

Commentary on the Readings for May 21, 2017

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

The Readings today, Sixth Sunday of the Easter Season, continue to tell us about the joy that is derived from loving and serving the Lord in a sincere and cheerful manner. However, in order to understand this and find the source of this joy and enthusiasm that the early followers of Jesus had, as well as the Psalmist, we must search a little deeper because when we talk about "Joy" in the spiritual sense, we do not mean the "Ha! Ha!" or the "Whoopie!" kind of joy of the body. Rather, spiritual Joy is a peaceful serenity that fills our being from within.

In the **First Reading** from the *Acts of the Apostles (8:5-17)*, we read or hear how Philip, one of the new deacons, went to Samaria to proclaim the Word of God. To draw attention to Philip's preaching, God worked many miracles through him, and many Samaritans were converted and baptized. The joy that was exhibited was not from the miracles or from Philip's preaching, rather, it was from the Spirit of Jesus that they received in Baptism. The conversion of heart and the commitment of Baptism bring the Holy Spirit who, in turn, gives joy, love, peace and many other gifts

In the **Responsorial Psalm, (66:1-20)**, we hear the psalmist extol the great wonders or miracles that God had worked in the past through his people who were faithful and obedient to Him. In the end, the psalmist is praising God for blessing him and answering his prayers.

The Second Reading is from the **First Letter of St. Peter (3:15-18)**. In this passage, Peter is telling his followers, and us, that we should share the Good News of the Gospel with anyone who is interested, not with force or domination, but gently sharing with them the great things God has done for all of us. If you need help in doing this, call on the Holy Spirit. He will never fail you.

The Gospel Reading is from the *Gospel of John (14:15-21)*. This is a continuation of the Gospel from last Sunday. The scene is the Last Supper, and Jesus is telling the apostles that he is about to leave them "for a while" but that He would be with them through His Spirit. In this passage, we learn about the Trinity (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: All are One yet each has His specific role in God's Plan of Salvation. The "Oneness" of the Trinity is held together by the divine and perfect spiritual love that they share and want to share with us. This is the love that Philip shared with the Samaritans. This is the love that made the Psalmist sing the praises of God. And this is the love that made St. Peter so brave and bold after the Holy Spirit descended upon him that first Pentecost Sunday.

Does the love of God reign in your heart? If not, pray to the Holy Spirit to help you find this love, joy and peace. Something to think about during your Prayer Time this week! **MFB**