

Do we like our life to be fairly predictable and same-ish or do we prefer challenge and newness? Do we like our religion to be fairly predictable and same-ish? Today's readings are all struggling with the idea of change.

*"I am going away....I am going to the Father,"* says Jesus, *"but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit...will teach you everything."* The disciples have got to transition from the immediate flesh and blood presence of Jesus for a much more open and spiritual relationship. It is in the love of the Father, in their prayer, in their fellowship together that they will rediscover their friend and saviour.

The way we do our religion, does it always have to be determined by the traditions of the past? The early Church based in Jerusalem was initially very shocked that Paul and Barnabas were preaching a form of Christianity that didn't require circumcision and didn't require following all the laws and regulations of Hebrew Scripture. *This led to disagreement, and .... a long argument.* The early Church was in transition from slavish obedience to the Law of Moses to the freedom of the Gospel.

The vision of Heaven, in our second reading, neatly combines predictability and newness, tradition and change. It's going to be like a human city and not just any old human city, but a very particular city, the city of Jerusalem. It's going to have walls and it's going to have gates and it's going to have foundation stones.

Twelve gates for the twelve tribes of Israel.

Twelve foundation stones for the apostles of the Lamb.

But that's where the familiarity and predictability come to a very abrupt end.

In this city there is no temple, no church, no altar, no sanctuary, not even the light of the sun or moon. All there is in this vision of heaven is *the radiant glory of God and the Lamb as a lighted torch.* To transition from earth to heaven is to transition from sacraments and symbols, from words and thoughts, to the sheer glory of God Himself. Silence and wonderment and making *our home with him.*

To be a Christian is to be in transition, faithful to the tradition and open to the Spirit, rooted in the community of the Church but open to others, fulfilling our flesh and blood commitments in this world but finding our true home in the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem.

To experience this transition is to experience that peace *"which the world cannot give"....*

*"This is my gift to you."*