

Each One is God's Favorite!



*Pilgrims in
the Church of
the Sepulcher,
Jerusalem,
Waiting for
the Light from
Jesus' Tomb.*

I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48)
Peter is not God

^{25h}When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and, falling at his feet, paid him homage. ²⁶Peter, however, raised him up, saying, "Get up. I myself am also a human being."

God is impartial

^{34*} Then Peter proceeded to speak and said, "In truth, I see that **God shows no partiality**. ³⁵Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. [**The Holy Spirit falls mysteriously**]

^{44p} While Peter was still speaking these things, the holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, ⁴⁶for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter responded, ^{47q}"Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the holy Spirit even as we have?" ⁴⁸He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

THE FOCUS: God shows no Partiality

COMMENTARY

- The Reading is choppy. It is made continuous by the liturgists who choose what to be read this Sunday.
- Note two characters: Peter and Cornelius.

- Peter visits Cornelius; assures him he is not God (vv.25-26).
- Peter, the apostle, affirms God is impartial. (*Salvation is not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles*) (vv.34-35).
- Cornelius, the pagan centurion, benefits from God's impartiality.
- The falling of the Holy Spirit upon all who were listening is a sign of God's impartiality. The gift of the Holy Spirit is poured also upon the Gentiles (vv.45-46).
- The gift is speaking in tongues and glorifying God (v.46).
- Peter orders baptism to them. God's impartiality is carried out by Peter.
- Problematic: The Holy Spirit comes first before the baptism. It is like confirmation before the baptism. This is the reason why the believers who accompanied Peter were surprised.
- The Holy Spirit moves beyond our rules and expectations.

REFLECTIONS

Like Peter, we can be instruments of God's impartiality, by being impartial to our brothers and sisters.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 98:1, 2-4)

THE LORD HAS REVEALED TO THE NATIONS HIS SAVING POWER. Or ALLELUIA.

SECOND READING (1 Jn 4:7-10)

^{7*}Beloved, let us **love** one another, because **love** is of God; everyone who **loves** is begotten by God and knows God. ⁸Whoever is without **love**

does not know God, for God is **love**.^{9f}In this way the **love** of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him.^{10g}In this is **love**: not that we have **loved** God, but that he **loved** us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.

THE FOCUS: Love

COMMENTARY

- The author plays on the word “love.”
- Almost every line contains the word “love.”
- The word “love” is used in two ways: exhortation: “Let us love one another” (v.7), and explanation/exposition: “love is of God”, “Everyone who loves,” “For God is love” (vv. 7-8, etc.).
- Absence of love leads to ignorance of God (v.8).
- Twice said: God has loved us (vv.9 and 10).
- Two reasons for God sending his Son to us:
 - 1) to have life through him.
 - 2) as expiation for our sins.

REFLECTIONS

The love of God gives life and brings forgiveness of sins. So love and be loved so that you may be saved.

GOSPEL READING (Jn 15:9-17)

Basis of love

^{9f}As the Father **loves** me, so I also **love** you.

The Commandment of Love

Remain in my **love**.^{10g}If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my **love**, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his **love**.

^{11h}“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

^{12f}This is my commandment: **love** one another as I **love** you.

Love and Friendship

¹³No one has greater **love** than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴You are

my friends if you do what I command you.¹⁵I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.

The Commandment of Love

¹⁷This I command you: **love** one another.

THE FOCUS: Love one another

COMMENTARY

- Love begins with the Father. The love of the Father is communicated to us through Christ (v.9).
- We are commanded to love. We have no choice but to love (vv.9-10).
- Jesus tells the secret of how to remain in his love: “if you keep my commandments” (v.10). Staying in love is maintained through obedience. He is the good example (v.10).
- Jesus reveals this: that his joy and our joy may be complete (v.11).
- Love finds its sublime expression in dying for one’s friends (v.13).
- Jesus considers us friends, if we keep his commandments (v.14). Friendship with Jesus has obligations and responsibilities.
- Privileges of the Friends of Jesus:
 - Jesus dies for them.
 - They are not slaves.
 - They know what the Father is doing (they can appreciate God’s works).
 - They are chosen ones, appointed to bear fruit.
 - Their prayers are granted (v.16).

REFLECTIONS

