

May 12, 2020
Tuesday of the 5th Week of Easter
Acts 14:19-28
John 14:27-31

Today's Activities & Tasks

- Ready Daily Readings
- Reflection from Fr. Brian Johnson
- Prayer and Challenge for the Day
- Video: “The Sacraments – Episode 1” from Word on Fire Institute
- Pray for Life Monthly Prayer Guide

Reflection Easter Week 5 Tuesday Acts 14:19-28 & John 14:27-31

One of my favorites! How many favorites can you have before you can't use 'favorite' anymore because you mean all of them? But really, this opening line of today's reading tells me just what I would want a Savior to say, ***“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives, do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid”*** (John 14:27). Please. Please, yes, this is precisely what the human heart needs after chasing too long its own self-frustrating ideas of what it thinks will satisfy it. A peace God alone can give. And what about the 'peace the world gives'? Well, to me that is the typical way of 'bait & switch', 'strings attached', or 'small print' that ends up costing exorbitantly more than any perceived benefit. Any peace the world gives is too humanly flawed and may feel good for a minute, or glitters for a time, but inevitably the 'pay-up' comes when its false promise is exposed. But the peace of Christ lasts and is true gift. It is the kind of inner joy that Paul certainly felt when he kept standing back up after being stoned (like today) or whipped or jailed or marched out of town. Today, Acts 14:20 says that after Paul was on the ground, supposed to be dead, after a stoning, “the disciples gathered around him, he got up and entered the city (*again*). What gave him such strong resilience? He describes it in Philippians 3:8 saying, “I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”. He has an interior peace of Christ, the world didn't give him and the world can't take away from him! I love how the fruit of such peace is that it can be freely shared with others if they too are open to it. For example, immediately after this setback in Lystra, Paul goes on to a little mission in Derbe and then returns to Lystra to meet again with the Christians there (where he had just got pulverized). Acts 14:22 says he went back and “strengthened the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in the faith”. So, he went back to the place where he was 'beaten-down', and

encouraged the faith of his fellow sufferers there in Lystra. That is some resurrection faith, which can be sustained only through a hopeful peace that Christ alone can give.

But persecution times or times when life and service is seriously interrupted, often foremost on people's minds is how to keep something going forward. It is said that the Great Roman Persecution of Jews & Christians and Temple's destruction in 70 AD is what led to the writing down and collection of what became the New Testament. But the type of persecution that Paul, Peter and others are going through in Acts of the Apostles also calls for a 'succession plan' for the Church. I have surely thought a lot about such a plan during this 'pandemic time'. Well, for the Church, Jesus had put things in place to provide for His ongoing ministry, too. Even long before His Last Supper instructions, He called the Twelve apostles as a group (Peter, chief among them in Matt 16:18). He empowered them for ministry in His Name. At that Last Supper, He assured them of the Advocate's Coming-The Holy Spirit's guidance over them ('I will not leave you orphaned' John 14:18). We can see in today's first reading too, some manner of continuing and keeping ministry going with an apostolic 'succession plan'. Acts 6:23 says Paul & Barnabas "appointed presbyters in each church and, with prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had put their faith". Then Paul would move on in mission, and the remaining Church was guided by presbyters. We saw the beginning of such planning for different communities when the institution of 'Deacons' was established earlier back in Acts 6:1-6. Today's Acts reading highlights the introduction of 'presbyters' who function much as current parish priests-pastors. Later in the Church (following apostles' deaths) we will hear about the added role of bishops (1 Timothy 3:1-7) in church governance. This developing structure organically grows up in the church by the guidance of the Holy Spirit to allow for continuous pastoral care, mission and preaching in the Jesus' Name. So, the Church is still with us today by the direction of God who continues to raise up bishops, priests and deacons to serve and lead us (yet also with so many other needed ministers such as are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:28). But, we should not be surprised to see that God takes care of His People by providing servant ministers to keep it going throughout the ages!

Prayer for the Day:

O God, by your grace you have called us in this Diocese of Owensboro to a fellowship of faith with one another. Bless our Bishops, Deacons, priests, and lay ministers in all varied and diverse mission work in the Church. Encourage the faith of all our members. Grant that your Word may be truly preached and truly heard, and your Holy Sacraments faithfully administered and faithfully received. By your Spirit, fashion our lives according to the example of your Son, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all people among whom we live and whose paths we cross daily; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Challenge for the Day:

Offer a prayer of gratitude or share an inspiring story with someone today of a special sister or nun, priest deacon or bishop who influenced you at an important point in your life.

The Sacraments

Watch for free Episode 1 of The Sacraments Series
from Word on Fire Institute

The Sacraments: Episode 1

Pray For Life

Here is Pray For Life May 2020 Monthly Prayer Guide

USCCB Pray for Life