

4th Wednesday of Easter. 4/28/2021

Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul. I came into the world as light.

The word of God continued to spread and grow. This is what we hear today in our reading from Acts, how the early Church continued to expand beyond the boundaries of Jerusalem and the chosen people of Israel.

This is the time of fulfillment that had been announced. As we heard and repeated in the psalm today: O God, let all the nations praise you. The love of God is meant to reach everyone, all the nations of the earth. How is this going to happen? Through the Church, by the preaching and the witness of the Church, which is sent out in mission.

The words of Jesus in the Gospel today, they are placed at the end of his ministry, as the Gospel of John is about to transition into The Last Supper and the Passion. Those words are a summary of what the ministry of Jesus has been about. He came to save the world, not to condemn it. He came to bring light into the world, to make the love of God known, and to give eternal life to everyone who accepts him.

Jesus also tells us that he hasn't been speaking and acting on his own, but that he was sent. He was sent by the Father and he follows the Father's will, for the salvation of the world. Whoever believes in Jesus also believes in the Father who sent him.

We find this pattern also in the Church that goes out to evangelize. In our first reading, we find the followers of Christ gathered in worship. Out of this worship comes the command to send forth two of them. To send forth Barnabas and Saul to other cities to proclaim the word of God. The others, Symeon, Lucius and Manaen presumably stay in Antioch. But they also play their role in the Church and its mission. They also speak and act not on their own but following Christ who sent them.

The world needed the good news of Christ, and it was through the witness of these early Christians that the message of the love of God was spread, bringing meaning and changing the lives of many.

Today, the world needs the good news of Christ. We are gathering in worship as the early Christians did in Antioch, and out of this worship we are also sent to the world, to bring the light of God's love. There is so much conflict, so much sin in the world. Can we really make a difference?

Not if we act on our own. Not if we trust in our own strength. Only if we open our hearts to God so that he takes hold of our lives and we let him speak through us.

Then he can bring conversion and hope to the world through all the small interactions we have with people through the day.

As we come to embrace Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask him to purify our hearts and our lips, so that we can bring to the world the good news of God's love.