Living Faith
Daily Catholic Devotions
Holy Week 2020
Awakening

Morning after morning
he opens my ear that I may hear. Isaiah 50:4

As we stand at the beginning of this week we call holy, we pray for ears that are awakened, ears that hear as disciples do. And how do disciples hear? Attentively, noticing the sometimes subtle ways in which the Holy One is at work in our lives and in our world. As we listen today to the account of the Agony in the Garden, we see Jesus’ companions seemingly lacking these awakened ears, missing his plea for the comfort of their presence in his hour of anguish. Perhaps at times, we may recognize this spiritual deafness in our own lives. Today, let us pray for deep listening as we accompany Jesus in his Passion through Holy Week and beyond.

Sr. Chris Koellhoffer, I.H.M.
Patience and New Life

Wait for the **Lord** with courage
be stouthearted, and wait for the **Lord**. Psalm 27:14

Life presents us with endless opportunities to practice waiting. How we wait for small inconveniences like a stoplight to change or our turn in the checkout line reveals something about ourselves. When I am able to go through the day with a sense of trust, I stop trying to control the things I cannot change. The circumstances don’t change, but my attitude does, and that makes all the difference.

Of course, in this Holy Week, the passion of Jesus vividly reminds us that waiting sometimes stretches us to the limits of our faith, hope and love. Whether it is a trying personal situation or angst over the state of the world, we often come up against situations over which we have no power. In those moments, the image of Jesus on the cross is a powerful reminder that no matter how bleak things may appear, new life can come out of what looks like a hopeless situation.

Terri Mifek

Isaiah 42:1-7 • Psalm 27:1-3, 13-14
John 12:1-11
Love, Despite the Failings

So Simon Peter nodded to him to find out whom he meant. John 13:24

The gospels remind us again and again that Jesus was surrounded by flesh-and-blood humans with all of their foibles and failings. In other words, people just like us. Jesus announces that he will be betrayed, but, once again, the apostles seem clueless. So Peter, like the big brother of the group, prompts the disciple “whom Jesus loved” to find out what he meant. Even then, the disciples don’t understand.

As if to underscore the point, Jesus informs Peter that, far from laying down his life for the master, Peter will soon deny him. How fortunate we are that Jesus did not summon the most successful and the brightest. We are fortunate because our God is a God of forgiveness and mercy. Salvation is not for the already perfect. Instead, we are all like Peter, trying to understand, professing our love and faithfulness even when we fall into sin again and again.

Lord, may I, like Peter, never stop loving you, no matter my failings.

Greg Erlandson

Isaiah 49:1-6 • Psalm 71:1-6, 15, 17
John 13:21-33, 36-38
What a raw day it was—not my idea of springtime. Driving in traffic only added to my gray mood. As I edged up to an intersection, the light turned red. I noticed a school across the street. On its lawn was a sign as big as a billboard. In huge lowercase letters were the words, “you are beautiful.” I felt my face flush. Was that message meant for me? It couldn’t be…could it?

A few weeks later, I noticed you are beautiful stenciled under a viaduct. Little stickers of you are beautiful started popping up in unlikely places—elevators, telephone poles and even dumpsters. And so it continues. Each time I discover one, I want to high-five the heavens. God does speak in such surprising ways. This message captivates me because you are beautiful—we all are!

Gail Goleas

Gail Goleas is a pastoral associate in the Archdiocese of Chicago and serves as a field delegate for its marriage tribunal. She is a federal prison volunteer for Prisoner Visitation & Support, a national organization.
Gift, Grace and Blessing

I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. John 13:15

Today is the glorious feast of Holy Thursday. It is a day of Eucharist, of gratitude for all ministries and of foot washing. Most of us will hear a homily on following Jesus’ model of self-giving, which is never easy, especially when we offer a service devoid of judgment and negative evaluations.

But we can’t simply stop at foot washing. Jesus gave us other models as well. Hearing of his friend Lazarus’ death, Jesus wept compassionately. He blessed children when he was tired, loved his enemies, turned the other cheek and witnessed to forgiveness in everyday life. He asked us to do the same.

May we, on this first of the holy days, examine our lives from the standpoint of Jesus’ challenges to us, humbly asking us to become a living Eucharist so as to be like him, making of our lives a gift, grace and blessing.

Sr. Bridget Haase, O.S.U.
Why Is This Day Called “Good”?  

Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth. Isaiah 53:7

Why do we call this day Good? After all, this was the day Jesus was brutally tortured and executed as a criminal. Despite this reality, Christians have called this day Good Friday for centuries. There are several theories. Some believe Good Friday was originally called God’s Friday, which simply meant it was a very sacred day. Others maintain that it is called Good because Jesus’ terrible death led to the resurrection and the salvation of the world. What is “more good” than that? One Scripture professor said, “When we look at Jesus hanging on the cross, we should say not only, ‘Look how much he suffered,’ but, more importantly, ‘Look how much he loved.’”

Good Friday, then, is good because it attests to Jesus’ incredible sacrificial love. The question for each of us today is this: How can I make this day—and every day—good by my Christ-like love for others?

Jesus, help me to love as you love.

Sr. Melannie Svoboda, S.N.D.
Right Next to Us

Then the angel said to the women in reply, “Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified.”
Matthew 28:5

The followers of Jesus certainly were afraid following his crucifixion. They had lost their friend and leader. They feared for their own lives and wondered what could possibly be coming next. And, yet, still they sought him, for he had promised something that sounded impossible—his own resurrection from the dead and eternal life for them and a new generation of believers.

We are not much different today. We live in fear of unknown, imagined and very real evil. We fear the negative influences in our lives, forgetting all the time that we have the risen Christ as a living antidote to this fear. He is “hiding in plain sight,” standing nearby and always waiting for us to seek him out and find him, to turn our heads and discover him right next to us, bringing peace.

Jesus, be the ever-present bearer of love and courage in my life.

Steve Givens
Goodness Triumphs!

...he saw and believed. John 20:8

When I call my mother, I typically start the conversation with, “What are you doing, Mom?” She often responds in a droll tone, “Watching the bad news on TV.”

Indeed, we are daily saturated with news of wars, riots, famines and natural disasters, not to mention dire predictions about the environment and the rising number of terrorist attacks. Death, destruction and evil seem to have the upper hand.

But because of today, Easter Sunday, we know otherwise. Jesus is risen. He has smashed the forces of evil and Satan forever. Suffering, evil and death will not have the last word, either in our world or in our own lives.

Whatever suffering or trial may be afflicting you, know that it is not the final word. Jesus is risen! This is the real news, and it is Good News!

Msgr. Stephen J. Rossetti

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