

## Acts 3:11-16

**While the man [who had been healed] held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see."**

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## Pilgrims of hope, pilgrims of peace

Sister Elisa, Sisters of St Andrew

Since the beginning of this week, we have been talking and reflecting on hope. The poet Charles Péguy wrote about the virtue of hope: "Hope is a little girl, nothing at all... And yet it is this little girl who will endure worlds. She alone will guide the Virtues and Worlds. One flame will pierce the eternal shadows."

Today, as we listened to this reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we are called to be pilgrims of hope. The scene described is far from ordinary: a man who had been paralyzed and used to beg at the temple gate clung to Peter and John after being healed. The people were astonished, but Peter asked them, "Why does this surprise you?" He spoke as if what had just happened was completely natural. Then he began to explain the meaning of recent events: the judgment, condemnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In other words, he shared the essence of the Christian faith - what we call the Kerygma. And he said, "We are witnesses of this" (v. 15).

Peter reminded them that the Israelites had handed Jesus over to be killed and had disowned him. This same Peter, now speaking with courage and clarity, is the one who doubted Jesus when walking on water and began to sink (Mt 14:30); the one who fell

asleep and left Jesus alone in his moment of trial (Mt 26:40); the one who fled in fear when Jesus was arrested (Mk 14:50); and the one who denied Jesus three times when his own life was in danger (Mt 26:69-74; Lk 22:54-60).

And now he says they are witnesses of God's work through Jesus. How can such a witness be trustworthy?

Peter, like the other disciples - and like us - faced difficult moments in his journey with Jesus. It wasn't always easy to keep believing in the face of adversity. He had to confront his own fears and his ghosts to become a true witness of God's power.

He knows well that he had to cry out the name of Jesus to save him from drowning (Mt 14:30). And it was Jesus who reached out and held him. Peter remembers with sorrow the three times he denied Jesus. But didn't hold back his tears of joy as he declared his love for the risen Christ three times: "Lord, you know that I love you!" (Jn 21:15-19). Peter is deeply aware that he is not God. He has no power of his own. But he accepts the call to bear witness to God's power in his life and in the lives of others.

Like him, we don't need to be perfect or possess superpowers to spread the good news of hope. In a world wounded by violence, war, and injustice, we can hold fast to our faith and hope in Jesus. With our own stories - full of ups and downs - we can be witnesses to the power of love. We don't need to do great things.

Tonight, during evening prayer, each of us will receive a small candle lit by someone else. We are invited to pass the flame to another person. And when the flame eventually extinguishes - for safety reasons - we are called to become that small light ourselves. It may seem insignificant to pass the flame to just one person. But when each of us does it, the whole church will be illuminated. And so will the world, if we share our little flame of hope.

"One flame will pierce the eternal shadows."

### **Questions for sharing**

- x Have I ever experienced a transformation through faith - something that freed me from fear or helped me overcome a sense of paralysis?*
- x How can I bear witness to hope and love in tangible ways within the world around me?*
- x What words or actions can I offer to bring light into the lives of others?*