

The Word of God This Week

Set time aside each day this week with other members of your household, with other members of your parish or alone to listen to and reflect on the living Word of God. Use these passages from the Lectionary that are assigned for Liturgy this week. Reflect on how the Lord is inviting you to a deeper union with him.

TODAY

Acts 10:25–26, 34–35, 44–48

1 John 4:7–10

John 15:9–17

MONDAY*

John 15:9–17

"Abide in my love."

TUESDAY

John 16:5–11

"But now I am going to him who sent me."

WEDNESDAY

John 16:12–15

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you..."

THURSDAY

Mark 16:15–20

"Get behind me, Satan!"

FRIDAY

John 16:20–23a

"...you have pain now; but I will see you again..."

SATURDAY

John 16:23b–28

"...if you ask anything of the Father ... he will give it to you."

*Feast of Saint Matthias

**Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord (observed in some dioceses)

Abiding in Christ's Love

A motorist with very poor eyesight was driving in a dense fog. Unable to see more than a few feet ahead, he began to rely on and closely follow the taillights of the car in front of him. When that car suddenly came to a stop, the second car collided with the first.

The driver of the first car walked back and asked, "What were you doing?" The man in the second car shot back, "Why did you stop so suddenly without warning?" "I had to," said the first driver, "I just pulled into my garage."

It is not wise to depend on and trust someone whom we only know superficially, if at all. Unaware of a person's true intention and direction, if we blindly follow, we will often be unhappy with where we end up.



This is not how we follow Jesus. Through our Baptism, Christ shares with us his very life. In today's Gospel, he says that we are to abide in his love. Jesus lives within

us and guides us internally through the promptings of his Spirit.

The presence of Christ within us allows us to discern right direction in our lives. To recognize God's will, we do not have to hesitantly follow Christ as a motorist might follow another car's taillights. Our connection to Christ is deep enough and real enough to give us the freedom to live and trust. That freedom is important, because life can take sudden turns and force us to face unexpected issues. In the midst of such challenges, Jesus does not simply give us external commands. He gives us himself.



The Faith of the Church

The bishops of the Second Vatican Council assured us that Christ lives in our hearts through the energy of his Spirit. He animates, purifies, and strengthens the noble longings within us by which all people strive to make our world more human and render the entire earth submissive to what is good (Cf. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World 38).



Questions of the Week

Out of the presence of Christ within us comes a new commandment: to love one another as Christ has loved us. Our ability to love, even when it is difficult, comes from the strength of Jesus in our hearts.

Adults

Whom do I find difficult to love openly and honestly? Am I willing to open myself to Christ's guidance so that I can love more genuinely?

Children

Do I realize that Jesus asks me to love my friends and even my enemies, and that he will help me do so?

Responding to God's Word . . .

Life is not predictable. There are no rules that fit every situation. You may have intended to live your life in faithful love with a marriage partner. But now you face divorce. The pattern you had hoped to live is no longer relevant. But the living presence of Christ can guide you to find your way.

You might be a person who has always taken care of your health. You exercise and watch what you eat. Now you find yourself facing a disease that will radically change your life. Your old pattern of living no longer applies. The life of Christ within you can show you the next steps to take.

You may have expected that your children would grow up sharing your values and faith. Now they have gone their own way, and you have less and less in common. The relationship that you expected to share is no longer viable. Abiding in Christ's love can lead you to a new way of relating with them.

We may not be prepared for the challenges that life sets before us. But Christ is. His life within us guides us to joy. We need not fear if we abide in Him.

SUGGESTIONS

Use one of these suggestions or one of your own to respond to God's Word this week.

In the home. Identify the person in your family who most needs love from you. Spend time in prayer discerning how to offer it.

In the workplace or in school. Choose a problem that occurs regularly. Ask the Lord to show you how to approach it in a new and loving way.

In the community. Locate a person for whom you are grateful. Choose a way to thank him or her for witnessing goodness.



Meditation Moment

D-Day with the Screaming Eagles details the courage of the paratroopers who launched the invasion of Europe on D-Day, June 6, 1944. They gave their lives that their comrades might land safely. In one company alone, 219 men jumped and only 73 survived. These brave men lived out the meaning of Jesus' words in today's gospel. They died that their friends might live.

For reflection . . .

The sacrifice of the paratroopers and Jesus' words in today's reading invite me to inventory my own spirit of sacrifice. How willing am I to sacrifice—if not to the point of sacrificing my life, at least to the point of sacrificing my comfort and my time?

THAT MAN MAY LAST, BUT NEVER LIVES,
WHO MUCH RECEIVES, BUT NOTHING GIVES;
WHOM NONE CAN LOVE ... NONE CAN
THANK, CREATION'S BLOT, CREATION'S
BLANK.

THOMAS GIBBONS

FROM MISSION BY MARK LINK, SJ

Bearing Good Fruit in the Lord

Lord Jesus,
life is confusing,
and at times I do not know
what is the next step to take
with my son, my spouse, my
boss, or my friend. I believe in my
union with you and your presence
within me. Guide me in ways that
are clear and effective. Move my
heart and will to follow your
promptings and rejoice in
your grace.
Amen.

Carry this thought in your heart as
a guide for your faith journey this
week.

[B]ecause of the truth that
abides in us and will be with
us forever: Grace, mercy, and
peace will be with us from
God the Father and from Jesus
Christ, the Father's Son, in truth
and love.

2 John 2–3

Profile in Faith

Author of 2 John

The author of this Second Letter calls himself "the Presbyter," indicating a position of leadership in his community. Much like the theology in the Gospel of John and in First John, the theology in Second John asserts that the truth of Christ dwells in us and remains with us forever.

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