

Homily For Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Easter - Year II

St Peter's 8:30am Mass - April 30, 2024

(Memorial - St. Marie de L'Incarnation)

Acts 14:19-28 "They stoned Paul and left him for dead. Through persecutions we enter the kingdom."

Psalms 145:10-21 "O Lord, your faithful shall speak of the glory of your kingdom."

John 14:27-31 "Peace I leave you, not as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid."

Best Highlights

Introduction

As time goes on, I have less and less time to watch whole baseball or hockey games, even in the playoffs. If there is a game I am really interested in, I find the eight to ten minute highlight video the day after the game. It doesn't have everything but it gives me a good idea of what happened, along with the best plays. Because I usually know who won, it allows me to pick the highlights of games where I would be happy with the outcome.

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is a kind of highlight package. A lot of details are missing, so it could be frustrating for someone who likes to read the whole novel with all of its details. But it provides us some amazing events. The best part is that our team always wins. The hard part is that this victory is always hard won, with really terrible situations to overcome. But isn't that what makes the victory all the sweeter?

Acts of the Apostles

In the Book of Acts, there are journeys and persecutions. Listed today are the travels to many cities, winning of souls for Christ, appointing of elders, uniting the churches in different places, strengthening souls, making disciples, and especially opening the doors of salvation to the whole world.

In the middle of all this activity of the churches growth, what a spectacular highlight we have today. If this was on YouTube, I would watch this part over and

over. Paul and Barnabas were preaching in Lystra. Paul had just healed a crippled man. There's a highlight that it would be nice to know more about. The people there wanted to proclaim him a god. But as soon as others came with convincing words, the people became a violent mob and stoned Paul right there in the streets, then drag him out of the city. It reminds one of Stephen being first dragged out of the city, then stoned, while Paul watched. The dramatic irony is profound. They stone Paul, then just leave him there, thinking he is dead. The disciples there gather around him, then he gets up and the next day they head out to other cities. That's very exciting stuff, but I want to know how that happened. Was he knocked out, then came to? Was he healed by some kind of prayer activity of the disciples? We don't know. He simply gets up and carries on.

What is important is that we see for the hundredth time, that we should not be dismayed by persecution. Jesus had to go through Good Friday. Suffering and trials are the normal way to become conformed to Christ. It is necessary for us to go through many hardships. Christians may be dismayed. It does not mean there is something wrong with God's plan. Remember at creation that, after the fall, God's plan was fulfilled by the sending of the saviour. His plan is not changed but fulfilled.

John

The first word Jesus says after the resurrection is Shalom. Not like the world gives. It's not about protection and safety. Our peace is not about having things of this world secured but rather our hope in God. Ultimately our peace rests in God's salvation. Even if we lose our worldly goods or even our wellbeing.

With His death on the Cross, He defeats both death and fear. He gives the peace "Not as the world gives." From the moment sin entered the world, suffering in our lives has been unavoidable. There are times when it is a physical pain. Other times, it is a moral suffering. And then, there are times when it is a matter of a spiritual pain.

But John records Jesus using a word that I think is pretty important, that is easy to miss. Jesus says to his disciples before he goes to the cross: "Do not 'let' your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid." By the use of this word 'let', Jesus means that peace is not a matter of what is going on around us. It is a matter of what we 'let' into our hearts. It is a faith choice we make.

When Jesus says, "My peace I leave you," he isn't just saying 'have a nice day' or even 'have a nice life'. It's not a wish for nice weather or lack of conflict. Even though Satan has control in the world, he can only gloat over the suffering that he will cause. But the ruler of this world has no power to prevent the peace of Christ, his personal shalom.

We can let trouble and anxiety into our hearts, or we can allow the peace of Christ to take over our whole being, such that nothing will disturb us. We are invited once again to let God take over control of those parts of our lives that tend towards fear and anxiety.

St. Marie of the Incarnation

Marie of the Incarnation was a **French Ursuline nun**. As part of a group of nuns sent to New France (Quebec) to establish the Ursuline Order, Marie was crucial in the spread of Catholicism in New France.

At age 7, Marie had a dream in which she saw the heavens open and Jesus come to her and embrace her. "*Will you be mine?*" He said to her. "*Yes!*" answered the child. This special dream became an incentive for her to do good, be united to God and care for others.

Her husband's premature death left Marie a widow at age 19 with a six-month old baby to care for. She inherited her husband's bankrupt business. The voyage to New France lasted three months. As their drinking water had been contaminated shortly after their departure, they soon became very thirsty. Long, heavy storms made them seasick. But worse yet, everyone expected to die when their ship just missed striking an iceberg.

The community's debts began accumulating and its resources were running dry. As the Ursulines had always acknowledged the Virgin Mary as their first and principal superior, Mary of the Incarnation placed the community totally in her hands and affirmed having felt her faithful and loving presence from the beginning to the end of the enterprise.

The remains of Saint Mary of the Incarnation rest at the Monastery in Old-Quebec. You are invited to visit this oratory of recollection.

Call To Conversion

What is true peace for each of us. What attachments keep us from it? In Lent we practice giving these things up. During Easter we practice putting peace in place of those things we got rid of. Now because it is an ongoing process we have to keep doing both, but let's keep up with Easter. Let's make more highlights.

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *The Lord has taken her as his bride forever in faithfulness and mercy..*

Collect: *O Lord our God, who led St Marie to contemplate the wonder of the Trinity, grant that we may live as witnesses to your love.*

Acts: *At Lystra, some Jews came from Antioch and won over the crowds. Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But when the disciples surrounded him, he got up. The next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. Paul and Barnabas made many disciples there. . Back in Antioch they encouraged the disciples, saying: "It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God." Back to Antioch where they started, they related all that God had done with them.*

Psalm: *O Lord, your faithful shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power. They make known to all people your mighty deeds.*

John: *When the hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father, Jesus said: "Peace I leave with you, not as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid. If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father. I have told you this so that when it occurs, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, but I do as the Father has commanded.*