

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, May 13th 2024

Today's reading from Acts of the Apostles offers us another example of delayed catechesis. It is hard to believe that the company of twelve at Ephesus became Christian believers without knowing either of the Holy Spirit or the necessity of Christian baptism. The baptism of John, certainly widely respected, was evidently seen by some as sufficient. After learning of this erroneous idea, Paul sees to their baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit becomes part of their lives.

There may be more to this issue than meets the eye. It may well have been that there were disciples who saw John's mission as "parallel" to Jesus' mission, with a certain level of equality between the two. This may go some way in explaining something else. The Gospels are at pains to honor John but also to emphasize his inferior status to that of Jesus. Behind all of this may well have been champions of John who were overstating his case.

In the Gospel today, Jesus tells his disciples that they will too be scattered and be left to endure his passion alone. But suffering will be their lot as well. Yet confidence and trust remain the order of the day. The world is set against Jesus and his followers. But fear not! He has overcome the world.

An incomplete understanding of the truth of our faith is a serious concern today. Many of those people today whose faith is firm and education complete learned their religion at an early age. Today the majority of our children are not in Catholic schools. Their religious instruction is limited to one hour a week, in afterschool hours. It is often geared solely to their reception of the sacraments. It is seldom a high priority. Parents and Catholic educators have to see this as a major responsibility.

The education and formation of the young is a matter of major importance. It is essential to the transmission of the faith and must be a high priority for parents and for all those who seek to positively shape the minds and souls of children.