

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY 15, 2022

Dear Girls and Boys,

This is the Fifth Sunday of Easter and today's readings continue with the same events that we heard about last Sunday. We follow the travels of Saints Paul and Barnabas, as they spread the good news of the Lord. We also read about John's Revelation in the second reading and we finish with the new commandment that Jesus had given to his apostles in order to carry on His work.

The FIRST READING (**from the Acts of the Apostles 14:21-27**) has a lot of unfamiliar names of places where the disciples traveled, they are names of cities or regions in Turkey. We learn how much effort they put into personal travels and how very far they went, to spread the good news and to convince the Gentiles that Jesus was the son of God.

Paul and Barnabas preached the good news in Derbe and won some people to the Lord.

Then they went back to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia;

They encouraged the followers and begged them to remain faithful.

They told them,

"We have to suffer a lot before we can get into God's kingdom."

Paul and Barnabas chose some of those who had faith in the Lord to be leaders for each of the churches.

Then they went without eating and prayed that the Lord would take good care of these leaders.

Paul and Barnabas went on through Pisidia to Pamphylia, where they preached in the town of Perga.

Then they went down to Attalia and sailed to Antioch in Syria.

It was there that they had been placed in God's care for the work, they had now completed.

After arriving in Antioch, they called the church together.

They told the people what God had helped them do and how he had made it possible for the Gentiles to believe.

Did you notice the many names of cities to which the two Apostles traveled to proclaim the good news of Jesus? They are in Turkey and Syria and a long way from their home. They did all their travels on foot; there were no cars, trains, or planes to get to those many

places. Imagine you and your family walking on foot down to the shore! We cannot think of how many days and months they spent walking from one town to another to tell the Jews and Gentiles about the message that Jesus had told them to go forth and preach the good news. They knew they were doing the right thing and no sacrifice was

too big for them. We should learn a lesson from them and also be willing to make those special sacrifices for our Lord.

THE RESPONSORIAL PSALM (**145:8-9, 10 and 12**) tells us why we should praise our Lord's name forever: He is good to us, he loves us always, and He is kind. We should copy Him and try also to be good and kind to our family members and our friends and to all those who need us to treat them lovingly. We could just once try to be kind to someone who needs an understanding word or gesture by offering them a helping hand, a smile or a hug and thus spread the good news like Sts. Paul and Barnabas.

I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

**You are merciful, Lord!
You are kind and patient and always loving.
You are good to everyone,
and you take care of all your creation.**

I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

**All creation will thank you,
and your loyal people
will praise you.
Then everyone will know about
the mighty things you do
and your glorious kingdom.**

I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

The next reading for today is the SECOND READING (**Revelation 21:1-4**) The word 'Revelation' is often used in the Bible. It means it is a vision that John, the Apostle had. He, like so many prophets before him, had received messages from God. He talks of a 'new heaven and a new earth' and tells his people that the Lord promises to be with his people.

**Then I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth.
The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and so had the sea.
Then I saw New Jerusalem, that holy city, coming down from God in
heaven.
It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown and ready to meet her
husband.**

**I heard a loud voice shout from the throne:
“ God's home is now with his people,
He will live with them, and they will be his own.
Yes, God will make his home among his people.
He will wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death,
suffering, crying, or pain.
These things of the past are gone forever.”**

John's revelation has been interpreted by scholars as the start of a new beginning in the creation of Christ's Church. What this means for us is that God is always with us, his people. He will wipe away our tears and will take away the pain and the suffering as these have no place in a Church guided by hope. We, his children, have to believe in Him and put our hope in Him because he said they are things of the past and are gone forever.

"John" also gives us the GOSPEL (**John13:13a, 33-35**) and in it he tells of Jesus giving us a new commandment. Let us read it and then discuss, what that means for us.

After Judas had gone, Jesus said:

**"My children, I will be with you for a little while longer.
Then you will look for me,**

**but you won't find me.
I tell you just as I told the people,
You cannot go where I am going.**

**"But I am giving you a new command.
You must love each other, just as I have loved you.
If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples."**

With this message, Jesus tells his disciples what He is planning. He will be leaving them and returning to heaven, but they will not be able to come with him. Jesus has instructed them to preach the good news about Him to the people far and wide, which as we read in the First Reading, is how far some of the disciples traveled to spread the news about Jesus. But now He will leave them and they have to carry on the work, which He has chosen for them to do. We, too, have the job of spreading the good news by living the way God has shown us and by obeying the commandments. But Jesus gives them also a very important new command, a new rule: they are to love each other just like He has loved them. That means love one another above all, and this way all the people who meet them will know that they belong to him. They are His disciples.

That command is also for us. We are constantly reminded that this is our biggest job, that is, to love each other. Did you ever notice how easy it is to do something you LOVE to do? Think of something that you enjoy a whole lot. When you do it, you see how easy it is and how great it feels to do because you love to do it. Let us take this lesson from today's Mass: Love one another, including your parents, your siblings (even if they sometimes annoy you or you annoy them), your friends, and even other people who are not necessarily your friends.. For this week, let each of us try to show just ONE person in a special way that we love him or her, just as Jesus has commanded us. Guaranteed it will make you feel great.

We had a lot of readings today. Here are some questions for you to see if you remember:

1. Who were the two Apostles who traveled so far to spread the good news in Turkey?
2. Why should we praise God's name forever?
3. What is another word for 'vision' that the Bible uses?
4. How can we show it when we want to spread the good news?
5. What is the NEW command that Jesus gave to his disciples?

Answers to the questions:

1. Who were the two Apostles who traveled so far to spread the good news in Turkey?

The two Apostles who traveled through Turkey to spread the good news were Paul and Barnabas

2. Why should we praise God's name forever?

We should praise God's name forever, because He is good and kind and forgiving.

3. What is another word for 'vision' that the Bible uses?

The word that the Bible uses for 'vision' is 'revelation'.

4. How can we show it when we want to spread the good news?

We can spread the good news by obeying the commandments.

5. What is the NEW command that Jesus gave to his disciples?

The New Command that Jesus gave to his disciples is: love one another as I have loved you

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