



Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The Newman University community invites you to join us in celebrating the 50 days of the Easter season with these reflections.

May 3, Fifth Sunday of Easter – Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12

The passage from ACTS describes tension between diverse disciples about concern for widows who are being overlooked in the distribution of bread and about ‘who should be doing what’ in the faith community. The ‘twelve’ gather, listen, and give the issue back for discussion and a solution-- that ‘seven’ spirit-filled and wise people are to be chosen among them to serve bread to those in need. Does that passage show, then as now, too much attention to position, rather than calling everyone to listen and ACT, so that bread will be distributed to those who need it? Lest we are tempted to leave ourselves out of this discussion for lack of being ‘ordained,’ the second reading from Peter offers this challenge, YOU are the living stones, YOU are chosen, so that YOU may proclaim and bring light in darkness.

In the reading from John, Jesus reassures his disciples, who question how they can follow Him when they just don’t know the way, with a simple answer, “Don’t be afraid. Continue the works I have been doing.” Jesus’ way is very clear. Distribute bread to those in need.

Sisters Cecilia Hellman and Jan Renz, ASC

May 4, Monday of the Fifth Week of Easter - Acts 14:5-18; John 14:21-26

The message I receive from Acts is twofold. First, God is the source of healing the man, not Paul. It is in the divine that we must seek our refuge, healing and restoration, not in any person. Second, when being praised from other people about our talents and abilities, we must redirect their attention to God, as it is only through him that we are capable of anything.

John speaks of the connection between love and action. Jesus states that love is expressed through obeying God and God’s commandments. It is easy to see how this plays out in our daily interactions with the people and things we love. If a gardener loves their garden, that love is expressed by watering the plants and providing the proper nutrients for growth. Simply saying “I love my garden” is a hollow statement if the actions to nurture the garden are not taken. Likewise, if we love God, that love requires us to obey his commands.

Frank Macias, Admissions Counselor

May 5, Tuesday of the Fifth Week - Acts 14:19-28; John 14:27-31a

In these readings, we see both challenge and peace. In Acts, Paul experiences real hardship, yet he continues his mission and encourages others to remain strong in their faith. In John, Jesus offers a different kind of peace, one that is not dependent on circumstances but comes from trusting in Him. Together, these readings remind me that even when life feels difficult, I am still called to keep going

and trust that God is present. They encourage me to find peace not in everything going well, but in knowing I am not alone.

Natalie Morales, Graduate Student

May 6, Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Easter - Acts 15:1-6; John 15:1-8

In John 15, Jesus is the vine and we believers are the branches. All goodness resides in Christ; by accepting Him we become partakers in His goodness. In the Old Testament Israel is often depicted as a vineyard tended by the Lord. Jesus uses this same imagery to speak of himself, showing that He is the fulfillment of the old Law. This is affirmed in the passage from Acts 15. We depend on God for all good things; we now look to Jesus to show the way to fulfillment. Christ taught this fulfillment is possible by loving God above all and others. We must cling to the vine as our source of love. As branches we receive and share the source and fruits of God's love.

Rev. Mr. Isaac Hilger '22, Transitional Deacon

May 7, Thursday of the Fifth Week of Easter - Acts 15:7-21; John 15:9-11

The readings highlight God's unconditional love for us, despite our failures. God's joy and peace are always available, even when we stubbornly choose our own will over His. We are called to humble ourselves and surrender to God's plan, trusting that His path leads to something greater. When we follow our own desires, we become distracted by idols and temptation. Yet, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are gently guided back. In choosing God's will over our own, we open ourselves to the fullness of His love, joy, and purpose for our lives.

Whitney Burke, Assistant professor of Psychology

May 8, Friday of the Fifth Week of Easter - Acts 15:22-31; John 15:12-17

Of the many images of the relationship between God and His people, the image of the vine and the branches emphasizes our complete dependence and our need for a constant connection to Our Father and His Son. As Jesus is about to depart from the apostles, this was an important parable for them to hear. Jesus would remain united to them and they to Him as truly as the branches are connected to the main vine. Jesus is the true vine. We must be rooted in Him if we are to bear fruit for God's work in the world.

At the first Council of Jerusalem, there was tension and questioning between the understanding of the Old and the New Covenant. The apostles and elders aimed to affirm that all seeking salvation - even Gentiles - must be attached to Jesus Christ - the Vine. This New Covenant would flourish only through the works of fruitful "branches." This marks a crucial shift towards Christianity as a universal rather than purely Jewish faith.

Jayne Connor Farmer SHA '66

May 9, Saturday of the Fifth Week of Easter - Acts 16:1-10; John 15:18-21

In Acts, Paul stays open to God's direction, even when the path is uncertain and constantly changing. In John, Jesus reminds us that following Him will not always be accepted by the world. Together, these readings show that faith requires both trust and toughness. We are called to keep moving forward, even when we face resistance or discomfort. Growth happens when we stay committed through challenges. Like in life, we won't always have clear answers, but if we stay rooted in Christ, we can handle whatever comes our way.

Blake Chadwick, Graduate Assistant Men's Basketball Coach