
8 Saturday

SATURDAY 5th Week of EASTER

Acts 16: 1 - 10
Ps 99: 2,3,5
John 15: 18 - 21

“Day after day the churches grew stronger in faith and increased in number”. The *Acts of the Apostles* we hear or read during these Easter weeks give a picture of the rapid geographical spread of faith in the risen Jesus, and of the vitality of the first Christian communities. St Peter (in earlier weeks) and now St Paul feature strongly in the story, and new names, like Timothy, begin to appear. These men and women were the foundations of the early church, and we honour them as such. But the text of the *Acts*, not least today’s reading, emphasises that it is the Holy Spirit who guides all this evangelical work. See how often the Spirit is specifically mentioned, as directing and accomplishing the spreading of Easter faith.

But how or why (according to the reading) does the Spirit “not allow” or “prevent” St Paul going to certain places ? Was it perhaps opposition or even persecution, such as Jesus talked about in today’s gospel ? And how is Paul so sure that it’s the Spirit who called him in that vision of invitation to cross over the sea into Europe ?

These days, hearing of scandals in the church or oppression of Christians, it may seem we’re no longer growing in faith or increasing in numbers. Some people are pessimistic and wonder where is the Holy Spirit ? But rather than talking or speculating about all this, let us instead pray that each of us be more attentive to the Spirit of Jesus in our lives.

Come Holy Spirit, renew the face of the earth, the face of our community today.