

21 04 12 Monday 2nd Week of Easter

Acts 4:23-31, John 3:1-8

Today's Gospel from John is that famous occasion when Nicodemus sought out Jesus and Jesus gave his teaching on the necessity of Baptism for the life of a Christian. In Baptism we are "born again" of water and the Spirit (v.5) and so become a new person. Most of us have no memory of our Baptism. However, at that moment we were irrevocably changed, and were united to Christ, and to one another in Him. We became a part of the Church, Christ's Body on earth.

The First reading is from the Acts of the Apostles. This book of the Bible is an account of the establishment of the early Church, and it is certainly worth reading straight through. On the weekdays of the Easter season almost the whole book is read bit by bit and on Sundays we hear key extracts from it. The Acts of the Apostles demonstrates that the early Church was led and inspired by Holy Spirit after Pentecost. It is full of exciting adventures; the apostles being captured and miraculously released, amazing conversions, shipwrecks, and even humour!

Today we read about St. Peter and St. John, who having been arrested for preaching about Jesus, are released. Immediately, the community gathered and prayed and rejoiced in having been made to suffer on account of their faith in Jesus. Their suffering has not deterred them but has given them a fresh impetus to go out and preach Christ to the nations! We can pray that prayer today in our own times; "And now Lord... help your servants to proclaim your message with all boldness, by stretching out your hand to heal and to work miracles and marvels through the name of your holy servant Jesus" (v.29).

The early Church gathered for prayer and their prayer was so powerful, that the house in which they were praying, shook (v.31). Although at this time, our gathering to pray is limited to Mass in a "Covid" secure way or through gatherings on zoom, because we are united to Christ in our Baptism, whenever we are praying, we are praying IN and WITH Christ as members of His Body on earth. Our prayer can be as powerful as that of the first Christians! So, let us set aside time this week to pray in and with Christ. Let us reflect on the courage of the Apostles and their determination to preach the risen Christ despite the opposition of the authorities. How can we speak of Christ to those around us? Ask the Holy Spirit to give us the word and the opportunities.

For more reflections on the Acts of the Apostles, see this week's Family Activity Sheet with a short summary of the first reading each day this week.