

The Disciples' Resurrection

Intro. Advertising uses before and after pictures to tout their products' ability to improve our looks or health. Usually the change is very dramatic. Today's scriptures offer such a before and after look. In both John's gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, the disciples are gathered together. In the gospel they are filled with fear of the unknown. In Acts, the community is prayerfully waiting - for a gift from God. In the gospel the disciples needed to feel the peace the Lord offered them. They were not only afraid of the Pharisees, but they had also abandoned the Lord [M. McGlone, *NCR*, 5/19/17]. In Acts, they are often pictured praying peacefully. What a difference a few days makes.

I. Fifty days after Passover, the Jewish people celebrate the feast of Shavuot, the gift of God's

revelation in the Torah. It was celebrated this past week, close to our celebration of Pentecost. That is the reason so many people from all over the world were in Jerusalem that day. It probably had all the usual things of festivals today: food booths rather than food trucks; games for children; handmade clothing and jewelry. It was into this religious observance and community celebration that God sent the Spirit to the disciples. They were not scattered in the streets with the other inhabitants of Jerusalem. They were *together*. Luke tells us there was a strong wind that whipped through the streets of Jerusalem and people wondered what was going on. *Somehow* they were led to the street outside the room where the disciples were. There they became witnesses of the power of God's Spirit in the now suddenly alive disciples pouring out of the house like a disturbed

ant colony. It was *not* a coincidence this happened during a big feast; *nor* were the traditional signs of God's presence - wind and fire. *Neither* was the miracle of uneducated people from Galilee suddenly speaking in world languages. It was all part of God's plan. One way to get the word out about salvation in Christ, was to give it to people going home to Parthia, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Asia, Libya, Rome and Crete! This was the equivalent of Facebook. Back home the question would be, "So, how was the Shavuot celebration; same old, same old?" The unexpected response would be, "No. There were some Galileans who were on fire with a message of Jesus raised from the dead and salvation for the whole world. And they were speaking our language!" The story would spread so that when the disciples began to evangelize in those parts of the

world, some would already know about Jesus of Nazareth.

Concl. Before all this happened, the disciples were struggling for life. The Lord had been arrested and crucified. Then that morning they heard the "wild" story of Mary Magdalene having seen him alive at the tomb. Emotionally they may have felt as if they were unable to breathe, packed together into that upper room. They needed help. They *needed to experience a resurrection of their own*, be **revived** before they were ready for the next step in God's plan: receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Lord appeared and breathed life back, not into their **lungs** but into their **hearts**. We have received the gift of the Lord's revelation too. We have also experienced difficult things and need resurrection. This is what the gift of the Spirit can be: an energizing of heart

and mind much more than any funny bunny. From time to time we need to be revived so we can go and proclaim the Word of God alive in our lives. The first result of the disciples' preaching that day was about three thousand persons added [Acts 2:41]. And a few days later about five thousand more heard their words and believed [4:4]. Our witness may not have those results but I think if we worked at it, we could add a *couple* of believers.