



Fifth Sunday of Easter – May 10, 2020

Father Erickson's video <https://youtu.be/banRhzwrpEE>

As we continue to dive into the scriptures for each Sunday we want to give you some tools not only for the particular readings for that week, but for your scripture studies in general. As a good doctor assesses a sickness or an injury with good questions a good scripture study is one that asks good questions as well. Who are these people? Where did they come from? Why did the author choose to say this or that? What did this passage mean to those present? And then finally we can say, “What does this mean for me?”. We remember that at the end of the Gospel of John 22:25, the author says “There are also many other things that Jesus did, but if these were to be described individually, I do not think the whole world would contain the books that would be written”. Therefore, what we are reading in Sacred Scripture has been written deliberately and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Within the readings for this Fifth Sunday of Easter there are many curious phrases, situations and understandings that asking good questions might help us understand.

Before you go through the study and the questions, read through the readings and, with your curiosity peaked, write down your own questions. What things seem odd to you? What things don't make sense? What things need more context? There are many great resources to get the answers to these questions within your own study. Here are a couple of those resources. There are many more, but these are a great start.

- The Great Adventure Catholic Bible. <https://ascensionpress.com/products/the-great-adventure-catholic-bible>
- Ignatius Catholic Study Bible <https://www.ignatius.com/promotions/catholic-study-bible/>
- Writings of the Church Fathers <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/>

Reading 1 [ACTS 6:1-7](#)

In this reading we get a glimpse into the life of the early church. Some of these early glimpses can often seem to be scandalizing because we get to see some of the struggles of the early church. One of the errors we can fall into today is to think that the early Christians must have lived in this Lake Wobegon like community where everyone sacrificially cared for each other, they had no problems and of course they were all above average. The particular struggle we see this Sunday is something fairly simple. One group complains to another group that their widows are being neglected in the distribution of goods (Acts 4:34-35) This struggle might not seem like a big deal, but if we think about the early group of followers we have to understand that this is a very fresh community, some large groups converted together, some groups come to believe in smaller numbers and they are all trying to live together as a new community. This brings with it different cultures, practices and languages. The Hellenists spoke Greek and lived a Greek life and the Hebrews were Palestinian Jews and spoke Hebrew or Aramaic. We don't have to think very hard to understand that within this context there might be a bit of a "looking out for my people first" mentality.



The central story of this passage is about the deaconate ordination of St. Stephen and these other Greek men. These men are asked to serve the community in order to solve the problem. This passage is one of the main places that the church finds her understanding for the role of the Deacon. The noun Deacon comes from the Greek verb "to serve" (deaconous) and this service is tied up in who the man is and who he is meant to serve (CCC 1569-70). The service in this passage is the distribution of earthly goods and food, but we see later the ministry includes preaching (JN 8:5) and baptizing (JN 8:12).

Diving Deeper:

1. It is often times a temptation to see the ordained ministers as the only evangelists called to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to convert those in the world, but as we will see in the second reading the laity participate in the priesthood as well to make holy their life and the world around them. In what ways can you participate more fully in the priesthood of all the faithful that you were baptized into?

Responsorial Psalm [PS 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19](#)

Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

One of the reasons that the Psalms are repeated after each stanza is because, like a song, the words are meant to sink in deeper and deeper and become a part of us. We are meant to say them as if we wrote them ourselves. So, take a minute to read over the psalm on your own and say it as if it were your own.

