

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LECTIONARY #60

READING I Acts of the Apostles 1:15-17, 20a, 20c-26

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers

—there was a group of about one hundred and twenty persons in the one place—

He said, "My brothers,

the Scripture had to be fulfilled

which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand

through the mouth of David, concerning Judas, who was the guide for those who arrested Jesus.

He was numbered among us

and was allotted a share in this ministry.

"For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

May another take his office.

"Therefore, it is necessary that one of the men

who accompanied us the whole time

the Lord Jesus came and went among us,

beginning from the baptism of John

until the day on which he was taken up from us, become with us a witness to his resurrection."

So they proposed two, Judas called Barsabbas,

who was also known as Justus, and Matthias.

Use a tone of regret. One of their own betrayed them; this is a painful memory.

Project so that it is clear that Peter is

quoting the Psalms.

Barsabbas = bahr-SAH-buhs or bahr-SAB-uhs. Practice this name so it is not confused with Barabbas.
Justus = jus-tuhs
Matthias = muh-THI-uhs

READING I

Today's first reading provides us with some context

for next week's celebration of Pentecost.

Following Luke's description of the ascension in the Acts of the Apostles, we hear

that the eleven returned to Jerusalem to

await the coming of the Spirit. That first

community included the eleven, the women

who followed Jesus, and members of Jesus'

family, including Mary, his mother, as well

as many other followers. As they waited,

they prayed. During this period of waiting,

Peter delivered his first speech, portions of

which form our first reading. But why is

Peter speaking?

Before the Spirit can come upon Jesus'

disciples, there is one matter that must be

resolved: the number of the twelve apos-

tes (currently at eleven) must be restored

to twelve. The number has symbolic mean-

ing, as the twelve, in Luke's understanding,

are related to a restoration of the people of

Israel (twelve patriarchs and twelve tribes).

Such an understanding is confirmed in the

opening address, when Peter addresses

those gathered for this event as "brothers" (*andres adelphoi* in Greek), twice emphasis-

ing their maleness, and when he cites

Psalms 109:8 (Psalms 108:8 in the Septuagint)

to justify replacing Judas, who had aban-

doned his apostolic office. This restoration

will occur only one time. As we later read in

Acts of the Apostles, when future members

of the twelve die, they are not replaced.

Clearly, the need to establish a full contin-

gent of witnesses stretching from Jesus'

baptism to his ascension is necessary so

that the Spirit can descend upon them.

Having prayed and placed the final decision

in God's hands (by drawing lots), the com-

munity is poised to receive the Spirit.

Then they prayed, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this apostolic ministry from which Judas turned away to go to his own place." Then they gave lots to them, and the lot fell upon **Matthias**, and he was counted with the eleven apostles.

Pause after "prayed." Shortly, they will cast lots. This is not gambling but an ancient practice of determining God's will.

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20 (19a)

R. The Lord has set his throne in heaven.

or

R. Alleluia.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all my being, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him. The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, all you his angels, you mighty in strength, who do his bidding. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put out our transgressions from us. The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, all you his angels, you mighty in strength, who do his bidding.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

READING II 1 John 4:11-16

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us. This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us, that he has given us of his Spirit. Moreover, we have seen and testify that the Father sent his Son as savior of the world. »

Pause after the tender salutation.

Pay attention to the verbs.

READING II

In contrast to the first reading, which provides a suitable liturgical context for next week's celebration of Pentecost, the second reading continues our steady progression through 1 John that commenced at the beginning of the season. The fifth and sixth Sundays of Easter took up dimensions of the author's exhortation: "we should love one another" (1 John 3:11). Today's reading builds on and refines those earlier discussions. The Elder begins by grounding the believer's love in the source of all love: God.

God loved us, so we must love. God's love is an incarnational and active love. In other words, God remains in the one who loves, and thereby brings love to perfection. This is an amazing reciprocity: love is brought to perfection in the disciple when the disciple acknowledges that Jesus, the one who came in the flesh, is the one whom God sent as savior of the world and is the Son of God. This, the community has come to realize, is the embodiment of God's love for them, and it leads them to know it, to believe it, and to remain in God who remains in them. The members of the Elder's community came to know this because they correctly understood the relationship between the Father and the Son. In contrast to the secessionists, the Elder's community is brought to perfection in love. For the is actualized in the love. For the commandment to love one another. Placing all in God's hands, the Elder notes that the criterion for God's "remaining" is found, not in the Spirit, but in the fact that God has given his Spirit.

Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God. We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.

GOSPEL John 17:1b-19

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed, saying: "Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me,

so that they may be one just as we are one. When I was with them I protected them in your name that you gave me,

and I guarded them, and none of them was lost except the son of destruction,

in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you.

I speak this in the world so that they may share my joy completely. I gave them your word, and the world hated them,

because they do not belong to the world, any more than I belong to the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world

but that you keep them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world.

Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, And I consecrate myself for them,

so that they also may be consecrated in truth."

Today's passage comes from the second part of that prayer: for his disciples. The prayer's appeal to inclusion and exclusion is grounded in Jesus' knowledge that where no one eats, but where feet are washed (including those of Judas!), and it runs for five chapters of lengthy discourses. Priestly Prayer) where Jesus prays for his own glorification (17:1-8), for his vulnerable disciples (17:9-19), and for future believers who will come to faith through his disciples (17:20-26).

and Satan to seek their destruction (exclusion). Although Jesus does not ask for his faithful ones to be removed from the world, he does ask, because of the faith of the disciples, that the Father to identify the disciples with his design (the truth), and thereby to make them holy (to consecrate them). Thus, just as Jesus was sent and consecrated, so too will his followers be consecrated and sent, and become one with Father and Son, S.L.

Love is active. Passivity has no place in the Christian life.

The reading has some repetition. Emphasize the new idea and subdue ideas when repeated.

Let Christ's joy reflect on your face and then go to a neutral expression when recounting the world's hostile response. Be sure to enunciate so that "word" and "world" are heard distinctly.

There is a reciprocal nature to the dialogue; the Father sends the Son and the Son sends us.

GOSPEL

The Last Supper of John's Gospel is unique among