

CELEBRATE SABBATH

Fifth Sunday of Easter

**The final judgment is not about how you kept the rules
and how many prayers you said.**

**It is about how faithful you have been to God
and God's will and purpose for you.**

Acts 14:21-27

Some Jews from Antioch and Iconium stoned Paul and dragged him out of the town. Paul's disciples formed a circle around him and protected him.

Be grateful for your circle of friends! Help each other remain safe from all harm!

Like good pastors, Paul and Barnabas continued their missionary journey, instructing people and encouraging them to stand strong in the face of difficulties.

The Gospel of today reminds us that love is the quality and character of the disciples of Jesus. It is this love that moved Paul and Barnabas to carry the message of Jesus risking their lives.

Stay focused on your mission. Be faithful to your mission even when things don't turn out the way expect.

Psalms 145

This is a psalm composed for public worship. It is an acrostic (alphabetic) poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The Psalm focuses primarily on God's compassion, especially for the underprivileged and depressed. It is a daily reminder of praising the unfathomable greatness of God, which goes beyond all our theologies, philosophies and doctrines. Verse 4 invites us to meditate on the wondrous acts of God and to pass on this memory to the future generations. Verses 8-9 express the most basic faith of the O.T. about the very nature of God: "steadfast love", "compassion" all-embracing love, abundant love. Verses 9-10 – All God's works give thanks because of the "all-embracing love". The whole Psalm proclaims God's name: "Steadfast love"

**The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The Lord is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.**

Revelation 21:1-5

John tells us about his vision of the faithful, after sufferings have been endured, enjoying the eternal presence of God, where “God will wipe every tear from their eyes” and make all things new. He saw a “new heaven and a new earth”. With this vision, he affirmed, “God’s dwelling is with the human race”.

Be mindful of the presence of God in your life!

John 13:31-35

Jesus and the disciples were around the Passover table. Tension mounted among the twelve disciples as Jesus told them that one of them would betray him. Questions about who the betrayer was, suspicion of each other...many such factors created confusion. It is amazing to know how Jesus tried to help the disciples become aware of what was happening and what was going to happen to him. They just failed to understand. They were too preoccupied with themselves and their ambitions.

Jesus made a final and special appeal to the heart of Judas. For the host to offer a special morsel from the dish was a sign of special friendship. When Jesus handed Judas Iscariot the “bit of food”, the “dipped morsel”, it was an offer of “special friendship”, a final appeal to the heart. But the heart of Judas was unmoved, full of greed, darkness, hate and didn’t see the light or the love that was offered. Judas left never to return!

Be alert! Stay awake! Be sensitive to those around you and their concerns, needs, struggles, etc. Learn to see beyond yourself! Listen to the heart of those around you! Be compassionate!

After Judas left, rejecting the love that was offered, Jesus told the disciples that they were to live and love as he did: “love one another as I have loved you”. The standard of life and love went far beyond what they had known. It was no more, “love your neighbor as yourself” ...it became, “love one another as I have loved you”. The disciples were to love as the master loved...not as others love them, not as they wish to be loved and not as they love themselves, but as the master himself loved! This is unconditional love...love unconquerable, invincible. This is love without competition, comparison, control and discrimination. This all-embracing love...the way God loves...love of all people, the rich and the poor, the proud and haughty, the humble and meek. This is self-sacrificing love, “no one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”.

May your love transcend competition and control...May your love transcend ill feelings, jealousies, hatred, etc....May you reach out in selfless and generous service!

Saint of the Day, May 18 - St. Pope John I and 18 other saints are remembered this day

Pope John I was a native of Siena in Italy. We do not have much information about his life before he became pope. He was elected Pope while he was still an archdeacon upon the death of Pope Hormisdas in 523. At that time, the ruler of Italy was Theodoric the Goth who subscribed to the Arianism which denied the divinity of Christ but had tolerated and even favored his Catholic subjects during the early part of his reign. His policy changed at about the time the young John was elected pope.

When the eastern emperor began imposing severe measures on the Arians of his area, the western emperor forced John to head a delegation to the East to soften the measures against the heretics. Little is known of the manner or outcome of the negotiations designed to secure continued toleration of Catholics in the West. On his way home, John was imprisoned at Ravenna because the emperor had begun to suspect that John's friendship with his eastern rival might lead to a conspiracy against his throne. Shortly after his imprisonment, John died on May 18, 526, apparently from the treatment he received in prison. John's body was transported to Rome and he was buried in the Basilica of St. Peter. He was Pope, the bishop of Rome from August 13, 523 to May 18, 526.

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