

May 20, 2020  
Wednesday of the 6<sup>th</sup> Week of Easter

**Acts 17:15,22 – 18:1**

**John 16:12-15**

Today's Activities & Tasks

- Read Today's Readings
- Gospel Reflection from Fr. Brian Johnson
- Prayer and Challenge for the Day
- Fr. Brian's Letter to Parishioners
- Public Celebration of Mass will begin today, May 20<sup>th</sup>. Please follow the link below for general information.
- Question(s) of the Week

Easter Week 6 Wednesday Reflection Acts 17:15, 22—18:1 & John  
16:12-15

At times, St. Paul was persuasive in a very diplomatic fashion, and at other times St Paul could be blunt and raw! We have a great example of his oratorically persuasive skills today (another great example is his letter Philemon). Since I brought up his sometimes-offensive bluntness, I refer you to his crudity in Philippians 3:2 'Beware the Dogs' or worse in Galatians 5:12). But today, we hear his skillful excellence in presenting the gospel to the Athenians, and working with their openness to him. In Acts 17:22, Paul complimented the crowd by pointing out their religiosity as seen by the great number of shrines and temples around the city. Paul did his research around town listening to citizens and learning the local culture. He uses his experience by throwing in this line, *"As I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I discovered an altar inscribed, 'To an Unknown God.' What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you now"*. Paul is using Jesus' method of evangelization that I call 'meet them where they are and walk with them farther'. We saw Jesus use that 'befriending and gaining trust' approach in His decisive and effective sharing of the gospel on the Road to Emmaus. In that experience, He met some disciples along the way, and asked questions about their lives. He then listened to what was going on with them and gradually shared more and more with them. But He was always sensitive to their needs. Jesus is individual and personal like the best of teachers. And Paul uses Jesus' touch here with the Athenians. He does his homework studying their values and their community to know best how to speak to their hearts. And apparently it worked as Acts 17:34 says "some did join him". Yet, also he gained their respect and a door is left open for him to return again as verse 32 said, "We should like to hear you

some other time'. Since evangelization is a 'seed planting' time, Paul will eagerly return to preach again and try to reach even more lives appealing to them and sharing Jesus with them.

St Paul repeatedly shows creativity in his evangelization to different people and places. An early church theologian Origen of Alexandria (in a letter to Gregory Thaumaturgus) describes this process of seeking out familiar illustrations or finding personalized demonstrations for presenting the gospel to new people as 'using the spoils of the Egyptians'. He is referring to Exodus 3:21 and 12:35, that recounts that the Egyptians gave the Israelites gold, silver and fine clothes as they left Egypt after the plagues. Tradition says the Israelites used the 'spoils-gifts' as raw material to make the temporary tabernacle of God's presence (Tent of Meeting) through their years wandering in the desert. Origen was encouraging the creative use and **repurposing** of pre-Christian ideas/customs for presenting the gospel in newer situations and for more effective outreach attempts. Another case of Paul's creative use of a community's background experience to make a point is when he uses athletic examples to the Corinthian Church that happened to be the home city of the Isthmian Games (the Olympics before there was Olympics). In 1 Corinthians 9:26, he takes up track sprinter and boxer examples, saying, "Therefore I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight like I am beating the air." Or appealing to Timothy's admiration for noble military glory, Paul encourages him to keep vigilant and faithful by saying, "Bear your share of hardship along with me like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. To satisfy the one who recruited him, a soldier does not become entangled in petty business affairs of life" (2 Timothy 2:3). St Paul is a great persuasive evangelist, and splendid missionary teacher! May all evangelists be inspired by his example of finding people wherever they are & introducing them to Jesus with illustrations of God's grace from within their own experience!

#### **Prayer for the Day:**

O God, the creator of all humankind, we pray to you for people of all walks of life, and of all places of the earth, that you would be pleased to make your ways known to them, your saving health to all nations. More especially we pray for your holy Catholic Church worldwide; that it may be so guided and governed by your good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in proper piety and devotion. Finally, we commend to your fatherly goodness all those who are in any ways afflicted or distressed, in mind or body; that it may please you to comfort and relieve them according to their different needs, giving them patience in their sufferings, and a happy remedy from all their afflictions, asking this in Jesus' Name.

#### **Challenge for the Day:**

Ask yourself what are your favorite examples of God's work. Where do you see God most at work in the world around you? Your favorite miracles of Jesus or the most touching God-moments you have had. I imagine they say something about your favored interests and familiar life experience, and provide you the best material for use in evangelizing!

## **Letter to Parishioners**

Fr. Brian Johnson has written a letter to all our parishioners about returning to Mass. This letter outlines adjustments and adaptations we will need to follow during Mass. We look forward to seeing everyone.

However, if you have any reservations about attending public Mass, please stay at home, and, if possible, watch the Mass via our Facebook Live feed or another source available on television.

Please click on the link below to read Fr. Brian Johnson's letter to the parishioners:

## **Letter to Parishioners**

## **Returning to Public Mass**

Bishop Medley has released a statement about the Diocese of Owensboro returning to public Mass. St. Pius X Parish in Calvert City will have public Mass starting Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 8:00am.

Please be patient as parish staff and volunteers prepare the church in accordance to the Bishop's guidelines. Please read or view Bishop Medley's announcement from our Diocese's website:

## **Returning to Public Mass** **Announcement**

## **Question(s) for the Week**

Will you be attending Mass this week?

If so, when will you likely attend?

Please use the comment section below  
to send in your answer.

Thank you!!