

St. Philip the Apostle
Roman Catholic Church



Thursday, April 29, 2021

- Thursday of the Fourth Week of Easter
- Memorial of St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin and Doctor of the Church
- Fr. Sherdel's Morning Mass Intention: **Rev. Michael X. Bennett**

First Reading: Acts 13:13-25

From Paphos, Paul and his companions set sail and arrived at Perga in Pamphylia. But John left them and returned to Jerusalem. They continued on from Perga and reached Antioch in Pisidia. On the sabbath they entered into the synagogue and took their seats. After the reading of the law and the prophets, the synagogue officials sent word to them, "My brothers, if one of you has a word of exhortation for the people, please speak."

So Paul got up, motioned with his hand, and said, "Fellow children of Israel and you others who are God-fearing, listen. The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and exalted the people during their sojourn in the land of Egypt. With uplifted arm he led them out, and for about forty years he put up with them in the desert. When he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance at the end of about four hundred and fifty years. After these things he provided judges up to Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king. God gave them Saul, son of Kish, a man from the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. Then he removed him and raised up David as their king; of him he testified,

I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will carry out my every wish. From this man's descendants God, according to his promise, has brought to Israel a savior, Jesus. John heralded his coming by proclaiming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel; and as John was completing his course, he would say, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. Behold, one is coming after me; I am not worthy to unfasten the sandals of his feet.'"

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 89:2-3, 21-22, 25, 27

For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

The favors of the Lord I will sing forever;
through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness.
For you have said, "My kindness is established forever";
in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness. **R/.**

"I have found David, my servant;

with my holy oil I have anointed him,
That my hand may be always with him,
and that my arm may make him strong.” *R/.*

“My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him,
and through my name shall his horn be exalted.
He shall say of me, ‘You are my father,
my God, the Rock, my savior.’” *R/.*

Gospel: John 13:16-20

When Jesus had washed the disciples’ feet, he said to them: “Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it. I am not speaking of all of you. I know those whom I have chosen. But so that the Scripture might be fulfilled,

The one who ate my food has raised his heel against me.

From now on I am telling you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I AM. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

Reflection

Whoever receives the one I send receives me. (John 13:20)

Sometimes we think of the Church like a relay race: one generation hands the baton to the next by passing on the gospel message. Of course, there is truth to that: we want to guard “the deposit of faith” and keep it free from error for the next generation (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 86).

But sharing our faith involves far more than this. We’re not only passing on information; we are sharing a person, Jesus himself. That is why, in today’s Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples, “Whoever receives the one I send receives *me*” (John 13:20, emphasis added).

We aren’t handing on a “thing.” We aren’t even handing out Jesus’ contact information. We’re giving someone a personal introduction to our amazing friend, Jesus. Pope Benedict XVI emphasized this when he wrote, “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 1). When we witness to Jesus, it’s as if we are passing on a precious fire in the dark of night, something life changing *and* necessary to finding our way forward.

What a privilege it is to bring Jesus to another person in a way that could change their life forever! But how can we do this? One way is through humble service. In fact, the Master himself showed us the way. In today’s Gospel, Jesus had just finished washing his followers’ feet when he told them to follow his example. He wasn’t just teaching them something; he was showing them how to do it. This has been the way of the Church from the beginning: we share the message of Jesus through our words *and* our love.

If you want to introduce Jesus to the people around you, begin by serving them. Listen as they share their stories. Offer to bring them a meal or drive them to Mass. It might be easier just to hand them a Bible — like a relay baton — and avoid dealing with their “dirty feet.” But there is nothing like the human touch to convey the love of Jesus —through your smile, your voice, or your hands and feet.

Jesus, help me to share your love and presence with the people around me.

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.