

DAILY MEDITATIONS

Sunday 5 May Acts 8:5-8.
1 Peter 3:15-18. John 14:15-21
Jesus promises his disciples that he will send them an Advocate in the form of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for this is 'paraclete'. In Greek it referred to someone who helped you out in a crisis.

Lord, you have promised never to leave me without help. Thanks.

Monday 6 May

Acts 16:11-15. John 15:26-16:4
In Acts today we hear of Lydia, who was in the purple dye trade. This purple dye was in fact more like our scarlet in colour. It was expensive because it was made from thousands of sea shells. Ordinary people could not afford to wear purple.

Lord, may we be fair in how we share out the riches you give us.

Tuesday 7 May

Acts 16:22-34. John 16:5-11
The book of Acts was written as a continuation of Luke's gospel. Both Luke's gospel and Acts begin with a little introductory letter to someone called Theophilus – generally thought to be a high ranking Roman official.

Lord, may I always be patient and considerate in my dealings with others.

Wednesday 8 May

Acts 17:15-18:1.
John 16:12-15
Much of Acts focuses on St Paul's conversion from a Christian-hating fanatic to a passionate advocate of the Gospel. In today's reading he cheerfully makes a complete fool of himself.

Lord, can I learn to enjoy my mistakes and humiliations?

Thursday 9 May

The Ascension
Acts 1:1-11. Ephesians 1:17-23.
Mt. 28:16-20
Even now there is a hint of complacency creeping into the attitude of some of the followers of Jesus. He is with us, business as usual. But the rug is pulled from under them; from now on they have to become active apostles.

Lord, may I recognise your calling.

Friday 10 May Acts 18:9-18.
John 16:20-23
St Paul often fell foul of the authorities. In today's reading he appears before Gallio, a Roman governor who was described by his peers as a thoroughly charming person. He was the brother of Seneca, a philosopher and tutor to the Emperor Nero.

Lord, foreigners and pagans are often nice people I haven't met yet.

Saturday 11 May
Acts 18:23-28. John 16:23-28
Even though Jesus had bestowed a good dose of the Holy Spirit on his followers, there was still plenty of argument around!

Lord, whatever is going on around me, help me to find some inner peace.

Mares Walter

Next week's readings:
Acts 1:12-14
1 Peter 4:13-16
John 17:1-11

Sunday Plus

Year A 5 May 2002
6th Sunday of Easter Divine Office Week II

Ascension Day – Thursday 9th May

He went away, just as they'd got used to the idea that he hadn't gone away, and he went promising to be with them always. No wonder some of them didn't know what to believe.

Turning points in our lives are often marked by someone (or something) not being there any more. A friend moves away, you are made redundant, your last child goes off to college, you start a new business: and suddenly, the landscape is different, you don't recognise the familiar paths. You can take nothing for granted.

*Lord Jesus,
when we are at a loss,
gazing into the sky,
asking 'what now?'*
*grant us patience to wait
and be ready for the Spirit of adventure.
Amen.*

Obedience isn't a fashionable virtue. We tend to think that people who just do as they are told are a bit lacking in enterprise and imagination. Our habits of democracy mean that we like to be consulted, expect to discuss what should be done and to agree to plans before they are implemented. The idea of obedience is linked in our minds to war criminals pleading that they were 'only obeying orders'. We think of obedience as a cop out, an abdication of responsibility.

Instead, try thinking of it this way. If you want to play the piano really well, or get a black belt in karate, or cook like Delia or Jamie, you have to practise. First you have to learn the techniques and skills you need from other people. Then you have to practise them until they are *your* techniques and skills. Then you can start to be original and creative and to think for yourself.



TREES OF LIFE

Close to where I live now there is an oak tree that was old when Elizabeth I was queen, and in the same wood are saplings that won't reach maturity until after I am dead. Trees are good for giving us a sense of perspective. Oaks nurture a host of small creatures, from moths to mushrooms, while the elegant beech reaches to the sky and fills the air with its wide branches, and the rowan's bright berries feed a multitude of birds. Each tree is itself, but each is also the hub of a lively community of wild things that extends beyond the tree but couldn't exist without it. Individual trees fall and decay, but the forest remains.

Caring for the world around us, the world that God has entrusted to us, is one of the ways in which we witness to God's love for all creation. When we are respectful towards the forests and woods, taking from them only what we need, and restoring what we use up, we are doing what we were created for, acting as good stewards of the earth. In this way, we give an account of the hope that is in us, a hope that is renewed each spring, a hope as enduring as that ancient oak tree.

It is this second kind of obedience that we need if we are going to be loving human beings. Loving your neighbour as yourself isn't something that comes naturally to most of us. We have to learn how to do it, and even after years of training, a moment of irritation or selfishness can undo all our good work. When we realise this, we understand that we need Christ, with us and in us, if we are to build a truly human society, a world where God can be at home.

When you see how imperfect you are, don't be afraid – only, don't cherish your imperfections and so stick at the point where God found you. *St Augustine*