

Fifth Sunday of Easter – May 19, 2019 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: Acts 14:21-27

After Paul and Barnabas had proclaimed the good news to that city and made a considerable number of disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch. They strengthened the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in the faith, saying, "It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." They appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had put their faith. Then they traveled through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. After proclaiming the word at Perga they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now accomplished. And when they arrived, they called the church together and reported what God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Psalm: Ps 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13

R. (cf. 1) I will praise your name forever, my king and my God.

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

R. I will praise your name forever, my king and my God.

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.
Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might.

R. I will praise your name forever, my king and my God.

Let them make known your might to the children
of Adam,
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
Your kingdom is a kingdom for all ages,
and your dominion endures through all
generations.

R. I will praise your name forever, my king and my God.

Scripture Reading: Revelation 21:1-5a

Then I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away." The One who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

Gospel: John 13:31-33a, 34-35

When Judas had left them, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and God will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."



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Prayer

Loving Father, I thank you for this day
and for all the good things
I have experienced.
Forgive me, whenever I have
sinned against you,
against others or against myself
and let my heart rest in peace with you.
Amen.

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the gospel be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Glory. We will hear about it in Sunday's Gospel. God will be glorified and God will glorify Jesus. And will do it right away. Fine. But most of us admit we do not understand what it means to give glory to God or to Jesus. Let us look. The word glory could be defined as: very great praise, honor, or distinction bestowed by others. I was at a concert by Nickel Creek a number of years ago in which the audience gave wild, unrestrained approbation to the three performers, all of it deserved. We thundered appreciation and shouted and whistled after every song in a two and a half hour concert. The performers were in their twenties at that time, but they had complete musical mastery. Half way through the concert I noticed that I had been smiling the whole time. At last, when the three tried to end the concert, the audience, in effect, threatened to mob them. One of the performers called out, "Everyone deserves this experience! We are going to line up the whole audience and let each of you come up here, and have everybody go crazy over you!"

Was this a kind of "glory"? But a member of Nickel Creek had written a song that might show a better meaning of glory. It is called "The Hand Song."* Here is the story it tells. A young boy tore off some garden roses for his mother. She had been tending these roses with great care, and he, unknowingly, pulled them to pieces. The thorns dug into his hands as he brought his present to her. She extracted these thorny reminders of her roses, lovingly. Some time later, held close on her lap, the boy listened to stories from the bible. He saw a picture of Jesus and cried out, Momma, he's got some scars just like me. Finally grown up, the young man is called by Uncle Sam. His "number" is drawn, and he throws himself in front of a friend to shield him from gunfire. He gave his life, a deed he had learned from the roses and the cross. He learned what love was and he gave it on the battlefield. It is a small story, with no stadiums of people to give applause. Did the boy/man earn "glory"? Yes. Real love is the essence of human life. Jesus says so in this Sunday's Gospel:

"I give you a new commandment: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."

This is a love we can understand. Jesus hurt his hands and his soul on the cross. It took his life. The pain and death he incurred for others is filled with the beauty of quiet glory. Can we imagine this kind of glory? Even if we hurt our hands?

**The Hand Song, by Sean Watkins and David Puckett, Copyright © 2000. From the album Nickel Creek.*

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. Paul and Barnabas traveled through the lands and they opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. According to them, who was responsible for letting in the Gentiles? Who is in charge of your ministry? How deep is your belief about that?
2. What is the connection between the holy city in the reading and God's dwelling with the human race?
3. "As I have loved you, so should you love one another." According to Pope Francis, how do we show that we "love one another" in our words or in our actions?

Christian love is always "concrete." Love, then, consists more in actions than in words, more in giving than in receiving. Love is not a kind of romanticism: either it is a selfless and solicitous love which rolls up its sleeves and looks to the poor, preferring to give rather than to receive; or it has nothing to do with Christian love. "If we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us." (1 John 4:12) The experience of faith is found in this double "remaining."

Vatican Radio, Pope Francis, Mass celebrated at the Casa Santa Marta, January 9, 2014 Pope Francis: Christian love is concrete

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

Almighty ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us, that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under your protective care, bear much fruit and come to the joys of life eternal. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen