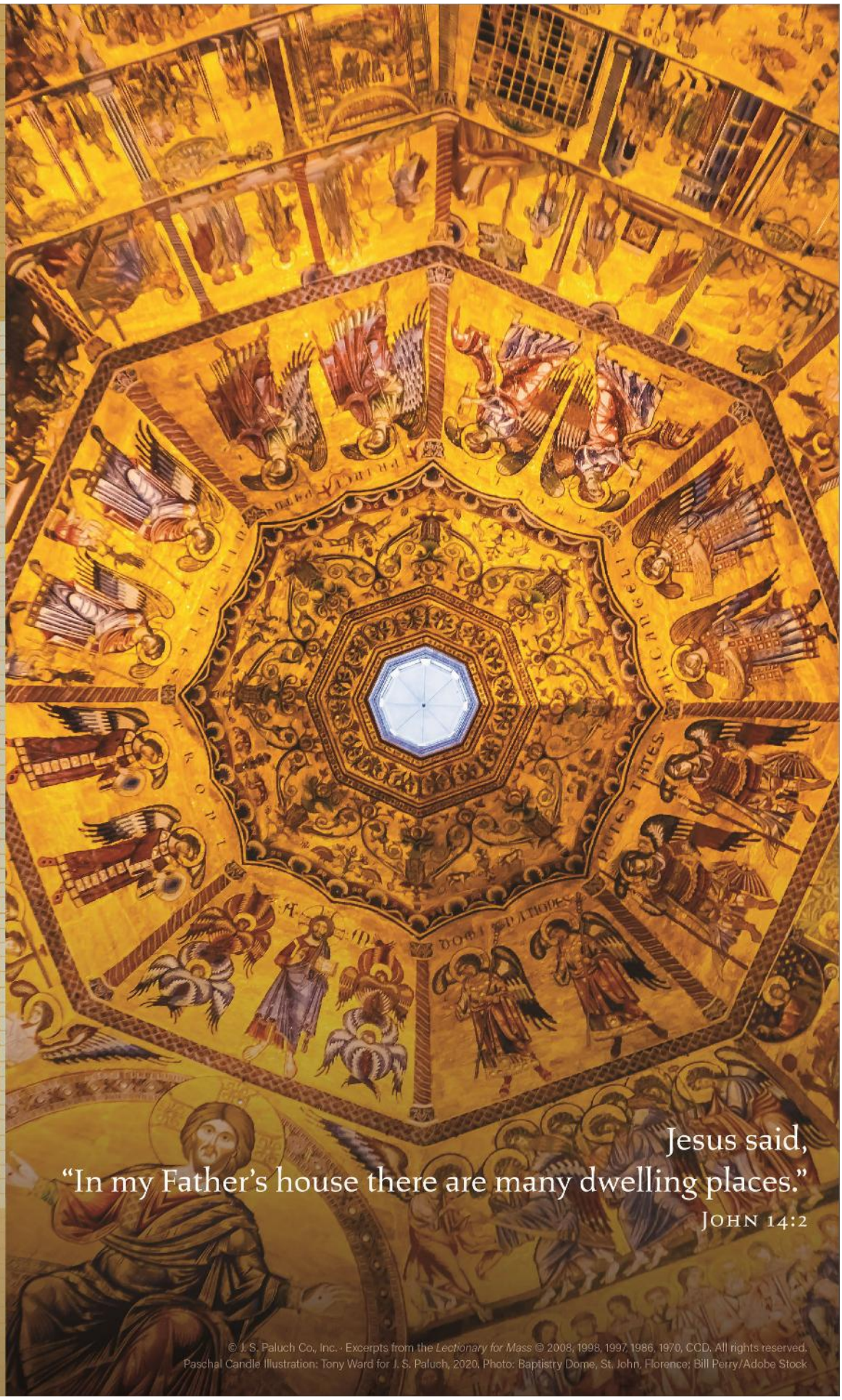
MAY
10
2020



Jesus said,
"In my Father's house there are many dwelling places."
JOHN 14:2

FIFTH SUNDAY OF Easter

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Paschal Candle Illustration: Tony Ward for J. S. Paluch, 2020. Photo: Baptistry Dome, St. John, Florence; Bill Perry/Adobe Stock

Saint Damien Joseph De Veuster of Moloka'I (1840-1889)

May 10

In the mid-1990s, a heavily bearded, bespectacled Robin Williams appeared on Late Night with David Letterman, whose host was clearly taken aback. Letterman inquired as to why the wild look. Uncharacteristically subdued, the usually manic comic responded that he was producing and starring in a movie about a most extraordinarily compassionate man, Damien, the Leper Priest of Moloka'i.

Some saints transcend religious and ethnic boundaries to touch the heart that beats in each human being: Francis of Assisi; Mother Teresa; and, though Williams' film was never completed, his admiration speaks, as does Damien's statue outside the capitol in Honolulu, of this newest saint's universal appeal. Far from his native Flanders' idyllic beauty and rich culture, Damien volunteered to bear Christ's light into Moloka'i's bleak leper colony, building decent homes, opening schools, establishing clinics, planting farms, sharing the sufferings—and the social stigma—of those with whom he delighted to identify: "We lepers," he would proudly say when finally he contracted leprosy. Saint Damien challenges us to identify the lepers of our own day, to examine our compassion for and our identification with them.

