

Storms and the Spirit of Jesus

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During this Easter season, the liturgy proposes to us an ongoing reading of the Acts of the Apostles. This is the book that testifies to the fulfilment of Jesus' promises, of his new presence. The Apostles are children of these promises. Using their abilities, their limitations and openness to God's action, the Spirit makes them witnesses of Jesus. From now on, they will live, love, serve and even die like Jesus.



These witnesses form a community animated by the Spirit of Jesus. The Spirit gives the members of the community the freedom and courage to proclaim Jesus, who died and who rose again. This is not a closed community. On the contrary, its openness to and familiarity with the Spirit, makes them attuned to what that same Spirit is doing in the hearts of those who sincerely seek God. In the tensions and contradictions that the community itself goes through, in the various understandings of God that prevail, the unknown God is always seeking to be (re) known.

We can hardly imagine the impact of the death and resurrection of Jesus on the disciples of Jesus, nor the tensions that such an announcement had on the faith and religion of Israel. The tensions we see today between "progressive" and "conservative" groups in the Church seem to us of little importance compared to the enormous challenges that the apostles and the nascent Christian communities had to face: their confessional and practical relationship with Judaism, their openness to the Greco-Roman world, the ways of expressing their faith in Jesus, dead and risen, the discernment of the charisms that were emerging in the community, the need for new ministries, deacons and deaconesses, preachers and prophets, elders, even an apostle like Paul who, like us, knew Jesus only after the resurrection.

Do not be afraid of internal tensions

A Church, animated by the Spirit of Jesus, is not afraid to face its internal tensions, as made visible in its first leaders, Peter and Paul. Rather, it seeks to reach ever new forms of communion, learning how to discern, in new contexts, what of the faith and practices of Israel can be maintained and also what the Spirit is already doing in people and cultures. The Church is an apostolic Church of disciples, of people who know how to listen to the needs of

others, especially the poor, and promote initiatives that respond to their needs; a Church that equips itself with the ministries it needs for the growth and accompaniment of its members.

Basically, the Acts of the Apostles tell us about the journey of the community of Jesus' disciples who not only believe in the promises of Jesus who will accompany his Church until the end of time, but who also allow themselves to be guided and moulded by his Spirit.

Let us dare to believe in the working of the Spirit of Jesus.

Let us ask the Spirit of Jesus, then, to remind us of his words and to assist us in the ministry we undertake in his name. Above all, may he convert our hearts so that we may truly believe in the fulfilment of his promises, in ourselves and in our world.

For this we can make our own the words that St. Charles de Foucauld used to recall in the Spirit the promises of Jesus:

“My children, whatever happens to you, remember that I am always with you; remember whether you perceive me or not, whether I seem to be active or sleeping, forgetful of you, I am always watching and am always all-powerful. Never be afraid, never be anxious: I am there. I watch, I love... I am all-powerful. What more do you ask? Remember how many storms I have quieted by a word, making a great calm to follow. Remember how I held up Peter walking on the waters (Mt 14,28f). I am always as near to every person as I was then to him... Be confident, faithful, courageous; have no fear for your body and soul, for I am there, loving and all-powerful. But ... do not let your confidence make you careless or neglectful of the dangers or confident in yourself or in others ... You are in imminent danger. Evil spirits, those strong and crafty enemies, your own human nature, the world, make perpetual warfare upon you ... In this life the tempest never ceases and your boat is ever ready to sink. But I am there, and with me it will never be wrecked.” (Saint Charles de Foucauld)

Fraternally,

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