

DAILY REFLECTIONS (WEEK OF 05/08/11 - 05/14/11)

SUNDAY, MAY 8, 2011: It is printed in the bulletin.

MONDAY, MAY 9

EASTER WEEKDAY

For everything there is a season

In order to bring something new into the world something about the old has to change. Prospective parents give up a lot of freedom when they invite a child into their family. To move to a new place you have to surrender the old one. When Jesus inaugurated “the way, the truth, and the life” in his ministry, it threatened business-as-usual for the contented synagogue-goers around him. They feared the destruction of the old practices and didn’t cheerfully anticipate the arrival of the new. Change is always intimidating. Pray for the grace to make room for the new.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Acts 6:8-15; John 6:22-29 (273)*

“This Jesus the Nazorean will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us.”

TUESDAY, MAY 10

FEAST OF DAMIEN JOSEPH DE VEUSTER OF MOLOKA’I, PRIEST

Have a wide-eyed view

Just as Mother Teresa had her critics, so also Father Damien was maligned after his death. It was novelist Robert Louis Stevenson, however, who visited the island leper colony where Damien ministered in 1889 and set the record straight. When a Honolulu pastor publicly called Damien a “coarse, dirty man” whose leprosy should be attributed to his “carelessness,” Stevenson rebutted: “You are one of those who have an eye for faults and failures; that you take a pleasure to find and publish them; and that, having found them, you make haste to forget the virtues and the real success which had alone introduced them to your knowledge. It is a dangerous frame of mind.” Not all are called to Damien’s heroism, but every Christian must reject a narrow-mindedness that sees only the faults and failures of others.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Acts 7:51-8:1a; John 6:30-35 (274)*

“Lord, do not hold this sin against them”

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11

EASTER WEEKDAY

Hang out the welcome mat

Christians who define their faith in limiting terms—“who’s out and who’s in,” for example—appear to have missed the memo from Christ that all are welcome at his table. Too often throughout history, and today as well, a desire for “religious purity” ends up hurting a lot of people who don’t fit the mold. Avoid exclusionary ideology; remember that everyone else doesn’t have to be wrong for you to be right with God. Christ is bigger than that, and we can be, too.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Acts 8:1b-8; John 6:35-40 (275)*

“I will not reject anyone who comes to me.”

THURSDAY, MAY 12

EASTER WEEKDAY

What do you say to that?

Catechesis is one of the essential ministries of the church. We do it formally, for example, in religious education classes and the Rite of Christian Initiation and informally through daily interactions with others—our children, neighbors, and coworkers. It can, however, be discouraging work. Fortunately Saint Augustine offers some advice, especially for those times when we are feeling ineffective. First, we are not as terrible as we think we are; second, we must persist; and third, we must do the best we can and *let God speak through us*—because in truth God is doing the teaching. We are merely God’s instrument. What would your day be like if you thought God was speaking through you? What would you say? What *wouldn’t* you say?

TODAY’S READINGS: *Acts 8:26-40; John 6:44-51 (276)*

“They shall all be taught by God.”

FRIDAY, MAY 13

EASTER WEEKDAY

Breathe life, not death, into your words

The power of speech is not to be underestimated. It can bring life, and it can bring death. For God, “breathing” words results in life: water, animals, human beings, mercy, and compassion! Mary followed in God’s footsteps with a single word on her part that resulted in her bearing the Christ child in the world. On the other hand some of our words can be death-dealing. Saul, a persecutor of Jesus’ followers before his conversion, “breathed murderous threats” that resulted in much fear, injury, and death. How will you use your power of speech to nurture life?

TODAY’S READINGS: *Acts 9:1-20; John 6:52-59 (277)*

“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

SATURDAY, MAY 14

FEAST OF MATTHIAS, APOSTLE

Some are called . . . later

Matthias was chosen by the remaining 11 apostles to replace Judas following the latter’s betrayal of Jesus. Perhaps he could be thought of as the patron saint of later vocations. All are called by Jesus to bear fruit, and there are many ways to do so. But some fruit just takes a little longer than another to ripen. Those who come to consecrated religious life later rather than earlier bring with them a wealth of life experience. Older vocations are a blessing for the church and the people of God. Consider your own options and keep all those thinking about religious life in your prayers.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Acts 1:15-17, 20-26; John 15:9-17 (564)*

“It was . . . I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit”