

Sunday, May 29, 2022 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

First Reading: Acts 16:16-34

16-18 - One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

*Oracle at Delphi
Statistics re human trafficking today*

James 2: 19 – You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder.

Mark 1: 24 – (The man with the unclean spirit in the synagogue in Capernaum) cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God."

19-24 - But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Acts 16: 37 - Paul (after being told in the morning that he and Silas were being released from prison) – "They have beaten us in public, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and now they are going to discharge us in secret? Certainly not! Let them come and take us out themselves."

Verse 39 – The magistrates came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. After leaving the prison they went to Lydia's house; and when they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters there, they departed.

When and how is it appropriate for a Christian to be assertive in demanding to be treated fairly?

25 - About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

Philippians 1: 12-13 – I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ.

26-28 - Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."

Why do you think none of the prisoners tried to escape?

29-34 - The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

Sermon – "Jail House Joy" / music during the offering - "Jail House Rock"

What do you think the Philippian church was like if it included (1) Lydia, the seller of purple; (2) the Philippian jailor; and (3) some former prisoners?

Second Reading: Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21

20 - The one who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Depending upon where you divide the letters, the word "maranatha" could mean either "The Lord has come" or "Lord, come."

What about our world and/or our nation today most leads you to pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Gospel: John 17:20-26

John 17 contains the longest recorded prayer of Jesus in the Bible.

Jesus prayed this prayer on His way from the Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane.

What would you pray – what and whom would you pray for - if you knew that you – and those whom you love – are about to face the most difficult time of your – and their – lives?

4 – I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do.

9 - I am asking on their behalf.

11 - Holy Father, protect them in your name so that they may be one, as we are one.

14 - The world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

15 - I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.

18 - As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

20-21 – I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one.

21 – As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

23 – I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.