

FIRST READING – C EASTER 4

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Paul and Barnabas went on from Perga
and came to Antioch in Pisidia.

Perga = **PUHR**-guh
Pisidia = pih-**SID**-ih-uh

On the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down.

When the meeting of the synagogue broke up,
many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas,
who spoke to them and urged them
to continue in the grace of God.

The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered
to hear the word of the Lord.

But when the Jewish officials 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 officials 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.

Iconium = eye-**KOH**-nih-uhm

And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

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 4

A reading from the book of Revelation.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

After this I, John, looked,
and there was a great multitude that no one could count,
from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages,
standing before the throne and before the Lamb,
robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.
And one of the elders then said to me,
“These are they who have come out of the great ordeal;
they have washed their robes
and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
For this reason they are before the throne of God,
and worship him day and night within his temple,
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.
They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;
for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”



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 4

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:

“My sheep hear my voice.

I know them, and they follow me.

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.

No one will snatch them out of my hand.

What my Father has given me is greater than all else,
and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand.

The Father and I are one.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Reading I: Acts 13:14, 43-52

The first reading continues to be taken from Acts instead of from the Old Testament. Acts shows us the Christian community in the first years after the Easter events, and thus mirrors the impact of the resurrection experiences on the apostolic Church.

Today's reading tells of the preaching of Paul and Barnabas at Pisidian Antioch during the so-called first missionary journey.

The pattern of events is typical and is repeated in many cities during the missionary journeys: the apostles preach in the synagogue; a certain number of Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism believe, while others reject the message and stir up opposition against the apostles, who then declare their intention of turning to the Gentiles.

The proclamation of the word of God has no promise of success, but the word must be proclaimed whether people hear or refuse to hear (Ezekiel 3:5).

What matters is that the word is proclaimed faithfully. This matters even more than that it should be made to seem relevant by artificial stunts and gimmicks.

Responsorial Psalm: 100:1-2, 3, 5

This Sunday, formerly called the third Sunday after Easter, was traditionally known as Jubilate Sunday, especially among the German Lutherans, because of the old Introit from Psalm 66. Now, in series C, we use another Jubilate psalm, Psalm 100.

Easter is preeminently the season of joy. (Note also the last sentence of the first reading and the joyful tone of the hymn in the second reading.)

Easter joy (Jubilate) is not the joy of anticipation, like that of Advent (Gaudete), nor the brief moment of relief like the joy of mid-Lent (Laetare), but the exuberance of sorrow that has been turned into joy (John 16:20-22, from the old gospel of this day).

Reading II: Revelation 7:9, 14b-17

We normally associate this passage with All Saints Day, but it is just as appropriate for Easter. The joy of the martyrs is also the sorrow that has been turned into joy.

The martyrs have come out of "the great tribulation" (not merely tribulation, but the tribulation; the Seer regards their martyrdom as part of the messianic woes, a sharing of the cross of Christ).

Paschal imagery is picked up in the phrase “the blood of the Lamb” (see last Sunday’s second reading, with its reference to “the Lamb who was slain”), as also the image of the shepherd who will guide the martyrs to springs of living water, an image that will recur in the gospel.

Gospel: John 10:27-30

This Gospel is not from the shepherd discourse proper, which comes earlier in John 10, but is an echo of it in the next section, Jesus’ discourse at the feast of the Dedication.

It is tempting, as some commentators have done, to rearrange the text and to put these verses back in the good shepherd discourse. But it is characteristic of John to return to an earlier theme and develop it further.

The earlier explanations of the good shepherd parable dealt with the gate and the shepherd, while this one deals with the sheep, their relation to the shepherd, their enjoyment of eternal life already in the life of discipleship (following), and the thrice-repeated assurance that they shall not perish nor be snatched out of the shepherd’s hand (at the final judgment).

While all this is stated in typically Johannine language, its substance correctly reproduces the teaching of the earthly Jesus as recorded in the Synoptists. To hear and to respond to Jesus’ word on earth is the decisive factor that will determine acceptance by God at the last judgment (see Luke 12:8-9).

The concluding sentence about the unity of the Father and the Son gives the basis for the Nicene faith, but it was meant by the evangelist, not in an ontological or metaphysical sense, as in the later dogmatic formulas, but in the dynamic-historical sense of Hebraic thought.

The Father and the Son are one because of the Father’s call of the Son and the Son’s response in history, resulting in a complete alignment of the words and acts of the Father and the Son.

The history, of course, has an external background in the relation of the Father and the Son, as the prologue makes clear (John 1:1-14).

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