



# Christ in Our Neighborhood

## Prayer

Father, we long to follow You and You long to lead us. May Jesus, the Good Shepherd, guide us on Your path of love. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

## Commentary

### 1st Reading: Acts 9:26-31

Barnabas led Paul to the Church in Jerusalem knowing that the disciples would fear Paul for previously persecuting them.

After some assurance, their fears were allayed and they turned their proper fear toward God.

What does it mean to fear God?

Christians are not to be scared of God. We have His promise that nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:38-39).

Rather, fearing God means having such a reverence and awe for Him (Hebrews 12:29) that it has a great impact on the way we live our lives. The Fear of God is respecting Him, obeying Him, submitting to His discipline, and worshiping Him in awe.

In fearing the Lord, the early Church was at peace. Even in the midst of persecution, the overwhelming awe of those who witnessed the Resurrection was enough to compel the Church to proclaim the praises of God.

The Church was “making steady progress in the fear of the Lord.”

## Question

How have you been in fear and awe of God lately?

## Commentary

### 2nd Reading: 1 John 3:18-24

Living in false fear paralyzes us. Even Jesus said, “Fear is useless.”

If there is any fear in us, it should come from a worry that we might abandon our relationship with the one who matters most in our lives.

But, we know that “nothing will ever separate us from the love of God.” (Rom 8:38)

The First Letter of John reminds us that God wants us to remain in Him as God remains in us. This beautiful bond of “remaining” is life-giving, not life-paralyzing.

Remaining in the love of God is made possible by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. John writes, “The way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.”

The Spirit of God (celebrated in a profound way on Pentecost at the end of our Easter Season) binds us together with the Lord.

## Question

In what way or ways do you remain in the Lord?

## Via Lucis

**Take a walk in your garden or park and meditate on these 14 stations of Easter Joy (called the Way of Light)**

Jesus is raised from the dead, The finding of the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene meets the risen Jesus, Jesus appears on the road to Emmaus, Jesus is known in the breaking of bread, Jesus appears to the disciples in Jerusalem, Jesus gives the disciples his peace and the power to forgive sins, Jesus strengthens the faith of Thomas, Jesus appears by the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus forgives Peter and commands him to feed his sheep

## Commentary

### Gospel: John 15:1-8

There is an old adage: “You cannot give what you have first not received.”

It is for this reason Jesus tells His disciples to “remain” in Him as He “remains” in them.

Using the example of a branch united to the vine, Jesus tells His disciples that a cut-off branch is unable to bear fruit. He says, “Without me you can do nothing.” We cannot give what we have not first received.

A branch receives its nutrition from the vine so that it can give fruit. Christians who do not remain in Christ cannot bear fruit. They are Christian in name but not in practice.

Remaining in the Lord is the way in which God brings joy to the world. Joy is shared through Christ His Son (the vine) and through His disciples (His branches) grafted to the vine.

Remaining in the Lord is the way in which we fear and give awe to the Lord. Jesus says, “By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

## Question

In what way are you producing fruit and glorifying the Lord?

## *This Week's Task*

Examine what you have accomplished this past week.

Ask yourself, how much of what I have accomplished was a response to my relationship with Jesus?

## Prayer

The leader holds a candle and says:

“I am in fear and awe of you Lord, because \_\_\_\_\_ . Lord, I glorify Your Name!”

Passing the candle, each member says the same.

After all have shared, the gathering says together:

“We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess Your Resurrection until You come again.”

The leader will then guide the group in praying Psalm 22

## *Psalm*

**Response: Alleluia.**

I will fulfill my vows before those who fear the LORD.

The lowly shall eat their fill;  
they who seek the LORD shall praise him:  
“May your hearts live forever!”

**R. Alleluia.**

All the ends of the earth  
shall remember and turn to the LORD;  
all the families of the nations  
shall bow down before him.

**R. Alleluia.**

To him alone shall bow down  
all who sleep in the earth;  
before him shall bend  
all who go down into the dust.

**R. Alleluia.**

And to him my soul shall live;  
my descendants shall serve him.  
Let the coming generation be told of the LORD  
that they may proclaim to a people yet to be born  
the justice he has shown.

**R. Alleluia.**

**Conclude with an OUR FATHER**