

# Reflections

Connecting the True Word to Real Life

Second Sunday of Easter: April 22-28, 2016



## A Word of Introduction

Easter is behind us, and yet its promise is ever before us. That's a thought to keep in mind as we move toward the celebration of Pentecost. As one of our more recent hymns so succinctly states: "Every day to us is Easter, with its resurrection song." The passages for this week reflect the presence of Easter and are an indication of the Church's attempt to discern what Easter meant and what it would continue to mean to the generations of believers that followed. These reflections are based on the Revised Common Lectionary- a collection of scripture readings designed to take churches through the broad sweep of scripture over the course of three years. Feel free to use this however you wish. It's meant to be put to use as a gateway to personal Biblical reflection or as a discussion starter with small groups. I'd suggest that it's likely that you will get more out of the experience if you gather together to share your questions and insights. If there is a group out there who would live to have me drop in as a guest participate or discussion leader, give me call. I'd welcome the opportunity to spend some time with you.

## Passages for the Week

Acts 5:27-32; Psalm 150; Revelation 1:4-8; John 20:19-31

## Prayers for the Week:

### *Morning*

Gracious God, you are the God who is and was and is to be. Thank you that Christ has freed us to be a kingdom of priests, serving you and your world. Give me a deeper sense, as I move through this day, of what it means to say that you are my "Alpha and Omega," my A to Z. Amen.

### *Evening*

Jesus, tonight I remember that your gospel gives me the power to forgive any and all, through the gift of your Holy Spirit, and that includes forgiving myself. Breathe your peace into me, so that even if I pierced you today, I can still see you coming to embrace me with your freedom and love this night. Amen

## Questions for Reflection

### Day One: Monday, April 22

**We are Witnesses - Read Acts 5:27-32.**

-The apostles understood that they must obey God rather than people. When have you been confronted with the choice between serving God's purpose and fulfilling human expectations? How did you respond? What were the results?

-The religious authorities feared that the "whistleblowers" among the disciples would provoke judgment on them for their crimes perpetrated in the name of peace, order and security. What is our responsibility as Christians to be "whistleblowers" in relation to the abuses we see today?

### Day Two: Tuesday, April 23

**Let Everything that Has Breath... - Read Psalm 150.**

-This psalm is long on exhortation and short on explanation. What gives us reason to worship? What reasons do you have to praise God? What do you think it would sound like if everything that had breath praised the Lord? Do we praise God to the extent described here? Where do you think we fall short and why?

### Day Three: Wednesday, April 24

**Every Eye Will See - Read Revelation 1:4-8**

-Revelations calls Christians to live fully and faithfully in the light of Christ's return. What do you think that return will look like? How real is that possibility to you? Is it an expectation you hope for or is it one that you think is mostly symbolic? Do you think it possible that Christ has returned and a distracted world did not notice?

### Day Four: Thursday, April 25

**Every Eye Will See - Read Revelation 1:4-8**

Visualize Christ's coming as described in verse 7. How do you anticipate Christ's manifestation? What do you regret as you face him? What in your lifestyle and circumstances would make you sorrowful on that day? What words of praise would you utter? What questions would you have?

### Day Five: Friday, April 26

**"Unless I See..." - Read John 20:19-31**

-Thomas moved from doubt to faith to witness. Does Thomas' skepticism do something for your faith? What doubts have you had about the faith claims of the Christian gospel? How have these been resolved? How is believing different than knowing something based on observation?

### Responding to the Word

What proof do you feel you still need? What proof do you have to offer? How might you witness to the things you've seen and experienced as a person of faith?