

# ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

**MELKITE GREEK- CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
130 ST. FRANCIS CABBINI AVENUE \* SCRANTON, PA 18504

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## PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Rev. Dn. Jos. Daratony. Mich. Abda. Marie Barron.  
Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne Buck-  
ley. Chris Carey. John Coury. Maryann Nappi Donahue. Car-  
ol Downer. Dav. Fairclough, Sr. Rob. Fairclough, Sr. Sara  
Gomez. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Jos. Ed. Bartnicki.  
Sue Solsman. Sus. Vieselmeyer. Dean & Sherry Yockey.  
**MEMORY ETERNAL:** \*Rev. Char. Aboody.\*Rev. Mich. Jol-  
ly.\*Rev. Jos. Francavilla.\*Rev. Theo. Leonarczyk\*Rev. Frank  
Milienewicz\*Dn. John Karam.\*Marie Abda.\*Charlotte &  
James Abda.\*Marie Abda.\*Nancy Abda.\*Paul Bauman.\*A.J.  
Bolos. \*Jos. Bolos. \*Nich. Ciani.\*Patricia Cimakosky.\*Ann  
Coury.\*Mary Sue Betress.\*Cecilia Davidson\*Marg.t Dillen-  
burg\*Eric Jolly.\*Jos. King \*Blakely Landell. \*Elaine Ma-  
nuele.\*Frank Milewski, Sr.\*Frank Milewski, Jr.\*Mary  
L.Mooty.\*Karen Murray.\*Marie Patchoski.\*Anth. Simon.\*  
Bill Simon.\*Ruth Sirgany. \*Mary A. Walsh.\*Gen. Zaydon

## CLERGY:

Rev. Christopher Manuele, Presbyter

## DIVINE SERVICES:

Wednesday :

Compline ..... 7:30 P.M

Saturday:

Great Vespers: ..... 3:15 P.M

Sunday:

Orthros ..... 9:00 A.M.

Divine Liturgy: ..... 10:00 A.M.

Holy Days:

Eve: Great Vespers: .... 5:30 P.M.

Day: Divine Liturgy ... 5:30 P.M

## HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION:

Before Vespers at 3:00 P.M.; follow-  
ing any service; or by appointment.

