

## THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER – B

On this Sunday before the feast of Pentecost Jesus prays to the Father for his disciples who are to carry on his work. Jesus' prayer will be answered by the coming of the Holy Spirit. In the first reading it is Peter who arranges for the position of Judas to be filled and Matthias is chosen. The second reading gives us another lesson from John on love telling us that God is love.

The **First Reading** is from Acts of the Apostles. This New Testament book is part two of a history of the rise of Christianity, the first part being the gospel according to Luke. They became separated when, about 150 A.D., Christians wanted the four gospel accounts bound together in one volume. The author, Luke, is a Syrian from Antioch, a doctor of non-Jewish origin, who was a close friend of Paul accompanying him on his second and third missionary journeys. Luke collected a great deal of evidence from a variety of sources which he edited. The book deals with the primitive Jerusalem community under Peter's leadership, the spread of Christianity to Samaria, to the gentile peoples and the early days of Christianity in Antioch. From chapter 13 Luke deals with Paul's three missionary journeys and ends with Paul a prisoner in Rome. The reading, 1.15-17,20-26, gives the account of the replacement of Judas under Peter's direction. Two are chosen who have been followers of Jesus from the very beginning which tells us Jesus didn't have a tight little group of twelve there were others who followed Jesus and two of them are named here. Matthias is chosen and numbered among 'the twelve' who are clearly set apart.

The **Responsorial Psalm**, Psalm 102.1-2,11-12,19-20, is a psalm of repentance and at the same time acknowledging God's greatness and all that He has done for us particularly in the excerpts which we are using.

The **Second Reading** is from the first letter of St John. There are three letters attributed to John the first being the most important, possibly written at the same time as the gospel. This letter was written to the Christian communities of Asia (Turkey) because they were suffering near disintegration due to some early heresies which were afflicting the Church. In the introduction the writer says he wants to share what he has 'seen and heard', his experiences, with his readers. He picks out three main points 1. To live in the light of Christ and he lists four conditions to live such a life. 2. To live as God's children with three conditions necessary, and 3. He speaks of the source of love and faith. Love is from God so we must love, and faith in Christ Jesus is necessary to overcome the world. The letter ends with two supplementary points. The reading, 4.11-16, is the last in this Easter period from John's treatise on love, God's love for us and our love for God and each other. John mentions four ways in which God will live in us. First, 'as long as we love one another God will live in us.' Secondly, God lets us share his Spirit so 'we can know that we are living in him and he is living in us.' Thirdly, if anyone acknowledges Jesus as God's only Son 'God lives in him and he in God.' Finally, 'anyone who lives in love lives in God and God lives in him.' Something for us to meditate as we prepare to celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Church.