

COMMENTARY ON READINGS FOR SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2005
(6th Sunday of Easter)
(Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Ps 66; 1 Pet 3:15-18; John 14:15-21)

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These readings speak about the Holy Spirit, fruit of Jesus' passion and resurrection, the Paschal mystery. In the first reading from Acts, we get a glimpse of early Church activity: there is first preaching about Christ, accompanied by signs that something powerful from God takes place when the gospel is believed; people are restored to sanity and healed. There may be a hint of partial knowledge of Church practice and teaching in the fact that there is mention of baptism in the name of Jesus without receipt of the Holy Spirit, until leading apostles such as Peter and John come and lay their hands as a type of confirmation (a later, separate sacrament) of this baptism; cf. Acts 10:44-48 (receipt of Holy Spirit followed by baptism; 18:25).

In his last discourse before his passion in the Gospel of John, Jesus promises to send the Spirit of Truth (the Holy Spirit, John 1:33; 14:26; 20:22) from the Father as an Advocate or Counselor who will always remain with the disciples who keep Jesus' commandments. When this happens, the ones who love Jesus will experience within them the presence and love of the Trinity, that is, the revelation of God through Jesus in the Spirit.

The reading from 1 Pet really instructs us on how to live this life in the Spirit, "sanctifying" Christ (akin to "hallowed be thy Name" addressed to the Father in the Lord's Prayer, meaning that God's glorious being is manifested to all by its recognizable effects on human life, our late Pope being a sublime example of this). This is at bottom the "explanation" for our righteous conduct and hope that the reading speaks about. By this humble, patient and gentle behavior, Christ's Paschal mystery is also brought to light, manifesting that it was the Spirit of God that came forth from Jesus' putting sin and evil to death on the cross.