

WHAT MADE THE FIRST CHRISTIANS EFFECTIVE DISCIPLES?

In the “Reflection” from May 10, I wrote about the “New Evangelization”. Why is it called “New”? It is “New” in the approach, in fervour, in zeal, in style, in method and conviction shown in the proclamation, in order to “renew” the Church.

I also explained that every baptized Christian shares in the mission to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. That is what the first Christians did.

During this Easter season the first Readings of the Mass are taken from the Book of Acts, which tell us how the first Christians lived and celebrated Good News of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection even in the midst of a hostile environment.

They also tell us that the apostles’ preaching was confirmed by the miraculous healings of the sick, just as Jesus had done. These supernatural signs, coupled with the example of brotherly love among the believers, contributed greatly to the conversion of people in great numbers.

This Sunday’s first Reading, taken from the ACTS of the Apostles 8:5-8, 14-17, shows how the first Christians took the Message of Jesus outside Judea and anywhere they happened to be travelling.

The testimony of their Christian lifestyle was more effective than words, which attracted non-believers to want to join and ask for Baptism. Today we can do the same. We can learn from the first Christians, and adopt their methodology to make Jesus known wherever we are.

What would make our words and life testimony effective as at the beginning of Christianity? **The anointing and power of the Holy Spirit!** That was Jesus’ promise in Acts 1:8 *“you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be **my witnesses...**”*

So, in order to be effective witnesses and disciples of Jesus, as we prepare for Pentecost, let us pray: ***“Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us; melt us, mold us, fill us, use us...”***

