



Fathers and Brothers

MARYKNOLL™

2023 Easter Season Reflection Guides

The Upper Room: Gathered to Transform

THE UPPER ROOM: GATHERED TO TRANSFORM

If Lent is an invitation to go to our Inner Rooms to let God's loving presence heal us, the Easter Season is our opportunity to join the disciples in the Upper Room to be transformed for mission.

In the Upper Room the disciples are transformed. The fear and grief of Good Friday gives way to glimmers of hope with the discovery of the empty tomb on Easter morning. Over the weeks, they go from being afraid and lost behind locked doors to becoming the impassioned disciples that burst forth on Pentecost, compelled to share their joy with others.

Although we carry on their legacy and mission as Pentecost continues to unfold in our time and place, the Easter Season is a good time for us to return to the Upper Room. Using the Sunday Readings, let the Risen Jesus gather and transform you and your community so that this Pentecost Sunday, your joy is deepened and your faith is renewed and strengthened. Get in touch with your own experiences, learn from stories of those in other cultures and lands. Make sense of your reality through the lens of the Gospel and let the Spirit guide you in going forth.

To make room for the Spirit to continue to inflame our passion for mission, we are including new [Visio Divina](#) exercises with each guide during the Easter Season. Let the Spirit speak to you through meditation and sacred images.

OPENING PRAYER

Create your own sacred space. Light a candle and use symbols. Begin by taking time in silence to enter into the presence of God's love. Throughout his life, Jesus balanced prayer with action.

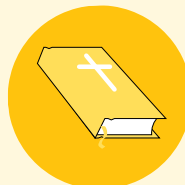
INTRODUCTION

Read together to introduce the theme. Each week we focus on a particular theme of global economic justice that builds the bonds of global solidarity.



1. SEE OUR REALITY

Use the reflection questions to share your stories to appreciate how God is present in our lives. Then read together/listen to the stories of others and see how the Spirit is at work in the world.



2. DISCERN WITH OUR FAITH

Read the Gospel together. If you have time, read it twice with a pause in between for everyone to share one word or phrase that spoke to them. Then use the reflection questions to look at your experience and what's going on in the world through the lens of the Gospel.



3. GO FORTH AND DO JUSTICE

Go deeper and discern how God invites you and your community to go forth as missionary disciples to do justice locally and globally. Each week use the [Easter Visio Divina](#) Exercise to deepen your celebration of the Easter JOY so that you can go forth and do justice.

CLOSING PRAYER

Conclude with sharing your intentions, an Our Father, Glory Be, and the closing prayer.

[More Resources](#) | [Small Christian Communities Info](#) | [Maryknoll Vocations](#) | [Discover Your Neighbor](#) | [All the Easter Guides](#)



Fr Daniel Ohmann M.M., Tanzania
(Maryknoll Archives)

THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

The Upper Room: FROM SCATTERED TO GATHERED

Prayer Loving God, help us rejoice and be glad in the midst of confusion and grief.

Introduction

The resurrection began with confusion and grief. Many of Jesus' followers scattered after his death. A few remained locked away in fear. There were, however, glimmers of hope. Mary of Magdala ventured out to fulfill the rituals of grief and encountered an empty tomb. What did that mean? Together, they would find out over the following weeks as the risen Jesus gathered the scattered disciples and prepared them to go forth from the upper room to carry on his mission. As missionary disciples, we too enter the Easter season with our own needs and concerns that can keep us from going forth with Pentecost zeal. But gathered together, the Spirit strengthens us as well to venture from our upper rooms to bring God's love to the world.

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1.SHARING OUR STORIES



Share a time when your heart was filled with grief but someone helped you through it.

Meet Learn how the joy of a suffering people in Tanzania contributed to the moment Fr. Ohmann, M.M. considers his greatest moment as a priest.

2.DISCERN WITH OUR FAITH



Read the Gospel of Jn 20:1-9

Reflect How is the Spirit inviting you to be inspired by communities that are usually overlooked?

3.GO DEEPER



Transform Use the Visio Divina Exercises to let the Spirit guide you. This week reflect on the image of light breaking through the obstacles in our way.

Respond Make a list of people you know who have suffered a loss in the last year to hold in prayer. Reach out to at least one person on the list to check in with them.

**Closing
Prayer**

Conclude with your intentions, an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, and the prayer refrain.

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SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (DIVINE MERCY)

The Upper Room:

FROM EXCLUDED TO INVITED

Prayer God, help us open our doors to build new communities of love.

