

## Reading for Friday after Ascension

May 15<sup>th</sup> 2026

### First reading

Acts 18:9-18

**'I have many in this city who are my people.'**

When he was in Corinth, the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.' And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, saying, 'This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law.' But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, 'If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things.' And he drove them from the tribunal. And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and sisters and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow.

### Responsorial Psalm

**Ps 47(46):2-3. 4-5. 6-7. R8a**

*God is king of all the earth.*

*or: Alleluia.*

All peoples, clap your hands.

Cry to God with shouts of joy!

For the Lord, the Most High, to be feared, the great king over all the earth.

He humbles peoples under us and nations under our feet.

Our heritage he chose for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves.

God has gone up with shouts of joy.

The Lord goes up with trumpet blast.

Sing praise for God; sing praise! Sing praise to our king; sing praise!

### Gospel Acclamation

**Jn14:26**

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Holy Spirit will teach you everything  
and remind you of all I have said to you.

Alleluia!

**Or: cf.Lk24:46,26**

Alleluia, alleluia!

It was ordained that the Christ should suffer  
and rise from the dead,  
and so enter into his glory.

Alleluia!

## **Gospel**

## **John 16:20-23a**

### **‘No one will take your joy from you.’**

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. In that day you will ask nothing of me.’

### **Short reflection on the reading for today**

We might think that all possible questions about faith or morals can be resolved from the Bible and tradition. Today’s Gospel, however, suggests that we will still have questions to resolve until the Lord’s second coming. “[Only] on that day you will have no questions to ask me,” says Jesus. Such a saying might be expected from the earliest strands of the New Testament, say from the gospel of Mark, or the Epistle to the Thessalonians. But it comes in the gospel of John, written some sixty years after the resurrection. Since the author of this gospel could survey almost the whole New Testament era, we imagine he should have had all the answers. Yet he gives it as the mind of Christ that we must await the second coming before all questions cease.

To balance this, we have Christ’s assurance that he is with us, as we seek answers to the questions that life continues to throw up. Amid St Paul’s uncertainty about how to share the Gospel message in Corinth, Jesus appeared to him with the promise: “I am with you.” Even after this promise Paul has serious issues to face. He is accused before the Roman proconsul as a trouble-maker, and then the protestors turn upon their own synagogue leader, Sosthenes (who has supported Paul) and beat him up.

God’s will for Paul’s own lifestyle was still being clarified – he thought long and hard about what he ought to do. This brings to mind the words of Jesus about a woman in labour, about birth-pangs followed by joy. In some sense, we are all like that pregnant woman, for we are called to commit ourselves to our work, when often the future is not clear. But we have the assurance of Jesus that “your grief will be turned into joy.” Jesus’ invisible presence helps us to deal with each issue, as it arises.