## HOLY ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Following services /call the Rectory.

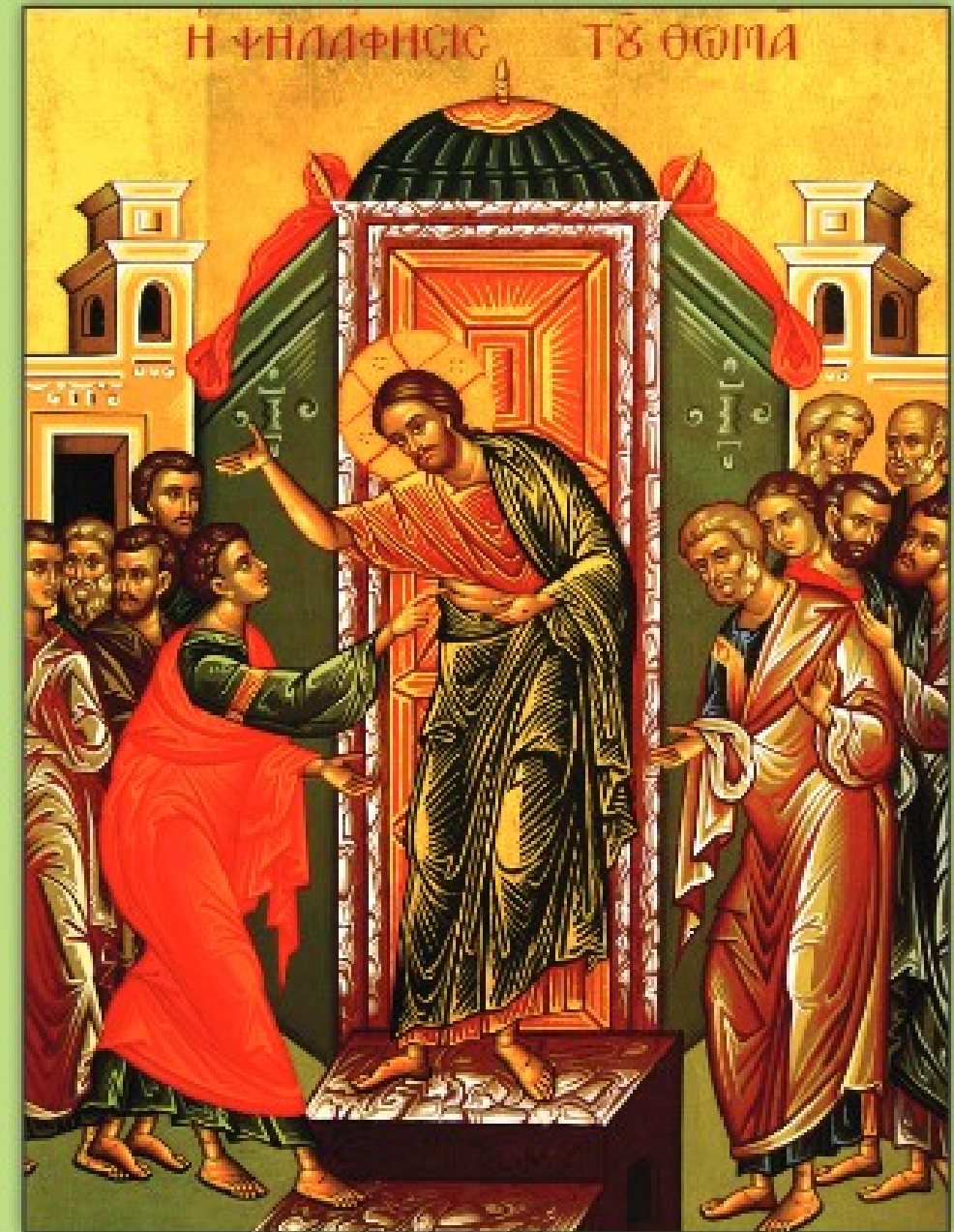
## HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

## PARISH ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Meetings as scheduled.

## SUNDAY OF SAINT THOMAS



*Icon of Christ and Saint Thomas*

# DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

24 APRIL 2022 ♦ TONE 00 EOTHINON 01 † **FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PASCHA** / **SUNDAY OF ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE**

**GREAT DOXOLOGY:**

**GREAT DOXOLOGY: Pascha**

**FIRST:**

**SECOND:**

**THIRD:**

**ENTRANCE HYMN:**

In the assemblies bless God, the Lord, from Israel’s wellsprings.

**APOLYTIKIA:**

**Saint Thomas (3x)**

While the tomb was sealed You shone forth from it, O Christ our Life, and while the doors remained closed, You stood among your Disciples, O Resurrection of all, and through them You restored a new spirit in us according to your great Mercy.

**KONDAKION: Pascha**

**INSTEAD OF THE TRISAGION:** All of you who have been baptized...

**PROKIMENON: Psalm 146:5, 117:1**

Great is our Lord, and great is his power. *Stichon:* Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.

**EPISTLE:**

In those days by the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people (and with one accord, they all would meet in Solomon’s portico; but of the rest, no one dared to associate with them, yet the people made much of them. And the multitude of men and women who believed in the Lord continued to increase), so that they carried the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and pallets, in order that, as Peter went by, at least his shadow would fall upon some of them. And crowds also came to Jerusalem from neighboring towns, and they brought the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits — and all of them were healed. But the High Priest rose up, and all his supporters (that is, the members of the Sadducean sect), and being filled with hatred, they laid their hands upon the apostles and threw them into the public jail. But during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison, and led them out, saying: “Go, and standing in the temple, speak to the people all the words of this life.”

**ALLELUIA: Psalm 94:1,3**

O Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us shout for joy to God our Savior!

