

MONDAY**30 MAY****Acts 19:1-8****Psalm 68:1-6****John 16:29-end****TUESDAY****31 MAY****Visit of the Blessed
Virgin Mary to
Elizabeth****Zephaniah 3:14-18****Psalm 113****Romans 12:9-16****Luke 1:39-49 (50-
56)****WEDNESDAY****1 JUNE****Acts 20:28-end****Psalm 68:27-28.
32-end****John 17:11-19****THURSDAY****2 JUNE****Acts 22:30; 23:6-11****Psalm 16:1. 5-end****John 17:20-end****FRIDAY****3 JUNE****Acts 25:13-21****Psalm 103:1-2.
11-12. 19-20****John 21:15-19****SATURDAY****4 JUNE****Acts 28:16-20. 30-
end****Psalm 11:4-end****John 21:20-end****REFLECTION**

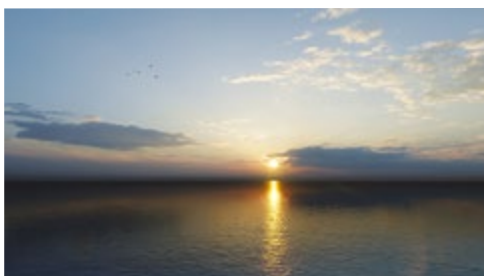
Jesus' prayers in our readings from John's Gospel this week reflect the aspirations he has for his current and future followers. He prays they will know joy, unity, love

and a new closeness to God. All this sounds wonderful, but these readings also show that, despite praying for such things, Jesus did not expect the Christian life to be a blissful, easy existence. He warns his followers that they will face hostility, hatred and persecution. The difficulties of the Christian life are also reflected in the prediction of Peter's martyrdom, recounted in Friday's Gospel, and the arrest, detention and trial of Paul, in our Acts readings.

This week leads up to Pentecost, when we celebrate the giving of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit enables Jesus' prayers for great blessings on his followers to become a reality but does not eliminate our troubles – the trials Jesus spoke of are still an inevitable part of the Christian life. However, the Spirit does empower us to cope with these difficulties and helps us to attempt the challenging things Christ mentions in our readings such as obeying God, loving others and knowing his joy even in difficulty.

PRAYER

Risen, ascended Lord,
as we rejoice at your triumph,
fill your Church on earth with power and compassion,
that all who are estranged by sin
may find forgiveness and know your peace,
to the glory of God the Father.

**SCIENCE AND RELIGION****PART II – GOD IN HEAVEN –
CHRISTIANITY AND ASTRONOMY**

It's understandable that early humans assumed the earth was flat, although the idea was discounted by serious thinkers far earlier than is commonly thought. Even before the time of Jesus, Aristotle (384-322 BC) pointed out that anyone travelling south would start to see southern constellations rising higher above the horizon. So when, in Egypt, Ptolemy (AD 100-170) formulated his view of the universe, it was based upon the understanding that the earth is spherical. But his theory maintained that the stationary earth is orbited by the sun and other planets. In other words Ptolemy placed earth – and humankind – at the centre.

By 1514 Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) had formulated a "heliocentric" view, suggesting that the sun is the fixed point around which the other planets revolve. At first – possibly because he was a cleric – Copernicus' theory was surprisingly uncontroversial, even embraced by the Church. Indeed, the 1514 Lateran Council considered reforming the ecclesiastical calendar based on Copernicus' findings. In the Reformation, Protestant objections to heliocentrism were based upon biblical literalism. Martin Luther (1483-1546) is reputed to have called Copernicus a "fool" who, "wants to turn the whole art of astronomy upside down. However, as scripture tells us, so did Joshua bid the Sun to stand still and not the Earth."

It wasn't until the Italian Galilei (1564-1642) started to systematically observe the heavens with his telescope, that the touch paper was lighted. In 1616 the Church declared it heretical to assert that the sun is central to the universe. Galileo was summoned before an inquisition, forced to recant and spent the rest of his life under house arrest. In his work, Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) removed all doubt about heliocentrism. But for all these pioneers did, it wasn't until Apollo 8 circled the Moon in 1968, that humans first witnessed an orb floating in the inky darkness of space – the earth that modern Christians celebrate as God's amazing creation.

LIVE
the **WORD**SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEKEdited by
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and
Heather Smith

Seventh week of Easter

Monday 30 May to
Saturday 4 June
2022

WEEK

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