

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

We are approaching the solemnities of the Ascension of the Lord and of Pentecost.

Today is the last meeting for our group; we will resume the meetings on August.

At the beginning of our meeting today there will be a short prayer, taken from next Sunday's Mass.

After the reflection on the readings we will have a longer prayer.

FIRST READING Acts 8,5-8,14-17.

We find two points of interest in this reading.

- ★ Philip is not one of the apostles, he comes from a Hellenist culture. In the Acts of the Apostles this group is presented as the liberal group in the Church.

Philip leaves Jerusalem when the persecution starts after the death of Stephen.

- Philip is one of the deacons who had been chosen to take care of the poor, of what we would call today the social services of the Church. But we see that Philip also preaches.
 - Luke presents the preaching of Philip in Samaria as very successful, accompanied by wonders, healings and other signs. These signs attract many persons who come to listen to him and to see the wonders he does. Nowadays whoever has received the gift of healing or says he/she has it, will attract many people also.
 - Between this first part of the story of Philip and the last part of this coming Sunday's Reading, there is a story which we will not read about Simon the Magician who wanted to buy the gift of healing. But the gifts of the Spirit cannot be bought, they are given by the Lord, who gives them to whom he wants. The gifts are never given only for our own benefit but for the good of the community.
 - The temptation of Simon the Magician is a temptation that has always been present in one form or another among the followers of the Lord. To buy or to ask for money when giving what we have received freely.
 - Another thing which is completely different is to ask for financial help to take care of the expenses we have in our Christian community. Like a good family we need to take care of our expenses with the cooperation of all.
- ★ The second point of interest is what Luke tells us in the second part of our reading.
 - The news about the ministry of Philip reached the community of Jerusalem where the Apostle Peter was.
 - The community sent Peter and John to impose hands on those who had been baptized by Philip, so that they could receive the Holy Spirit.
 - They had not yet received the gift of the Spirit, only by the imposition of hands by the apostles they were able to receive the Holy Spirit.
 - It is a very interesting situation, of which we seldom think about. The Church is acting in the same way we do it now. In most of the cases we first are baptized and then later on we receive the confirmation. Only when the adults receive the sacraments of Christian initiation the Church gives baptism and confirmation in the same celebration.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 66,1-7, 16, 20.

- ✚ This psalm sings the marvels God has done during the Exodus.
- ✚ The works God does through Philip are even more wonderful than those of he accomplished at the Exodus.
- ✚ To cooperate with the Lord in changing the human heart is a more marvelous work than to change the sea into dry land.

LET ALL THE EARTH CRY OUT TO GOD WITH JOY.

Shout joyfully to God, all you on earth,
Sing praise to the glory of his name
Proclaim his glorious praise
Say to God "How tremendous are your deeds!
LET ALL THE EARTH CRY OUT TO GOD WITH JOY.

Let all on earth worship and sing praise to you
Sing praise to your name!
Come and see the works of God,
His tremendous deeds among men.
LET ALL THE EARTH CRY OUT TO GOD WITH JOY.

He has changed the sea into dry land;
Through the river they passed on foot;
Therefore let us rejoice in him
He rules by his might forever
LET ALL THE EARTH CRY OUT TO GOD WITH JOY.

Hear now all you who fear God while I declare
What he has done for me
Blessed be God who refused me not
My prayer or his kindness!
LET ALL THE EARTH CRY OUT TO GOD WITH JOY.

SECOND READING 1Pt 3,15-18

We continue the Reading of this beautiful letter from Peter. We listen to his words to the brothers and sisters who were suffering persecution or maybe they had some other kind of suffering in their lives as Christians.

- Let us venerate the Lord in our heart. But for us Christians to venerate the Lord is never something exclusively interior, but it is manifested in our attitudes toward our fellow men and women. We need to show our respect for God in the respect we have for his image, the human being
- Let us be ready to reply to anyone who ask the reason for our hope and faith; but let us speak gently and respectfully.
 - Letting other people know why do we do the things we do
 - And what do we believe and what is our hope.
- Maybe we will suffer for doing good deeds, this will always be a cause for peace. Let us respond to the insults with meekness like Jesus did.
 - He is our model .
 - Being innocent he gave up his life so that we could have abundant life.

