



THE Aquinas Way

Greetings, Theological Reflections and Spiritual Resources
during the COVID-19 Pandemic

*The Lord's resurrection and glorification show us the
life that will be given to us in the future.*

SAINT AUGUSTINE

Bulletin VI - April 24, 2020

Greetings from Carolyn Wright, D.Min.
Aquinas Institute of Theology Graduate, 2004
Assistant Professor, Aquinas Institute of Theology

April 24, 2020

Dear Members of the Aquinas Community,

We live in a time of uncertainty. What we thought we knew and how we lived is forever changed. In some ways, we find ourselves in the 'betwixt and between'—the what is—after the what was and that which is yet to be. We find ourselves moving in a liminal space in time.



The term 'liminal' originates from the Latin, *limen*; translated as threshold. The ethnographer, Arnold van Gennep, created the term 'liminality' when studying the phases of the rites of passage of males in African and Australian tribal societies last century. The movement through the rites of passages consisted of a regular pattern of stages from separation to transition to incorporation. The liminal period was identified as the transition stage 'where new and/or expanded understandings of values, abilities, and meanings for an individual are created' within the context of community (Lisa Withrow, "Sanctifying Space and Creating Liminal Bridges," *Journal of Religious Leadership*, 18, no.1 (Spring 2019): 77). Anthropologist, Victor Turner furthered Van Gennep's work and "reappropriat[ed] an understanding of threshold times and spaces as a cultural space of human creativity and agency" (Withrow, 77).

During the fifth week of Easter, the Liturgy of the Hours provides a reading which addresses our liminality as a people of faith. Augustine of Hippo's discourse on the psalms, calls us to be a people of liminality as he speaks to us of two periods of time: "the one that is now [as] beset with the trials and troubles of this life and the other yet to come, a life of everlasting serenity and joy."

The now is our space of liminality; redefined day to day, hour to hour and, sometimes, moment to moment. Knowing and grieving what was. Living through the uncertainty of what is. Hoping for some stability; for what might be.

The Easter celebrations put us face-to-face with the reality and the truth that Christ is alive and working with and through us in this muck during these liminal times. Let us invite Christ to work in our hearts and grow our patience, our generosity, our compassion, and our gratitude. Let us invite Christ to work in our hearts and challenge us to clarify our values, virtues, and gifts. Let us invite Christ to work in our hearts and push us to see ourselves and others with new eyes; no longer as individuals—although our isolation might challenge this—but as utterly connected and interdependent; as family, as neighbors, as cities, states, countries and as a world. Let us invite Christ to engage our gifts and creativity to cultivate and bring forth life in our midst.

Let us do our part to protect the vulnerable, the marginalized, the impoverished. Let us praise God as a People—as a Church—in the temple of Creation through our collective action following Christ's lead during these times of unprecedented liminality.

In St. Dominic,

*Dr. Carolyn Wright, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology
Class of 2004*

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

**Liturgy of the Hours
Saturday, Fifth Week of Easter**

SECOND READING

From a discourse on the psalms by Saint Augustine, Bishop
(Ps. 148,1-2: CCL 40, 2165, 2166)

The Easter Alleluia





Our thoughts in this present life should turn on the praise of God, because it is in praising God that we shall rejoice for ever in the life to come; and no one can be ready for the next life unless he trains himself for it now. So we praise God during our earthly life, and at the same time we make our petitions to him. Our praise is expressed with joy, our petitions with yearning. We have been promised something we do not yet possess, and because the promise was made by one who keeps his word, we trust him and are glad; but insofar as possession is delayed, we can only long and yearn for it. It is good for us to persevere in longing until we receive what was promised, and yearning is over; then praise alone will remain.

Because there are these two periods of time—the one that now is, beset with the trials and troubles of this life, and the other yet to come, a life of everlasting serenity and joy—we are given two liturgical seasons, one before Easter and the other after. The season before Easter signifies the troubles in which we live here and now, while the time after Easter which we are celebrating at present signifies the happiness that will be ours in the future. What we commemorate before Easter is what we experience in this life; what we celebrate after Easter points to something we do not yet possess. This is why we keep the first season with fasting and prayer; but now the fast is over and we devote the present season to praise. Such is the meaning of the Alleluia we sing.

Both these periods are represented and demonstrated for us in Christ our head. The Lord's passion depicts for us our present life of trial—shows how we must suffer and be afflicted and finally die. The Lord's resurrection and glorification show us the life that will be given to us in the future.

Now therefore, [brothers and sisters], we urge you to praise God. That is what we are all telling each other when we say Alleluia. You say to your neighbour, "Praise the Lord!" and he says the same to you. We are all urging one another to praise the Lord, and all thereby doing what each of us urges the other to do. But see that your praise comes from your whole being; in other words, see that you praise God not with your lips and voices alone, but with your minds, your lives and all your actions.

We are praising God now, assembled as we are here in church; but when we go on our various ways again, it seems as if we cease to praise God. But provided we do not cease to live a good life, we shall always be praising God. You cease to praise God only when you swerve from justice and from what is pleasing to God. If you never turn aside from the good life, your tongue may be silent but your actions will cry aloud, and God will perceive your intentions; for as our ears hear each other's voices, so do God's ears hear our thoughts.

CCMA Resources

The Catholic Campus Ministry Association offers a [page of resources](#) for campus ministry during the COVID-19 Crisis.

The Word

The Word offers [daily homilies](#) from the Order of Preachers.

Easter Season Resources

Resources for families to celebrate the Easter season are available through [Loyola Press](#).

COVID-19 Resources from The Catholic Health Association

The Catholic Health Association of the United States has created a [list of COVID-19 resources](#) which provide information regarding bioethics, palliative care, pastoral care, spiritual resources, and a wealth of credible resources for anyone with questions about this pandemic.

COVID-19 Resources from The US Conference of Catholic Bishops

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops provides a [page of resources](#) for Catholic at home during the COVID-19 crisis.

Free Formational Events

The National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers has a [collection of one-hour formational events](#) presented free to ministry leaders and volunteers as part of their mission to support and strengthen those who accompany young people as they encounter and follow Jesus Christ.

Family Resources to Pray Together from Home

The United States Association of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd provides a [wonderful page of resources](#) for parents and families to pray together from home.

Friarly

This project is a [collaborative effort of the Dominican Student Brothers](#) of St. Dominic Priory in St. Louis, Missouri. The COVID-19 resource page offers a number prayer and liturgical resources including the daily preaching by one of the Dominican friars.

Today's Word of Hope

[Daily reflections](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis offered by Fr. James Marchionda, OP, Provincial of the Dominican Central Province of St. Albert the Great.

Reflections from Fr. Cristobal Torres, OP

Fr. Cristobal a graduate of Aquinas Institute of Theology and a friar from the Southern Province of St. Martin de Porres. He serves as University Chaplain at Barry University and offers a short daily reflection on the [Barry University Campus Ministry Facebook page](#).

CHURCH: Catholics Helping Us Reach Catholics at Home

This is a [public Facebook group](#) facilitated by Firebrand+ (created by Aquinas graduate, Jared Bryson, and his business partner, Katie O'Brien Pesh). The CHURCH group is a portal to see how people are sharing our faith in unique ways during this unprecedented time.