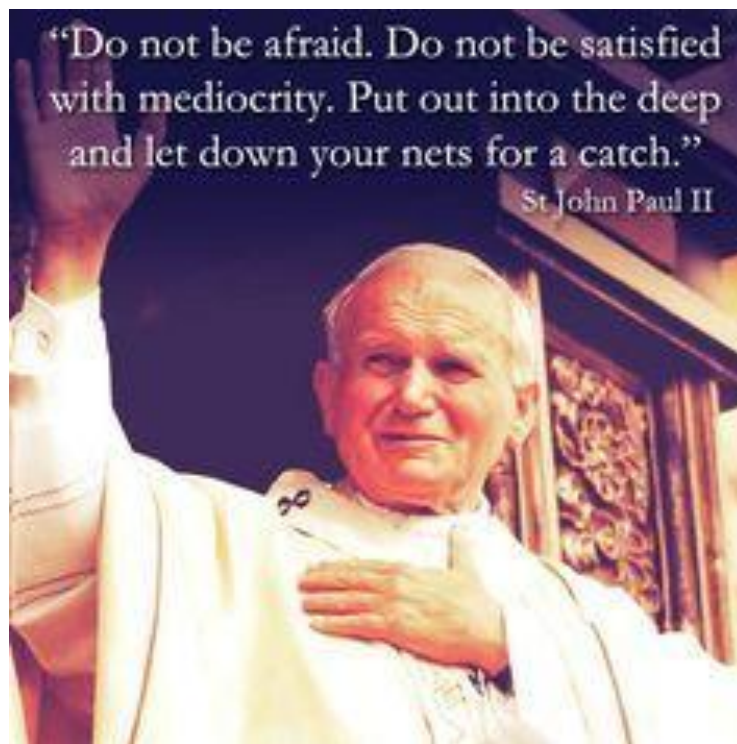


FROM FATHER JOHN: *“We set sail from Troas, making a straight run for Samothrace, and on the next day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi leading city in that district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We spent some time in that city. On the sabbath we went outside the city gate along the river where we thought there would be a place of prayer. We sat and spoke with the women who had gathered there. One of them, a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, from the city of Thyatira, a worshiper of God, listened, and the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul was saying. After she and her household had been baptized, she offered us an invitation, ‘If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my home,’ and she prevailed on us.”* (Acts 16:11-15)

Happy Mother’s Day! I wish all of our Mothers, and their families, a Most Blessed Mother’s Day!



The above reading from the Acts of Apostles made me think of Neil Armstrong and what he said as he set foot on the moon, “One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.” St. Paul made a relatively short trip when he went from Troas to Neapolis but it was a trip from Asia to Europe. It was a huge milestone for Europe because St. Paul was bringing the Good News of our Lord Jesus to Europe for the first time. One small trip for St. Paul, but one giant leap forward for Europe.

St. Paul wrote, *“We proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.”* (1 Corinthians 1:23) Europe was inhabited by pagans with a large variety of religious practices before Christianity appeared in Europe. Christianity totally changed the trajectory of Europe and its culture. Its monuments, works of art, philosophy, development of the scientific method, history, etc. all were the result of Europe becoming a Christian continent.

St. Paul did not proclaim a mere message or teaching. He proclaimed our Lord Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead. What he proclaimed was the person of our Lord Jesus and the events through which our Lord redeemed us and gave us the gift of salvation. The Catholic faith is not a philosophy or a religious system or set of simple beliefs. It is much more than that.

A scholar once wrote that “The New Testament is neither a collection of thoughtful essays nor an attempt to construct a system of ethics. It bears witness to a unique history, and it discovers the truth in the history.” The Catholic faith bears witness to what Christ Jesus has done for each of us, and, in His life, death and resurrection, we find the Truth, with a capital T, which informs all aspects of our life, our death and, hopefully, our resurrection.

We share in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is why eyewitness testimony is crucial. Religious sayings, philosophical arguments, theories, etc. do not convince people of the faith. Rather, the eyewitness testimony of the lived experience of faith in relationship to our Lord Jesus is what brings people to our Lord. People don’t find faith plausible through lectures; they find it plausible in the lived experience of the people who bring them to our Lord Jesus and to the faith.

We have all been brought to faith by someone. For me, it was my parents, my grandparents and my uncle. It was their witness to Our Lord that led me to our Lord. We see an example of this at work in the passage from the Acts of Apostles (above). *“One of them, a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, from the city of Thyatira, a worshiper of God, listened, and the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul was saying. After she and her household had been baptized, she offered us an invitation, ‘If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my home,’ and she prevailed on us.”*

Lydia was the first convert on the continent of Europe. Her conversion marks the beginning of western civilization. She responded and immediately opened her home, and her heart, to the followers of our Lord Jesus. Her home became the base for the start of the evangelization of Europe.

Our Lord says to us, *“When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me. And you also testify.”* (John 15:26) Our Lord Jesus gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit and calls us at the same time to be His witness in the world, to testify on His behalf. We are called to give witness to what the Holy Spirit, our Advocate, our Defender, our Protector, has done for us. Each of us is called to proclaim the Good News of our Lord Jesus based on what we have experienced through the power of the Holy Spirit.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.