

FIRST READING – C EASTER 6

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Certain individuals came down from Judea
and were teaching the brothers,
“Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses,
you cannot be saved.”
And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension
and debate with them,
Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed
to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question
with the apostles and the elders.
Then the apostles and the elders,
with the consent of the whole Church,
decided to choose men from among their members
and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.
They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers,
with the following letter:

Barsabbas = bahr-SAB-uhs
Silas = SIGH-luhs
Cilicia = sih-LISH-ih-uh

“The brothers, both the Apostles and the elders,
to the believers of Gentile origin
in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings.
Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us,
though with no instructions from us,
have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds,
we have decided unanimously to choose representatives
and send them to you,
along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,
who have risked their lives
for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.
We have therefore sent Judas and Silas,
who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth.
For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us
to impose on you no further burden than these essentials:
that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols
and from blood and from what is strangled
and from fornication.
If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.
Farewell.”



Pause for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – C EASTER 6

A reading from the book of Revelation.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

In the spirit the angel carried me away to a great, high mountain
and showed me the holy city Jerusalem
coming down out of heaven from God.

It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel,
like jasper, clear as crystal.

It has a great, high wall with twelve gates,
and at the gates twelve angels,
and on the gates are inscribed the names
of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel;
on the east there were three gates,

on the north three gates,
on the south three gates,
and on the west three gates.

And the wall of the city has twelve foundations,
and on them are the twelve names
of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

I saw no temple in the city,
for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.
And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it,
for the glory of God is its light,
and its lamp is the Lamb.

PAUSE for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – C EASTER 6

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Whoever loves me will keep my word,
and my Father will love him,
and we will come to him and make our home with him.
Whoever does not love me does not keep my words;
and the word that you hear is not mine,
but is from the Father who sent me.
I have said these things to you while I am still with you.
But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything,
and remind you of all that I have said to you.
Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you.
I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled,
and do not let them be afraid.

You heard me say to you,
‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’
If you loved me,
you would rejoice that I am going to the Father,
because the Father is greater than I.
And now I have told you this before it occurs,
so that when it does occur, you may believe.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE IN DEPTH

Reading I: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

This is Acts' version of the apostolic conference at Jerusalem. Paul's account of it in Gal 2:1-12 agrees to some extent. The *dramatis personae* (Paul, Barnabas, Peter, James) and the point at issue, namely, the circumcision of Gentile converts to Christianity, are the same. But the outcome is different.

In Paul, the conference results in a "gentlemen's agreement": Peter will head up the mission to the Jews, Paul the mission to the Gentiles, and the law will not be imposed on the Gentile churches.

In Acts, the conference concludes with the adoption of a compromise solution (the apostolic decrees): the Gentiles are spared the burden of circumcision but must observe a certain minimum of legal requirements. Acts has probably combined the results of two separate conferences.

The first conference concluded as Paul said, but it left unclear what was to happen when Jews and Gentiles in mixed communities ate the Eucharistic meal together. Hence the subsequent fracas in Antioch described by Paul in Gal 2:11-14.

It was to deal with this later problem that a second conference was apparently held, the results of which were communicated to Paul on his last visit to Jerusalem (Acts 21:25. If Paul was present when the decrees were promulgated, as Acts 15 alleges, why would James have to inform Paul of them in Acts 21?).

Responsorial Psalm: 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

Psalm 67 combines thanksgiving for harvest with prayer for continued blessings. It serves as an appropriate thanksgiving for the resurrection and for the continuation of the enjoyment of its benefits in the Church and the spread of its benefits to all nations.

Reading II: Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

This is a continuation (in part a repetition and in part a further development) of the picture of the descent of the new Jerusalem. The descent is repeated, but a further description of the city is given—its radiance, its walls and gates, its foundations, its need of neither temple nor sun.

There is a partial correspondence between the holy city and the Church on earth. The Church, too, has a radiance—not the splendor of a worldly power (though it has often masqueraded as such since the time of Constantine), but the radiance of the word and the sacraments and the presence of the Spirit.

The Church, too, has continuity with the old Israel, suggested by the symbolism of the twelve gates, angels, and tribes. Its foundation is the twelve apostles—their witness to Jesus

Christ and his resurrection, perpetuated in the Church's Scriptures and expounded in its doctrine by the successors of the apostles.

But there is a temple in the Church, a visible place where God's presence is made known in word and sacrament. This is not because he is not everywhere, but because in this age and on this earth he wills to be manifested in a particular place, at a particular time, in a particular rite and a particular sacrament, this bread and this wine.

Here is the scandal of the Church's particularity. To seek to abolish the temple in this age on this earth, as some kinds of secular interpretations of the Gospel would like to do, is to ignore the "not yet" and to suppose that we are already in heaven. That is Schwärmerei, fanaticism.

Gospel: John 14:23-29

In the Easter season we tend to read the farewell discourses, with their promise of the coming of the Paraclete (RSV: "Counselor"), as discourses given by the risen and not yet ascended Lord during the forty days in preparation for the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.

For the evangelist, they are discourses of the earthly Jesus, placed in the context of the Last Supper. They look through and beyond the death of Jesus to his glorification, which releases the gift of the Spirit. Thus, in the early Church the whole of the fifty days included the celebration of the gift of the Spirit, not just the day of Pentecost.

We are here listening to a promise fulfilled at Easter. In the Fourth Gospel the risen Christ conveys the gift of the Spirit to his disciples on Easter Sunday evening (see the gospel of Pentecost Sunday). The Spirit is, as in Paul's letters, the gift of the risen Christ.

In the gift of the Spirit, the risen Christ and the Father come and make their home with the disciples.

The function of the Spirit is to "teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." It is not the work of the Spirit to convey ever new revelations, but to unfold in ever new understanding, interpretation, and application the once-for-all revelation of Jesus Christ ("all that I have said to you").

"His work is more than a reminiscence of the ipsissima verba [the exact words] of the Son of God; it is a living representation of all that he had spoken to his disciples, a creative exploitation of the gospel" (E. C. Hoskyns).

This ongoing work of the Spirit gives the disciples peace and takes away their fear, because the Spirit is always there as their helper who stands by them in persecution and martyrdom.

Reginald H. Fuller