

10 April 2024 - Wednesday of the 2nd week of Easter

[Acts 5, 17-26; John 3, 16-21](#)

Homily

There is something that has always puzzled me in the text of Acts that we have just read. Why did the angel go to the trouble of closing the prison doors after letting the apostles out? In fact, at the beginning of the text, Luke says that the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and let the apostles out; but when the temple guard arrived in the morning, he found the doors firmly shut! There must be a symbolic meaning in this story of the doors being opened and then locked.

There was something similar in last Sunday's Gospel from John. The disciples had locked the doors of the place where they were gathered. This is no doubt related to Jesus' recommendation: "When you want to pray, go into your room, lock the door and pray to your father in secret". What John seemed to be saying in this account is that Jesus manifested his presence among his disciples when they were gathered together to pray. But then, what does he do? He breathes his Spirit on them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit. As my Father has sent me, so I send you". In today's text from the Acts of the Apostles, the angel of the Lord appears to the disciples when they are behind closed doors. But is the angel of the Lord distinct from the Lord himself? And what does he do? He says to them: "Go out now... and preach to the people about this Life".

The doors of prayer and solitude are revolving doors. They separate us from the world in the Johannine sense of the word. Paradoxically, locked doors are an invitation to the Lord to enter. But, at the same time, he invites us to come out of ourselves, towards our brothers and sisters. But if we go out in His name, to carry out the services we are called to perform, we are still inside and, in fact, the door is still locked.

We could also recall the original way in which Pope Francis (then Cardinal Bergoglio), in an exchange between cardinals during the conclave in which he was elected, interpreted the words of Revelation (3:20) "I stand at the door and knock". It's Jesus," he said, "who is inside with us, knocking to be let out. Going out to the peripheries...

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