—Peter Scagnelli, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Vocation

Roman Catholics in the United States spend a good deal of time speaking of "vocation" and the manner in which each of us discerns our vocation for life. In today's apostolic letter, however, Peter gives us the "cornerstone" of our vocation, the description of what each of us is called to first and foremost by our baptism. He describes our vocation as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of [God's] own, so that you may announce the praises" of Christ, who called us out of darkness into light (1 Peter 2:9). All of us, no matter what path our life's vocation may take us down, have been chosen by God, made holy, and anointed as priests in the high priesthood of Christ through baptism. All of this, so that we may announce the praises of Christ. Vocation is given for proclamation at home, in the workplace—wherever life takes us—in service, in word, and in sacrament.

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Readings for the Week

Monday:	Acts 14:5-18; Ps 115:1-4, 15-16; Jn 14:21-26
Tuesday:	Acts 14:19-28; Ps 145:10-13ab, 21; Jn 14:27-31a
Wednesday:	Acts 15:1-6; Ps 122:1-5; Jn 15:1-8
Thursday:	Acts 1:15-17, 20-26; Ps 113:1-8; Jn 15:9-17
Friday:	Acts 15:22-31; Ps 57:8-10, 12; Jn 15:12-17
Saturday:	Acts 16:1-10; Ps 100:1b-3, 5; Jn 15:18-21
Sunday:	Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Ps 66:1-7, 16, 20; 1 Pt 3:15-18 or 1 Pt 4:13-16; Jn 14:15-21 or Jn 17:1-11a

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Fifth Sunday of Easter; Mother's Day
Tuesday:	Ss. Nereus and Achilleus; St. Pancras
Wednesday:	Our Lady of Fatima
Thursday:	St. Matthias
Friday:	St. Isidore the Farmer
Saturday:	Armed Forces Day

Today's Readings

First Reading — To meet their growing needs, the community chooses seven reputable men to serve the new Greek believers (Acts 6:1-7).

Psalm — Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you (Psalm 33).

Second Reading — We, like living stones, let ourselves be built into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:4-9).

Gospel — "Show us the Father," Philip asks Jesus. To which Jesus replies: "Whoever sees me, sees the Father" (John 14:1-12).

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Treasures From Our Tradition

If there is such a thing as a Catholic "trademark" it is the sign of the cross, first traced on the senses of catechumens as they begin the journey to baptism, or on the forehead of an infant who is brought to the doors of the church at baptism. As early as the third century, Christians were tracing the sign of the cross on their bodies. At first, the cross was traced on the forehead during times of prayer and daily occupations. We use a similar small cross today as we trace the cross over on the forehead, lips, and heart at the Gospel during Mass. Much later, the full-body sign traced from forehead to heart to shoulders took shape, perhaps copying the priest's gesture of blessing with the consecrated host during Mass. Today, this superb baptismal gift is a sign of belonging to Christ and the community, a way of focusing our attention, of asking for God's blessing, of tracing on our shoulders a willingness to find meaning in life's burdens. In the sign of the cross, we have an ever-available means of expressing gratitude for our baptism.
—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Mary Our Mother

What a joy to remember that Mary is our Mother! Since she loves us and knows our weakness, what have we to fear?
—Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

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Throughout the Easter season, we hear the story of the earliest Christian communities in readings from the Acts of the Apostles. We hear how the people grappled with what it meant to place their faith and trust in the Lord, understanding that doing so called them to live differently—to follow Jesus' way of love. This is more than a history lesson for us. As we hear how the people were drawn to Christ and learned to follow Jesus, we are invited to ask ourselves how fully we are taking the gospel to heart. Is Jesus our way, truth, and life? Do our daily actions announce the praises of the Lord?

Change Of Mind And Heart From Now On

During Lent, we participated in penitential practices and focused on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in order to turn our lives more fully to the Lord. However, the fruit of our Lenten practices is not supposed to end on Good Friday or Easter Sunday. Lent is our annual time to embrace spiritual renewal, which is intended to last. The change of mind and heart that we embraced in the weeks preceding Easter are to be our spiritual foundation, shaping our lives now and into the future. Pause for a moment and ask yourself what difference Lent made for you this year. If you can point to some particular change of mind, heart, or behavior, promise yourself that you will continue to live in this new way in the months and years to come. If Lent did not have a special impact on your life this year, now is the time to invite the Lord to show you the way to more meaningful and faith-filled living in the future.

Don't Be Afraid. Do The Works Of Christ

In the Gospel passage we heard today, Jesus was preparing the apostles for a time when he would not be with them physically. Jesus wanted to reassure the apostles, even though he knew they were having a difficult time understanding. We sometimes struggle to grasp the Lord's ways, too. We know that God is with us in Christ through the Holy Spirit, and yet, when we really have to act in accord with our faith, we sometimes falter. Jesus tells us to not be afraid. Have faith in Christ and do his works. We may be surprised at what we are able to do when we trust and follow Jesus' way. And we are assured that God will be with us through it all.

Today's readings: Acts 6:1–7; Ps 33:1–2, 4–5, 18–19; 1 Peter 2:4–9; John 14:1–12

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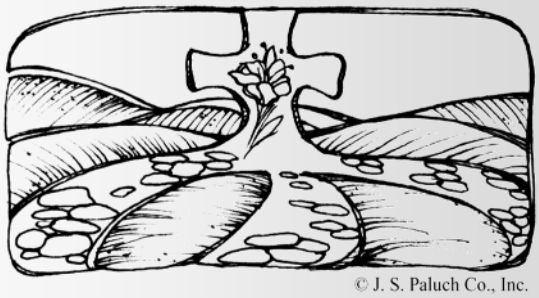
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