

# Introductions to the Readings – May 2010

## **Fifth Sunday of Easter, May 2**

### **First Reading: Acts 14: 21-27**

The book of Acts shows how the Easter message spread to all parts of the Mediterranean world. Today we hear a travelogue of part of one of Paul's missionary journeys that took him to modern-day Turkey. The mountainous terrain there made travel difficult and dangerous, and the situation was even worse because of the constant threat of robbers, flash floods and wild animals.

### **Second Reading: Revelation 21: 1-5**

Many people think the book of Revelation gives secret information about future events, including the end of the world. But it was really intended to be a source of hope for Christians suffering persecution toward the end of the first century. The author vividly describes visions of how God would ultimately overcome all evil and bring all creation to its destiny.

## **Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 9**

### **First Reading: Acts 14: 21-27**

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### **Second Reading: Revelation 21: 1-5**

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## **Ascension of the Lord, May 16**

### **First Reading: Acts 1: 1-11**

Today's passage takes us back to the beginning verses of the Acts of the Apostles and sets forth the themes that Luke is going to develop throughout this, the longest book of the New Testament. His major theme is the role of the Holy Spirit, who enables the apostles to be effective witnesses to Jesus. (The Holy Spirit is mentioned 57 times in the Acts of the Apostles.)

## **Ascension of the Lord, May 16 (cont'd)**

### **Second Reading: Hebrews 9: 24-28, 10: 19-23**

On Yom Kippur, the high priest sacrificed a goat on the altar in the temple. Then he took some of the blood into the holiest place in the sanctuary where only he was allowed to go. He sprinkled the blood there as a renewal of the covenant made at Mt Sinai, and prayed that God would forgive all their sins committed during the previous year. This ritual is the backdrop for today's reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

## **Pentecost Sunday, May 23**

### **First Reading: Acts 2: 1-11**

Pentecost was a Jewish feast that celebrated the beginning of the harvest. It took place 50 days after the feast of Passover. Jewish pilgrims came to Jerusalem from all over the ancient world for the celebration of the feast. Today we hear how Pentecost became a Christian feast.

### **Second Reading: Romans 8: 8-17**

Today's passage comes from chapter eight of Paul's letter to the Romans which stresses the importance of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. Paul wants us to remember that the Spirit who will raise our bodies on the last day is the same Spirit who enlivens us for holiness every day. Today Paul offers a sharp contrast between life in the flesh (meaning, life prone to sin) and life in the Spirit.

## **The Most Holy Trinity, May 30**

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