Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 16:15–20: The Ascension of the Lord

Jesus said to his disciples: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

Focus Questions

1. What is Jesus’ command to His disciples?
2. What does Jesus say we must do in order to be saved?
3. What signs does Jesus say will accompany those who believe? How do we see these signs today? Why do you think it might seem like we don’t see these signs very often?
4. What do you think it means that Jesus “took His seat at the right hand of God?”
5. What did the Apostles do after Jesus ascended into Heaven?
The Mission of the Church: Our Mission

Directions: Read what the Church teaches about evangelization. Then reflect on your own personal witness of Jesus.

Pope Paul VI wrote an encyclical, an official teaching letter to the faithful, called Evangeli Nuntiandi, or, Evangelization in the Modern World. In it, he wrote the following:

Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection. (14)

...For the Church, the first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life, given over to God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one's neighbor with limitless zeal. As we said recently to a group of lay people, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." (41)

The first of these very important quotes tells us that the Church exists to evangelize—that is, to share the Good News of the Gospel. The pope goes on to tell us ways that the Church does this. The next quote tells us of the first way of evangelizing, which is our own witness of life as Christians. In fact, the pope believes that in our modern world our witness is more important than anything we might say or preach. Each one of us is a witness to Christ. Each one of us can share our example of life and joy with others and can tell others about our relationship with Jesus.

What is your story?

How can you show and tell others about Jesus?
My Personal Witness

Directions: Using the questions below as a guide, tell the story of your personal witness of Jesus in a way that you could share with others.

1. What was your life like before you met Jesus? (What was the most important thing in your life? What made you the happiest?)

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2. How did you discover that this life would not make you as happy as you expected or wanted?

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3. How did you meet Jesus? (Did you have a sudden conversion? Or was it over time?)

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4. What was it like coming to know the truth of the Gospel?

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5. How does Christ give you the happiness, security, and fulfillment that you searched for before your conversion? Give a specific example.

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