

1. April 2024

To proclaim the gospel without fear
Easter Monday

Acts 2:14,22-33

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed them in a loud voice: 'Men of Judaea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, make no mistake about this, but listen carefully to what I say. Men of Israel, listen to what I am going to say: Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that God worked through him when he was among you, as you know. This man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention and foreknowledge of God, you took and had crucified and killed by men outside the Law. But God raised him to life, freeing him from the pangs of Hades; for it was impossible for him to be held in its power since, as David says of him: I kept the Lord before my sight always, for with him at my right hand nothing can shake me. So my heart rejoiced my tongue delighted; my body, too, will rest secure, for you will not abandon me to Hades or allow your holy one to see corruption. You have taught me the way of life, you will fill me with joy in your presence. 'Brothers, no one can deny that the patriarch David himself is dead and buried: his tomb is still with us. But since he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn him an oath to make one of his descendants succeed him on the throne, he spoke with foreknowledge about the resurrection of the Christ: he is the one who was not abandoned to Hades, and whose body did not see corruption. God raised this man Jesus to life, and of that we are all witnesses.

We see an apostle Peter, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, undauntedly proclaiming the message of the Lord, the message of His resurrection. A transformation is discernible in him, for he knew very well that the enemies of Jesus, who were responsible for His death, had not changed their view and would now have become attentive and converted listeners to the message. But the intrepid, a sign of the Holy Spirit of strength, shows that Peter is committed to the truth and to mission, even if this involves dangers.

Peter now places the event of the Lord's resurrection in the context of biblical events and announcements. In his enlightened address, which should also touch the heart of his listeners, God wants to make it clear to the listeners through His apostle that what

was promised is happening before their eyes, namely that they are witnesses of the fulfilment of His will of salvation, and that these untaught apostles are proclaiming the truth in His power.

Peter uses the word openly, which bears a resemblance to undaunted. Frankly means that the apostle is committed only to the truth, that he cannot be constrained, either by his own fears or by external threats. He listens to the Holy Spirit, who shows him God's way of salvation and gives him the light to understand and proclaim with authority.

Today, it is equally necessary to proclaim the Gospel with frankness, not to be intimidated by an increasingly anti-Christian environment, by the so-called “political correctness” that wants to dictate what we should think and say.

This also applies to the church, if there should be a tendency to no longer call sin as a sin and one can come into danger of sacrificing the truth for the sake of false mercy, if one makes concessions to the message of salvation that is meant for all people and puts the gospel of Jesus Christ on the same level with other religions, if the message of the gospel should more and more lead to political actions and promote inner-worldly developments instead of serving primarily to proclaim salvation.

Freedom is required, but also the attentive perception of the inner line of the message of salvation, both as regards the Bible and the authentic teaching ministry of the Church, which is a proof of the working of the Holy Spirit.

After three years in the direct school of the Lord and having lived with him, Peter, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, now fulfils his mission to proclaim the Gospel even without the physical presence of the Lord.

For us, this is always an example so that we too - each one in the place where the Lord placed him - may carry the message of the Lord's Resurrection into the world without fear.