

Missionary Commentary

Seventh Sunday of Easter
May 12, 2024

Sunday Readings

Acts 1:15-17, 20-26
Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20
1 John 4:11-16
John 17:11-19
[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

Contemporary Mission Challenges

What are some critical challenges that Catholics face in living their faith in today's world? Recall that in today's Gospel Jesus says that he does not ask his Father to take his followers out of the world, but that they may be kept safe and "consecrated in truth."

One challenge is the **credibility of being Christian**. People do observe one's behavior and lifestyle. As Catholic missionary-disciples (parents, youth, workers, teachers, etc.) we all need to manifest authenticity in our daily living. We are reminded of the profound words of Saint Pope Paul VI: "For the Church, the first means of evangelization is the witness of Christian life.... 'Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses'" (EN 41).

A second challenge centers on **communio** (communion, community). God's very nature is communion. His own Trinitarian communion invites us to live out a spirituality of communion with other faithful. It is sad when a sub-culture of "unhealthy competition" creeps into how Catholics relate with one another. The spirituality of communion, as seen in today's first reading from Acts, teaches us that we should be committed to support each other, and be happy when another Church member achieves excellence and distinction for the local Church and for God's glory.

The third challenge is **creative evangelization**. Saint John in his first letter (today's second reading) exhorts us to love each other, since God has loved us and given us his Spirit (next Sunday is Pentecost). Our age is characterized by a seemingly limitless explosion of knowledge and new inventions. Even in the area of Christian living, we must seriously consider creative methods and expressions in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ—especially to the youth of today.

A fourth challenge is **conscience formation**. We are currently immersed in a postmodern era in which young people's conscience is often shaped by a morally relativistic mindset that teaches that the individual person is the sole judge of what is good or evil, of what is right or wrong. I recall Pope Benedict XVI noting: "It is by forming consciences that the Church makes her most specific and valuable contribution

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to society” (2012). He also asserted: “With confidence, awaken receptivity to the truth, to God and his goodness. In this way, you will also help to form consciences which, enriched by faith, open a sure path to peace and to respect for others” (2008).

In my own small way, I share these four challenges [four **C** words] for all Catholics in our time: *credible life-style, communion, creative evangelization* and *conscience formation*. As we continue our faith-journey through life, we pray that Catholics will live up to their identity and mission to become the locus of an encounter with Christ that will be a transforming and life-changing experience, especially for the young, whom we hope will live saintly lives and be vessels of grace for others.

Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

Since Easter we have been journeying with the early Church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Today the Church focuses on apostolic succession by completing the number of the twelve apostles.

Responsorial Psalm

The responsorial psalm pictures the ascended Lord seated on his heavenly throne.

Second Reading

This reading emphasizes a favorite Johannine theme of concretely integrating the love of God within our daily lives.

Gospel

Taken from Christ’s High Priestly Prayer at the Last Supper, this passage notes that the Lord consecrates those who will carry on His work in the world.

Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James Kroeger, who recently published
[A Joyful Journey with Pope Francis: Exploring Twelve Pivotal Documents](#)
(Faith Alive Books — 2024)

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