

# Rejoice and Be Glad

*Daily Reflections for Easter 2019*

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## Introduction

### **Living through the Fifty Days of Easter**

As Christians we find it spiritually intuitive to afford Ash Wednesday and the Lenten season, through the Triduum, to Easter Sunday a full measure of attention. We observe this season with intention, reflection, and a desire for conversion. The words of Ash Wednesday ring in our hearts: “Repent, and believe the Gospel!”

Over the years, in listening to the Scriptures and engaging with the liturgical season of the Fifty Days of Easter, I have come to understand the profound conversion that the disciples of Jesus and early Christians underwent in order to appropriate the full meaning of the dying and rising of Jesus. Repeatedly, we encounter the necessity of letting go of partial or mistaken understandings of Jesus’ Messiahship; of embracing the power and freedom of the Holy Spirit and speaking a new language; of opening arms and hearts to be inclusive in understanding the liberating energy of being baptized into the dying and rising of Jesus.

I am thrilled by this publication because it offers readers and all who pray an opportunity to engage with a fresh, integrated, and provocative unpacking of the meaning of the Fifty Days for us, today.

Abbot John Klassen, OSB  
Easter 2019



# Reflections

## Sentinels of the Dawn

**Readings:** Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Col 3:1-4 or 1 Cor 5:6b-8; John 20:1-9

**Scripture:**

When Christ your life appears,  
then you too will appear with him in glory. (Col 3:2)

**Reflection:** I'm standing on the porch at my brother's house. He lives high above a valley. Below me the dry bed of the Estrella River winds through cattle-dotted pastures and vineyards, a pale still life in the predawn light. Last night's stars have fled and the sky is streaked with color along the horizon. As I watch, a deep rosy glow grows in the east. I murmur a line from the *Benedictus*, "The dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness . . ."

The sun bursts over the horizon, first a glint of gold, followed by such a fierce blaze that I cannot bear to look at it. I close my eyes and let the warmth wash over me. Such power, I marvel, that it can warm me from 93 million miles away, banishing the night's cold as with the flick of a finger.

Look to what is above, Paul advises the Colossians. This morning of all mornings, I'm tempted to read that literally. Look to what it is above, try to grasp the power and the glory that pour down on us at all times, day or night. We are called to be sentinels of the dawn, Pope Francis reminded us in a

reflection on the Triduum. We are called to be the ones like Peter and Mary Magdalene who run to see signs of the Risen Christ. And if we can bear it, we are called to reflect that power and glory back for the world to see.

**Meditation:** Close your eyes and lift your face to the sun, feeling its warmth on your face. Where is Christ dawning in your life now? How might you reflect that glory for others to see?

**Prayer:** Christ, our light and our life, may your dawn warm our hearts, banish the darkness, and guide our feet into the way of peace, that we might at last wake to the fullness of your glory.

—Michelle Francl-Donnay

## I Believe in the Holy Spirit

**Readings:** Acts 2:14, 22-33; Matt 28:8-15

**Scripture:**

Exalted at the right hand of God,  
he poured forth the promise of the Holy Spirit.  
(Acts 2:33a)

**Reflection:** *"I believe in the Holy Spirit . . ."* The words rise to my tongue each week, called forth between Word spoken and Body broken, borne aloft on the voices of friends and strangers. *"The Lord, the giver of life . . ."* I believe in the Spirit who once stirred in the chaos of creation, is stirring within me, within the world now. *"Who proceeds from the Father and the Son . . ."* One God, whose glory and majesty cannot be contained but spills over, pouring down from heaven onto earth.

It feels too soon to contemplate the coming of the Holy Spirit; the scent of incense from the Easter Vigil lingers in the corners of the church. The Easter season has barely dawned; Pentecost's flames are weeks away. I want to cling to these quiet moments, to the sure knowledge of the resurrection. But the reality is that my life is not some carefully choreographed and perfectly timed sequence of events. The fruits of the Spirit may be love, joy, peace, and patience, but the surest signs of the Spirit's passage are chaos and disruption. It is not too soon to be about the work of the Gospel.

We are all witnesses, says Peter. Go, tell the world. Go, says Jesus, bear my news to the disciples, tell them to get out of the room and on the road. Do not be afraid, says Jesus, for Father, Son, and Spirit will never leave you.

**Meditation:** We can be reluctant to embrace chaos, to let our lives be disrupted, even when the reasons are joyful. Where is the Spirit pushing you out of your comfort zone to be witness to the salvation of the world? What roads is Jesus suggesting you might walk with the Trinity this Easter season?

**Prayer:** Holy Spirit, who hovered over the waters at creation, breathe in us, that we might shout aloud our joy in the new life we have been given. Strengthen our hearts, that we might walk with firm purpose in God's ways.

—Michelle Francl-Donnay