

About the Readings on 5.5.24

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Today is the sixth Sunday, the 36th day, of Easter. We continue to celebrate the meaning of the resurrection. The challenge for the preacher is to find interesting ways once again to proclaim 1 John and John.

Acts 10:44-48

How to experience the resurrection of Christ? Receive the Holy Spirit and be baptized. The order of events in this narrative has given support to those churches that understand baptism as only a ritual that confirms one's belief, thus "believer's baptism." Apparently in the 80s CE, some Christians were baptizing "in the name of Jesus Christ" and others in the name of the Trinity; this difference continues today.

Psalm 98

We respond to the narrative of the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit by singing Psalm 98. Also appointed for Christmas Day, Psalm 98 is an exuberant hymn in which we, with "all the ends of the earth," praise the victory of Christ's resurrection.

1 John 5:1-6

This reading complements the gospel from John by repeating an emphasis on love but also by placing "children" alongside "friends." The truth of each term balances the other.

John 15:9-17

We continue through John 15. The command to love takes the form of a sign in the footwashing of Maundy Thursday. The crucified and risen Christ enables us to live in such love. This passage includes an emphasis on joy and introduces the language of being a friend of God. We are so accustomed to this language that we lose the shock of the divinity calling humankind friends. The command to love in Mark 12 will be the reading on November 1, often celebrated as All Saints Day