

Reflections for 2nd Sunday of Easter

Acts 5: 27-32

Revelation 1: 4-8

John 20: 19-31

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Apocalypse Now: Our Passport for Life

The Books of Acts and Revelation (Apocalypse) do not so much compete for our attention in the weeks after Easter as complement one another. Acts tells of how the first followers of Jesus remembered him and tried to live out his teaching and nonviolent lifestyle in a violent world at the edge of the Roman Empire.

Apocalypse is the text of hope reminding us of the triumph of Easter - life over death. It is no accident that it is the last book in the Bible - placed there as our guarantee of victory over the forces of evil and destruction.

In it John tells us that because of the Resurrection, we can now cope with the suffering, the violence and everything else we endure in life. But as we pray for His Kingdom of peace and justice to come in the future, we do so in the knowledge that we are also called to live it out in the here and now.

To be a disciple implies that one is poor and powerless before the world. And that's the way most of us feel when confronted by today's world poor and powerless. But the challenge of Christian witness is that we confront the world and its problems with the hope and confidence born of Easter. And what keeps us going is what the New Testament calls Grace, best translated as an inner peace and courage.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it all memorably when he said that because of the Resurrection, we are living out the consequences of a victory that has already been achieved. The Apocalypse is our guarantee that, in Julian of Norwich's words, all will be well.

In short, it is our passport to a new life, a life without end.