

Devotion, Week of April 27, 2025—Second Week of Eastertide

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

We are in the second week of Eastertide, the liturgical season that lasts until Pentecost, 50 days after Easter on June 8. You will see white paraments throughout this period as we continue to celebrate the resurrection and the time period when Jesus appeared periodically to his disciples, preparing them for his ascension into heaven and the coming of the Holy Spirit as his Advocate.

I find it fitting that Pope Francis died on Easter Monday. He was able to greet the thousands of people who gathered on Easter and then quietly slipped away in the early hours of the next day. He was an incredible man and leader. I found it interesting that he was a chemistry major and worked in a biochemistry lab. He later received a degree in philosophy and taught literature and psychology. He became a Jesuit priest, and was the first Jesuit pope, the first from the Americas and from the Southern Hemisphere, and the first born or raised outside of Europe since the 8th-century Syrian pope, Gregory III. His Jesuit background always showed in his ministry – those vows of chastity and poverty influenced his life greatly, including his modesty in how he lived – in a small apartment rather than the richly furnished papal residence. On the night of his election, he took a bus back to his hotel with the cardinals rather than being driven in the papal car. William Bole, in his book about the Pope, said that “As a Jesuit pope, Francis made clear that a fundamental task of the faithful is not so much to follow rules but to discern what God is calling them to do. He altered the culture of the clergy, steering away from what he named “clericalism” (which dwells on priestly status and authority) and toward an ethic of service (Francis said the church's shepherds must have the “smell of the sheep”, always staying close to the People of God).”

Pope Francis’ lifelong concern for the poor and marginalized was a blessing to all of us, and as we spend these 50 days of Eastertide rejoicing in our risen Lord, I hope you will remember this man who lived as Jesus taught us – to care for the least and to welcome all as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Jeanne