



There Was Great Joy in that City

Our first reading today from the Acts of the Apostles tells us that when Philip was preaching the Gospel and performing miracles in the name of Jesus, there was great joy in the city. We can only imagine how excited people were when they heard the Gospel and witnessed those miracles. Certainly, many were convinced that Jesus was the Son of God and wished to be Baptized immediately. We know many people were anxious to renounce their former way of life and embrace the new life of a Christian.

We might ask ourselves today just how joyful we are when we focus on our faith in Jesus. If there is a lack of joy in our lives, perhaps we are not living fully as Jesus wants us to live. Perhaps we are looking for a joy in all the wrong places. Sometimes people say that they need a miracle to believe. Some skeptics might say that it was easy for the people mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles to believe, because they witnessed a miracle. Some might say that miracles do not occur anymore, so why should one believe?

Most people do not witness grandiose miracles; even in the Scriptures, it was not everyone who witnessed a miracle who came to believe in Jesus. Many people came to believe when they heard from someone else what Jesus or His disciples were doing. One of the greatest miracles of all is that we can believe without seeing (“Blessed are those who have not seen, yet believe” from John 20:29.) We are told there was great joy in the city, because the Gospel was being preached and wonderful signs were taking place. Yes, even today, the Gospel is being preached and wonderful miracles are taking place: the birth of a human being, a person being healed of a serious illness, enemies becoming friends. Our news media may not pick up on these things, but they occur nevertheless.

Let us be joyful people; if we are not as joyful as we want to be, let us ask if we are truly listening to what Jesus is saying to us. Let us ask if we are being attentive to the modern day miracles occurring in our midst. Wonderful things do happen in our world, but we must look at everything with the eyes of faith, not with the eyes of doubt. Those people in Samaria finally received the Holy Spirit and their initiation into the Church was complete. May the Holy Spirit, which we have already received, allow us to experience the fullness of joy knowing that Jesus is in our midst!

Father David