

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR C

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God, lover of us all,
Jesus came among us
to bring us peace.
Take away all worry and fear,
and make us ready
for the coming of your Spirit.
We ask this
through Christ our Lord.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The first reading, from Acts, continues Luke's presentation of the mission of the Church to spread the Gospel to the "ends of the earth." In today's section, we read the letter written by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. Seemingly, the decisions taken at the meeting were to determine the status of the Gentile believers. Even after the Resurrection, there were those who believed that salvation was only for the Jews. This passage rejects that notion.

The Gospel is part of John's discourse on the Holy Spirit. Jesus, before his death, assures his followers that he will return and will take the faithful to be with him forever. There is no need to fear; God's own Spirit will be with us and will teach us and remind us of all that Jesus said. The Spirit brings the peace of Jesus. True believers live, not in fear, but in peace.

FIRST READING: *Acts 15:1-2, 22-29*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Some people went
from Jerusalem to the city of Antioch
and said to the new Gentile believers there,
"If you don't follow the law of Moses,
you cannot be saved."

Paul and Barnabas did not agree with this,
so they went to Jerusalem
to ask the leaders of the Church
what they should do.
After they talked about it,
the leaders decided to send Judas and Silas back
with Paul and Barnabas,
and they sent this letter to the Gentiles:

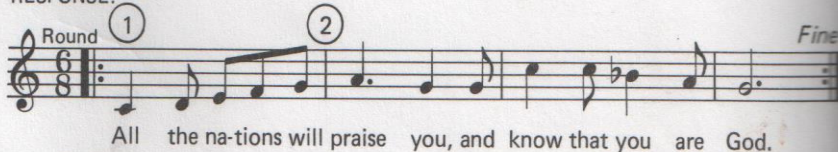
"Greetings from the apostles and elders,
to the Gentile believers in Antioch.

"Dear friends,
We have heard that some people from here
have come to you and have confused you
by what they said.
So we are sending Judas and Silas
along with Paul and Barnabas
to tell you what we have decided is best.
This is what the Holy Spirit has taught us:
don't eat food that has been offered to false gods,
and keep yourselves pure.
If you do this, you will be doing what is right.
We send you our greetings. Farewell."

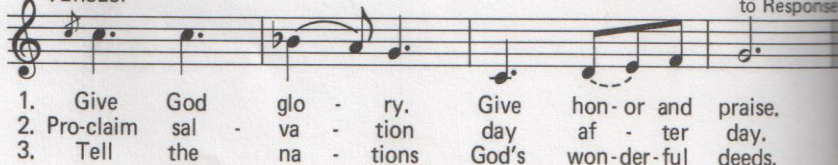
The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: *Psalm 71*

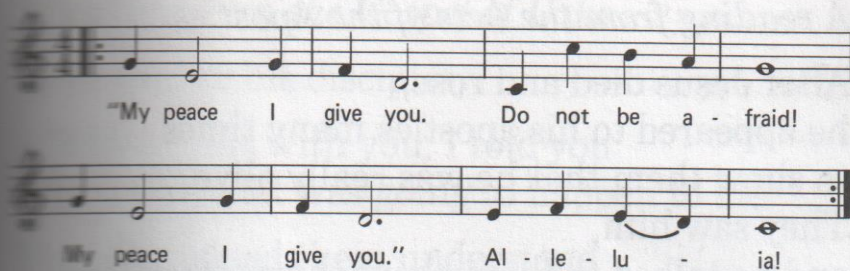
RESPONSE:



VERSES:



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



GOSPEL: *John 14:23-29*

A reading from the Gospel of John.

Jesus said to his disciples,

"I am going to prepare a place for you,
and I will come back and take you with me.
If you love me, you will obey my words
and do as I have said.

For everything I have said to you
came from the Father who sent me to you.

"I have told you this while I am here with you.
But the Father is going to send the Holy Spirit,
who will teach you everything
and remind you of all that I have said.

"I leave you my peace.

The peace I give you
is not like the peace that the world gives,
so don't be afraid.

Let your hearts be at peace.

"I told you that I am leaving,
but I will come back to you.

I am telling you this so that when it happens,
you will believe it."

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Ask the children if they have ever experienced an inner desire to do something good for someone. Perhaps some examples would help. Sometimes children decide with excitement that they are going to "surprise Mom or Dad" by cleaning the house while they're out. Some children like to sneak in and put flowers on a teacher's desk. Sometimes they see an elderly person or a smaller child having difficulty, and they instinctively want to help. Allow them time to share their own experiences.

Tell them that it is the Holy Spirit that inspires us to do good things. We don't see the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Jesus—is in us and helps us. Remind the children that they received the Holy Spirit when they were baptized. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would always be with us.

What else did Jesus promise in today's readings? Jesus tells us that he is giving us his peace. Jesus really wants us to have peace and not be afraid. He is always with us.

"Peace" in this context seems to mean a "sense of well-being." Ask the children if they experience that when they follow their feelings to do good things. Help them see that following the Holy Spirit—living like Jesus—brings peace.