

Once upon a Time, Again (April 19, 2020)

(2nd Sunday of Easter: Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31)

The life of the first believers, as described in Acts, seems almost too good to be true. Their enthusiasm for the teaching of the apostles, for common prayer, fellowship and the sharing of goods—it is no wonder that “Awe came upon everyone.”

In the Psalm we read: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes.” But in 1846 Mary wept because the Cornerstone was, tragically, being rejected again. And today?

St. Peter, in our second reading, lists the benefits of God’s “great mercy.” Our Lady of La Salette is our “Merciful Mother.” Let us consider the parallels.

First, God “gave us a new birth to a living hope.” At La Salette, this hope lies not only in future prosperity but, before that, in conversion to the things of God.

Next is “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,” beyond our current needs and concerns. Peter says this is kept in heaven for us, but that does not mean we cannot draw on it even now. Prayer and especially the Eucharist give us access to it. These are essential to the message of La Salette.

Thirdly, salvation. This, above all, explains the enthusiasm of the earliest Christians, and the attractiveness of that community. “And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” La Salette does not offer salvation independently, of course, but leads us to the Savior himself.

Then Peter writes, “In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials.” Anyone who has truly experienced God’s mercy—as have many through La Salette—knows exactly what he means. Troubles will come and go, the joy remains.

The Apostle Thomas went through a time of darkness, and then experienced the Lord’s mercy. His first response was to acknowledge Jesus’ divinity: “My Lord and my God!”

Earlier, fear had confined the Apostles behind locked doors. Divine mercy changed all that. What it did for them, it can do for us and, through us, devoted to our Merciful Mother, for others.