

Easter tide 2017 Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2017  
6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

A Meditation based on Acts 8: 5-8, 14-17

*There was great joy in that city*

Today's first reading tells us three things: evil exists; we have the Holy Spirit in us; and we can experience "great joy" as God manifests his power.

Ever since the time of the Enlightenment, there has been a tendency to dismiss belief in the devil. An overemphasis on reason and science led people to believe that there was no reality beyond the material universe,

Yet Scripture gives us plenty of evidence to the contrary. Jesus confronted demonic forces when he met a man with an unclean spirit (Mark 1: 21-28), a blind demoniac (Matthew 12: 22-29), and the daughter of a Canaanite woman (15: 21-28).

Evil spirits are real, and they are most effective when we are indifferent to them.

There are real-life situations of people who are *possessed* by evil spirits through witchcraft, curses, and the like. These people need the help of an exorcist. But those are rare cases. For the rest of us, Satan tends to *harass* us, not possess us. He whispers thoughts that tempt us to be negative, resentful, or self-condemning. We may think these thoughts come from ourselves, and partly they do. But at the same time, they are fostered by Satan's negative accusations.

So what can you do? First, have faith that the Holy Spirit is in you, helping you fight Satan's temptations. Second, pray. Hold on to the words of the Lord's Prayer. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Then, pay attention to what is going on in your heart. Look for signs of how the temptation is diminishing. Rejoice in even the smallest sign of freedom!

Jesus has already conquered Satan. Now he wants us to step into the freedom he has won for us. By following these three simple steps, we can begin to know the "great joy" that comes when we resist Satan's temptations.

*Pray ....*

*"Lord, lead me not into temptation.  
Deliver me from every evil harassment."*

