



## SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**FIRST READING: Acts 17:22-31**

A reading from Acts.

<sup>22</sup>Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said,  
“Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way.  
<sup>23</sup>For as I went through the city  
and looked carefully at the objects of your worship,  
I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’  
What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.  
<sup>24</sup>The God who made the world and everything in it,  
he who is Lord of heaven and earth,  
does not live in shrines made by human hands,  
<sup>25</sup>nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything,  
since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.

<sup>26</sup>“From one ancestor he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth,  
and he allotted the times of their existence  
and the boundaries of the places where they would live,  
<sup>27</sup>so that they would search for God  
and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—  
though indeed he is not far from each one of us.  
<sup>28</sup>For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’;  
as even some of your own poets have said,  
‘For we, too, are his offspring.’

<sup>29</sup>“Since we are God’s offspring,  
we ought not to think that the deity is like gold or silver or stone,  
an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals.  
<sup>30</sup>While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance,  
now he commands all people everywhere to repent,  
<sup>31</sup>because he has fixed a day  
on which he will have the world judged in righteousness  
by a man whom he has appointed,  
and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Word of God, word of life.            *or*            The word of the Lord.

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**FIRST READING**    *Areopagus = ar-ih-OP-uh-gus*    *Athenians = uh-THEEN-ee-unz*  
Paul is addressing a group of very bright people. They had altars to gods of many names. In addition, they had an altar dedicated to “an unknown god.” Paul says he is going to tell them about the God whose name they do not know. Then he proceeds to explain the God we know, from Adam and Eve right through Jesus’ resurrection. That is the good news of Easter. Might Paul have been smiling? Might you? Give this high-powered sermon the energy and urgency it demands!

**PSALMODY: Psalm 66:8-20**

**SECOND READING: 1 Peter 3:13-22**

A reading from First Peter.

<sup>13</sup>Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?  
<sup>14</sup>But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed.  
Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated,  
<sup>15</sup>but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord.  
Always be ready to make your defense to anyone  
who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you,  
<sup>16</sup>yet do it with gentleness and respect.  
Maintain a good conscience so that, when you are maligned,  
those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.  
<sup>17</sup>For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will,  
than to suffer for doing evil.  
<sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered for sins once for all,  
the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God.  
He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,  
<sup>19</sup>in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison,  
<sup>20</sup>who in former times did not obey,  
when God waited patiently in the days of Noah,  
during the building of the ark,  
in which a few, that is, eight lives, were saved through water.  
  
<sup>21</sup>And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—  
not as a removal of dirt from the body  
but as an appeal to God for a good conscience,  
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,  
<sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God,  
with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Word of God, word of life.            *or*            The word of the Lord.

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**SECOND READING**

This is a tough little reading. The words are simple, but the thoughts are complex. That makes it doubly important to read slowly. The author says that even if one suffers for doing the right thing, one ought to hold onto Jesus as the source of hope. Jesus too suffered injustice "in order to bring you to God." The risen Christ has proclaimed (in the resurrection) the power of God to the spirits of evil. Christ has returned to heaven and rules over all. Deliver these truths carefully—with boldness and confidence!

## **GOSPEL: John 14:15-21**

The holy gospel according to John.

「Jesus said to the disciples:」

<sup>15</sup>“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

<sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father,

and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.

<sup>17</sup>This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

<sup>18</sup>“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.

<sup>19</sup>In a little while the world will no longer see me,

but you will see me;

because I live, you also will live.

<sup>20</sup>On that day you will know that I am in my Father,

and you in me, and I in you.

<sup>21</sup>They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

The gospel of the Lord.

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### **GOSPEL**

Too often the words of Jesus are read as though they were written in a script. This deeply touching sequence of teachings and promises might profit by a more hesitant delivery, allowing the assembly to sense our Lord’s working at what he wishes to say next.