profit for her owner.

The owner rallied the leaders in the community to punish Paul and Silas. While the Roman leaders and prison staff were exercising their power with might and physical oppression, Paul and Silas countered this with the power of love and non-violence. In this account, we see all 6 principles of non-violence as outlined in Dr. Martin Luther King's memoir [Stride Toward Freedom](#).

1. One can resist evil without resorting to violence.
2. Nonviolence seeks to win the "friendship and understanding" of the opponent.
3. Evil itself, not the people committing evil acts, should be opposed.
4. Nonviolence practitioners must be willing to suffer without retaliation as suffering can be redemptive.
5. Nonviolent resistance avoids "external physical violence" and "internal violence of spirit" as well. (King, *Stride*, 85).
6. The nonviolent resister must have a "deep faith in the future," stemming from the conviction that "The universe is on the side of justice"

Paul and Silas sing praises to God for the privilege of being God's servants in the face of injustice.

This reading highlights the beauty of redemption, forgiveness, and



restorative practice. This is an escape story without an escape. After the earthquake, they saw an opportunity to be the voice and the hands of Christ. They save their jailer from the suicide that Roman honor expected with a failure of duty. Luke's emphasis was on the love that Paul and Silas demonstrated for the jailer by remaining in prison when they could have escaped. It was primarily this love that won the jailer over.



Wednesday, May 25, 2022
Christy Estrada

When visiting Athens, Paul discovered an altar inscribed "to an Unknown God." I'm struck by this idea of worshiping an unknown entity. Part of me sees this as an incredible leap of faith: believing and expecting that there is more than what is known at this time, and humility in recognizing it, and a desire not to miss it or fail to honor that unknown. It occurs to me that we are all on that journey of knowing our God. We expect, believe and desire to know more. And what are our relationships, our service, our work-- if not to know and experience God?

I am reminded of my Grandma, whose birthday was yesterday. She was born in 1904 and lived to be 100 years old. She is my earliest memory of love. My fondest memories of childhood were all in her presence. I recognize now that I felt completely and unconditionally loved by her, and as a result felt safe and cherished. Beautiful and worthy by just being. When I am searching for God, I think of my Grandma-- her hands: strong, warm, worn and nurturing. Our time together was timeless and quiet. From my child memory there was only us and whatever we were doing together.

I can think of nothing on earth closer to knowing God than these precious moments with my Grandma. I pray that we all can know God in these divine moments. There is holiness on earth that gives us a glimpse of God's love. They are but a shadow, but they are here.

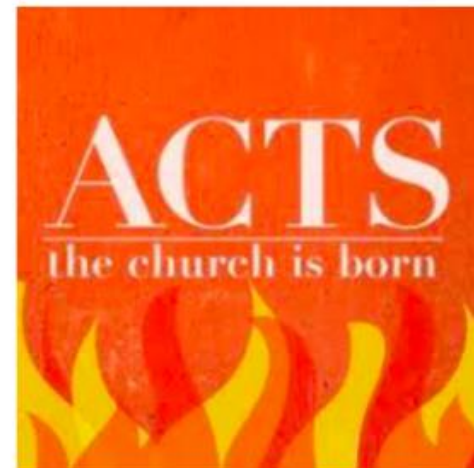
Thursday, May 26 2022
Peggy Stein

The first reading today tells of Paul's focused efforts to "preaching the word, testifying to the Jews that Christ was Jesus." He becomes angry when they "opposed and revile him," saying he will "go on to the Gentiles." I think about how I would have received Paul and the other disciples. I lean towards cynicism, and am also slow to change, so I'm thinking I would have been a Jew who resisted following Jesus and continued living my life as a devout Jew.

But what was it that drew thousands to convert? Something must have pulled them away from the comfort and complacency of the rituals and beliefs of their religion, the faith they grew up with, the faith their families used to determine the activities of their daily lives.

People did disrupt their lives, even risking their lives, to follow Jesus. Becoming a follower of Jesus meant a total disruption of one's life. Whether Jew or Gentile, becoming a Christian was a life changer. Becoming a Christian not only changed one's core beliefs, it probably also meant being ostracized by family and friends, possible persecution or even death.

As I have previously reflected on the courage of the disciples who preached the Word, I am also grateful for the people who received the Word and believed. With the coming of Pentecost, I pray my heart is receptive to the gifts of the Spirit, as were the hearts of the early Christians.





Friday, May 27, 2022
Valerie Cissell

Have you ever been told you need to watch how you speak, the words you use, or your tone of voice? I have my whole life. I tried and still try to modify my speech. The answer to this dilemma is given in this reading.

In Luke 12:11-12, Jesus says "When they bring you before the synagogue, the rulers, the authorities, do not worry about how or what your defense will be or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will

teach you in that moment what you should say."

Paul wasn't in the group when Jesus gave these instructions nor was he present when Jesus went to trial. Jesus knew Paul would be put on trial many times, so he gave Paul a vision: "Do not be afraid. Go on speaking, for I am with you. No one will attack and harm you ..."

Paul was brought to trial under Proconsul Gallio. The charges were given, but before Paul could say anything at all, Gallio refused to pass judgement! Not only did Paul not have to worry about what to say, he didn't need to say anything!

Jesus fulfilled his promise to Paul and to us. The Holy Spirit helps us to discern what to say, how to say it, and whether anything needs to be said. Let us pray to the Holy Spirit about these situations.

Saturday, May 28, 2022
James Skinner

Maybe because I did not grow up as a Catholic Christian, the church liturgical year calendar still fascinates me--there was no equivalent to this in my childhood. I love that Easter has a full season, culminating in Pentecost Sunday. The book of Acts, which is read during this season, has something for everyone and has an almost novelistic adventure plot. Many times recently I have thought about sitting down and reading it straight through, and no doubt that would be worthwhile.

In today's reading, Paul leaves Syria and heads to what is modern day central Turkey, and the story moves on without Paul for a moment! We learn about a gifted and fervent preacher, a Jew named Apollos from Alexandria, who comes to Ephesus to teach about Jesus, though he knows only "the baptism of John." We learn that what he does not know about "the Way of God" is more accurately explained to him by Priscilla and Aquila, friends of Paul. Apollos then goes on to be a fine preacher and to preach Christ Jesus back in Greece.

So we see things are not always about the great man of the church--in this story, Paul. There are other learned and effective preachers. And we see here a woman (Priscilla) doing good and privately supplying what is lacking in this particular preacher! We can see that many different things make up the spiritual and intellectual formation of a talented and energetic preacher such as Apollos.