Introduction

Being left out hurts. Around the world, we gather to share celebration moments, mark transitions, make decisions, and sometimes mourn. It was to one of those gatherings, filled with grief after the crucifixion, that Jesus appeared to bring comfort and peace. But Thomas missed out. When Jesus returned the following week he invited Thomas to touch the wounds that marked a painful memory. That encounter of mercy in the community moved Thomas from doubt to belief. As missionary disciples, we too are called to gather, invite, and empower those who have been excluded and feel they may be missing out on God's mercy. By sharing our own wounds and stories of healing love with them we become the vessels of God's transformative mercy.

Photo credit (Unzueta/U.S.)

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JESUS
CAME,
ALTHOUGH
THE
DOORS
WERE
LOCKED...
”

1.SHARING OUR STORIES



Share Share a time when you (or someone else) were excluded from a group and missed out.

Meet Meet Mission Educator Sarahi and learn how being excluded is not an uncommon experience.

2.DISCERN WITH OUR FAITH



Read the Gospel of Jn 20:19-31

Reflect Who is excluded from your family or community that the Spirit is prompting you to invite in?

3.GO DEEPER



Transform Use the Visio Divina Exercises to let the Spirit guide you. This week reflect on the Christ of Maryknoll Icon.

Respond Make a list of people from your friend, faith or community circles who may have been excluded from gatherings, projects, meetings etc. Reach out and invite at least one person to your next gathering.

Closing Prayer Conclude with your intentions, an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, and the prayer refrain.

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

The Upper Room:

FROM GIVING UP TO GOING ON

Prayer Jesus, when we are tempted to give up, make our hearts burn with new zeal as it did on the road to Emmaus.

Introduction

Give up or keep going? The disciples on the road to Emmaus had had enough. They decided to give up and go back to their former lives. But an unexpected encounter with a stranger reminded them that especially in our darkest moments of despair, God remains to heal the hurt and restore hope. Recognizing the risen Jesus through sharing stories and breaking bread, they return to the community filled with joy and excitement. As missionary disciples, we may lose hope and be tempted to give up. However, in challenging ourselves to leave our comfort zone and be open to encounters with strangers, we meet the risen Lord who empowers us to keep going on and to share our joy with others.

The El Alá, Chile bridge where Fr. Judd M.M.'s Emmaus moment happened.

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JESUS
HIMSELF
DREW
NEAR AND
WALKED
WITH
THEM
”

1.SHARING OUR STORIES



Share Share a time when you almost gave up, but someone helped you to go on.

Meet Learn how Maryknoll Fr. Steve had an Emmaus encounter in Chile.

2.DISCERN WITH OUR FAITH



Read the Gospel of Lk 24:13-35

Reflect How is the Spirit inviting you to give a second look to those who may have given up on?

3.GO DEEPER



Transform Use the Visio Divina Exercises to let the Spirit guide you. This week reflect on an image of Emmaus story.

Respond Climate change is one of those areas where it is easy to get overwhelmed and want to give up. Make a list of three things you can begin to do this week to help heal the environment.

Closing Prayer Conclude with your intentions, an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, and the prayer refrain.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

The Upper Room:

FROM LONE SHEEP TO EMPOWERED COMMUNITY

Prayer

Open the gate Jesus, so we may enter and encounter you through community.

Introduction

Sometimes it may seem easier to just make a go of it alone. But Jesus reminds us that abundant life happens in community. Using the image of a gatekeeper who calls his sheep by name, he gathers the community into a safe and sacred space. It is there that the scattered, scared, and vulnerable sheep become a flock who are transformed into a powerful community that can go forth to carry on the mission of love. As missionary disciples, we are called first to gather as a flock to be transformed, and then to go forth to the margins to invite in the other lost sheep.

The first Maryknoll Sisters in China
(Maryknoll archives)

“
I AM
THE
GATE
FOR THE
SHEEP
”

1.SHARING OUR STORIES



Share

Mother Mary Joseph said “We are the ones who should be changed.” Share the story of a community that has made a difference in your life.

Meet

Watch The Maryknoll Story to learn how Maryknoll builds and becomes part of communities around the world.

2.DISCERN WITH OUR FAITH



Read

the Gospel of Jn 10:1-10

Reflect

Who are the lone sheep the Spirit is prompting you to invite into your family, circle of friends or community?

3.GO DEEPER



Transform

Use the Visio Divina Exercises to let the Spirit guide you. This week, reflect on the empowerment that comes from being part of a flock.

Respond

Learn more about global issues. Pick one issue to be involved in so you can be a more active member of the global community.

Closing
Prayer

Conclude with your intentions, an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, and the prayer refrain.



Maryknoll Lay Missioner Kathy Bond is committed to making healing therapies available to all

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

The Upper Room:

FROM ANXIETY TO TRUSTING THE WAY

Prayer Let your mercy be on us, as we learn from you and others how to navigate the Way.

