

HOMILY FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
27 APRIL 2025

Fr. Jim Fredericks

Part One: the readings for the day
Part Two: reflections on the readings
Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY
Lectionary: 45

Reading I Acts 5:12-16

Many signs and wonders were done among the people
at the hands of the apostles.
They were all together in Solomon's portico.
None of the others dared to join them, but the people
esteemed them.
Yet more than ever, believers in the Lord,
great numbers of men and women, were added to them.
Thus they even carried the sick out into the streets
and laid them on cots and mats
so that when Peter came by,
at least his shadow might fall on one or another of them.
A large number of people from the towns
in the vicinity of Jerusalem also gathered,
bringing the sick and those disturbed by unclean spirits,
and they were all cured.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

R (Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is
everlasting.

Let the house of Israel say,
"His mercy endures forever."

Let the house of Aaron say,
"His mercy endures forever."

Let those who fear the LORD say,
"His mercy endures forever."

R Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is
everlasting.

I was hard pressed and was falling,
but the LORD helped me.

My strength and my courage is the LORD,
and he has been my savior.
The joyful shout of victory
in the tents of the just:
R Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is
everlasting.

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
By the LORD has this been done;
it is wonderful in our eyes.
This is the day the LORD has made;
let us be glad and rejoice in it.
R Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is
everlasting.

Reading II Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19

I, John, your brother, who share with you
the distress, the kingdom,
and the endurance we have in Jesus,
found myself on the island called Patmos
because I proclaimed God's word
and gave testimony to Jesus.
I was caught up in spirit on the Lord's day
and heard behind me a voice as loud as a trumpet,
which said, "Write on a scroll what you see."
Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me,
and when I turned, I saw seven gold lampstands
and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man,
wearing an ankle-length robe,
with a gold sash around his chest.

When I caught sight of him,
I fell down at his feet as though dead.
He touched me with his right hand and said,
"Do not be afraid.
I am the first and the last, the one who lives.
Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever.
I hold the keys to death and the netherworld.
Write down, therefore, what you have seen,
and what is happening, and what will happen afterwards."

Alleluia John 20:29

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me,
says the Lord;
blessed are those who have not seen me, but still believe!
R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel John 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood in their midst
and said to them, "Peace be with you."
When he had said this,
he showed them his hands and his side.
The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me, so I send you."
And when he had said this, he breathed on them
and said to them,
"Receive the Holy Spirit.
Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,
and whose sins you retain are retained."

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve,
was not with them when Jesus came.
So the other disciples said to him,
"We have seen the Lord."
But he said to them,
"Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands
and put my finger into the nailmarks
and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Now a week later his disciples were again inside
and Thomas was with them.
Jesus came, although the doors were locked,
and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."
Then he said to Thomas,
"Put your finger here and see my hands,
and bring your hand and put it into my side,
and do not be unbelieving, but believe."
Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!"
Jesus said to him,

"Have you come to believe because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Now Jesus did many other signs
in the presence of his disciples
that are not written in this book.
But these are written that you may come to believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

PART TWO: REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
Our pope has died.

Good Pope Francis has gone before us, marked with the
sign of faith. Eighty-eight years ago, he was baptized into
the death of the Savior. Now, after many years of faithful
service, let us pray with the confidence of the Gospel, that
this good and holy man will share in Christ's resurrection.

As you know, many things are being said about Pope
Francis. Not all that is being said is insightful. In fact, some
of what is being said is quite silly. Next Sunday, after the
9:30 mass at Saint Leo's, I will give an appreciation of
Francis' pontificate. Maybe what I will say will be silly too.
Please come, so you can judge for yourself.

For now, I will let Good Pope Francis speak for himself. At
the Urbi et Orbi blessing on the evening of Easter Sunday,
Francis appeared at the central balcony of the basilica and
looked over the piazza to bless us and share the Good
News of Christ's Resurrection.

This is what he said:

Love has triumphed over hatred, light over darkness
and truth over falsehood. Forgiveness has
triumphed over revenge. Evil has not disappeared
from history; it will remain until the end, but it no
longer has the upper hand; it no longer has power
over those who accept the grace of this day.

Reflect on these words. They reveal a lot about the Mystery
of the Resurrection. They reveal a good deal about the

faith of Pope Francis as well. After sharing his faith with us from the balcony, Jorge Mario Bergolio returned to his room and died a few hours later.

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Nuestro Papa ha fallecido.

El buen Papa Francisco nos ha precedido, marcado por el signo de la fe. Hace ochenta y ocho años, fue bautizado en la muerte del Salvador. Ahora, tras muchos años de servicio y cariño, oremos con la confianza del Evangelio para que este hombre bueno y santo participe de la resurrección de Cristo.

Como Uds saben, se dicen muchas cosas sobre el Papa Francisco. No todo es perspicaz. De hecho, algunas son bastante absurdas. El próximo domingo, después de la misa de las 9:30 en San Leo, haré una apreciación del pontificado de Francisco. Quizás lo que diga también sea absurdo. Por favor, vengan, para que puedan juzgar por sí mismos.

Hoy día, dejaré que el buen Papa Francisco hable por sí mismo. En la bendición Urbi et Orbi de la tarde del Domingo de Pascua, Francisco apareció en el balcón central de la basílica y miró hacia la plaza para bendecirnos y compartir la Buena Nueva de la Resurrección de Cristo.

Esto es lo que dijo:

El amor ha triunfado sobre el odio, la luz sobre las tinieblas y la verdad sobre la mentira. El perdón ha triunfado sobre la venganza. El mal no ha desaparecido de la historia; permanecerá hasta el final, pero ya no tiene la última palabra; ya no tiene poder sobre quienes aceptan la gracia de este día.

Reflexionen sobre estas palabras. Revelan mucho sobre el Misterio de la Resurrección. También revelan mucho sobre la fe del Papa Francisco. Tras compartir su fe con nosotros desde el balcón, Jorge Mario Bergolio regresó a su habitación y falleció pocas horas después.

PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as "a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys"). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually "reading" the Bible. Rather, we are "listening" to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the homily on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?