

## SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 1, 2005

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Psalm 66: 1-7, 16, 20; 1 Peter 4: 13-16; John 17:1-11a

Reflection by S. Noreen Coleman, O.P.

Each morning as I enter the facility where I minister to incarcerated women, I have the privilege of encountering a gentleman who is the custodial supervisor of a few inmates who clean the foyer. His name is Mr. Peace and he is the perfect image of a person of peace. He greets me with a gentle smile and a sincere inquiry as to how I am that day. Another man, friendly and upbeat, whom I meet quite often as I walk down the long corridor, is Mr. Easter. No fooling--these are their real names: Mr. Peace, Mr. Easter! These two help set a positive tone to my day and unwittingly keep me focused on my role as chaplain: to be a person who brings the Gospel message of resurrection peace and joy to those so much in need of this encouragement.

Today is May 1; why talk about Easter which occurred more than a month ago? Because the Church has given us fifty days to help us get the point of Jesus' message. As I review the key events of our Savior's public life and his appearances to his disciples as presented in the Sunday Gospels since Easter, I can just imagine Jesus lamenting the stubbornness and incredulity of his followers:

*Oh, you of little faith! It took a lot of convincing for you to believe in my love for you--so many signs, miracles, teachings. It took my unspeakable suffering, my ignominious death, my glorious resurrection. Now that--my resurrection--was a tough one to get over to you. You wouldn't believe my messenger, Mary. Were you jealous that I appeared to her, a woman, first?*

*I had to walk through the closed and locked door, not once but twice, to wish you peace. I accompanied you to Emmaus so I could open the Scriptures for you. I tried to explain to you that if you paid more attention to me, you would know and see the Father. I promised to send you my Spirit, so you wouldn't be alone after my departure. What more could I do?*

Now, at last, in his Good News for this Sunday John the Evangelist presents a "different" Jesus. His disciples have finally come around. In his prayer to the Father he is able to praise them because they have "accepted...truly understood...believed."

Jesus' early followers needed dramatic signs and wonders before they could believe. Do we also demand proof of his undying love for us?

Let us pray for the grace to accept this gift freely lavished upon us. Let us return love for love by our willingness to be harbingers of resurrection peace and joy in our day.  
Amen! Alleluia!