

## **Sixth Sunday of Easter – May 26, 2019 – Good Shepherd Parish**

### **Scripture Reading: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29**

Some who had come down from Judea were instructing the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the Mosaic practice, you cannot be saved." Because there arose no little dissension and debate by Paul and Barnabas with them, it was decided that Paul, Barnabas, and some of the others should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question. The apostles and elders, in agreement with the whole church, decided to choose representatives and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. The ones chosen were Judas, who was called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers. This is the letter delivered by them:

"The apostles and the elders, your brothers, to the brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia of Gentile origin: greetings. Since we have heard that some of our number who went out without any mandate from us have upset you with their teachings and disturbed your peace of mind, we have with one accord decided to choose representatives and to send them to you along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have dedicated their lives to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. So we are sending Judas and Silas who will also convey this same message by word of mouth: 'It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities, namely, to abstain from meat sacrificed to idols, from blood, from meats of strangled animals, and from unlawful marriage. If you keep free of these, you will be doing what is right. Farewell.'"

### **Psalm: Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8**

R. (4) O God, let all the nations praise you!

May God have pity on us and bless us;  
may he let his face shine upon us.  
So may your way be known upon earth;  
among all nations, your salvation.

R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

May the nations be glad and exult  
because you rule the peoples in equity;  
the nations on the earth you guide.

R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

May the peoples praise you, O God;  
may all the peoples praise you!  
May God bless us,  
and may all the ends of the earth fear him!

R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

### **Scripture Reading: Rev 21:10-14, 22-23**

The angel took me in spirit to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It gleamed with the splendor of God. Its radiance was like that of a precious stone, like jasper, clear as crystal. It had a massive, high wall, with twelve gates where twelve angels were stationed and on which names were inscribed, the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites. There were three gates facing east, three north, three south, and three west. The wall of the city had twelve courses of stones as its foundation, on which were inscribed the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb. The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb.

### **Gospel: John 14:23-29**

Jesus said to his disciples: "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me.

"I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me tell you, 'I am going away and I will come back to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe."

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### **Prayer**

O Lord, you have searched me and you know me!  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
You discern my thoughts from afar.  
You search out my path and my lying down,  
and are acquainted with all of my way.  
Even before a word is on my tongue,  
behold, O Lord, you know it all together. . .  
For you formed my inward parts,  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you for I am wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works. Amen.

*Psalm 139: 1-4, 13, 14*

## Sixth Sunday of Easter – May 26, 2019 – Good Shepherd Parish

### **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**

In Sunday's liturgy, Jesus says, "If you loved me you would rejoice." Imagine this: your best friend is leaving town, the one you had counted on for any trouble you just needed to share. There is no way to change his/her going, it is virtually certain. What do you do with your sorrow? In the reading, Jesus was leaving. He told Mary Magdalene he must go to the Father. He had plunged into death and he swam to shore, but nevertheless could not stay on in this world. We sorrow, big time. Sunday, this is the story of the Gospel. The crucifixion had taken him away from us, and now his ascension will make his absence completely final. We, along with the apostles, do not want to lose him one more time! We are aghast that our friend is going away. Think of the experience of a funeral. You may be truly glad that your beloved no longer has the pains and shortages of this life. But you do not get your own burden lifted, you get more added to it. He or she is gone. Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me tell you, I am going away and I will come back to you." *Going away but coming back? What kind of sense does this make?* (1) Start with the pre-Jesus world. God the Father had been with the people for all ages. The First Testament tells this over and over. But God the Father stayed unknowable in very important ways. He told Moses that he, God, would pass by the mouth of a cave where Moses was, and ..... when my glory passes I will set you in the cleft of the rock and will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand, so that you may see my back; but my face may not be seen. (Exodus 33: 22) To see God directly would destroy a human being. (2) To close this gap, God decided to tell us everything about himself in a way we could understand. He speaks out his very self, using a Word that left nothing unsaid. Jesus was that Word, spoken in the large language called humanity. Now God can be known because we can know Jesus. (3) Jesus dies, resurrects and ascends to the Father from whom he came. Are we abandoned?

No. Just as the Father had done, Jesus actually spoke out his very self in a further Word that left nothing of himself unsaid. That Word is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the full reality of a human being called Jesus, who is already the very interior reality of God. We are to be closer to Jesus and to the Father even more than the apostles were! If you and I say yes to this Spirit, we will know that Jesus is with us, just as sheep know the voice of their shepherd. In knowing Jesus, we will know the presence of the Father. We will find him in the Mass, in the Great Sacrament of Baptism, in prayer, in the people around us. We will be side by side with the closest possible presence of the God of love. So we needn't sorrow. Nice as it might have seemed to experience Jesus in his physical company, we now have a much closer relation to him in the here and now.

### **INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING**

1. Is there any growth without tension? Would the Church be better off if there were never dissension and debate? Which is a sign of life: Paul and Barnabas going to Jerusalem to work out the Judean people's objections, or the two "sides" staying as far away from each other as possible?
2. In this reading John talks about the "Lamb," present with the twelve apostles. Why is Christ called the Lamb (which we repeat in every Mass: "Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world ...")? Has he been a sacrificial victim?
3. The second great gift in this reading is the promise of the Holy Spirit, who will teach us everything. Do you think there could be a direct proportion between how much a person loves and how much that person allows the Holy Spirit to live within him/herself?

### **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: Grant, almighty God, that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion these days of joy, which we keep in honor of the risen Lord, and that what we relive in remembrance we may always hold to in what we do. 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

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### **Prayer to St. Michael**

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen