



7<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26;

Psalm 1

1 John 5:9-13;

John 17:6-19

### 1<sup>ST</sup> READING

#### A Reading from the Book of Acts

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, "Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus – for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry. So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us – one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection." So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

ACTS 1:15-17, 21-26

### PSALM 1

- 1 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, \* nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful!
- 2 Their delight is in the law of the Lord, \* and they meditate on his law day and night.
- 3 They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; \* everything they do shall prosper.
- 4 It is not so with the wicked; \* they are like chaff which the wind blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgement comes, \* nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.
- 6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, \* but the way of the wicked is doomed.

*Giver of life, save us from the desert of faithlessness and nourish us with the living water of your word, that we may bring forth fruit that will last, in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

### 2<sup>ND</sup> READING

#### A Reading from the First Letter of John

If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son. Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 JOHN 5:9-13

## GOSPEL READING

### The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ According to John

Jesus said, "Father, I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And 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."

JOHN 17:6-19

*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.*

It has been ½ a century plus one year since the Detroit riots. At my age, I know how the passing of time can affect our ability to remember things. Short-term memory is mostly affected. Longer term memory can also be a problem, however. But some things never leave one's mind. They are too significant in any number of ways to be forgotten.

As I have shared with you before, the Detroit riots of 1967 significantly affected our lives and perceptions. We found ourselves steeling our way out in the middle of the night with our children and dog in defiance of a curfew order. It was very clear to us that life was more important than material goods and a house. So off to my mother's home in the country we went. The press reported one situation that stuck in our memories. People in some buildings were asked to get out for their own safety. Most did.

But there was one woman, one *mother to be* who wasn't about to flee. Instead she put a sign in her window which had the following message in large print: *Beware — stay away! This apartment is protected by a pregnant mother with a Sherman tank!* The media reported that she got through the riots just fine. No one dared bother her and her family.

Today is Mother's Day. I wonder how many mothers have had to deal with fending off angry folk trying to burn down homes, apartments, businesses and government buildings. But should the occasion arise, I am sure that the manual that every mother gets when a child comes into a family must have a reference to how it is a mother's duty to help protect that family.

**It** has been pointed out by some that there is a lot of masculine use of language in scripture. This is true also in many Biblically related books and booklets. Some think there is too much masculine imagery and not enough feminine imagery in the New Testament. From our perspective in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they make a good point. Importantly, they point out that we tend to refer to God as 'He' ; Jesus as 'He'; and the Holy Spirit as 'He' (even though there are some references to the Holy Spirit in the feminine in the Old Testament).

**But** more may be going on than we first may see. For instance, Jesus as a man is not described as only doing *manly* things. A classic reference is where he talks about wanting to gather his children, the people of Jerusalem, under his wings like a mother hen to protect them. Jesus took on the image of a loving mother. He wanted to embrace them as children are embraced by a mother.

**Enter** today's Gospel reading. Jesus is at a point where his Earthly ministry is about to come to an end. Like a mother, he is concerned with what will happen to those he must leave behind.

**Things** are not really all that simple. There are three major areas of concern. First, there is the future of the people who have shared in his Earthly journey over the past 3 years or so. Secondly, there is the future of the other people who have decided to become followers of Jesus — faithful folk living scattered over a wide area. Thirdly, there is the future of the people throughout the whole world — humanity.

**Why** all the concern? Because the source of all truth is God. That is fine for all who believe in God and what God has to say through Jesus.

**But** what about everyone else? There are those with a knowledge of God in their hearts and those without. Of further concern are those representing the forces of evil. Jesus could ignore all of this and leave everyone behind to fend for themselves. But he doesn't choose to do this.

**What** does Christ do? He acted like a mother hen, taking on responsibility to make a bad and threatening situation into a strongly protected one. Where does Jesus go for help? God. And what help does he seek? Protection from the evil one.

**We** are reminded that the strength and truth of God are implanted in the hearts of the faithful. How does this help? Those with the truth of God in their hearts are to be protected as they go about the business of living the truth in their lives and in sharing the Word. Primary to that, Jesus' commandment for them to love one another as Christ has loved them, is central to their lives. And wherever love is found in the hearts of folk, Christ is present as well. It is love and truth (the knowing of God) that leads to true life — everlasting life. People — that is you and I, and anyone else who will listen — are all called to lives of true love — love of God; love of neighbour; and love of self.

**Notice** too, how as a parent, a mother's responsibility in raising her offspring, to emphasize the role and value of love. Many of us have benefited from mothers who have shared this message. May it never be forgotten.

**Our** world seems to be messed up and chaotic. We will never heal until the message of love and an uncompromising appetite for truth prevail.

**New** mothers have a lot of work before them. So do the rest of us. Remember we have a God who is willing to be a source of love, strength and truth within us as he shares in our lives. Praise be to God.