

# Fifth Sunday of Easter



## Psalm of Rejoicing

Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous.  
Praise befits the upright.

Praise the LORD with the lyre;  
make melody to him with the harp  
of ten strings.

Sing to him a new song;  
play skillfully on the strings, with loud  
shouts.

For the word of the LORD is upright,  
and all his work is done in faithfulness.  
He loves righteousness and justice;  
the earth is full of the steadfast love  
of the LORD.

Truly the eye of the LORD is on those  
who fear him,  
on those who hope in his steadfast love,  
to deliver their soul from death,  
and to keep them alive in famine. Amen.  
—Psalm 33:1–5, 18–19

## Sunday, May 22, 2011 A Roomy Home

Today's Readings: Acts 6:1–7; 1 Peter 2:4–9; John 14:1–12. In today's Gospel, Jesus leads his listeners from a visible, tangible reality to the spiritual world it represents. When he speaks of his Father's house, we may think of our own homes—places where we are most authentically ourselves. At home we drop the masks; there we laugh, cry, and love freely. Jesus seems to suggest that we will be in a safe and intimate place with God.

Jesus' promise that his father's house has many rooms reassures those who worry whether they'd fit into the celestial palaces often portrayed in art. Of course we are not meant to take this metaphor literally. That was the mistake

of so many of Jesus' conversation partners in the Gospel according to John. Apparently Jesus means to convey that the heavenly state is expansive, affording a far broader perspective than we know now. It's a feast for the imagination and a comfort to those whose loved ones have died to think of being "at home" with Jesus Christ.

Jesus' promise to the disciples recalls the marriage custom of his day. After a betrothal, a young man would leave to build a room onto his parents' dwelling for himself and his bride. Before he left, he would tell her, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am you may be too." Imagine Jesus speaking these wondrous words to us.



## This Week at Home

### Monday, May 23

#### Christian de Cherge and Companions

On this day in 1996, Algerian fundamentalist rebels announced that they had killed seven Trappist monks. Christian had been a French soldier in the Algerian war of independence when he was 21, and a Muslim friend had protected him from death with his own body. Christian had a conversion, and joined the Trappists. He became prior of a monastery near Algiers, and studied the Qur'an. His community offered a place where Muslims and Christians could pray together. Despite warnings to leave the country, the Trappists remained—not to convert others, but to keep a prayerful presence until their martyrdom. Today's Readings: Acts 14:5–18; John 14:21–26.

### Tuesday, May 24

#### Reassurance

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us not to be troubled or afraid. He guarantees us his peace, which is not as fickle as the world's gifts. Yet he himself was terrified in the Garden of Olives. He knows directly our human hearts. So he speaks with integrity when he promises, "I am going away, and I am coming to you." In the roller coaster of our experiences, Jesus stays with us. Today's Readings: Acts 14:19–28; John 14:27–31a.

### Wednesday, May 25

#### Saint Bede the Venerable

Saint Bede the Venerable (673–735), whose optional memorial may be celebrated today, was a monk, teacher, and writer, famous for his *History of the English Church and People*. There he tells the charming story of a king who assembled his advisors to discuss the new Christian faith. One counselor compared human life to the flight of a bird through the mead hall. Indoors, it enjoys light and warmth, but flies through the darkness before and afterward. Humans know nothing of the life before or after this one, he said, and any religion that helps to explain that other life should be welcomed. Such an attitude allowed Christianity to be taught and to spread. Today's Readings: Acts 15:1–6; John 15:1–8.

### Thursday, May 26

#### Memorial of Saint Philip Neri

He sounds like a saint you'd want to ask to dinner: joyful, personable, warm, playful. Saint Philip (1515–1595) loved practical jokes and crazy disguises. He conversed easily with people, and was a spiritual guide to many young men. Eventually, he led walking tours of the seven basilicas that included discussions about spiritual matters. His evenings of conversation and prayer led to a group called the Oratorians, later a congregation approved by the Vatican. Thanks be to God for Saint Philip's life! Today's Readings: Acts 15:7–21; John 15:9–11.

### Friday, May 27

#### Saint Augustine of Canterbury

Saint Augustine (d. 604), whose optional memorial may be celebrated today, was sent by Saint Gregory the Great from his monastery in Rome to preach the Gospel in England. He carried with him books of scripture and an image of Christ. Startled by the fair complexions and blonde hair of the tribe living in England (the Angles), he made a famous pun in Latin: "Angles—or angels?" Today's Readings: Acts 15:22–31; John 15:12–17.

### Saturday, May 28

#### Praising God for Spring

After a long winter, it's a blessing to see green trees and flowers, God's creation at one of its loveliest times. Walk outside in a park or backyard; follow a trail around a lake or along a river. Reflect on spring themes in Ecclesiastes 3:1: "For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven" or the Song of Solomon 2:10b–11: "'Arise my love, my fair one, / and come away; / for now the winter is past, / the rain is over and gone. / The flowers appear on the earth; / the time of singing has come.'" Today's Readings: Acts 16:1–10; John 15:18–21.



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 Keeping the Seasons  
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