

11. June 2026

Feast of St. Barnabas the Apostle  
Faithfulness to the Lord and His Church

Acts 11:21b-26; 13:1-3

*In those days, a great number that believed turned to the Lord. News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a large company was added to the Lord. So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church, and taught a large company of people; and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians. Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyre'ne, Man'a-en a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.*

We are honoured to bear the name "Christian"; a name that derives directly from the Name and mission of our Redeemer; a name that is to reach the whole world; a name that carries with it the responsibility to proclaim God's great gift to humanity and to witness to it through our lives.

In the times of persecution of the nascent Church, the Gospel was also proclaimed to the Greeks in Antioch, after it had initially only been preached to the Jews. There it was well received and, as the Acts of the Apostles says, "*a great number believed and were converted to the Lord*". When the church in Jerusalem heard of it, they sent Barnabas to Antioch, and he was able to see with his own eyes the work of the Holy Spirit, "*and he urged them all to remain faithful to the Lord with heartfelt devotion*".

This exhortation is a legacy for all of us. It is not only that we should know the Lord, accept His grace and thus receive the fruits of Redemption; we are also called to remain faithful to the Lord, to the faith as handed down to us by Tradition and to the vocation

entrusted to us. The best example of faithfulness is to be found in God Himself, for, come what may, He shows us His love with unwavering fidelity. The whole of the Old Testament speaks to us of this faithfulness of God, which unfortunately often has to be contrasted with the unfaithfulness of man.

In our days, we have to remain faithful especially to the Church. We know that the world is opening itself up to anti-Christian influences, increasingly disregarding God's commandments and sometimes even perverting them into the opposite. But unfortunately we have to note that this anti-Christian spirit is also penetrating more and more into our Church, trying to weaken it from within, to destroy it or even to use it in a very subtle way to build up a man-made religious entity and, consequently, influenced by demonic forces. We could hardly identify our holy Catholic Church in such a construct!

At this stage of the Church's history, fidelity is particularly necessary: fidelity to the Lord, to His Word, to the authentic doctrine and praxis of the Church. Let us seek constant prayer, the deepening of our relationship with our Mother Mary, the path of holiness and all that is part of our Catholic faith.

We are undoubtedly in times of crisis, and it is then that our faith must prove its solidity and demonstrate that it is truly founded on the Lord. Everything may collapse, heaven and earth will pass away, but the Word of the Lord remains forever (Mt 24:35). This is our comfort in the midst of so much confusion!