



PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

Facilitated by Racine Dominican Preaching Committee

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We Live, at the Same Time, in Two Realms...

Carla Mae Streeter, OP

We are living in the glow of the fifty days; yes – fifty to top the forty days of lent. We live in the fifty days of wild joy. The words of the Easter Entrance Song still ring in our ears: “I am risen and still with you.” The One our hearts seek was not kidding. He will suffer, and then after three days, he will rise. Yes, and so will we.

Why is it that in the midst of the wild joy of the fifty days of Easter, we wake up with the same pandemic limiting us, the same bills, the same laundry to be done? We are Christians, and as such we are pilgrims. We walk between the now and the “not yet.” We live simultaneously in the struggles and ordinariness of time/space, and in the promises of the gospel. Sometimes we wonder what is really “real.” The answer to that, is a simple “yes,” for they both are “real.”

That is why the daily immersion in the Word is so important. It helps us “walk on water.” We don’t want to sink into the pandemic, the bills, and the laundry that we drown. Nor do we want to have our heads so in the clouds that we neglect the pandemic, the bills, and the laundry. We need to navigate both realms. The early Christians were wrestling with this very challenge. How do we tend to our daily life in the light of the resurrection? How do we balance the both/and? The gift of his Spirit will teach us how. Our present Focus Statement calls us to develop a strong sense of presence...being “all there.”

*Lord, are you “real?”
In your risen life you show us how we shall be.
No ghostly bloodless soul,
but flesh and blood even in your new life...even the wounds.
You show us...you are a living Word.
Send me that Breath that unites what we tend to break asunder.
Keep me whole, for in your risen glory ...
you carry your whole story...
joys and tears, friends and fears,
and so shall it be with me –
nothing lost – really me.*

Special thanks to S. Joann Blomme for these reflections.

Fourth Sunday of Easter (John 10:1-10)

When in your lifetime has our world been more in need of a Shepherd than now? One who calls His sheep by name, leads them out, walks ahead where the sheep will follow because they recognize His voice. Recently I watched a modern “shepherd saga” happen across the lake front grass as five wild, bold turkeys strutted in perfect time headed for the ravine, all but baby #3! Curious, slow, content to lag behind till an alert Mama hung back to literally gather this baby under Mama’s wing, pick her up and hustle to catch up to the family! At that point, Baby #3 was simply dropped to the ground and she took her place in line! But three more times Mama’s wing had to give refuge to the baby, till all were safely reaching their destination. “And the sheep follow Him as the shepherd calls his own by name and leads them on...” In these days, weeks and months of covid19, where have you heard your name, urging you to go beyond your comfort zone, to reach out to others? Where has the Shepherd walked ahead of you because you deeply believe you heard God’s voice?

Fifth Sunday of Easter (1 Peter 2:4-9)

“Come to Him, a living stone, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house.” (Peter 2:4-5.) Let myself be built?? All I have is TODAY, just this very day, offering me building blocks leading to ...”the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” Will I recognize these blocks? We’ve heard, “It’s all in the eye of the beholder!” Come with me and a young mother of six to view a badly needed house she has her eye on. Driving field after field, Cathy finally yelled out, “Pull in here! Pull in here!” But all I saw was a small, cinderblock structure surrounded by weeds, a door blowing in the breeze and hanging by one hinge. Inside – animal droppings, broken glass and crushed bricks. “Oh, Ms. Joann! I love it! My living room here, the kids’ room there, and I can hang sheets for curtains.” Yes, it’s in “the eye of the beholder!” And my eyes were too tear-filled to recognize any of that. Do *my* living stones have to be “just so” before I recognize them?

Cathy, you taught me how blessed I am: running water, lights, health care and a place fit for humans. Help me, Loving God, to “be” a living stone for someone in need this day.

Sixth Sunday of Easter (Acts 8:5-8, 14-17)

Jesus clues His Apostles that he will be leaving them and the Spirit will come. Tough messages for friends to hear! It’s time the apostles’ “student teaching” days are over. Now go here; go there; tell the whole world what you know about Jesus. Remember: The spirit stays with you always.

Have you ever known a single telephone call to really draw you “into the world” of another? One day this is what I heard. “I know you want to say good bye to us! So come to the gas station. The bus is coming.”

I went! There stood Mom with four very young children. Everything they owned in four bulging cartons taped, tied and addressed to Chicago. “More places to get a job. I gotta go. But we’ll come back. Don’t forget us, Ok?” With warm hugs they were off. Forget you? Never! I watched the bus till it disappeared, tears rolling, prayer in my heart: “Go, Letia, I believe the Spirit will go with you.”

Seventh Sunday – Ascension (Matthew 28:16-20)

Were you there on the Mount when Jesus ascended? Up till the moment He was raised up, did you get all the instructions He left? – wait for God’s promise – ready yourself for the Holy Spirit – go invite more disciples – above all, remember I am with you always!

Wait Jesus, don’t go yet; just a minute! When did you say you’d be back? Will we recognize you?

Life as the disciples knew it was gone, but Good News remained: I am with you always. Something new would follow. Is there an “Ascension 2020” promise? What will it look like amidst our fear, illness, death, separated families, exhausted healthcare workers, body bags? A Promise? “Jesus has gone ahead of you.” Go....find this ascended Lord walking, working, weeping, singing, dancing, and loving right here today. Just give God space!

“It is a serious thing/just to be alive/on this fresh morning/in this broken world. – Mary Oliver

Pentecost Sunday (John 20: 19-23)

We watched the ice build on every possible tree limb. We heard thunderous cracks as huge branches tore away from the trunk. We watched 80 year-old giant pecan trees split in two, landing with vibrating thuds. Is this how the Spirit came? “Peace be with you! Peace be with you!”

In quiet, in noise, in frustration and pain, in fear and kindness, “Peace be with you!” We will find it when we can listen for this peace in our lives.

Together let us speak this blessing “Peace be with you”

To those who couldn’t have a last goodbye during this covid 19, and who ache with lingering sadness;

To every nurse, doctor, assistant, service personnel and volunteer,

To parents home with children 24/7 and are on their very last nerve,

To the homeless continually exposed to possible contamination where unspoken fear lives within,

To our world, may the Holy Spirit come to renew the face of the earth.