

**Homily – Wednesday of the Second Week of Easter
U.S. Province OMI Spring Assembly – April 10, 2024**

Thank you, brothers, for inviting me to celebrate with you. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to share the Lord's banquet and to address you.

I believe the image of the imprisoned apostles – after performing signs and wonders in the Temple in the name of Jesus – speaks eloquently about our call to witness as religious, as priests and as Christians. Incidentally, the passage we heard in the first reading comes soon after the Acts of the Apostles says: *“The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all.”* (Acts 4:32-33).

As opposed to the apostles and early believers, the Sadducees were afraid and envious. They absurdly believed that they could continue silencing God, instrumentalizing his name through their mediocrity. And then the Angel of the Lord appears, much like in the Exodus, freeing the apostles from the slavery of silence and oppression. Like in the Resurrection, at dawn they return to the Temple. God restores their freedom, but not so that they can escape, but to continue the work of Christ. The witness of the apostles should make us reflect on our own daily witness. What “signs” do we communicate? How clearly do we communicate the living and Risen Christ or, on the contrary, our “signs” make clear our fears and mediocrities?

When reading this text from the Gospel of John, we can remember Pilate's self-condemning question to Jesus: “What is Truth?” Our world

today continues to ask us, Christians, about the Truth about which – or Whom – we preach. Deep down, believers or not, we all seek a truth that truly sets us free, offering us a deep meaning by which to continue living. That is the reason Christ came. The Son of God became Man out of love, but the world systematically rejects Him, or at best ignores Him. Our fallen nature invites us to prefer the darkness of mediocrity, of my self-centered truths. We are constantly drawn to that which we know deep down enslaves us because it depends exclusively on my circumstantial, accommodating criteria and leads us to existential nothingness.

The Truth about Jesus, his life, death, and resurrection, are our reference to the God of Truth who saves through Love. But the Lord not only saves us from punishment or condemnation after death. That is why the judgment that the text tells us about will be a Judgment of Love. And Love is always compassionate, patient and bears witness to the Truth. The Love of God, the Holy Spirit – Whom we are preparing to receive during the Easter season – invites us to accept the Light of our Savior’s Truth, and to reject the darkness of Pilate’s platitude, present in every person.

Pope Francis reminds us that, (quote) *“We cannot be Jesus’s disciples without our own truth, that which we are. (...) The Lord always wants transparent dialogue, without hiding things, without dual intentions: ‘I am like this.’ I can speak with the Lord this way, just as I am, with my own truth. Thus, from my own truth, by the power of the Holy Spirit, I find the Truth: that the Lord is the Saviour...”* (end of quote).

As we look forward to Pentecost, we may ask ourselves: What are the “signs” of my witness? What criteria of Truth should we proclaim as a Church, to show Christ as the Light of Salvation? May Our Lady of Guadalupe help us find the courage to confess our weakness, so we may witness how we ourselves have been saved.