

INTRODUCTION: In our post-Easter series, we will be reflecting on what it means to be Jesus' witnesses in the world (Acts 1:8). Each one of us occupies very particular places and, because of that, we each have our own unique opportunities to offer love and service to those we interact with. We have a "Jerusalem," a place where God has called us to be present and attentive to what He is doing and to join Him in that work. We are, in some sense, all missionaries; we are all witnesses of God's good news for the world in and through Jesus.

CENTERING: Take a moment to center yourself for communion with God.

READING: Acts 2:42-47, Acts 4:32-35

REFLECTING ON SERMON & SCRIPTURE:

- How would you define "the church"? Base your answer on lived experience, not a theological construct.
- After reading the descriptions in Acts 2 and 4, how did the first Christians understand what it meant to be a part of the church? What are the similarities/differences to our understanding today?
- Where do you see the church acting as an agent of hope and healing today?
- If you were in charge, what would you like to see "the church" do differently?
- How does your group support each other and advance the shared commitments of personal formation, relational reconciliation, sacrificial living, kingdom justice, and helping people meet Jesus?

BEING A WITNESS:

- Reflect on the words from Mission Basilica San Diego: "Saint Francis used to tell his brothers: *'Preach the Gospel always, and if necessary, use words!'* (cf. *Franciscan sources*, 43). *There is no witness without a coherent lifestyle! Today there is no great need for masters, but for courageous witnesses, who are convinced and convincing; witnesses who are not ashamed of the Name of Christ and of His Cross; not before the roaring lions, nor before the powers of this world. And this follows the example of Peter and Paul and so many other witnesses along the course of the Church's history, witnesses who, yet belonging to different Christian confessions, have contributed to demonstrating and bringing growth to the one Body of Christ.*"

PRAYING:

Prayer from the Sanctuary Centre: *Holy Spirit of complete and perfect truth, come and fill your church still more. For we know we have not given you full access and rule in our lives and daily fall so very short of your perfect standard and integrity. Help our actions match our words. Please help us. But more than this even, please, help our hearts reflect all we speak and do and to prize character over status or influence.*