

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

As the Easter season moves towards the Ascension, we read from the farewell discourse of Christ in St. John's Gospel chapters 14 to 17.

### FIRST READING – Acts 6,1-7

- Jesus said to his apostles that the Holy Spirit would remind them all his words. In this reading from the Acts, these words of Jesus become real.
- This passage is like an image of what the Church has been doing during her journey through history, whenever she is confronted with new problems or issues she has to discern the new situation in order to be faithful to the Lord.
- Those who have the mission to guide the Church, the pastors, will have to look at the problems, difficulties or new situations which confront the Christian community, discover and try to understand the voice of the Spirit.
- All the groups in the Church will have to do the same, under the guidance of their pastors.
- And also all the members of the Church will have to do the same if they want to be faithful to the words of Jesus.
- Chapter 6 of Acts presents a very concrete situation. There are differences among them, they did not take care of all the poor in the same way.
- At the beginning the first community of the followers of Jesus was formed by persons converted from the Jewish faith. They took good care of their widows and orphans. That was not difficult, since they had been doing that long before in response to the law of Israel.
- But now there are also other widows who come from other countries, speak other languages.
- The community is too large now, and the apostles cannot take care of all the needs that the community has. They decide to look for help among the men of the community. A new ministry is born in the Christian community: the deacons whose main mission will be to take care of those in need.
- They choose 7 men deeply spiritual and prudent, faithful to the teachings of the Lord.
- The first community of the young Church that the book of Acts presents as a model has its problems too.
- There are two groups, those who want to continue with the old way of the Jewish traditions. We could call them conservatives.
- The second group was formed by persons converted from the pagan world. They were open to new ways in the interpretation of the teachings of Jesus.
- Faced with this situation the community of the believers, the Church has to listen to the voice of the Spirit of Jesus who will remind her the words of Jesus "love one another as I have loved you...."
- This will give birth to the local or ecumenical councils. The pastors assembled in council will look at the different problems that the Church experiences at different times, and they will look for answers listening in community to the Spirit of Jesus.

Let us reflect on our community, our apostolic movement and see if we are faced with problems similar to those of the first community of Jerusalem.

### SECOND READING – 1Pt 2,4-9

- ★ The message of this fragment of the letter of Peter is very reach.
- ★ Peter describes the Young Church, the community of the believers as a temple and each one of us is a stone It is a beautiful image, the more beautiful the stone the more beautiful the temple.
- ★ This passage also reminds us the words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman. Jn 4,23-24.
- ★ In the book of Revelation there is another image of the Church as the Holy City which is at the same time the bride of the Lamb 21,10-27.
- ★ Peter describes Jesus as the cornerstone. The cornerstone holds the building together.

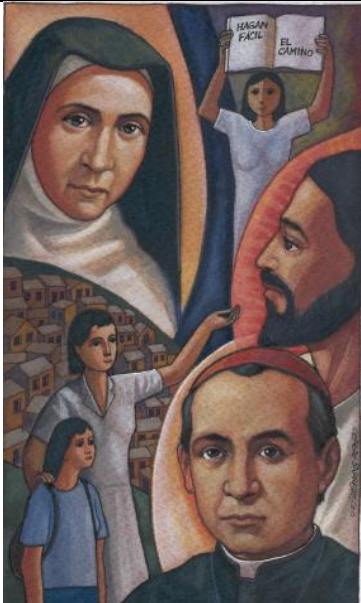
- ★ Jesus is this stone. This stone is of value for those who have faith
- ★ But it is occasion of stumbling for those who oppose it ( Is 28,16).
- ★ These words remind us the words of Simeon when Jesus was presented in the Temple by Joseph and Mary Lk 2,34-35
- ★ Peter tells us that we are a priestly nation consecrated to proclaim the wonderful works of God.
- ★ Let us discover in our life the marvels God has done in the past, is doing now and will continue to do for us.

**GOSPEL Jn 14,1-12**

- ✚ Jesus says to his apostles and to us “do not let your hearts be troubled.”
- ✚ He also invites them to believe in God and in Him.
- ✚ Heaven is presented as a home with many rooms which Jesus himself prepares for each one of us. When we expect someone to visit us to stay for some days, we prepare the room and everything so that person feels at home. Let this powerful image that John offers to our contemplation help us to dream, to imagine the beauty of heaven, our home; knowing that Jesus prepares an eternal room for us with the Most Holy Trinity.
- ✚ There are two other images in this text
  - ✓ **Jesus is The way to** go to this “home”  
He is also the truth and the life.  
The way to discover the truth in order to have abundant life.
  - ✓ **Whoever sees Jesus** sees the Father  
Jesus is in the Father and the Father in him.  
The words of Jesus are the words the Father says to him.  
The works Jesus does are the works the Fathers does in him.

The passage began with the words of Jesus “do not let your hearts be troubled,” and ends with these powerful words which will help us **“not to be troubled”**:

**I SOLEMNLY ASSURE YOU, THE MAN WHO HAS FAITH IN ME WILL DO THE WORKS I DO,  
AND GREATER FAR THAN THESE, WHY? BECAUSE I GO TO THE FATHER.**



“Let those persons who live in this family be aware that all of them must work at acquiring the virtues of our Mother Mary Most Holy: her laboriousness, her contemplation, her profound humility, her poverty.” (Venerable Maria Antonia Paris, Foundress of the Claretian Missionary Sisters.)

O Virgin and Mother of God! You know well that I am your son and servant formed in the forge of your mercy and love. I am like an arrow in your powerful hand. Mother throw me against those who oppose the Kingdom of God. Trusting in your protection, I proclaim the Gospel with the only weapon of the Divine Word. The victory will be yours. Amen. (St. Anthony Mary Claret, Founder of the Claretian Missionary Sisters.)