

Reading for Weekday in the Fourth Week of Eastertide

27th April 2024

1st Reading: Acts 13:44-52

After failing to convert Jews, Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles

The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy; and blaspheming, they contradicted what was spoken by Paul. Then both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you reject it and judge yourselves to be unworthy of eternal life, we are now turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and praised the word of the Lord; and as many as had been destined for eternal life became believers. Thus the word of the Lord spread throughout the region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region. So they shook the dust off their feet in protest against them, and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Responsorial: Psalm 94: 1-4

R./: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Sing a new song to the Lord
for he has worked wonders.
His right hand and his holy arm
have brought salvation. (R./)

The Lord has made known his salvation;
has shown his justice to the nations.
He has remembered his truth and love
for the house of Israel. (R./)

All the ends of the earth
have seen the salvation of our God.
Shout to the Lord all the earth,
ring out your joy. (R./)

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia
Christ, having been raised from the dead, will never die again.
Death has no power over him any more.
Alleluia!

Gospel: John 14:7-14

Jesus tells Philip, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."

Jesus said to his disciples,

"If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

Short reflection on the reading for today

Adapting our understanding of God to today's evolving culture can be difficult and divisive, as we well know. We found it so in the wake of Vatican II back in the 1960s, and are still feeling this tension six decades later, when traditional church doctrine often clashes with widely held values of modern times. As we adapt to the changing world we might recall Jesus' words to the apostle Philip that "Whoever believes in me will do greater works than these." How can we possibly achieve more than Jesus? Is he teasing with unreal praise or inviting us, prodding us to move on?

Parents sometimes say to their children: "what I couldn't do, you must do! Take my dreams and make them come true." Jesus dreamed of a mission to the entire world and yet could not achieve it in his lifetime. He told the Canaanite woman, a pagan who came looking for his help, "My mission is only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." When she persisted, he resisted her verbally before giving in, "Woman, you have great faith! You can have your wish." (Matt 15:21-28). Jesus seems to say, "Your wish is now my wish."

When Paul and Barnabas were expelled from the synagogue and extradited from the territory, what seemed a failure actually served the spread of the Gospel. At least that was how Paul saw it. He quotes from Isaiah: "I have made you a light to the nations, a means of salvation to the ends of the world." We can apply this principle in any crisis or change, trusting that the whole process is under the loving providence of our God.

"We shall be satisfied." – Adults often complain that children are never satisfied. That complaint should probably apply to us all, in a sense. Saint Augustine said that our hearts are restless until they rest in God. Philip expressed something of this when he asked Jesus, "Let us see the Father, and then we shall be satisfied." If only he could see the face of God all his longings would be satisfied. Jesus replied, "To have seen me is to have seen the Father." It is he himself who reveals the Father; he is the way to the Father.

We cannot see the face of God in this life, but God has sent us his Son. We cannot see Jesus physically as the apostles saw him, but we can see him with the eyes of faith. We can meet him in his Word, in the Eucharist, in the other Sacraments, in each other. Such "seeing" of the Lord doesn't fully satisfy but it gives a glimpse of what awaits us.