

Notes for Next Sunday

Fifth Sunday of Easter

The Point of this Week's Readings

First Reading (Acts 11:1-18). Jews had very strict dietary laws. It went back to the time that God gave these rules in Leviticus 11. To eat anything on the forbidden list like pork was a great big no, no. While the Jews often forgot the commandments, they generally were very conscientious of what they ate. In chapter 10 the Lord had come to Peter in a vision and laid out before Peter a large menu of food, some of which included what to Jews was unclean. Peter objected strenuously but God told that if it came from the Lord it was not impure. This was a way of getting Peter ready to minister to Cornelius a Gentile Centurion. Peter follows the Lord's instructions and goes to Cornelius' house. When returned to Jerusalem he is taken to task for his actions. Our reading is Peter's explanation to his critics. Peter's testimony led to the church in Jerusalem accepting Gentiles into their community of believers.

Second Reading (Revelation 21:1-7). This is the picture that John was shown of the New Jerusalem (Heaven). This is a picture of heaven after Judgment Day. Like in last week's reading, verse 4 again mentions situations of what will not be there. Jesus affirms His sovereignty by calling Himself "Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End," Verse 6 speaks of providing the water of which is offered free of charge. This is a symbol of the preaching of the gospel. He goes on to picture what will happen to believers who remain faithful to the end (verse 7).

Gospel (John 16:12-22). The disciples along with all Jewish people had expectations of grandeur and might when the Messiah would come. They did not understand that Jesus had come to be the Savior of the world by dying for the sins of all people. Therefore, when Jesus spoke of His upcoming death and resurrection they were very confused. In our gospel this week Jesus is again pointing to His death and resurrection. But, He is also pointing forward the Pentecost when the Holy Spirit would come into their lives. The comfort here is that the Holy Spirit is a part of the Holy Trinity and will convey the message from the Triune God. They get confused by the phrase "a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." Jesus is talking about His time in the grave and then when the disciples will see Him after the resurrection.

For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.

FIRST READING – Acts 11:1-18

The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him ³ and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them." ⁴ Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened: ⁵ "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. ⁶ I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air. ⁷ Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.' ⁸ "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' ⁹ "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' ¹⁰ This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again. ¹¹ "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped

at the house where I was staying. ¹² The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³ He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. ¹⁴ He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.' ¹⁵ "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?" ¹⁸ When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."

11:1-18 The chapters before the text (Acts 9–10) are filled with dramatic and miraculous death-to-life events. Saul's conversion is the miraculous working of the Spirit to bring a prominent and zealous Jew to faith in Jesus (spiritual death-to-life). The raising of Dorcas from death (9:36–43) is a great physical miracle (physical death-to-life). The miraculous visions to Cornelius and then Peter in ch 10 lay the groundwork for the dramatic and miraculous working of God to include formerly unclean people to be part of his plan. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:2 circumcised believers. Those who insisted on circumcision along with saving faith. Cf Gal 3. Since the uncircumcised Gentiles were only beginning to be received into the Church, this title may be retrospective—we see the party forming from this incident. Cf Ac 15. (TLSB)

11:14 you and all your household. † Not only the family, including any children, but also slaves and employed individuals under Cornelius's authority. (CSB)

11:16 Peter comments on what went through his mind during the events of 10:44–48. Pentecost was the fulfillment of this prophecy about Baptism and the Spirit (ch 2). (TLSB)

11:17 God gave the same gift. God withheld neither the gift of grace nor the Holy Spirit from the Gentiles. Peter, having seen Christ's ministry, death, and resurrection, was also an eyewitness of the Gentiles' receiving of the Holy Spirit through the proclamation of the Gospel. (TLSB)

11:18 repentance unto life. It means that a mission by Jews to Gentiles can begin because, as Peter has seen, God has removed the social barrier between Jews and Gentiles. It is a breakthrough not simply because Peter and the Jerusalem church now accept Gentiles for baptism but also because they recognize the right of Jewish Christians to freely associate with Gentiles in the course of their mission. (Tannehill)

SECOND READING – Revelation 21:1-7

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son

21:1 *New heaven and a new earth.* Finally, the revelation of a perfectly restored creation is described. (TLSB)

21:1 *First heaven ... passed away.* This fulfills the prediction Jesus makes in Mt 24:35. Also, Rm 8:19–21 suggests that there is continuity between the new creation and that which it replaces. However, certain things truly disappear: sin, death, and corruption. That which has been redeemed is transformed. (TLSB)

21:1 *no longer any sea.* Symbolically conveys that everything threatening and evil is removed. (TLSB)

21:2 *new Jerusalem.* Because this city is explicitly identified with the “bride,” it is best taken as representing the collective people of God

21:3 *bride.* Normally in the ancient Near East a groom would not help prepare the bride for the ceremony; her family and attendants would carry out that role (cf. 19:8). It is in fact *Christ* who does adorn and prepare his church to be his bride (Eph 5:25–27). (CC)

21:4 Note that John describes heaven by way of negation, (i.e., in terms of what will not be there: tears, death, crying, or pain). Such a description is fitting, given that we have no experience of anything as fantastic as the new heavens and new earth (cf 1Co 2:9). (TLSB)

21:6 “the Beginning and the End” of the creation of the new heaven and earth. One more time the combination of “the Alpha and the Omega” and “the Beginning and the End” will appear, in 22:13, where *the Lord Christ* says this of himself. By sharing these titles, the full divinity of Christ and his equality with the Father are affirmed. (CC pp. 602-603)

GOSPEL – John 16:12-22

12 “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. **13** But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. **14** He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. **15** All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. **16** “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

16:12-22 In his farewell discourse on Maundy Thursday (John 14–16), Jesus tells the apostles many things that he knows will be difficult for them to understand. He describes himself as the true vine (15:1). He prepares the apostles for the world’s hatred, which first was for him (15:18). He speaks about how he must return to the Father (14:28), but he reassures his apostles that he is not leaving them alone. He is sending the Holy Spirit (16:7). Jesus’ teachings undoubtedly have overwhelmed and confused the disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

16:13 only what he hears. Just as Jesus had told them nothing but what came from the Father, so the Spirit would speak only what came from the Father and the Son. And He would tell them things still to come, prophecies they would write down also for us to learn. So God’s truth for us would be revealed. So we too would learn what Jesus’ work has meant and what lies ahead for us and for the world. (PBC)

¹⁷ Some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father?’” ¹⁸ They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.” ¹⁹ Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’?” ²⁰ I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. ²¹ A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. ²² So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

16:20 I tell you the truth. ESV has truly, truly. KJV has verily, verily. The special seal of verity (the twofold amen) and of authority (“I say to you”) marks the importance of the statement (See 1:51). And this spoken with a clarity that sees the coming hours and days as though they were already past. (Lenski)

16:22 no one will take away your joy. The resurrection would change things permanently, bringing a joy that cannot be removed by the world’s assaults. (CSB)