

Reflection for Saturday 10 April

The Gospel reading at this morning's Mass ends with the command by the risen Lord to the disciples, "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation." When we read the Acts of the Apostles we read how and where the disciples, now commissioned by Jesus as apostles, to go out and do exactly that.

Within a short space of time the Gospel message had been proclaimed in vast areas of the Roman empire either by the Apostles themselves or those delegated by them to do so. Churches were founded in and around Greece and in Asia Minor now part of modern day Turkey.

But the proclamation of the Gospel the Church led to difficulties in the way of opposition from the Jewish authorities and the gentiles which led to beatings and imprisonment of Peter and Paul. James the first bishop of Jerusalem was killed at the hands of king Herod and the deacon Stephen was killed by the mob because of his witness to Jesus. He was the first Christian martyr. The Acts of the Apostles records the death of both these men.

The Church of the New Testament was so directed by the Holy Spirit that she was able to work through all opposition and remained faithful to the Lord Jesus in proclaiming the message of salvation. As a result the word of God grew. In this morning's first reading from Acts we read of Peter and John being arrested by the high priest and eventually appearing before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish court, and told that they must no longer teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter said they could not do that because salvation could only come through belief in the Lord Jesus and they had to testify to the truth of the Gospel message. As a result of the apostles' preaching and teaching we read of thousands giving their lives to Jesus. The Acts of the Apostles is an exciting book to read because of the work of that young Church.

On this Easter Saturday we too have a part in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ by our actions and words. At the end of every Mass we are told to go out and live the Gospel. This is a command, not a request if we want to or if we have time. We are God's Easter people and we should want to witness to others of the love of the risen Lord Jesus and the difference he makes to our lives.

We are so fortunate to have Pope Francis as the leader of the Catholic Church at this time because he wants the Church to be one that reaches out to people who know nothing or very little of the Lord Jesus. He gives us the lead to do that.

The Lord is risen Alleluia. He is risen indeed Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia. Let us go out and proclaim the message.