

# Second Week of Easter



## Thanksgiving for God's Mercy

Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and all that is within me,  
bless his holy name.

The LORD is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in  
steadfast love.

He does not deal with us according to  
our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above  
the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward  
those who fear him;  
as far as the east is from the west,  
so far he removes our transgressions  
from us.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and do not forget all his benefits—  
who crowns you with steadfast love  
and mercy.

Bless the LORD, O my soul.

—Psalm 103:1, 8, 10–12, 2, 4b, 22c

## April 19, 2009 Divine Mercy

Divine Mercy Sunday is a relatively new solemnity inspired by an apparition to a Polish nun, Saint Faustina, who was canonized on April 30, 2000. She saw a vision of Jesus, his garments shining with rays of light. Sister Faustina received from him a prayer, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, which many Catholics pray during “the hour of mercy,” between 3:00 and 4:00 in the afternoon. In the Old Testament, the words referring to God’s mercy derive mainly from Hebrew verbs meaning “to be motherly” and “to bend down.” In English usage, mercy refers to a kindness bestowed on someone who has no claim to it. It is difficult for humanity to fathom that the all-powerful

God could love us when we cannot feel we merit that love. The revelation to Saint Faustina is one of the millions of ways in which God reassures us. Today we might ask ourselves what it will take for us to believe, truly and deeply believe, that the risen Christ is still active, still among us, still seeking our salvation. Spend time in prayer today reflecting on the many reasons you have to trust Jesus. Let Jesus know that you trust him, or that you want to trust him. Open your heart to his love. When we put ourselves in touch with God’s mercy, we begin to notice that the capacity to be merciful to others is growing in us. Thanks be to God!



# This Week at Home

## Monday, April 20

### Holy Water

At the great Easter Vigil, the elect were baptized with water in the baptismal font. Do you remember how the water in the font was blessed? The Paschal candle was dipped into the font as the priest prayed the blessing prayer, recalling all the ways God has shown us his power through water. Also on that night the entire assembly was sprinkled with water from that font to remind us of our own Baptism and the promises we made at that time. As you bless yourself with water when you enter or depart from your church, remember how important that water is to us!

## Tuesday, April 21

### Memorial of Saint Anselm

Born in northern Italy in the eleventh century, Saint Anselm became a Benedictine monk, theologian, and bishop. Although involved in public life as a church leader, Anselm loved the monastic life, describing his monastery as a heaven on earth. Today is also Yom Hashoah, an international day of remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust, on which we commit to protecting all victims of atrocity. Christians are called, especially in this holy season, to make earth a more holy place. We cannot do this without confronting the forces of evil within our world.

## Wednesday, April 22

### Keeping the Easter Spirit

Many families keep the Easter spirit alive by listening to music together during the Easter season. Try lighting a lot of candles, turning off the electric lights, and gathering together as a family in the living room to listen to Easter music while you eat dessert. The Easter choruses from Handel's *Messiah*, Cesar Franck's *Redemption*, and the overture *Russian Easter* by Rimsky-Korsakoff are inspiring. Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* expresses Mahler's own reflections on death and resurrection.

## Thursday, April 23

### Saint George

The memorial of Saint George, the patron saint of England, is observed on April 23. Saint George is a third-century martyr, celebrated in legend as a soldier. He is the patron of soldiers and Boy Scouts. This is a good day to pray for those in the military,

and if you have any Boy Scouts at home, serve a special dessert in honor of their patron.

## Friday, April 24

### An Easter Walk

Since medieval times, it has been traditional to take a walk with family and friends during the weeks of Easter, recalling how the disciples walked with the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). This is a time for picnic lunches, games, and songs. In French Canada, families would walk to their grandparents' home for a family dinner. Consider having a progressive dinner with neighbors, walking to a different neighbor's house for each course of the meal.



## Saturday, April 25

### Feast of Saint Mark, the Evangelist

Most scholars believe the Gospel according to Mark to be the oldest of the canonical Gospels. One of its striking features is the apparent obtuseness of the disciples. Some scholars believe this reflects wide misunderstandings of the faith present in Mark's community. The Good News has never been easy for the human intellect to grasp. That is why the words of scripture need to be pondered. One ancient prayer tradition that teaches us to do this is *lectio divina*. Inquire about information on it at the Contemplative Outreach bookstore, 800-608-0096, visit the Contemplative Outreach Web site for Father Thomas Keating's explanation, <http://www.centeringprayer.com/lectio/lectio.htm>, or visit [www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html](http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html) where Father Luke Dysinger, OSB, offers an introduction.

