

Sunday, May 18, 2025

Give a sign of love

How do people know you're Catholic? Is it because of your jewelry, the crosses that dangle from your ears, or the really nice crucifix on the gold chain around your neck? Perhaps it's the bumper sticker or the rosary swinging from your rearview mirror. Maybe the T-shirt or sweatshirt you're wearing marks you as a believer, or the fact that you go to church every Sunday. Jesus says there's only one thing that can truly identify you as a disciple, and that's the love you show to others. Now can anyone tell you're Catholic?

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 14:21-27; Revelation 21:1-5a; John 13:31-33a, 34-35 (54).

"This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Monday, May 19, 2025

God's GPS

"Why do we need sex education?" a student asked his religion teacher. "We already know all the answers are no!"

Commandments, moral and ethical codes, rules and regulations get a bad rap. They're seen as punitive and stifling, when in fact the best commandments—the ones our faith tradition tells us God gave us—were meant to bring us joy. God so loved us that he gave us free will and then offered us guidelines—the Commandments—on how to make life-giving choices. There is no coercion. We're free to follow any path. The Commandments simply help you know which road leads to love.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 14:5-18; John 14:21-26 (285). *"Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me."*

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Don't give up

We all have bad hair days, blue Mondays, and getting-out-on-the-wrong-side-of-bed days. But other days go badly after they begin. Perhaps none are so bad as the day Saint Paul faced a shower of rocks from an angry mob and was left for dead. After his friends found him, he got up and reentered the city. It's not recorded that a miracle took place, healing him and taking the pain away. Chances are Paul stood up, bruised and bloody and sore as heck—and went back to work. This sort of perseverance involves a single-hearted dedication to the love of Christ. Ask for it!

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 14:19-28; John 14:27-31a (286). *"They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead."*

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Trim your branches

Jesus' image of the vine and the branches speaks to the intimate and enduring relationship between him as his followers. Just as the vine nourishes and supports the branches, Jesus sustains his followers. The branches, in turn, bear fruit, just as Christian disciples spread the Good News of God's love. Even in times of pruning and dormancy, branches remain connected to the vine, preparing for their next full flowering. Like a gnarled and ancient

grapevine along a Mediterranean coast, allow yourself to be spiritually pruned through prayer and good works so that you can continue to thrive in your Christian call to holiness.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 15:1-6; John 15:1-8 (287). *"I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing."*

Thursday, May 22, 2025

The secret to happiness

What comes to mind when you think of love? Maybe it's the deep connection you have with a loved one. Jesus talked about love in this way: The close relationship he had to the Father was the one he had with his disciples. He also gave us an example of a love that respects others, is patient, and is willing to make sacrifices for the good of others. Love, then, is about both contemplation and action: entering the bond you have with Jesus and the Father and also responding to it. Christ said another thing about love: It makes you happy. There's a unique joy in loving others. Find it today.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 15:7-21; John 15:9-11 (288). *"I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete."*

Friday, May 23, 2025

What image comes to mind?

The New Testament is filled with images of Jesus—from a good shepherd to a mother hen, from a royal king to a dear friend. Writers, theologians, mystics, and artists also have given us many images that can help us deepen our own experience of God and stretch us in new ways. While some images may surprise us, like Saint Gerard Majella urging us to recognize Christ in the "poor sick person," they can also spark a new way of thinking about how God is present in our everyday life. At different times one image might speak to us more than another: Jesus as the bread of life, the living water, or as Saint Bonaventure describes him, "both the way and the door." Think about which image of Jesus you most relate to today and what it calls you to do.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 15:22-31; John 15:12-17 (289). *"I have called you friends."*

Saturday, May 24, 2025

To know God is to love

The Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate* ("In our time") declares quite firmly that we cannot truly call on God if we refuse to treat in a "brotherly way" any human being. Our relation to God and his relation to all people is so linked together that, as scripture says: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8). The document goes on to say that "the Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against [people] or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion." Well, that directive couldn't be much clearer: We really must love our neighbor, no exceptions.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 16:1-10; John 15:18-21 (290). *"We sought passage to Macedonia at once, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the Good News to them."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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