

Notes for Next Sunday

Seventh Sunday of Easter

The Point of this Week's Readings

First Reading (Acts 1:12-26). The disciples and others seek the Lord's will concerning the candidate of His choice to replace Judas as a leader of the Church, the new Israel. Today, entrust your future to the Lord in prayer. He will prepare your way before you. Since our Lord is present with us till the end of the age, He will knit together in love His faithful people with Himself and with one another.

Epistle (1 John 5:9-15). The testimony of the apostles, the life of Jesus, and the work of the Spirit testify that God has given us life in His Son. This testimony is in stark contradiction to all who teach that God's Son did not suffer in the flesh or that He comes to us apart from the flesh of His humanity.

Gospel (John 17:11b-19). The text is the middle portion of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. The prayer itself is set among Jesus' teachings at the Last Supper and immediately prior to his departure for the Garden of Gethsemane. We hear Jesus praying for His disciples. Jesus knows that when He ascends into heaven they will be left without His protection. So He prays for their protection as they carry out the ministry that He, Jesus, has given them. Jesus asks the Father to make the disciples holy through the Word of God. This will not only protect them but also empower them to do the work He has given them.

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

FIRST READING – Acts 1:12-26

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk^a from the city. ¹³ When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. ¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) ¹⁶ and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—¹⁷ he was one of our number and shared in this ministry." ¹⁸ (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. ¹⁹ Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰ "For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms, "'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,' and, "'May another take his place of leadership.'^d ²¹ Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." ²³ So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. ²⁴ Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." ²⁶ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

1:12 Sabbath day's walk. Pious Jews were expected to stay within the permitted distance of 2,000 cubits (just over ½ mi) from home on the holy day. (TLSB)

1:13 room. Probably an upper room of a large house, such as the one where the Last Supper was held or that of Mary, mother of Mark. (CSB)

1:13 Zealot. “the Zealot” is to say that he belonged to a sort of “freedom party” of political activists, people who were not only zealous in the Jewish religion but who also sought freedom from Roman rule. It is a mixed group of ordinary men with ordinary names. The Lord would accomplish extraordinary things through them. (PBC)

1:14 with the women. Possibly wives of the apostles and those listed as ministering to Jesus (CSB)

1:14 brothers. These brothers would include James, who later became important in the church. (CSB)

1:15 in those days. During the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost. (TLSB)

1:15 Peter stood up. His words and the believers’ subsequent actions show that a major change has taken place in Jesus’ followers. Peter is now an interpreter of Scripture and of God’s purpose for the church. His insight into Scripture and God’s purpose will be demonstrated in his missionary speeches, but even before the mission begins he is presented as one who knows what “was necessary” now (1:16) and what Scripture indicates to be “necessary” now (1:20-22). Peter is taking over a major function of the departed Jesus. It might seem that there has been no preparation for this sudden shift in role, but that is not true. The language with which Peter begins his speech in 1:16 echoes the language that Jesus used when he was last presented as Scripture interpreter. (Tannehill)

1:22 a witness with us of his resurrection. Apparently several met this requirement. On this occasion, however, the believers were selecting someone to become an official witness to the resurrection—thus, a 12th apostle (v. 25). (CSB)

1:26 cast lots. By casting lots they were able to allow God the right of choice. The use of rocks or sticks to designate the choice was common. This is the Bible’s last mention of casting lots. (CSB)

EPISTLE – 1 John 5:9-15

.⁹ We accept man’s testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. ¹⁰ Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

5:6-12 The testimony of the apostles, the life of Jesus, and the work of the Spirit testify that God has given us life in His Son. This testimony is in stark contradiction to all who teach that God’s Son did not suffer in the flesh or that He comes to us apart from the flesh of His humanity. • Heavenly Father, let us abide forever in Christ and never doubt the testimony You have given about Your beloved Son. Amen. (TLSB)

5:13 that you may know. Knowing this gives us confidence before God and boldness before men. (TLSB)

5:14 if we ask anything according to his will. And this faith has another effect in us: And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. The prayers of the believers, the real prayers, are always heard, they never return unanswered.

GOSPEL – John 17:11b-19

¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. ¹³ “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

17:11 Holy Father. A form of address found only here in the NT. The name suggests both remoteness and nearness; God is both awe-inspiring and loving. (CSB)

17:12 I protected them. During the three and one-half years of His public ministry Jesus was constantly doing what He now asks the Father to do. Note emphatic "I," the God-man. "Was with them" denotes constant and continued action. Note the repetition of words from 11. (Buls)

17:12 the one doomed to destruction. "None of them was lost" is to be taken literally. The keeping and preserving which Jesus did through the Word of God was truly effective. "Except" can mean either "except" or "but." Jesus is not saying that His keeping and preserving was ineffective in one case. "The son of perdition" is, of course, Judas. Judas was not lost because Jesus' Word could not or did not preserve him. (Buls)

17:15 not that you take them out of the world. "You" is here used of an equal to an equal, unlike a formal "Thou" which is used of an inferior toward a superior. Therefore, the divinity of Jesus is implicit. (Buls)

17:17 Sanctify. Kretzmann: The Christians are sanctified, separated from the world, as soon as faith had been worked in their hearts. (Buls)

17:17 by the truth; your word. † Christians are sanctified (made holy) by the word of God, a means by which the Holy Spirit produces faith. Sanctification and revelation (as recorded in God's word) go together. (CSB)

17:18 As you sent me ... I have sent them. Jesus sends his disciples on a mission. The disciples are to complete the work that Jesus started. The mission was proclaiming the Gospel to the entire world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)