

5<sup>th</sup> Saturday of Easter “Faith Requires Mission”

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The Acts of the Apostles is an interesting chronicle of the adventures of the earliest evangelists. Travel was extremely difficult and dangerous. Set aside the fact that they didn't have the means of transportation we have today or have the kind of medical care we benefit from when accidents happen or illness takes hold, everywhere they went, they had to gain the trust of the people they were evangelizing. This was not an easy thing to do when your preaching was deemed heretical by the synagogues and sedition by the Roman authorities. Being an evangelist in these first years of Christianity was no easy vocation.

Our first reading has our group of heroes going all over the map, north, south east and west. They didn't do it for pay. They didn't do it for fame. They did it for the sake of the Gospel. And, despite all the hardships they endured, not to mention the beatings that they would receive, they maintained a spirit of zeal and enthusiasm in their mission of spreading the Gospel.

I mention this because in our Gospel reading, Jesus doesn't mince words with his Apostles during his Last Supper discourse. He basically tells them...you see what is going to happen to me here in the next couple days? This is what is going to happen to you if you follow me. As the world hates me so will the world hate you! It is one of those moments in the bible where you can probably say lightheartedly, “Hey, where do I sign up?”

On the other hand, I think the scripture readings for today convey a couple important life lessons. First, faith requires mission. It isn't enough to sit and naval gaze when it comes to what we believe. If we really and truly believe in something then it must be proclaimed. It must be shared. Otherwise, it really isn't a belief but just a passing opinion. Another life lesson is, no one ever promised you a rose garden. Anything worth pursuing in this life is going to be a lot of work and require a lot of suffering. If you want to be a mountain climber, then you are going to have to deal with blisters from time to time, some really bad muscle soreness and an occasional broken bone. If you want to be a medical doctor, you will need to be in school for a very long time, have enough years under your belt working long and hard hours at the hospital, and start off your career with debt up to your eye brows. If you want to be a politician or hold a public office, then you have to ready to have every detail of your life scrutinized for the world to see. Even what you may have written in someone's year book when you were in High School could be paraded around in the national press as a way of questioning your character. Whatever you want to pursue in life, get ready to suffer. On the other hand, when we reach our golden years and look back, will all the things that we suffered for really matter? Will they have made the world a better place? Will they have glorified God?

And so, I think our readings today remind us colorfully that faith requires mission. Mission requires sacrifice. If we focus on what the Lord wills for us, these efforts will never be in vain.

