

5th Sunday of Easter C

First Reading Acts 14:21-27

Paul and Barnabas went back through Lystra and Iconium to Antioch. They put fresh heart into the disciples, encouraging them to persevere in the faith. "We all have to experience many hardships" they said "before we enter the kingdom of God." In each of these churches they appointed elders, and with prayer and fasting they commended them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe. They passed through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. Then after proclaiming the word at Perga they went down to Attalia and from there sailed for Antioch, where they had originally been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On their arrival they assembled the church and gave an account of all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the pagans.

Second Reading Apocalypse 21:1-5

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, "You see this city? Here God lives among men. He will make his home among them; they shall be his people, and he will be their God; his name is God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness.

The world of the past has gone."

Then the One sitting on the throne spoke: "Now I am making the whole of creation new" he said.

Gospel John 13:31-35

When Judas had gone Jesus said: "Now has the Son of Man been glorified, and in him God has been glorified. If God has been glorified in him, God will in turn glorify him in himself, and will glorify him very soon. My little children, I shall not be with you much longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another; just as I have loved you, you also must love one another.

By this love you have for one another, every one will know that you are my disciples."

Meditation

Urgency marks the beginning of Jesus' farewell discourse: "now... soon... not much longer...." Soon Jesus will no longer be with his disciples. They must pass from the experience of his bodily presence to faith in his invisible presence. To experience in faith a presence in absence is the whole of Christian life until the parousia. Through the mutual love between the disciples the permanent presence of the Risen One is assured and manifested in the world. This mutual love characterizes our history during the time between Jesus' departure and his final return.