GOSPEL – Jn 14,15-21

This Reading is taken from the farewell discourse of Jesus after the last supper, according to the Gospel of John.

The reading invites us to think about each one of the Divine Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, in their relationship with us:

✓ **JESUS**

- If we love him we will obey his commandments
- Jesus will ask the Father to send to us another advocate, another protector to be with us always.
- But Jesus will continue to be with us always, he will not leave us orphans, he will come back to us. Last week the gospel told us that he will prepare for us a abode in his Father house, and will come back for us whenever that dwelling place will be ready.
- Then we will understand, we will know that
 - Jesus is in the Father
 - We are in Jesus
 - He is in us
 - If we love him the Father will love us
 - And Jesus will reveal himself to us.

✓ **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

- Will be sent to us by the Father on the request from Jesus.

✓ **THE FATHER**

- Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus.
- The consequence of this is that Jesus is in us, and the Father loves us.

FINAL PRAYER

We read in silence the whole prayer. Then each one of us chooses one of the paragraph: reads it aloud and prays with it.

LOVE ME AS YOU ARE

I know how poor you are, your struggles and
the tribulations of your soul;
the weakness and sufferings of your body;
I know your negligence, your sins,
but, in spite of all of this, I say to you:
“Give me your heart, love me as you are.”

If you wait to be an angel to give me your love, you will never love me
even when you fall again in the sins you wish you had never committed,
even when you are negligent in the practice of virtue
I do not allow you not to love me.

Love me as you are. Each moment, no matter in what situation you may find yourself.

In consolation or desolation, in fervor or dryness
In faithfulness or unfaithfulness

Love me as you are, what I want is the love of your needy heart.
If you wait to be perfect in order to love me, you will never love me....

Allow me to love you. I want your heart.
I have plans to transform you
But meanwhile, I love you as you are
And I would like you to do the same.

I would be pleased to see how love grows, from the depth of your misery,
I love in you even your weakness
I would like that from the depth of your poverty, you would cry out
Lord I love you!"

What I want is the song of your heart
do I need your science, your virtues or your abilities?
I have given all of this to you.
Try only to fill the present moment with your love.

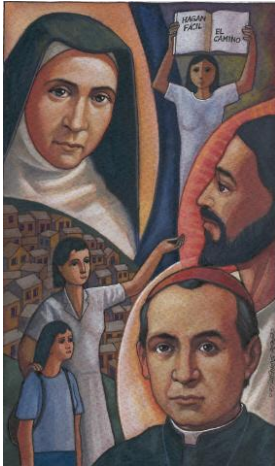
Today I, the Lord of Lords.
I am standing at the door of your heart, as a beggar.
I call and wait. Open quickly.

What hurts me is to see your doubts and your lack of trust
I would like you to think of me always, day and night
and that you would never do anything apart from loving me.

When suffering will come to you, I will give you the strength
You have given me your love; I will give you the ability to love more than you ever have dreamed

But remember: "Love me as you are."
Do not wait until you are a saint to give yourself to me.
(A monk from the "Community of Jerusalem"-Paris)

CLARETIAN CORNER



When I remembered those things in the midst of my afflictions, I thought many times of the instructions Our Lord Jesus Christ gave to his beloved apostles before leaving this world so that they must not fail when the many tribulations would come during the time of their mission.

(Venerable María Antonia París, Foundress of the Claretian Missionary Sisters, *Autobiography* 122.)

I never was tired of being in church before the image of Our Lady of the Rosary, and I talked and prayed so trustingly that I was quite sure the Blessed Virgin heard me. I used to imagine a sort of wire running from the image in front of me to its heavenly original. Although I had not yet seen a telegraph line at that time, I had imagined how it would be to have a telegraph line to heaven. I cannot explain how attentive, fervent and devout I was at prayer then, I was more so than that I am now. (Saint Anthony Mary Claret – Founder of the Claretian Missionary Sisters, *Autobiography* 48.)