Introduction

Recent events have heightened anxiety around the world and reminded us how debilitating fear can be. Even in the midst of the joyful event of the resurrection, Thomas and Phillip are still grappling with the anxiety, trauma and the new identity of the resurrected Jesus. They want to follow the Way but are filled with questions. Jesus reassures them, "I am the way and the truth and the life." As Missionary Disciples, we raise the same questions and Jesus gives the same response: trust in God, trust in the Way. How we as a community process our anxiety through that trust in God becomes the amazing gift of transformation we offer the world.

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HOW
CAN WE
KNOW
THE
WAY?
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1.SHARING OUR STORIES



Share Share a story of how working through anxiety became transformative.

Meet Meet Maryknoll Lay Missioner Kathy Bond who reflects on grounding and gratitude as a means of dealing with anxiety.

2.DISCERN WITH OUR FAITH



Read the Gospel of Jn 14: 1-12

Reflect How is the Spirit inviting you to learn from the global community about ways of dealing with anxiety?

3.GO DEEPER



Transform Use the Visio Divina Exercises to let the Spirit guide you. Use this week's image to reflect on how to deal with anxiety in your life.

Respond Talk to someone from a community or group you seldom interact with about how they deal with anxiety. Try to practice one thing you learned from them this week.

Closing Prayer Conclude with your intentions, an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, and the prayer refrain.

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SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

The Upper Room:

FROM LOOKING AWAY TO FOLLOWING THE WAY

Prayer

Lord help us to learn from your Blessed Mother, Mary to follow the way that leads to you.

Introduction

Imagine life without GPS and maps on your phone. As Jesus prepared the disciples to leave the upper room to go forth on mission, he gave them a roadmap, a north star to guide them on the way. It was a reminder of his commandments to love God and each other. As Missionary Disciples, this map has served us well for over 2,000 years. The challenges and opportunities may have evolved and perhaps become more complicated, but the message remains simple and pure. God is love. We are invited to accept that love, let it heal and transform us and then share it with a hurting world.

Maryknoll Missioners value listening and dialogue. (Mark Gruenke, Maryknoll Mission Archives)

“

I WILL
NOT
LEAVE
YOU

ORPHANS

”

1.SHARING OUR STORIES



Share

Share a time when you were lost and your mother or a mother figure helped you get back on track.

Meet

Meet Maryknollers who have used listening in the Synod processes as a roadmap.

2.DISCERN WITH OUR FAITH



Read

the Gospel of Jn 14:15-21

Reflect

How is the Spirit inviting you or your community to be a roadmap of love for others

3.GO DEEPER



Transform

Use the Visio Divina Exercises to let the Spirit guide you. Use this week's image to reflect on where you may have strayed and how you can get back on course.

Respond

Don't look away from someone who lives on the street. This week stop, and listen to their story.

Closing
Prayer

Conclude with your intentions, an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, and the prayer refrain.



Young adults from Maryknoll's YAE community with migrant children

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

The Upper Room:

FROM LOOKING UP TO STEPPING OUT

Prayer O God, give us the courage to dream new dreams, think new thoughts and go forward into the future with the Spirit.

Introduction

It's graduation time. In a matter of a few weeks the disciples moved through the fear and trauma of Good Friday, the glimmers of hope of Easter morning, and the life-giving encounters with the Risen Jesus in the Upper Room. Now they find themselves on a hilltop with Jesus who gives them their commission: "Go, and make disciples of all nations." They gaze as Jesus ascends, but are quickly grounded in the reality of their world. Their snapping back to reality is a reminder that mission begins in the here and now. Their graduation gift will come with Pentecost when the Spirit burns away the remaining doubts and fears. As Missionary Disciples, we bring our Easter Season to an end next week with the celebration of Pentecost and the reminder that we share that same commission and are equipped with the same gifts.

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I WILL
BE WITH
YOU
ALWAYS
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1.SHARING OUR STORIES



- Share** Share a time when you graduated from something and weren't sure what to do next.
- Meet** Meet the Maryknoll Young Adult group who went on mission after finishing their program and learned from the migrants how to manage transition and change.

2.DISCERN WITH OUR FAITH



- Read** the Gospel of Mt 28:16-20
- Reflect** To what "nations" or groups is Jesus sending you or your community? Why?

3.GO DEEPER



- Transform** Use the Visio Divina Exercises to let the Spirit guide you. Let this week's image speak to you about whom and where God may be sending you to.
- Respond** Make a list of places either locally or internationally that you feel called to visit. Map out the challenges and opportunities of engaging with them. Consider going on an immersion trip.
- Closing Prayer** Conclude with your intentions, an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, and the prayer refrain.

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