

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTERTIDE

FIRST READING

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

In those days: Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralysed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.

Now when the Apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 33(32):1-2. 4-5. 18-19.
℞ 22

℞ **Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.**

Cry out with joy to God, all the earth; O sing to the glory of his name. O render him glorious praise. Say to God, 'How wondrous your deeds! ℞

'Before you all the earth shall bow down, shall sing to you, sing to your name!' Come and see the works of God: his wondrous deeds among the children of Adam. ℞

He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. Let our joy, then, be in him; he rules for ever by his might. ℞

Come and hear, all who fear God; I will tell what he did for my soul. Blest be God, who did not reject my prayer, nor withhold from me his merciful love. ℞

℞ **Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.**

SECOND READING

1 Peter 3:15-18

Beloved: In your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia...

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, says the Lord, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him.. **Alleluia...**

GOSPEL

John 14:15-21

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

'I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

Our Lord's words, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15), reveal that the Christian life is not founded merely upon duty, but upon love. The commandments of Christ are not burdens laid upon unwilling hearts; they are the natural fruit of communion with him. As St Augustine teaches, "Love, and do what you will."¹ Where true love of Christ dwells, obedience follows as surely as light follows the dawn.

The Fathers of the Church understood that Christ does not ask for outward conformity alone. St John Chrysostom writes that Jesus "shows that it is possible to love him, not merely in word, but in deed and truth."² Love for Christ is proven not by passing emotion or pious speech, but by lives shaped according to his will: forgiveness instead of resentment, humility instead of pride, mercy instead of judgement.

Yet the commandments are not given so that we might earn God's favour. Instead, they teach us how to remain within the life

of God already poured into us through grace. St Cyril of Alexandria says that obedience is "the pathway of love toward God."³ In keeping Christ's commandments, we are gradually conformed to his likeness. The Christian obeys because he desires to dwell ever more deeply in the love of Christ.

This is why the saints speak of holiness with joy. The commandments lead not to slavery, but to freedom: freedom from sin, from selfishness, and from fear. To love Christ is to trust that his way is life itself.

As we hear these words at Mass, we are invited to ask not only whether we know Christ's commandments, but whether we love him enough to follow where he leads.

¹ *St Augustine, Homilies on the First Epistle of John 7.8.*

² *St John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of John 75.1.*

³ *St Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of John, Book 9.*