

**Fifth Sunday of Easter
Lectionary: 53**

Reading 1: Acts. 9:26-31

Responsorial Psalm: Ps. 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32

Reading 2: 1 Jn. 3:18-24

Alleluia: Jn. 15:4A, 5B

Gospel: Jn. 15:1-8

The apostle John reminds us in the second reading that we cannot love only in word; love also has to be visible in our works. But what kind of works can we do? Christian charity is an essential element of our faith, charity is an act of love based in works and sometimes words.

In yesterday's Gospel Jesus told Philip, "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves." (Jn. 14:11) Notice that Jesus backs up his words with his works, meaning if you do not agree with what I said or with what I tell you, take a look at the things I do. He is the truth; Jesus does not change the truth to make things work for him. In our time we just do not know who says the truth anymore. People have learned to hide and change the truth. We are often confused by so many people who claim to say the truth. Saint Peter was smart to open his heart and not hide anything from Jesus, "Lord, You know everything, you know that I love you (Jn. 21: 17). That is right, God knows the most secret places of our hearts and minds; we cannot hide.

When it comes to dealing with people we have to be smart and compare words and works. This is how we know if someone is truthful about things. The commandment of love in word and deed is the principal that Jesus recommends to us today. To express our love with our lips is something that only the rational being is capable of doing and to back it up with our actions is something that only those who remain in Jesus learn to do.

Therefore brothers and sisters, "Remain in me" Jesus tells us, remain in the faith that comes from God. This is a free gift that

helps us all to see the future with hope not with despair. Bear fruit by remaining united to Christ. "Remain" is a key word in the vocabulary of Saint John. In the Greek original (μένειν- menein) we find it 68 times in the writings of John and 118 in the New Testament. In the strongest sense it expresses the union between the Father and the Son. In a wider sense it expresses the union between God and the one who has faith and observes his commandments. The parable of the vine and the branches invites us in a particular way to "remain united to Christ".

To remain united to Christ is to remain united to grace, because without it we can do anything. To remain united to Christ is to remain united to Him by prayer, by the interior life. It is to make all our works and acts done in the presence of God and ordered according to God. Whoever separates from Christ is lost. It moves away from the path, the truth and life. It dries and it dies.

“αὐτὸν θέλω μένειν ἕως ἔρχομαι- I want him to remain until”