

FIFTH SATURDAY OF EASTERTIDE

16TH MAY 2020

Saint Brendan (486 – 578) was born in Munster, southwest Ireland, and became a monk and a priest. He founded a number of monasteries and travelled to Wales, to Iona, and on a three-year missionary journey to Britain. He is famous for his legendary voyage to the New World. Ireland at this time was the centre of a high



Christian culture at a time when much of Europe had collapsed into chaos and paganism, and Irishmen regularly went on missionary journeys to bring the Gospel to distant lands. It would have been natural to expand this to the far West, where lands might well exist, and where, if they did exist, they were waiting to hear the Gospel. Whether Brendan ever reached the New World may be doubted, and his journey is unlikely to have lasted seven years; but the story is evidence of a tradition of voyaging that involved many more people than Brendan.

Reflection: The theme of the first reading is of the second journey of Saint Paul. It is filled with the same adventurous spirit of Christians in other parts of the world like St. Brendan. Both men went out into uncharted territory as far as the new faith was concerned. Neither would have been rich nor able to rely on a mass of resources. They were people of faith & gave up other possibilities & opportunities to be servants of God's Word.

In contrast we live in a period of limited movement. This can make our faith journey tougher in some respects as we cope with the same old same old each day. We may not be able to wander far but our interior spirituality can take us on a journey.

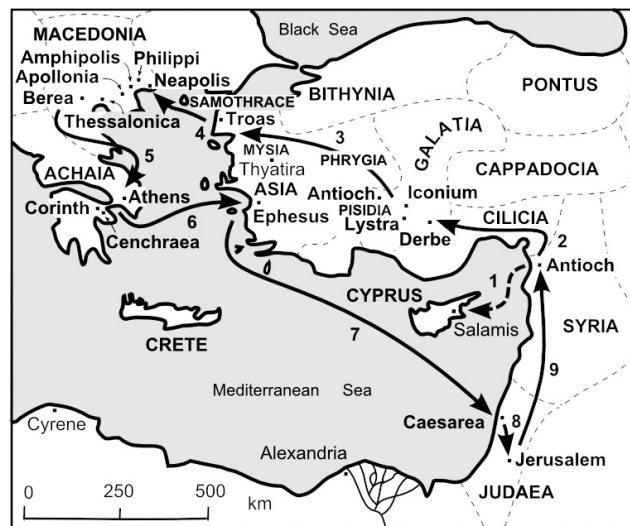
As we read the Gospel, it is useful to remember Jesus is speaking just before his arrest & passion. He had every reason to talk of hate & the whole world seeming to rise up against you. We know how easy it is to follow the crowd, keep our heads down & not make a fuss. Much tougher stand & face the wind.

A Reading From the Acts of the Apostles 15: 36 – 16: 15 Saint Paul's Second Journey

On a later occasion **Paul** said to **Barnabas**, 'Let us go back and visit all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord, so that we can see how the brothers are doing'.

Barnabas suggested taking John Mark, but Paul was not in favour of taking along the very man who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had refused to share in their work. After a violent quarrel they parted company, and Barnabas sailed off with Mark to Cyprus. Before Paul left, he chose **Silas** to accompany him and was commended by the brothers to the grace of God.

He travelled through Syria and Cilicia, consolidating the churches. From there he went to Derbe, and then on to Lystra. Here there was a disciple called **Timothy**, whose mother was a Jewess who had become a believer; but his father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy, and Paul, who wanted to have him as a travelling companion, had him circumcised. This was on account of the Jews in the locality where everyone knew his father was a Greek.



As they visited one town after another, they passed on the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, with instructions to respect them. So the churches grew strong in the faith, as well as growing daily in numbers. They travelled through Phrygia and the Galatian country, having been told by the Holy Spirit not to preach the word in Asia. When they reached the frontier of Mysia they thought to cross it into Bithynia, but as the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them, they went through Mysia and came down to Troas.

One night Paul had a vision: a Macedonian appeared and appealed to him in these words, 'Come across to Macedonia and help us.' Once he had seen this vision we lost no time in arranging a passage to Macedonia, convinced that God had called us to bring them the Good News.

Sailing from Troas we made a straight run for Samothrace; the next day for Neapolis, and from there for Philippi, a Roman colony and the principal city of that particular district of Macedonia. After a few days in this city we went along the river outside the gates as it was the Sabbath and this was a customary place for prayer.

We sat down and preached to the women who had come to the meeting. One of these women was called **Lydia**, a devout woman from the town of Thyatira who was in the purple-dye trade. She listened to us, and the Lord opened her heart to accept what Paul was saying. After she and her household had been baptised she sent us an invitation: 'If you really think me a true believer in the Lord,' she said 'come and stay with us'; and she would take no refusal.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

PSALM 99 (100)



Cry out with joy to the Lord,
all the earth.
Serve the Lord with gladness.
Come before him, singing for joy.

Know that he, the Lord, is God.
He made us, we belong to him,
we are his people,
the sheep of his flock.

Indeed, how good is the Lord,
eternal his merciful love.
He is faithful from age to age.

(The Alpacas of Dewsbury)

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ,
you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is,
sitting at God's right hand.**

Alleluia!

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO JOHN 15: 18-21

Jesus said to his disciples,

‘If the world hates you,
remember that it hated me before you.
If you belonged to the world,
the world would love you as its own;

But because you do not belong to the world, because my
choice withdrew you from the world, therefore the world
hates you.

Remember the words I said to you:
A servant is not greater than his master.
If they persecuted me, they will persecute you too; if they
kept my word, they will keep yours as well.

But it will be on my account that they will do all this,
because they do not know the one who sent me.’

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD