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19 Thursday

THURSDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of Easter

Acts 5: 27 - 33  
Ps 33: 2, 9, 17 - 20  
John 3: 31 - 36

These few days, the readings from the Acts of the Apostles have been very dramatic. Jesus' resurrection and sending the Holy Spirit has transformed Peter and the others, and they've gone about boldly proclaiming Christ. This has led to conflict with the religious authorities, and their arrest and then miraculous delivery from prison. Today we hear them being defiant in defense of their God-given commission, and how that so infuriates their interrogators.

Conflicts with authorities, civil or religious, is something that people of faith have always had to face. It has led to so many martyrdoms, people who've sacrificed their very lives choosing to obey God rather than human power-wielders. We honour and admire them, but others think they acted stupidly or imprudently. Would we be so brave? or foolish? Can we draw a line between putting up with bad situations (injustices, moral corruption, pressures on our conscience), and serving God and His people and His world? What would be the most loving, most Christ-like thing to do?

Peter spoke out as he did because of his faith and trust in God, his devoted love for His Master. He and the others were witnesses of Jesus' resurrection as Saviour for all people. He knew they now shared a life that was everlasting, not to be cut short by death, the love-life of God Himself, because they believed.

We who believe are also His witnesses. In this joyful Easter time may we more deeply appreciate that it's really Jesus who matters for us, the One whom we love, who gives life, and who is "with us always until the end of the world".