

From Fr. Mike's Desk

In today's world of mass media, and so many social networks, it seems that the second something happens, the whole world knows about it. The event could be something of great importance, which could change the entire world community, or just something, that is just important to you and your community of FRIENDS. People are always posting things on Facebook or they are tweeting about everything that happens to them. Along with this, people are always texting others, even people who are in the same room with them. The flow of news never ends, and while at times this could be a good thing, there are times when, too much news and constant communication is not a good thing. Why because this trend for constant news can also create stories that are not true and it brings us to the so-called new trend, FAKE NEWS. While it is true that Fake News is real (if that makes sense) it is also true that people who do not like what they read or hear can label something Fake News whether it is or not! In the past, we called this Yellow Journalism.

Today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles, shares with us the very good news that the numbers of disciples continued to grow. In fact, the Church got so big that the Apostles could not take care of all the members. It grew so fast, that the neglected members started to complain. The Apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit selected seven reputable men who were to meet the physical needs of the Church. The Apostles ordained the seven who became the first Deacons of the Church. Of course, once they were ordained, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they too went out and preached the Good News while still meeting the physical needs of the Church. One of the seven, St. Stephen, became the first martyr of the Church, as Saul of Tarsus supervised his martyrdom.

Throughout the early days of the first few centuries of the Church, the Church moved out beyond Jerusalem and the Holy Land to all over the Roman Empire and beyond. What good news that was, in light of today when it seems that the opposite is true. It seems that our numbers keep dropping and fewer people are attending Mass on a regular basis. This certainly seems true in the Northeast where many people find it hard to make ends meet. Many move away to other parts of the

country, some in search of warmer weather. However, Jesus tells the Apostles in today's Gospel that they should not let their hearts be troubled. After all, they had faith in God the Father; they should also have faith in Him. He told them this before He went to the garden on the Mount of Olives to pray. As we know, it was there that He was arrested and led to His trial and death. These words can and are directed to us even today. Sometimes we think that the Apostles and the people who lived with Jesus 2,000 years ago had an advantage over us. Oh yes, they saw Jesus and spoke to Him face to face, but Jesus is with us just as much as He was 2,000 years ago. Not only is He here, He is with us more so through the power of the Holy Spirit. However, how does this help us with our concern about the numbers in the Church? The answer is we should not be very concerned because as St. Peter tells us, at times we will be rejected just as Jesus faced rejection. Keep in mind, that God has provided us with our Spiritual House and that God has called us to be a Holy Nation, a People set apart. Remember if we let these things defeat us and we lose our faith, how can we share it with others, and how can we go out to help others to see and know what we do. The numbers should not defeat us, because Jesus is always here.

Just a little aside, on the First Sunday of Lent I was at the Rite of Election at St. Agnes Cathedral. Bishop Barres presided over the service and at that ceremony many people from all over Nassau County were called forth to enter their names into *the Book of the Elect*. The crowd was great and convinced me that we had nothing to worry about, for the Church was growing in the number of disciples: you can take this to the bank as this is not "fake news".

Happy Mother's Day to all of our Mothers and those who have been like mothers to us. God bless you all and on behalf of Fr. Hyacinth, Deacons Jim, and Tom and the entire staff of St. Edward's.

Fr. Mike