For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

**GOSPEL:**

When it was late, that same day, the first of the week, though the doors where the disciples gathered had been closed for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, “Peace be to you!” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore rejoiced at the sight of the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be to you! As the Father has sent me, I also send you.” When he had said this, he breathed upon them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.” Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side I will not believe.” And after eight days, his disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being closed, and stood in their midst, and said, “Peace be to you!” Then he said to Thomas. “Bring here your finger, and see my hands; and bring here your hand, and put it into my side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.” Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen me, Thomas, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed.” Many other signs also Jesus worked in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

**HIRMOS: Thomas**

**KINONKON: Thomas**

**COMMUNION HYMN:**

*Liturgy Book p. 17*

*Liturgy Book p. 29*

*Liturgy Book p. 32*

*Liturgy Book p. 180*

*Liturgy Book p. 38*

*Handout*

*Liturgy Book p. 181*

*Liturgy Book p. 51*

*(Tone 3)*

*Acts of the Apostles 5:12-20*

*(Tone 8)*

*St. John 1:1-17*

*Liturgy Book p. 182*

*Handout*

*Liturgy Book p. 186*

author’s purpose in writing this Gospel is clearly stated in Jn 20:30, 31: “*Truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*”

The aim of John’s Gospel, then, is to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah/Christ, the Son of God. In line with this aim, Thomas’ words here are not presented as an ordinary exclamation, but as an act of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. This rules out Answer A, above.

We are left, however, with another question: What might John have meant by calling Jesus “the Son of God”? This was not an unusual title for the Messiah – or for other important figures. It did not necessarily mean, however, what we mean by it. It was often a way of saying that the Messiah (or King or High Priest) was especially beloved or set apart by God.

When we look at the beginning of John’s Gospel, however, we see that John has a higher vision of Christ as Son of God. The Gospel begins with this famous passage: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him*” (Jn 1:11-4, 14, 18). John describes the eternal Word of God, His only-begotten Son, as having become flesh and dwelt among us. He is clearly depicting the Lord Jesus as divine, eternally existing, and uniquely in the bosom of His Father.

St Jerome (c. 347-420) taught that John wrote when those who denied the unique person of the Lord were gaining a hearing in the Church. “Gospels” were being written, purporting to contain the “secret” wisdom of Jesus, which resembled Egyptian philosophy rather than the Word of God. We find similar statements in St Paul who describes the genealogy of Christ in this way: “*...from them [the Israelites], according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen*” (Rom. 9:5). From the time of the apostles and evangelists, Christians recognized Jesus as the unique and divine Son of God. John expressed this belief more firmly and unequivocally than other Scriptural authors. St Jerome (c. 347-420) taught that John wrote when those who denied the unique person of the Lord were gaining a hearing in the Church. “Gospels” were being written, purporting to contain the “secret” wisdom of Jesus, which resembled Egyptian philosophy rather than the Word of God. John’s work is a clear rejection of these other “Gospels.”

## The Witness of Secular Society

Jesus’ contemporaries in the wider society did not write about Him. They gradually began writing about His followers and thereby showed us what the first Christians believed about Him.

From AD 111-113 Pliny the Younger (Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus) was the Roman governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor. He wrote to Emperor Trajan for advice on how to deal with Christians, whose gatherings he described in part like this: “They recited a hymn antiphonally to Christus as to a god...” (*Epistles* book 10, letter 96). As a pagan, Pliny was used to the many gods and goddesses venerated in Roman religion as so he described the Christians as reverencing Christ as “a god.” The Christians would never have said it quite like that, but Pliny is nonetheless witnessing that Christians considered Christ as divine.

A similar witness from the pagan world is Lucian of Samosata (c. AD 115-c. 200), a popular satirist in the Greek world of Asia Minor, who frequently lampooned the gods and public figures of his world as well as those who revere them. In his *Passing of Peregrinus*, 11 he notes that “The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day – the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. ...it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, deny the gods of Greece and worship the crucified sage and live after his laws.” While Lucian does not call Jesus a god, he testifies that the Christians worship Him instead of the gods of Greece. For them He is clearly divine.

While Jesus never said, “I am God.” He did and said things that would lead us to believe and understand that He is God. It would take the next several centuries for all the local Churches to express clearly how the one God could have a Son, how that Son was like the Father and be both God and man.

