



Bringing Home the Word

Fifth Sunday of Easter (C)

May 19, 2019

Sharing God's Word Everywhere

By *Mary Katharine Deeley*

I was fortunate to do my hospital chaplaincy rotation with a young seminarian who was ordained about three years after our summer experience. Tom and I became good friends. He came to my wedding and I went to his ordination. My children forever referred to him as Young Fr. Tom. He has been a blessing to me and my family.

When he was ordained, I tried my hand at writing a song as a gift for him. He was so eager and willing to preach the Gospel wherever he was sent that I wanted to mark that in some way. One

lyric I wrote went like this: "Finding our homes where we can share your word, only to leave again when it's been heard...to be your people." Fr. Tom serves in Africa now, training other seminarians, and I often think of him and of that song because I have come to realize that we're all called to share God's word whether we're in a comfortable place or a strange one. Perhaps part of our challenge is to leave the areas where we're comfortable and welcomed for those where the path is rougher and less clear, but the need for the good news is all the greater.

Today our models are Paul and his companions, who travel from place to place to preach the gospel and move on when they have done what they can. They follow Jesus' command to love and find the glory of the Lord in that work and in whom they serve. If we are to be God's people, we also must spread the hope of God's love to all we meet, even if we have to travel far to do so. +

Sunday Readings

Acts 14:21-27

They...reported what God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Revelation 21:1-5a

The one who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

John 13:31-33a, 34-35

[Jesus said,] "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."

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A Word from Pope Francis

We must not forget that we celebrate the Eucharist in order to become eucharistic men and women. What does this mean? It means allowing Christ to act within our deeds: that his thoughts may be our thoughts, his feelings our own, his choices our choices too....Doing as Christ did is Christian holiness.

—General audience, April 4, 2018



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do I have the courage to share God's word, not just in the comfort of familiar surroundings, but with strangers?
- No matter where I go, do my actions reflect Christ's example?

Finding Your Own Way to Pray

By Jim and Susan Vogt

Susan isn't comfortable raising her arms in praise. Jim found the Forty Hours devotion less than satisfying. As children, we both learned the rosary but seldom say it now. None of these prayer styles is wrong; it's just that prayer is such a personal experience. What inspires one person bores another. What seems old-fashioned to one connects another with her religious heritage.

Prayer, be it memorized or spontaneous, individual or communal, filled with incense or fragrant pine needles in a forest, is communication with God. On some level it flows from a human yearning that reaches beyond any particular religion. Most people eventually seek answers to life's persistent questions: Is there anything more than what meets the eye? Is there really an afterlife? We may not be aware of these yearnings, but eventually a crisis occurs, a life-changing decision is before us, or we simply marvel at the miracle of a newborn child—and we pray.

But how? And are we holier if we pray more? Conventional wisdom answers the latter question. Yes, prayer puts us in a more conscious relationship with God. This relationship of thankfulness, dependence, trust, and honor makes us better people—more aware of our inner selves and more attentive to others. It's the how that stymies many of us.



Prayer generally falls into the broad categories of verbal or nonverbal, individual or communal, memorized or spontaneous, contemplative or active. Seekers might experiment with many of the following prayer forms, allowing trial and error to lead them into a deeper conversation with God:

- **Familiar prayers:** Revisit the Our Father, Hail Mary, mealtime grace, or the rosary.
- **Weekday Mass**
- **Spiritual reading:** Our favorites include Fr. Ron Rolheiser, Fr. Richard Rohr, and Kathleen Norris.
- **Liturgy of the Hours:** This originated as the way monks set aside seven times daily to “pray without ceasing.”
- **Short spontaneous prayers:** These may range from “Praise God!” to “Lord, give me wisdom to make a good decision.”
- **Meditation:** Try centering prayer, reflecting on one's day, an examination of conscience, or using a prayer prompt like a picture, statue, or guided meditation.
- **Eucharistic adoration:** Many use this to keep reverent company with the Lord.
- **Communal prayer:** Join others for penance, healing services, or group prayer with friends before a meeting or activity.

- **Nature or everyday circumstances as reminders of God's presence:** Take a reflective walk in the woods, pray at stoplights or while waiting in line—instead of being impatient.
- **Prayers of the heart during crisis or joy:** Check out the psalms to find words to express your sorrow, gratitude, awe, or anger.
- **Prayer with children:** Children can lead us back to prayer if we feel awkward about starting. Other times they pull prayer out of us as we desperately try to understand them.

Remember, prayer is essentially conversation with God. Books and organized prayer can help, but if you have a relationship with someone, you want to spend time together. If you can talk, you can pray. Remember, talking isn't even required; just being in each other's presence counts.

But prayer isn't all there is to spirituality. Becoming a more spiritual person includes having an attitude of gratefulness, looking for the good in others, living out the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and doing the dishes or changing diapers as acts of service towards loved ones. Donating money so that others' lives may be better, putting up with annoyances, enduring an illness, sacrificing our wants for the needs of another—all of these make our hearts bigger and deepen our spirituality.

Consider this: If you're too busy to pray, you're too busy. +

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 20-25

Monday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 14:5–18 / Jn 14:21–26

Tuesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 14:19–28 / Jn 14:27–31a

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 15:1–6 / Jn 15:1–8

Thursday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 15:7–21 / Jn 15:9–11

Friday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 15:22–31 / Jn 15:12–17

Saturday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 16:1–10 / Jn 15:18–21