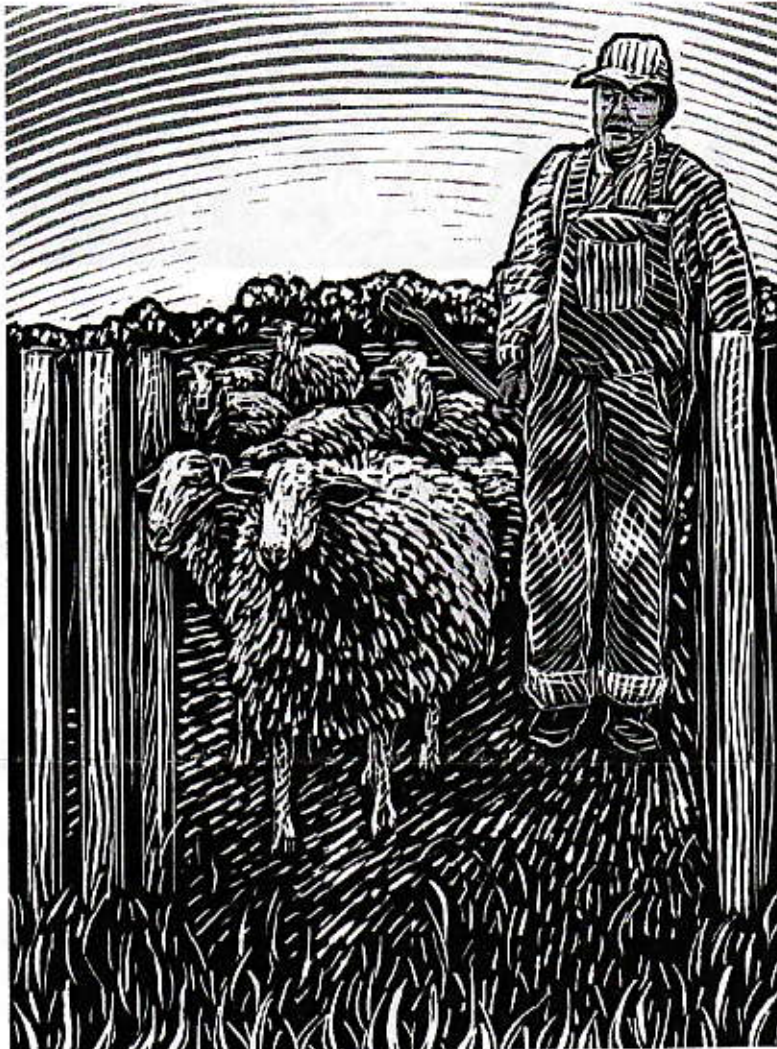


Fourth Sunday of Easter



Prayer for the Shepherd

Our Father,
you sent your Son to call us
from the desert of our wandering
to a place filled with abundant life.
He showed us your love
with his healing touch and words
of forgiveness.

He is with us now.
May we hear his voice
and know him when he calls.
May he calm our fears, for he
has promised
that no one will take us from you.
And in the end,
may he guide us safely through the gate
and into the home pasture,
where you live and reign forever and ever.
Amen.

April 25, 2010

Holding on to Easter Transformation

During Lent, most of us tried to be diligent about our Lenten discipline, whether it was prayer, or doing without something, or taking on more of something else. Often, by about the fourth week of Easter, the practice of Lent wears off and we return to our old way of doing things. We eat meat on Fridays, drink the soda we gave up, stop going to church as much, and otherwise relax. What if we took to heart the transformative effect of Lent and Easter and continued to practice our habits of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving? We might find ourselves talking to God more and watching TV less. We might not buy as many things, but give away much.

We might make less room for food or books, but have more room for patience, generosity, and love. What if we lived as though we were truly forgiven and given the grace to love everyone we meet? The Resurrection of Jesus tells us that we are forever changed and that we have the possibility of loving as Jesus did. But does this affect the way we act in the world? Jesus' self-giving love truly makes us children of God. How do we show that to the world? For the rest of the Easter season, reflect on the ways that your transformation empowers you to serve in the world. Think about doing one thing all year that will remind you of this wonderful grace.

This Week at Home



Monday, April 26

Spiritual Armor

During the Easter season we try to be especially conscious of Christ's presence all around us. The traditional Celtic prayer, the Breastplate of Saint Patrick, is probably from the eighth century and may capture an oral tradition associated with the fifth-century saint. It imagines Christ as spiritual armor protecting us on every side. Here are a few lines: "Christ be with me, Christ within me, / Christ behind me, Christ before me, / Christ beside me, Christ to win me, / Christ to comfort and restore me. / Christ beneath me, Christ above me, / Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, / Christ in hearts of all that love me, / Christ in mouth of friend and stranger."

Tuesday, April 27

Calling on the Trinity

The Breastplate of Saint Patrick ends, as it began, by calling on the Trinity: "I bind unto myself the Name, / the strong Name of the Trinity, / by invocation of the same, / the Three in One and One in Three. / Of Whom all nature hath creation, / eternal Father, Spirit, Word: / praise to the Lord of my salvation, / salvation is of Christ the Lord." For a full version of this translation, visit <http://elvis.rowan.edu/~kilroy/JEK/03/17.html> and scroll down slightly.

Wednesday, April 28

Saint Peter Chanel

Saint Peter Chanel (1803–1840) was an early member of the Society of Mary (Marist Fathers) from France. He wished to do missionary work, and he was sent to Fortuna Island (near Tahiti). There he preached the Gospel until the king, fearing that Christianity would weaken his authority, sent a warrior to pretend illness and kill Chanel. Through the intercession of Saint Peter Chanel, may missionaries have the courage and skill to preach the Gospel in the world.

Thursday, April 29

Memorial of Saint Catherine of Siena

Doctors of the Church are saints who display an exceptional spirituality and are particularly known for their theological insight. Their writing or preaching contributes to the Church's understanding of God and is deemed useful for Christians in every age. The last three doctors of the Church have been women: Saint Teresa of Avila; Saint Catherine of Siena, whom we honor today; and Saint Therese of Lisieux. Catherine is known particularly for writing *Dialogue of Divine Providence* and her counsel to Popes Gregory XI and Urban VI during the a time of division in the Church.

Friday, April 30

A Reason for Hope

Saint Peter would have told us that the Gospel today is a good illustration of the reason for our hope. Jesus' assurance to the disciples that there are many dwelling places in God's house and that he is preparing a place for them (and for all of us) gives us joy, even in adversity. Of course, many of us are like Thomas, who wants to know the exact route we take to heaven. Jesus' reply is both an inspiring metaphor and a firm instruction: He is the way, and if we follow him we cannot be lost.

Saturday, May 1

Saint Joseph the Worker

The memorial of Saint Joseph the Worker was introduced by Pope Pius XII in 1955. The Lectionary gives us this passage from Colossians for our contemplation today: "Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ" (3:23–24).



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 Keeping the Seasons

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