At the First Council of Nicaea (AD 325), the description of Christ which we find in the Creed became the universal way of describing the Lord Jesus: “the only-begotten Son of God, Light from Light, true God from true God – begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made.”

Subsequent councils, which discussed how Christ is God and man, did not receive universal acceptance. This resulted in the break between the Greek and Latin Churches on one hand and the other Eastern Churches (Armenians, Copts, etc.) on the other. It is only in the modern era that Agreed Statements on Christology between these Churches have acknowledged a unity of faith in their different expressions.

While Thomas the Apostle may not have been able to articulate the Nicene definition of Christ, the Holy Spirit speaking through him gave us the words to express the Church’s ongoing faith: You are my Lord and my God”

# THE CONFESSION OF THOMAS

THE SUNDAY AFTAR PASCHA is informally called Thomas Sunday because of the Gospel read on this day, Jn 20:19-31. Many people assume this means that Thomas Sunday is the feast of St Thomas. In fact, St Thomas is remembered in the Byzantine calendar on October 6. What we remember today is rather St Thomas' confession of faith upon seeing the risen Christ, *"My Lord and my God!"* (v. 28).

The meaning of this event is spelled out for us by the Lord in the following verse: *"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'"* (v.29). And if we did not see the implications of that statement for ourselves, the Gospel concludes this passage by saying, *"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name"* (vv. 30, 31).

## Thomas' Confession

In our culture the exclamation "My Lord and my God!" sounds like a rather banal exclamation of surprise. We are used to hearing "Oh, God!" or "Jesus Christ!" used that way. In first-century Judea – and among many Orthodox Jews today – saying the name of God even in prayer would be considered presumptuous. Since the third century BC Jews have refrained from using the name of God even when reading the Torah. Only the high priest was permitted to read the name of God as written in the Torah, and only on Yom Kippur. Many Jews today simply say HaShem (the Name) when reading such passages or referring to God.

Claiming to be the Son of God was blasphemy in the eyes of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council of elders in Jerusalem. The Gospel indicates that Jesus was condemned to death precisely for making this claim. *"And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!'"* Jesus said to him, *"It is as you said... Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?'"* They answered and said, *"He is deserving of death!"* (Mt 26:63-65).

Claiming to see Christ in glory caused the death of the first martyr, St Stephen, as well. Brought before the Sanhedrin he spoke of God's mercy toward Israel, and the elders listed. But then he said, *"Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"* Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him" (Acts 7:56-58).

Clearly Thomas' exclamation is presented in the Gospel as an act of faith in Jesus as Lord.

## The Apostles' Teaching

From the beginning the Apostles taught that Jesus, risen from the dead, was Messiah and Lord. Believers were taught to make this their act of Christian faith: *"...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved"* (Rom 10:9). They ascribed to Christ the title Lord (Kyrios in Greek) which was used in the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, as the equivalent of God's unpronounceable name. To call Jesus *Lord* meant that you were calling Him *God*: precisely the confession of Thomas.

In the Roman world of the apostles' day *Lord* was the title of the Emperor: the one who governed the lives of all his subjects. To call Jesus *Lord* was perceived by many as treason and caused the persecution of many, especially since the Christians often insisted that Jesus *alone* was Lord. The Roman world had many gods and goddesses; they could easily find room for one more. To claim, as we continue to do in our Liturgy, that only "one is holy, one is Lord: Jesus Christ" was another matter.

For a believer to claim that Jesus was Lord also meant that he or she was committed to Jesus' way of life. The usual way of doing things in society was now subject to a new criterion for believers: the Gospel of Christ. This was perceived as unpatriotic by many Romans, to use a contemporary term. Christians didn't give undivided allegiance to Rome – they had another Lord and another way of life.

Today in many societies Christians are perceived as second-class citizens because they do not follow the dominant culture. This was always true in Islam but is increasingly so in the secular west as well. In Great Britain, for example, Labour Party leader Andy Burnham has pledged to compel all faith schools to teach about gay rights, saying he has "no support" for religious schools who argue it may conflict with their teachings.

