

May 11, 2020
Monday of the 5th Week of Easter

Acts 14:5-18

John 14:41-46

Today's Activities & Tasks

- Ready Daily Readings
- Reflection from Fr. Brian Johnson
- Prayer and Challenge for the Day
- Children's Bulletin/Activity Pages

Reflection Easter Week 5 Monday Acts 14:5-18 & John 14:41-46

Paul and Barnabas do some marvelous wonder-work in today's first reading from Acts of the Apostles. This shouldn't be a surprise because we have heard Jesus teach that "whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these" (John 14:12). Paul & Barnabas perform such a greater miracle today, and Peter has too, earlier in Acts. Yet, as humble servants of Jesus, all three of these miraculous healers keep a meek disposition about the grace of possessing such a gift. I think of St John Vianney, who had the charismatic gift of levitation, and was surprised once by a cleaning helper in the rectory who saw him levitating. He forbade the woman tell anyone of the gift, or that he would leave the parish of Ars that he ended up pastoring for 41 years! Out of humility, St John Vianney wanted no one to know that special gift. God gave him the gift to help his devotion to prayer, not as any promoting spectacle. So today's reading has Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes to humbly show their weak or wounded bodies as confirmation that they were not any angelic or Greek godlike beings. As the people saw Paul and Barnabas heal a crippled man they began to bow down and worship them. So, they both tore their clothes and shouted to the crowd, *"Why are you doing this? We are of the same nature as you, human beings. We proclaim to you good news that you should turn from these idols to the living God"* (Acts 14:15). Peter had done the same thing earlier in Acts of the Apostles, when Cornelius, a convert, came to him, falling at Peter's feet and doing him homage.

Peter straightened him out as to who to properly worship (God Alone) in Acts 10:26 saying, "Get up. I myself am also a human being." So, Peter, Paul, Barnabas and many other missionaries perform great works in Jesus' name, but they maintain humility because they know themselves to only be vessels of God's grace. It is God working through them. Like a deacon friend of mine loves to preach, "We are not the carpenter, we are only tools in the hand of the Carpenter!" Servants must be humble and know who they serve: Jesus. It is not only here in John's gospel that Jesus told His disciples that they would do great things by His power, because He also said in Luke 10:19, "Behold, I have given you the power 'to tread upon serpents' and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you." Yet, He adds in the very next verse the caution about not letting the great works go to their heads, when He said, "Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Lk 10:20). Further, Jesus also taught at the Last Supper that like a branch dies and bears no fruit apart from the vine, so also a servant who separates from the Master is fruitless, "*because without me you can do nothing*" (John 15:5). Like a skilled athlete who loves the game so much he/she forget about themselves in plays, or craftsmen who give away their creations because they are simply so moved by the skill of work to not even be concerned with selling their products, Jesus also calls servant missionaries whose only concern is the wide telling of His divine grace and generous self-sacrifice freely given helping others! Such faithful disciples Jesus described in the Beatitudes when he taught, "Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). This principle of the lowly doing great things by the grace of God, Jesus had also been clear about when he said, "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). But we have to be humble and open to God working in us. Yet, if we are receptive to God's actions through us, then marvelous things can happen. I pick this up even in the gospel reading today, where Jesus tells us that whatever we might not understand or be able to accomplish, the Holy Spirit will make known or help us. He says, "The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—**He will teach you everything** and remind you of all that I told you" (John 14:26). So, we just show up to serve, and great things will happen in Jesus' Name! And maybe the greater the work, the more humble we become, because we know it has nothing to do with us!

Prayer for the Day:

Lord Jesus, I learn from St Peter, Paul Barnabas that any good work of mine is yours in thought, execution and recognition. It is all yours! I begin my day today by confessing that my heart has often been deceived into thinking that I am living a life of humble service when in reality, many of my motivations are grounded in my own selfishness. I am so grateful You helped me to understand this about myself. I start my day on my knees asking You to help me understand that any influence I might have in the Body of Christ needs to be given by the Holy Spirit Himself and not by my own ideas. Teach me to rely more and more on your strength. I know I will never be up to any job You have chosen for me, unless I realize how dependent on You I am. I thank you for such grace to know my weakness. May I be more like you today, than I was yesterday. Do not allow me to misuse any of the gifts You have given me. May all I do come from your direction and be aided by Your Spirit, all to the glory of your name and kingdom. Amen.

Challenge for the Day:

Take a moment to look forward to what church feasts we still have to celebrate leading up to Pentecost and the immediate Sundays following Pentecost. Can you sense any internal relation and purpose to the different feast days and their order?

Children's Bulletin/Activity Pages

Here is the Children's Bulletin full of activities about Sunday's Gospel.