

Biblical Reflections and Prayers for the 'Eight Days'

5 June – 12 June 2011

Day 3 – Tuesday 7 June

DEVOTION TO THE APOSTLES' TEACHING UNITES US



Readings

Isaiah 51:4-8	Listen to me, my people
Psalms 119:105-112	Your word is a lamp to my feet
Romans 1:15-17	Eagerness to proclaim the gospel
John 17:6-19	I have made your name known

Commentary

The Church of Jerusalem in the Acts of the Apostles was united in its devotion to the apostles' teaching, despite the great diversity of language and culture amongst its members. This teaching Paul received from them in person less than two decades after Christ's resurrection. He sought to hand on this 'apostolic tradition' faithfully (see 1 Corinthians 15:1-8), calling it 'the gospel of God' (see Romans 1:1-3 for example). The apostles' teaching is exemplified by Peter's preaching in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. In his use of the prophet Joel, he connects the Church with the biblical story of the people of God, drawing us into the narrative that begins in creation itself.

Despite divisions the Word of God gathers and unites us. The apostles' teaching, the good news in all its fullness, was at the centre of unity in diversity of the first Church of Jerusalem. Christians in Jerusalem remind us today that it is not simply the "apostles' teaching" that united the earliest church, but devotion to that teaching. Such devotion is reflected in Paul identifying the gospel as "the power of God for salvation." (Romans 1:16)

The prophet Isaiah reminds us that God's teaching is inseparable from God's "justice for a light to the peoples." Or, as the psalmist prays, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Your decrees are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart."

For Reflection/Discussion

- Most of us have favourite passages of scripture. Share one of yours with the group, and if possible, say why it is special for you.
- Do you consider yourself devoted to the Word of God? How do you express / live out that devotion?
- How does modern Biblical scholarship help us to better understand and appreciate the Word of God in Scripture?

Prayer

God of Light, we give you thanks for the revelation of your truth in Jesus Christ, your Living Word, which we have received through the apostles' teaching, first heard at Jerusalem. May your Holy Spirit continue to sanctify us in the truth of your Son, so that united in Christ we may grow in devotion to the Word, and together serve your Kingdom in humility and love. We pray in fellowship with the apostles and all those in Christ. Amen.



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