

# SPIRITUAL LIFE

## Sixth Sunday of Easter

By: Fr. John Mole O.M.I

**HOPE MOST CERTAIN** Our hope is as clearly defined as geese flying in echelon. There is no doubt about destination or purpose. The wings of our hope carry us unerringly to the blissful event that will mark the world's end. This event will be the return of the One who, after dwelling on earth among men, said "I am going away and I shall return" (John 14:2). It is also said, "This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven ... will return in the same way as you have seen him depart" (Acts 1:11). In what way will Jesus return? He will return visibly in his glorified body. Why will he thus return? In order that his second Ascension may take place. The first Ascension was of himself alone in his personal body. The second Ascension will be in company with the members of his mystical body of which he is the head. This is the precise object of our Christian hope: having risen from the dead in our bodies, we will ascend gloriously with our King into the eternal kingdom of God.

Acts 15:1-2; 22-29

The Jews were the first people on earth to have a tangible hope in the one, true God. The outward sign of this hope was circumcision. It meant that they belonged to God who would send them salvation in the person of the Messiah. But when Jesus Christ came, the Jews who put their faith in him as the Messiah continued also to put their hope in circumcision and obedience to the Law of Moses. What was ordained only as a preparation for the coming of the Messiah was retained even after he had come. And although Christ came to save all men without distinction, his Jewish followers insisted that all non-Jews who believed in him should be circumcised and subjected to the Law of Moses. But this was disputed by the concerted pagans, especially at Antioch where they were very numerous. The matter was settled in

their favor by the first Council of the Church, held at Jerusalem in A.D. 49. Let us note the complete absence of vagueness in the decision of this Council: "It has been decided by the Holy Spirit and by ourselves ..." the source of the certitude of the hope of Christians is the Holy Spirit dwelling within the Church.

Apocalypse 21:10-14; 22-23

The hopefulfulness of apocalyptic language is expressed in the concrete terms of a "new earth" and a "new heaven," as well as the end of time. As our hope of salvation includes our bodies as well as our souls, then we can hope in a future world that will not simply be a habitat for disembodied spirits. But as our bodies will be glorified, so must the future environment of these bodies be glorified. Hence the transformed universe described by the Apocalypse of John in terms of the new Jerusalem or holy city "coming down from God out of heaven." The glory of heaven will transform our mundane world into a paradise of which the beauty is compared by John to a city built of precious stones.

John 14:23-29

In this part of his farewell discourse, Jesus speaks of returning to his disciples after his death in two ways: First, he will come immediately with his Father and the Holy spirit to dwell within their souls. This is the first fruit of his sacrifice that they will receive. It is this indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the human soul that causes Christian hope to spring. The second return of which Jesus speaks will be at the end of the world: "I am going away and shall return" (v. 28). This return will be visible to our eyes of flesh for he will return in his body as a prelude to the second Ascension in which his members are to join, now that they possess their risen and glorified bodies.

### READINGS OF THE WEEK

Acts 15:22-29

Revelations 21:10-23

John 14:23-29

May 5, 2013

# 靈 修 生 活

## 復 活 期 第 五 主 日

吳 智 勳 神 父

今天的第一與第三篇讀經都提到聖神，讓我們以聖神的恩賜來做主題。教會常說聖神七恩，其實聖神的恩典又豈止七個？不過，聖經的數字七，包含圓滿的意義。今天我們反省兩件聖神的恩賜，就是分辨和突破，傳統稱為上智和明達的恩賜。

**第一個恩賜是分辨。**當有兩個或以上的選擇在自己面前的時候，不知選哪一個好，我們求天主聖神幫我們辨別哪個是天主的意思。作為基督徒，我們知道必須選擇善，而不應選惡，例如：「包二奶」的問題，基督徒根本不須勞煩聖神來幫我們分辨是否應該「包二奶」，因為這與基督徒的身分是完全不相稱的，聖經清楚的稱這些為淫亂，基督徒絕不可將淫亂看成浪漫；但是我們所講的分辨是指兩個都是善的價值在面前，自己不知道哪一個更好，這個時候，我們才呼求聖神幫助分辨哪一個是天主的意思。

今天的第一篇讀經就是這個情形，兩批不同的基督徒，猶太的基督徒和外邦人的基督徒發生了爭執，彼此都覺得自己有理由。猶太的基督徒因熱愛舊約的法律，對他們來說割損是重要的法律，共享天主這份恩賜；但是，聖保祿卻認為信仰耶穌基督才是最重要的事，是聖神使人自由，使人聖潔，所以基督徒是因信而成義，不是靠遵守法律。這一份自由和恩賜，比從前的法律更大和更好，更是好消息，基督徒沒有理由再走從前的舊路。

今天的教會已採納了聖保祿的講法，因為我們不是猶太人，對猶太的法律沒有一份情意結；另一方面，聖保祿的主張已成為教會的主流，但在當時是不清楚的，而聖保祿亦不是教會內最重要、最有影響力的人物，因此教會需要祈求聖神幫他們辨別哪一個是天主的意思。在辨別的過程裡，雙方都願意聆聽，都有機會發表意見。世人的爭執不能解決，往往因為不想聆聽對方，以為自己擁有真理的全部。

當人一關閉自己，不願意向聖神開放，辨別便不可能，因為每人只願別人接受自己的意見，好像連天主也要遷就自己的意見，人不再是承行天主的聖意了。如果當天雙方都堅持到底的話，教會便立刻分裂了。可幸當日聖神的確在運作，雙方都持開放的心，聆聽聖神籍別人所說的話。在一個祈禱的氣氛下，他們接納了雅各伯拆衷的建議。他們清楚知道，這是「聖神和我們的決定」，聖神幫助他們辨別，在這個環境下，教會的共融比彼此堅持自己有真理更重要。很可惜日後的基督徒沒有好好把握這個寶貴的啓示，為了維護真理，不惜傷害共融與愛德，造成教會四分五裂，大家都沒有善用聖神分辨的恩寵，使聖神憂鬱。

**第二個聖神的恩賜是突破。**福音中耶穌說：「聖神必要教導你們一切，並且使你們記起我對你們所說的一切」。聖神能夠教導我們，使我們明白耶穌所講的道理。我稱此「明白」為「突破」，即一種豁然貫通，大徹大悟的經驗。在生活的層面上，我們能有一種突破的愉快經驗，例如，學習游泳、踏單車、溜冰，經過一段時期的練習，會有一種成功突破的經驗，感到很開心。在倫理的層面上，我們也能有突破的經驗，小則能夠戒掉壞習慣，大則從為免受罰而守法，進而明白守法在群體中的價值，這些都是倫理上的突破。

福音上所說的是信仰上的突破。我們的親友中有人生活混亂，漫無目的，不知何去何從，或生活只是為賺錢，對信仰的事，沒有一點興趣；但過了一段時期，一些經驗使他整個人變了，他自己和其他人都感覺到他的改變，變得很虔誠，懂得為人去生活，對耶穌基督開始感到興趣，主動閱讀宗教書籍，每晚都祈禱，甚至每天望彌撒，對未來充滿希望，抱著樂觀的精神，這就是來自聖神的突破。這是聖神的創造，聖神的明達恩典，今天的教會仍有這一份來自聖神的經驗。

摘自「公教報」

## 本 週 讀 經

二 零 一 三 年 五 月 五 日

宗 15:22-29 ; 默 21:10-23 ; 若 14:23-29