

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTERTIDE

17TH MAY 2020

Reflection: As we read about Simon the magician we can think of many who are trying to take advantage of the current situation. The gift of the Holy Spirit, the presence of God in our lives is not a business proposition. We are invited to open our hearts & allow the Lord a little space.

A Reading From the Acts of the Apostles 8: 4-25

Those who had escaped the persecution went from place to place preaching the Good News.

One of them was Philip who went to a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Christ to them. The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw them for themselves. There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured. As a result there was great rejoicing in that town.

Now a man called Simon had already practised magic arts in the town and astounded the Samaritan people. He had given it out that he was someone momentous, and everyone believed what he said; eminent citizens and ordinary people alike had declared, 'He is the divine power that is called Great'. They had only been won over to him because of the long time he had spent working on them with his magic. But when they believed Philip's preaching of the Good News about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women, and even Simon himself became a believer. After his baptism Simon, who went round constantly with Philip, was astonished when he saw the wonders and great miracles that took place.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the imposition of hands by the apostles, he offered them some money. 'Give me the same power' he said 'so that anyone I lay my hands on will receive the Holy Spirit.' Peter

answered, 'May your silver be lost forever, and you with it, for thinking that money could buy what God has given for nothing! You have no share, no rights, in this: God can see how your heart is warped. Repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord; you may still be forgiven for thinking as you did; it is plain to me that you are trapped in the bitterness of gall and the chains of sin.' 'Pray to the Lord for me yourselves' Simon replied 'so that none of the things you have spoken about may happen to me.'

Having given their testimony and proclaimed the word of the Lord, they went back to Jerusalem, preaching the Good News to a number of Samaritan villages.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

PSALM 65 (66)

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 tremendous your deeds!'

'Before you all the earth shall bow;
Shall sing to you, sing to your name!'
Come and see the works of God,
Tremendous his deeds among men.

He turned the sea into dry land,
They passed through the river dry-shod.
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:
Blessed be God who did not reject my prayer
Nor withhold his love from me.

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF SAINT PETER 3: 15-18

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.

Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 14: 15-21

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘If you love me you will keep my commandments.
I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate
to be with you for ever, that Spirit of truth
whom the world can never receive
since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him,
because he is with you, he is in you.

I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you.

In a short time the world will no longer see me;
but you will see me, because I live and you will live.

On that day you will understand that I am in my Father
and you in me and I in you.

Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them
will be one who loves me;
and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father,
and I shall love him and show myself to him.’

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD