

Saturday's Gospel: Apostles with Leaks

Gospel for Saturday in the 1st Week of Lent, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 16:9-15*)

Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went out and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were

walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at table; and he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.

And he said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.”

Commentary

In the Gospel passage from Saint Mark that the Church invites us to consider today, it is striking to see the contrast between the apostles' refusal to believe the news they receive about Jesus' resurrection, and the confidence in them that our

Lord once again shows by entrusting them with the missionary mandate: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.”

This lack of faith on the part of the disciples is not something our Lord desires, and he reproaches them for “their unbelief and hardness of heart.” But neither is this an insurmountable obstacle to making them his instruments in spreading the Gospel throughout the whole world.

This lack of faith shown by the eleven isn't something new either. But Jesus always gives them a new opportunity to start over and once again shows his trust in them.

It is moving to see how our Lord not only *forgets* and *forgives* these faults, but also places in their hands an even greater mission: to announce the work of Salvation to all mankind.

Jesus, when he invites us to be his apostles (and let us remember that all Christians receive this call with Baptism), doesn't focus on what we don't have or what we are weak in. Rather he points us towards the future with infinite confidence in the action of the Holy Spirit in each one of us, if we strive to let him act in our lives.

May we too learn how to trust the people we have around us, seeing, with the eyes of Christ, all the potential to do good that each child of God possesses.

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