

St. Philip the Apostle

Roman Catholic Church



Monday, May 1, 2023

- Monday of the Fourth Week of Easter
- Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker

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. Slaughter 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 10:11-18

Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father."

Reflection

I had a vision... (Acts 11:5)

It was a tense discussion as "the circumcised believers confronted" Peter about eating with Gentiles (Acts 11:2). According to custom, "eating with" equated to "agreeing with," and it certainly did not look good for a Jewish follower of Christ to break bread with people who did not adhere to Jewish standards of purity. How did Peter respond to the confrontation? Not with a lengthy theological defense, but with a vision! As a result of Peter's explanation that day, the Church undertook a major shift in its acceptance of Gentiles.

This wasn't the only time a vision had a major impact on the Church. In France in 1858, a "beautiful lady" appeared to a fourteen-year-old girl named Bernadette and told her, "I am the Immaculate Conception." As a result, Lourdes became the site of many miraculous healings, and the dogma of the Immaculate Conception spread throughout the world.

In Poland in 1924, another teenager, Helena Kowalska, had a vision of the suffering Christ, which led to her joining a convent. In 1931, as a young nun, she had another vision of Jesus as the Divine Mercy. Paintings of this image have led to a newfound appreciation of the power of God's mercy over sin, hatred, and despair.

The Bible is also filled with stories of how God used visions and dreams to advance his plan and his purpose. In the Old Testament, the patriarch Joseph's dreams led to his banishment from his family but, ultimately, to their salvation and restoration. The prophet Jeremiah had many visions that God asked him to share with the people. And St. Joseph's dreams helped protect the Holy Family.

Today, marvel at how creative and generous God is in revealing his love through dreams and visions. Perhaps a vivid dream has inspired you to pursue a God-given purpose. Perhaps you've seen an image in your mind's eye that comforted you in a time of sorrow. Recall these experiences and thank God for them. Then ask him to continue to deepen your love for him and for others in his own creative way.

Jesus, help me to see you more clearly, both while I am awake and as I sleep.

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.