

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

STRENGTH AND BOLDNESS TO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS



My brothers and sisters in Christ, as we read the Acts of the Apostles, we discover how the Good News of the Gospel spread. Nothing and no one can halt the advancement of the Word of God. Deacon Philip is sent to Samaria not to go into hiding, but to preach. He carries out this entire mission in close collaboration with those who entrusted it to him; indeed, they would later travel from Jerusalem to validate his work.

It is worth noting that Samaria was a despised region. Devout Jews avoided associating with Samaritans or speaking to them, regarding them as unfaithful to the God of Israel. Yet, touched by grace, many converted and were baptized. **It was a true Pentecost for the Samaritans. Indeed,**

we must give thanks for the mighty deeds of God; in His eyes, no one is beyond redemption.

Like Philip, we too are sent to perform acts that heal, liberate, uplift, and restore life and hope.

In the second reading, it is Peter who addresses Christians facing slander and persecution at the hands of their adversaries. The Apostle outlines the proper course of conduct for them: they must never cease bearing witness to their faith, yet they must respond to attacks with gentleness and respect toward their enemies.

The Apostle Peter tells us that we must always be ready to give an account to those who ask us to explain the hope that lies within us. However, to answer this call, we like them stand in need of the Holy Spirit. We must never forget that we are all called to be both "disciples" and "missionaries." **To be a disciple is to welcome Christ, to listen to Him, and to let us be guided by Him.** The missionary is the one who is sent forth to proclaim the Gospel. Yet, like the Deacon Philip, he discovers that the Lord has already gone before him into the hearts of those he encounters along his path.

This proclamation of the Kingdom of God must be joyful. It is, after all, Good News: God invites us to the "wedding feast" an invitation to happiness and this must be evident in our lives. We are just a few days away from Pentecost. The Apostles prepared for it alongside Mary, the Mother of Jesus. She is here, with us, to help us prepare for this great event. **We, too, are preparing to welcome the Holy Spirit and to respond to the love of Christ, Who gave Himself for the salvation of the world. Let us pray to Him that He may transform us in the very depths of our being, helping us to live and to love as He did, and with Him. Amen**

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