

Fourth Sunday of Easter - Lectionary: 51

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Good Shepherd Sunday

Mother's Day

Reading I - [Acts 13:14, 43-52](#)

Paul and Barnabas continued on from Perga and reached Antioch in Pisidia. On the sabbath they entered the synagogue and took their seats. Many Jews and worshipers who were converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to **remain faithful to the grace of God.**

On the following sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and with violent abuse contradicted what Paul said. Both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first, but since you reject it and condemn yourselves as unworthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, I have made you a light to the Gentiles, that you may be an instrument of salvation to the ends of the earth."

The Gentiles were delighted when they heard this and glorified the word of the Lord. All who were destined for eternal life came to believe, and the word of the Lord continued to spread through the whole region. The Jews, however, incited the women of prominence who were worshipers and the leading men of the city, stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their territory. So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them, and went to Iconium. **The disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.**

Responsorial Psalm - [Ps 100:1-2, 3, 5](#) - R (3c) We are his people, the sheep of his flock.

Reading II - [Rev 7:9, 14b-17](#)

I, John, had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.

Then one of the elders said to me, "These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. "For this reason they stand before God's throne and worship him day and night in his temple. The one who sits on the throne will shelter them. They will not hunger or thirst anymore, nor will the sun or any heat strike them. For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Gospel - [Jn 10:27-30](#)

Jesus said: "**My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.** I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

Fourth Sunday of Easter - Lectionary: 51

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Good Shepherd Sunday

Mother's Day

Throughout the letters of Paul, he speaks strongly of the unity of faith and love that binds all Christians together. Of that unity, he teaches that we are not all the same. Each has his gifts, each has her role within the mission, each is a unique member of the Body of Christ the Church. When all the members, in their uniqueness and unity, are faithful to the graces of God they will be filled with joy and the Holy Spirit and fulfill their mission to bring others to the heart of Christ making them delighted and glorifying the Word with them.

But sheep, as we are called in the Gospel today, are not perfect; sometimes we wander. But Jesus, like a good shepherd will be keeping watch over us and when one of the sheep starts to wander away, just as a shepherd whistles to his sheep dog, and the dog sprints off in pursuit of the wanderer, chasing it back into the safety of the flock; he calls out to the angels, the saints and some of us to find the lost sheep of his flock.

Every Christian is a missionary. He gives us the living word, grace, and sacraments, and sends us into the world, to gather all the wandering and lost sheep. Our mission is to bring them back to the flock. It's not always easy. It takes all the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit given to us, and the use of the theological and cardinal virtues. It takes an ongoing effort on our part to know the faith well enough to be able to answer objections. But above all, it takes sharing Christ's own love for his people, for every person.

Each one of us has an entirely unique circle of acquaintances, an entirely unique network of relationships. If out of fear or laziness we fail to share the good news of our saving relationship with God, those lives may never receive the light.

It won't be easy - Our own self-centeredness will resist - The devil will throw up obstacles.

But when we care about the people God puts in our path, we will do whatever we can to bring them closer to Christ, because we know that if they go off on their own, they will easily get lost, and they will be vulnerable to attacks, to the deadly lies that say happiness can be found in money, pleasure, prestige, or the glamour of a false religion.

If we stay attentive to opportunities that God sends us to speak clearly and encouragingly to others about the gospel, to invite them to follow Christ, we will spread the light. If we follow in the footsteps of Christ and of the many generations of faithful Christians who have gone before us, if we strive every day to live as Christ would have us live, giving a constant example of kindness, courage, concern for others, forgiveness, responsibility, and hard work, we will spread the light.

We owe our faith and hope to the perseverance of missionaries from the past who, like Paul and Barnabas, carried the torch of truth and grace courageously, never backing down in the face of difficulties, just as Christ himself backed down.