The consequence for Christians today is that we may be more frequently forced to choose between following the secular values of the state or the godly values of the Gospel. Choose your Lord.

## "My Lord and My God"

Why would the Apostle Thomas, who moments before had refused to accept the other apostles' witness to Christ's resurrection, suddenly proclaim that Jesus is "My Lord and my God" (Jn 20:28)? This question has been discussed since the Gospel of John was written.

St John's Gospel, the only one to contain this narrative, is the last of the canonical Gospels to be written. In its final form it dates to the end of the first century AD, and manuscript fragments dating to c. AD 125 still exist. The

# SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

## EVENTS IN APRIL

Saturday, April 23rd

**NO Services**

Sunday, April 24th

**Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.**

**Memorial Service Joseph Bolus**

**Pascha Parish Potluck**

**Talent Show**

Saturday, April 30th

**Confessions: 3:00 p.m.**

**Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.**

**Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.**

Sunday, May 1st

**Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.**

## DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

**24 April ✠Joseph Bolus Memorial Service**

**30 April: ✠Kenneth, sr.**

**and Jeanette Marie Quigley**

**From Steve Bartnicki**

**01 May ✠Joseph Bolus**

**from David Glancey**

**07 May ✠Joseph Bolus**

**from Al & Sonia Elghazal**

**08 May ✠Joseph Bolus**

**from Al & Sonia Elghazal**

**14 May ✠Joseph Bolus**

**from Maria Fox**

**15 May ✠Joseph Bolus**

**from Lucy Bolus**

**21 May ✠Joseph Bolus**

**from Maria Fox**

**21 May ✠Joseph R. VanDeusen, Sr.**

**from Steve Bartnicki**

**2022 1st Quarter Financial Report:  
back of Church**

## PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow up on us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## 2022 WEEKLY COLLECTION

**April 17**

**Weekly Offering: \$ 4, 420.00**

**Flowers \$ 20.00**

**Candles: \$ 25.00**

**Total: \$ 4,465.00**

**Thank you for your support!**

## Food Festival News

Dates and Times

**Friday, August 12: 4-9 p.m.**

**Saturday, August 13: 4-9 p.m.**

**Sunday, August 14: 1-7 p.m.**

Cooking Dates

**Pies 9 July; Grape Leaves 16 July;**

**Kibee 30 July**

# THE GOSPEL PREACHED IN JERUSALEM

ONE FEATURE OF THE PASCHAL SEASON in Byzantine Churches is the reading of the Acts of the Apostles. Every day, beginning with Pascha itself, this story of the early Church is read at the Divine Liturgy. While the text of Acts itself begins with Christ's ascension, our public reading of it begins as we commemorate His resurrection. While Christ's followers struggled until Pentecost to grasp the reality of the resurrection and its meaning for mankind, the Church sees Pascha as the source of its life, the fountainhead of its existence to this day.

Divine power in the Church comes from the empty tomb and the blessing of the risen Christ upon His disciples – "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn 20:22) – which we also hear read on this Sunday. The paschal liberation in Christ from captivity to death begins to touch individuals and communities as the Church develops in the first century AD.

Acts paints a picture of the first Christian community in Jerusalem, then in Samaria, in Damascus and Antioch and the cities of Asia Minor. Finally Acts affirms that within the lifetime of the apostles a Church had been established in Rome, capital of the empire, the focus of life in the Mediterranean world of that era. The events recorded in this book would occur again and again through the centuries as the Church became established among different peoples and cultures.

Some of these characteristics listed in today's passage, Acts 5:12-20, are:

***Signs and Wonders (vv.12, 14-16)*** – The Church is first of all characterized as a transforming presence, just as Christ's own earthly ministry was, according to the Gospels. The sick are healed just by Peter's passing shadow, and those "tormented by unclean spirits" (v.16) are delivered.

To this day physical healings are regularly reported at saints' graves or shrines, in connection with their relics or wonderworking icons. The 10th-century shrine of St George near Istanbul is one such place. Remarkable here is that most of those who come by the thousands to this shrine are Muslims. One of the priests at the shrine, Father Ephrem, confided, "During my three years here, we ourselves are witnesses of miracles, such as the healing of paralytics, mutes, and the giving birth to children."

