

Sunday, May 11, 2025

How to hear the gospel

The root of the word *obey* is akin to “hear.” People tend to think only about the second part of obedience—following the rules, submitting to another’s command. If the history of a word means anything, though, then the first part of obeying would be hearing. And in this sense hearing involves more than simply words entering one’s mind. It also includes listening: taking in what someone is saying and reflecting on it, making it part of who one is, learning. That process is the prelude to action. No different is the word of God. However the gospel message comes to you, you are called to listen and then act.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 13:14, 43-52; Revelation 7:9, 14b-17; John 10:27-30 (51).
“My sheep hear my voice ... and they follow me.”

Monday, May 12, 2025

Feeling a little sheepish?

There is nothing cuter than a fuzzy baby lamb. But what about when they get older and are bona-fide sheep? Not so much. Sheep aren’t the smartest or cuddliest of creatures. When left to their own devices they’ll wander, get lost or maimed, destroy their own pasture, and panic over just about anything. Unfortunately for us, it is sheep, not lambs, to which Jesus compares his followers. Smelly, erratic, hapless sheep. While we may have our cute, fuzzy moments, we also have many not-so-cuddly occasions where we are difficult to love, difficult to be around, and just plain difficult. In Jesus’ words we find not condemnation but assurance that even in these times, he is there for us, calling our name. Remember to listen for Jesus’ voice in even your worst sheeplike moments.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 11:1-18; John 10:1-10 (279). “The shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.”

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

You’ve got this

Apathy and fear of failure are roadblocks on the spiritual journey. As 19th-century philosopher G.K. Chesterton notes, “The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been difficult; and left untried.” A lifetime exposed to the gospels, sacraments, saints, and moral teaching is often not enough to get us to the tipping point of committed discipleship. What will it take for us to get on board? “Don’t be afraid of the radicalness of God’s demands,” says Saint John Paul II. “If God asks much of you it is because he knows you can give much.”

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 11:19-26; John 10:22-30 (280). “[Barnabus] encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord in firmness of heart.”

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

Wait for it

Matthias was chosen by the remaining 11 apostles to replace Judas following the latter’s betrayal of Jesus. Perhaps he could be thought of as the patron saint of later vocations. All are called by Jesus to bear fruit, and there are many ways to do so. But some fruit just takes a little longer than others to ripen. Those who come late to religious life bring with them a wealth of experience. Consider your own options and keep those discerning a religious vocation in your prayers. Learn more at vocationnetwork.org.

FEAST OF MATTHIAS, APOSTLE

Acts 1:15-17, 20-26; John 15:9-17 (564). “It was ... I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit.”

Thursday, May 15, 2025

Share with the group

In the gospels Jesus’ words are often directed to a particular group of people—the Pharisees and scribes, the crowds, his disciples. Most of us regularly hear the word of God in a large group, such as Sunday Mass, where, Vatican II reminds us, the presence of Christ in the Word is as real as in the Eucharist. But faith can also be enlivened in other gatherings, such as Bible study groups, small Christian communities, or simple discussions with family or friends. Paying attention to the words of Jesus in different group settings can help us pick up nuances we hadn’t noticed before. Jesus always has something new to say.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 13:13-25; John 13:16-20 (282). “My brothers, if one of you has a word of exhortation for the people, please speak.”

Friday, May 16, 2025

An unshakable foundation

What is troubling your heart today? In Christ we have the foundation that no stress can shake. Jesus spoke of his troubled heart in the garden before his Crucifixion. Yet not even death could keep him from the fulfillment God promised. The disciples worried about their world falling apart even after they encountered the risen Christ. Yet Jesus promised them “another Advocate,” his very Spirit, that would sustain them. This same Spirit is who you may draw on for support today and every day. As a reminder of God’s constant presence, try incorporating into your daily routine this classic prayer of Saint Teresa of Avila’s: Let nothing disturb you./ Let nothing frighten you./ All things are passing away./ God never changes./ Patience obtains all things./ Whoever has God lacks nothing./ God alone suffices.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 13:26-33; John 14:1-6 (283). “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me.”

Saturday, May 17, 2025

Take courage

Living the gospel can be a thankless job. In fact, it can be downright dangerous. Persecution has been part of the life of Christians since the church began. Paul and the first disciples faced beatings, imprisonment, mockery, and derision. Yet something about their experience of God was so compelling that they couldn’t help but preach and live the Good News. Though understandably discouraged at times, and probably even doubtful, the early disciples persevered and, as scripture records, they were “filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.” Today we still face emotional and sometimes physical persecution from folks who don’t quite get the gospel, including those with “high standing” in our lives. Let us pray for the courage of our foremothers and forefathers to resolutely live the gospel.

EASTER WEEKDAY

Acts 13:44-52; John 14:7-14 (284). “[They] . . . stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their territory.”

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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