

MAY 10, 2020

## HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Mothering God, You  
Gave Me Birth*

## WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

## CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Where do you see God's presence in the world?
- What does the life of Jesus tell you about God?
- John 14:12 is about a relationship with God. How do you help others have this relationship?

## DEVOTIONS

Read: Acts 7:55-60.

Martyrdom is too often spoken of today in terms of suicide bombs that kill. That is not a Christian martyr. Stephen presents the model of Christian martyrdom for all time. He innocently suffers and dies at the hands of others; he does not act violently. Stephen imitates Christ's death by blessing one's enemies (v. 60). He also experiences the holy bliss of being filled with the Holy Spirit and seeing the glory of God and Jesus (v. 55). He has a rapturous experience of the triune God. Few of us will have that same experience, but we are still all martyrs. The word simply means "witness." We are witnesses to God's living presence when we suffer unfairly for the love of God, when we bless others, and when we experience the peace that passes all human understanding. In the midst of a world of hate, violence, and self-promotion, it is not possible to be a faithful witness on our own. It is the work of God that fills us with the Holy Spirit, witnesses to the love of God, and blesses others. Christian martyrdom is all around us. Who has been a witness to the love of God for you recently?

Pray: **O, Holy Jesus, give me faith to witness to your love, to suffer with others for the sake of love, and to bless others with hope in your Easter victory. Amen.**

## SERVICE

Psalm 31 is a prayer of deliverance from enemies. Even though there is suffering and pain, the psalmist writes of trust in the Lord and of God's goodness. Watch or read today's news. Who in the world needs prayer for deliverance from enemies? Pray for their deliverance.

## RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Today is Mother's Day in the United States. It is a time to recognize and be thankful for those women in our lives who have cared for us and for others. Be a witness for God's love and reach out to a woman you know who deserves a special thank you with a phone call or a visit. Take time to talk and then say this prayer for her.

**Lord God, thank you for (name). May she know how grateful I am to have her in my life. Please bless her this day and every day with your love and care. Amen.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)

MAY 3, 2020

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

*Followers of Jesus shepherd one another.*

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 10:1-10	Christ the shepherd
Monday	Acts 2:42-47	Life among believers
Tuesday	1 Peter 2:19-25	Example of Christ's suffering
Wednesday	Galatians 6:1-10	Bear one another's burdens
Thursday	Ezekiel 34:11-31	God, the true shepherd
Friday	Romans 12:9-18	Marks of the true Christian
Saturday	Psalms 23	The Lord is my Shepherd
Sunday	John 14:1-14	Jesus is the way, truth, and life

## SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. **Acts 2:46-47a (NRSV)**

## PRAYERS AND BLESSING

### A Prayer for the Week:

God our Savior and Good Shepherd, keep us close to your care, and in our times of suffering may we trust in you. Amen.

### Mealtime Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for preparing a table for us that we may be strengthened for our journey as we follow you, the Good Shepherd. Amen.

### A Blessing to Give:

May the shepherd and protector of your souls forgive you and give you peace forevermore. (1 Peter 2:24-25)



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**MAY 3, 2020**

**HYMN OF THE WEEK**

*Savior, Like a Shepherd  
Lead Us*

**WEEKLY MILESTONES**

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

**CARING CONVERSATIONS**

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- How does a shepherd care for the sheep?
- In what ways can we care for one another as a shepherd does the sheep?
- How is Jesus a shepherd to you?

**DEVOTIONS**

*Read:* Acts 2:42-47.

Every year the Fourth Sunday of Easter is the “Good Shepherd Sunday.” Psalm 23 reminds us that the Lord is our shepherd. 1 Peter 2:25 states that Jesus is “the shepherd and guardian of your souls.” John 10 speaks of the sheep who follow because they know the voice of the shepherd (v. 4). Acts 2 gives a picture of what the community of the Good Shepherd looks like. It is a people who shepherd one another by sharing their possessions (v. 45). Together they study the word of God, have fellowship, break bread and pray. Fellow shepherds of the soul do these things. Daily they worship publicly but also break bread in homes with “glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people” (vv. 46b-47a). The result is a community that by its very way of life and by the power of God adds “to their number those who [are] being saved” (v. 47b). A community of people caring for one another witnesses to God’s love and results in more souls in the sheepfold. How is your home a place to shepherd souls?

*Pray:* Good Shepherd, thank you for calling out to us through a community that cares for one another publicly and also in our daily lives. Amen.

**SERVICE**

“They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:45). There are many in our communities who are in need of food, clothing, and household goods. Organize or have a yard sale in your neighborhood with the proceeds going to those in need. If possible, place an ad in the local paper.

**RITUALS AND TRADITIONS**

Draw or find a picture of a sheep. Imagine you are the shepherd for this sheep. Make a list of things you would do to take care of the sheep. Psalm 23 begins with the words, “The Lord is my shepherd.” Read Psalm 23 and compare your list with the ways the Lord cares for sheep. Think about someone in your life who needs love and care. How can you be a shepherd for them?



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)

**MAY 10, 2020**

**FIFTH SUNDAY  
OF EASTER**

*Christian martyrs witness to God’s love.*

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>John 14:1-14</b>	<b>Jesus is the way, truth, and life</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Acts 7:55-60</b>	<b>The stoning of Stephen</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>1 Peter 2:2-10</b>	<b>A chosen people</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Romans 8:31-39</b>	<b>God’s love in Christ Jesus</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Hebrews 11:29-40</b>	<b>The faith of heroes</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>2 Corinthians 12:1-10</b>	<b>Contentment in suffering</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16</b>	<b>Prayer for deliverance</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>John 14:15-21</b>	<b>The promise of the Holy Spirit</b>

**SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK**

“Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.” **John 14:12 (NRSV)**

**PRAYERS AND BLESSING**

**A Prayer for the Week:**

Almighty God, you send us out to witness to the work of Jesus; give us confidence and courage to be your faithful witnesses. Amen.

**Mealttime Prayer:**

Dear God, may this food strengthen the body and your word strengthen the soul to be your witnesses in the world. Amen.

**A Blessing to Give:**

May the face of God shine on you and bless you through the steadfast love of the Lord. (Psalm 31:16)



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