

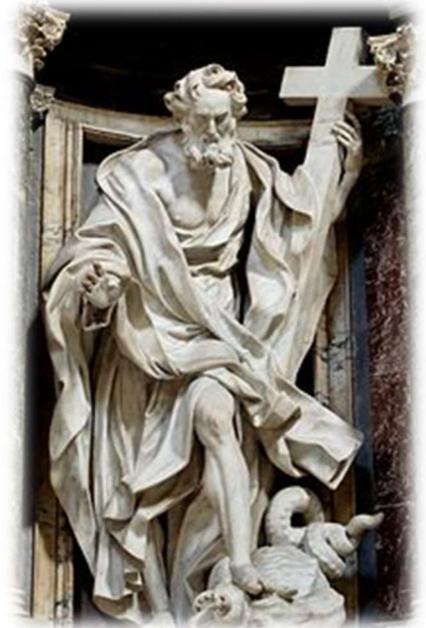
St. Philip the Apostle
Roman Catholic Church

Monday, April 26, 2021

-- Monday of the Fourth Week of Easter

First Reading: Acts 11:1-18

The Apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles too had accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem the circumcised believers confronted him, saying, 'You entered the house of uncircumcised people and ate with them.' Peter began and explained it to them step by step, saying, "I was at prayer in the city of Joppa when in a trance I had a vision, something resembling a large sheet coming down, lowered from the sky by its four corners, and it came to me. Looking intently into it, I observed and saw the four-legged animals of the earth, the wild beasts, the reptiles, and the birds of the sky. I also heard a voice say to me, 'Get up, Peter. Laughter and eat.' But I said, 'Certainly not, sir, because nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But a second time a voice from heaven answered, 'What God has made clean, you are not to call profane.' This happened three times, and then everything was drawn up again into the sky. Just then three men appeared at the house where we were, who had been sent to me from Caesarea. The Spirit told me to accompany them without discriminating. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. He related to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, saying, 'Send someone to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter, who will speak words to you by which you and all your household will be saved.' As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them as it had upon us at the beginning, and I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave them the same gift he gave to us when we came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to be able to hinder God?" When they heard this, they stopped objecting and glorified God, saying, "God has then granted life-giving repentance to the Gentiles too."



Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 42:2-3; 43:3, 4

Athirst is my soul for the living God.

As the hind longs for the running waters,
so my soul longs for you, O God.

Athirst is my soul for God, the living God.

When shall I go and behold the face of God? *R/.*

Send forth your light and your fidelity;
they shall lead me on

And bring me to your holy mountain,
to your dwelling-place. *R/.*

Then will I go in to the altar of God,
the God of my gladness and joy;
Then will I give you thanks upon the harp,
O God, my God! *R/*.

Gospel: John 10:1-1

Jesus said: “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers.” Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

So Jesus said again, “Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.”

Reflection

Peter began and explained it to them step by step. (Acts 11:4)

We all know what hindsight is: it's a look in the rearview mirror, when we are able to make sense of a situation only after it's already happened. It's what Peter experienced as he looked back at the amazing events in today's first reading.

As this story unfolds, Peter faces some very unusual situations, and by the end, his whole perspective changes. His vision, the three men knocking on the door, his choosing to go with them “without discriminating” (Acts 11:12), the Holy Spirit falling upon a Gentile household — each of these was another step in God's plan. But only with spiritual hindsight could Peter see that God wanted to include Gentiles in his Church. Peter became so convinced, in fact, that he was able to explain it to the circumcised believers in Jerusalem (11:2).

Think of how this works in your life. You might go through a situation that doesn't make sense at the time. Maybe you lost a job and had to stay at home with your children. Or maybe a good friend moved halfway across the country. It was a hard transition, but as you looked back on it later, you saw that God had a perfect purpose and plan in every step. Maybe you were able to have a breakthrough with one of your children or found a new way to deepen your friendship from afar.

Spiritual hindsight can help you stand in awe of God's plan. What's more, it can inspire you to lean on God the next time something unexpected comes along.

That's why it's worth it every now and then to look back on some of the events in your life or in the lives of your loved ones. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see how God might have been at work through these circumstances. Even better, write down your insights as a reminder of God's faithfulness when you doubt. As you do this, you will be better able to imitate Peter: though he might

not have understood how everything was going to work out, he tried to follow the Holy Spirit each step along the way.

Holy Spirit, give me spiritual hindsight to see your faithfulness throughout my life.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.