

Reading for Weekday in the Seventh Week of Eastertide

15th May 2024

1st Reading: Acts 20:28-38

Paul's final advice to the church leaders: shepherd the church of God

[Paul said to the leaders of the church]

” Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to warn everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

When he had finished speaking, he knelt down with them all and prayed. There was much weeping among them all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, grieving especially because of what he had said, that they would not see him again. Then they brought him to the ship.

Responsorial: Psalm 67: 29-30, 33-36

R./: Sing to God, O Kingdoms of the earth.

Show forth, O God, show forth your might,
your might, O God, which you have shown for us.
For the sake of your temple high in Jerusalem
may kings come to you bringing their tribute. (R./)

Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God,
praise the Lord who rides on the heavens, the ancient heavens.
He thunders his voice, his mighty voice.
Come, acknowledge the power of God. (R./)

His glory is over Israel; his might is in the skies.
God is to be feared in his holy place.
He is the Lord, Israel's God.
He gives strength and power to his people.
Blessed be God. (R./)

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!
Go, make disciples of all the nations.
I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.
Alleluia!

Gospel: John 17:11-19

Before leaving them, Jesus prays to the Father, Sanctify them in the truth

Jesus said to his disciples,

“Now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

Short reflection on the reading for today

Jesus has watched over his disciples and protected them. Now his prayer on their behalf continues his loving care. His intercessory prayer is an extension of the many ways he had served them since they first began to follow him. In a similar way, our prayer for others is an extension of our care for them; it is another form of service.

By his intercession for his disciples Jesus teaches us the value of all intercessory prayer. Intercession for others has been at the heart of the church's prayer life since the time of Jesus. Paul often mentions prayers for his churches and he called on his people to pray for him. Both Jesus and Paul, of course, were heirs to a Jewish tradition that greatly valued this form of prayer. Praying for others is one of the ways we express our communion with others in Christ.