Today's readings:
Acts 15:1-2, 22-29 | Rev 21:10-14, 22-23 |
Jn 14:23-29

May 1, 2016 – 6th Sunday of Easter

"Unless you are circumcised you cannot be saved."

Some people in Antioch were insisting upon stringent requirements for salvation. Paul and Barnabas appealed to Jerusalem, after which a settlement was reached. The new Gentiles were notified that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the young church was "not to lay on you any burden beyond that which is strictly necessary."

What was necessary? To be sure, the community of Jerusalem was presupposing dedication to the cause of Jesus, but they were also reluctant to pile obligations onto their new converts. What about strangled animals and blood? Are these still prohibited? What about idolatry? Might there be some contemporary parallel to this, have other practices taken their place in the catalogue of what is strictly necessary? One can read in the First Letter to Timothy that women ought not to speak in the assembly. The Letter to Titus directs that bishops must be of irreproachable character. They ought not to be heavy drinkers or money-grubbers. And they should be married only once – their children solid believers and properly respectful. Now that's a new twist on the celibacy debate.

One of the most seductive temptations of the believer is to identify the will of God with the will of the believer, and not the other way around. God's will is squeezed into patriotism, leftism, capitalism, hierarchy, ecclesiastical tradition. Among the churches, has it ever been heard that a certain practice can never be changed, since it is the will of God? Clearly circumcision was an important issue. But some of the antagonists seem to have given it the status of unchangeable law. How do we avoid servitude to merely human laws while we neglect the law of God?

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to instruct us in everything and remind us of all he revealed. Is this what led the Jerusalem community to forswear putting heavy burdens on its new believers?

It is Jesus and his word that we ought first and always to remember. Thereby the Holy Spirit instructs us. When we look at Christ, primarily in scripture, it is clear what he is saying: We need repentance; salvation is offered us in his redeeming death and resurrection; and we are called to imitate him in our mission to the world. We encounter him in our community, the church, which from the beginning has given us his word, under the blessing of the Spirit. Moreover, our holy sacramental signs recall and reenact Jesus' saving power.

Our hierarchies, traditions, teachings, and laws all help us remember. Our holy ones, called saints, and our devotions have ever called us back to his truth. We also see him, as he promised, in the least of our brothers and sisters. While no one of these can contain all of the mystery of Christ, taken together they are a concert of witnesses to the Easter message.

But one bright truth we should never forget. All ideologies and requirements, all popes and rituals, all theologians and mystics, all laws and traditions, would mean nothing to us as Catholics, if Christ is not risen and has not saved us.

It was no more than good sense to drop circumcision.

John Kavanaugh, SJ, *shortened from*: http://liturgy.slu.edu/6EasterC050116/theword_embodied.html

N E W S

Social gathering – Our monthly social gathering will take place this Sunday, May 1st, after Mass. Our small but active socials' team will be very happy to meet some volunteers coming half an hour prior to Mass to help setting up, and also for anyone helping to clean up later on.
Above all, we hope for a small contribution from everyone: Bring some time, some laughter, a dish to share!!

Rosary in May – May is traditionally a month devoted especially to Mary Mother of God; rosary prayers are part of this. You are invited to pray the rosary 20 minutes before Mass this Sunday, led by Margo. If anyone could lead this prayer on one of the next Sundays, before or after Mass, talk to us about it...

If you would like to be added to our email list please send your contact information to:
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