

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, May 2nd 2015

One of the gifts for me of the Easter Season is the opportunity to reflect on the Acts of the Apostles. For me, entering into the stories of the first Christians, their struggles with community and experiences of discipleship, offers an invitation to reflect on how I am in relationship with community, with God and how I am a disciple of Christ. Today's first reading is just such an occasion.

The sentence that captured my attention as I read the reading was: "For so the Lord has commanded us, I have made you a light to the Gentiles, that you may be an instrument of salvation to the ends of the earth." I smiled to myself as I read because I knew what I wanted to share today. I really like it when the Spirit works overtime.

This year I was asked to be a liturgical assistant for Triduum liturgies at my parish. This ministry has many parts and pieces but for me the highlight was at the Easter Vigil. I was tasked with carrying the Easter candle. Many of you, I am sure, are familiar with the liturgy. It starts in darkness. We light a new fire which is then blessed. From the new fire, we light the Easter Candle, the Light of Christ. As we were doing this, I was reflecting on the darkness, the quiet of Lent and personally how I have been in a place of darkness recently. I wondered if it was significant that I was going to carry the Light of Christ this night. Maybe I was coming out of the darkness and back into the light? What struck me more, though, as I walked up the aisle and the Light of Christ was spreading throughout the church, was that it wasn't about me coming out of darkness so much as it was/is about me being a Light to others in spite of any darkness I may be in. It was very powerful and I knew it was important for those gathered to witness me carrying the Light of Christ.

It was important for my son to see, my husband, those to be baptized, the young and the old, farmer and business person, ordained and lay person. Not only was it important for those gathered this night to see but it is important that we all claim the Light of Christ that dwells within us and carry it into our world. The Lord was not just talking to Paul and Barnabas and the other 1st century Christians. The Lord is speaking to us today. He is reminding us that he has made us light to the Gentiles (to all people), that we may be an instrument of salvation (grace) to the ends of the earth.

There are an infinite number of ways this can be done. For instance: volunteer at a local shelter, wish the person who tallies your grocery bill a good day, pray for the construction crew you pass on your way to work, go on a mission trip, reach out to a neighbor in need, participate fully at liturgy, be a holy listener to someone who is searching.

As we go through our day today, I invite reflection and prayer around how we are called to carry the Light of Christ to the ends of the earth. It is our call. When we are the Light, we, like the first

disciples, are filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

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