

From the Pastor's Office

6th Sunday of Easter

Very quickly, tensions arose in the new Church communities. We are told that the Christian message left a great impression on the Gentiles, people who did not come from the Jewish tradition. The Jewish Christians in the communities had a lot to say about their Gentile brothers and sisters. Jews should be regarded as the first citizens of the community, since they came from the Chosen people. Properly, the Gentiles should all become Jews first. That meant they should be converted to Judaism by wearing the sign of their Judaism, circumcision. Paul and Barnabas took issue. They were so concerned that they brought their appeal to the Council in Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas could see that this could be a deal-breaker. I want to become a Christian. I don't see why I have to become a Jew first. Great debate took place in Jerusalem. The Council deliberated. They came back with a decision in favor of the Gentile Christians. We do not want our Christianity to become a burden to good people. Because of this course of action, the Christian faith flourished among the Gentile peoples. They were delighted to join the Christians. Christians gained quite a reputation. They were open-minded. They preached a welcoming message. They preached love for neighbor. They preached reconciliation, justice, and equality. Of course, people wanted to become Christians. Jewish Christians struggled to become part of the mainstream Christian movement because they still hung onto their Jewish roots. It took a while for Christians to find their feet. We remind ourselves that people like Peter and Paul, and all the other apostles, carried on as practicing Jews. The separation of Judaism from Christianity happened over a period of 100 years. Early on, the Christians were called "the people of the Way." By the year 40 AD they began to be referred to as Christians. The rest is history...



With love,
Fr. Pat