



a Kendall Hunt Company

Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year B, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4

1 John 4:7-10 [or: 1 John 4:11-16 (when the Ascension is celebrated next Sunday)]

John 15:9-17 [or: John 17:11-19 (when the Ascension is celebrated next Sunday)]

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Is there a particular reading that appeals to you? Is there a word or image that engages you?

Read the following **Word in Liturgy** and **Catholic Doctrine** sections. Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need.

The Word In Liturgy

The scene in the first reading, in the home of Cornelius, plays a decisive part in the theological plan of Luke's two-volume opus. The mission of Jesus that culminated in Jerusalem was entrusted to the young Church (Acts 1:8) at the ascension. Now, the disciples are to preach the Good News, first in Jerusalem (Acts, chaps. 1-7), then in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-9), and finally "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 10-28). The "Gentile Pentecost," as this scene has been called, is described in detail as befits its importance in Luke's plan. The universality of salvation ("God shows no partiality") "in the name of Jesus Christ" is an expression of God's unconditional love for every human being, and the Church's mandate to carry the Gospel to all nations is a direct correlate of that divine love. Truly, love-divine love-is the heart and soul of the Church's apostolic mission.

The gospel chosen for today follows immediately on the vine and branches material presented last week. Jesus invites his listeners to an even deeper understanding of the vital intimacy they share with him, with his Father, and with one another in the Church. He links his own mission in the world to the Father's love for him ("As the Father loves me, so I also love you"). Then he joins the mission that he has entrusted to the disciples to his own mission ("love one another as I love you"). For a Church under persecution, the words of John's gospel would have enormous importance, recalling how the Master had linked his own death ("no one has greater love than this...") with their mission in the world ("I...appointed you to go and bear fruit..."). The Christian's mission in the world is the natural outcome of life in union with Christ. Just as the branches produce grapes because they are joined to the vine, so the disciples of Jesus "bear fruit" in the world because of love-the love they have received from God, the love they have received from Jesus, the love they share with others in the Christian

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community.

Catholic Doctrine

Love, the Soul of an Apostolate

The Greek term *apostolos* means "one who is sent out, messenger" and refers to the Twelve (minus Judas Iscariot and adding Matthias) after Jesus' ascension. Saint Paul, in his letters, also describes himself as an apostle who received a special calling from Christ to witness to God's saving message in Jesus and thereby build up the Church. Down through the ages the whole Church can be described as apostolic in that through the successors of Peter and the other apostles (the bishops) it has remained in communion of faith and life with its origin. The Church is also apostolic in that it does not seek to serve itself but is sent out into all the world for the sake of the world's salvation.

This apostolate is carried out by all members of the Church because we are inheritors of a magnificent grace, or gift, in Christ. God loves us so much that he sent his only Son to save us from sin and death. The gift is such an abundant gift that it must be shared. Hoarding it is antithetical to Christianity. Thus, the Second Vatican Council taught, "The apostolate is lived in faith, hope, and charity poured out by the Holy Spirit into the hearts of all the members of the Church. And the precept of charity, which is the Lord's greatest commandment, urges all Christians to work for the glory of God through the coming of his kingdom and for the communication of eternal life to all..."

The apostolate may take many forms and exhibit a wide variety of efforts and activity. But drawn from the Eucharist-the sacrifice of Christ and the meal of true life-love is the soul of this diverse apostolate. The love of God shown to us in Christ is proclaimed and given witness by our own deliberate efforts to place our love at service to the mission of Jesus in his Church.