Just as physical healing was not the chief object of Christ's ministry, the Church's focus is chiefly on spiritually healing the whole person. The Church's therapy may include Confession, spiritual guidance and the Mystery of Holy Unction, given "for healing, for relief from every passion, from defilement of flesh and spirit, and from every illness" (oil blessing prayer).

***Proclaiming Christ (v. 12)*** – Rabbis and scholars would regularly be found gathering at Solomon's Porch, a colonnade east of the temple. It became the place where the first followers of Jesus would go to share the Gospel, sure of a curious audience.

The town square and the coffee house have in their time been places where Christians have gone to gather and to make their faith known to others. Today cyberspace may be the ultimate Solomon's Porch. As Pope Benedict XVI recently wrote, "I would like then to invite Christians, confidently and with an informed and responsible creativity, to join the network of relationships which the digital era has made possible... In this field too we are called to proclaim our faith that Christ is God, the Savior of humanity and of history, the one in whom all things find their fulfillment."

***Reluctance of the Religious Establishment (v. 13)*** – While people from the Jewish rank and file were drawn to the Gospel message, their religious leaders at first held back and then directly opposed this teaching which threatened their power among the people.

The apostles encountered the same reception from the leaders of Israel as has the Lord Jesus, John the Forerunner and other prophets. Politicians – be they political or religious may be more concerned with keeping "good order" than with seeking the will of God.

A famous expression of this conflict between leaders and the Christ of the Gospel is the "Parable of the Grand Inquisitor" in Feodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. In it an atheist tells his brother, a monk, that Christ would be arrested and condemned to death were He to return today because His teachings would disturb the established way things are done.

***Growth (v.14)*** – A major theme in the book of Acts is that, before the death of the chief apostles, the Church had spread from the first group at Solomon's Porch to the very heart of the empire, Rome itself. The Church began with "locals," Jews from Galilee and Judea. Hellenized (Greek-speaking) Jews soon joined them as did "proselytes," those pagans who had adopted the Jewish belief in one God, but had not formally joined the Jewish people as this would demand complete separation from their non-believing family and associates. Finally other pagans, never drawn to Judaism began accepting Christ ultimately outnumbering the first Jewish believers.

Is the number of Christians still growing today? In 2011 BBC reported that more people go to church on Sunday in China than in the whole of Europe. In 1900 there were approximately 10 million Christians in Africa, mostly in the historic Coptic and Ethiopian Churches and among Italians, Greeks and other settlers. A little over a century later the number has reached 500 million. And where, in 1900, Africans accounted for only 2% of the world's Christians, today they number 20%. . .

***Persecution (v. 17-18)*** – As the number of Christians in the Roman Empire grew, they came to be seen as a threat to the state. Christians in the empire were persecuted from time to time and from region to region until AD 311, when the Great Persecution of Diocletian came to an end.

Religious persecution has often been carried out with political overtones. When Rome was persecuting Christians they were welcomed in its neighboring rival, the Persian Empire. When Rome embraced Christianity the Persians began persecuting Christians as Roman sympathizers.

Today Christians may be persecuted outright for political reasons, as in North Korea, or in strongholds of other religions in Asia and Africa. In the historically Christian nations of the West, the contemporary "powers that be" have increasingly marginalized religion, striving to keep it behind church doors for people who fancy that sort of thing. Public figures regularly pit Christian values against "human rights," "women's health" and the like. Thus even Mother Teresa of Calcutta was vilified for calling abortion "a great destroyer of peace" when accepting the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. One lives Gospel values in the public sector at one's own risk.

***Divine Protection (vv.19-20)*** – The apostles, miraculously delivered from prison, went right back to the temple. As we reported to the Sanhedrin: "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" (v. 25). When questioned about why they had disobeyed the council's demand that they stop, Peter and the others replied with a phrase that has repeatedly been used since against opponents of the Gospel: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (v. 29).

From the apostles' preaching at Solomon's Porch to our own day the Holy Spirit, given by Christ, has protected and made fruitful the proclamation of the Gospel.