

6th Sunday of Easter A

First Reading Acts 8:5-8.14-17

Philip went to a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Christ to them. The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw them for themselves. There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured.

As a result there was great rejoicing in that town. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Second Reading 1 Peter 3:15-18

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong. Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

Gospel John 14:15-21

Jesus said to his disciples: "If you love me you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he is with you, he is in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you. In a short time the world will no longer see me; but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will understand that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me; and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him."

Meditation

Jesus asks his Father for another Paraclete, who will remain with us and help keep the memory of Jesus alive. Paraclete is a term which comes from the Greek and signifies a legal advocate, one who speaks for us. It is only the loving acceptance of this Spirit of truth which allows us to love someone whom we know not by sight but through testimony of others. The Spirit of truth is the Church's creative memory. It enables us to enter into the mystery of Christ. Thus the Church takes part in the vital communion of Father and Son. This same Spirit inspires us to love Jesus, "in deed and in truth and not merely talk about it" (1 John 3:18). The love of a Christian for the Master is not satisfied with words. The scriptures attest to the indissoluble bond between knowledge and moral life. To say that we know Christ without keeping his commandments is a lie.

On the contrary "whoever keeps his word, truly has the love of God been made perfect in him" (1 John 2:5). By living as Jesus lived, we already pass with him from death to life.