

The Servant



Newsletter for Christian Servants • 5523 Newberry Drive/Raleigh, NC 27609

Vol. 16 No. 2

April 2005

Holy Sees

Nice things are said at funerals. Last week's funeral was no exception. John Paul's was one of the best funerals we have witnessed in a long time. Now, there are those who want to "fast track" the late pontiff to a higher place in paradise. There is a grass roots movement to make John a Saint. Usually, the deceased are allowed to "Rest in Peace" for a few hundred years before they are put to work the switchboard, answering the phone banks, which according to Catholic doctrine, ring non-stop in heaven. It would seem to me that Saints have bigger fish to fry in eternity than to be distracted by all the nonsense going on down here, but what do I know? Personally I think John Paul needs some time off. Anyone being Pope for twenty-six years must be pooped.

That having been said, Popes and Kings are things of the past. They are at best figureheads that hardly figure into the modern equation of internet, bloggers, and ipodders. Why Prince Charles wants to wear a crown or any Cardinal wants the Holy See is beyond me. Princess Diana was a hard act to follow, to say nothing about any mortal who dares put on John Paul's satin slippers. When we see that puff of white smoke you can be sure that where there is smoke, there is fire.

There will be plenty of fires for the next Pope to put out. Not being Catholic, we had best be paying attention to some of our own problems. We are told that the churches in Italy and England are empty. So are many of ours. No one will have much trouble finding a seat in one of our New Testament churches. Pretending that it is our "truth" that keeps attendance down is like saying it is the "food" that keeps the truckers away. Even truckers know where not to stop along the highway to eat. While One Billion Catholics are looking for their next shepherd, real sheep know a real shepherd when they see one. Real

shepherds are not elected. Woe to the Assembly that casts lots for vacant bishoprics; and woe to the Assembly that has no shepherds. We are not talking about Kings and Popes. We are talking about someone ordained and called of God to give his heart and life for the care of the sheep. Christ is our Chief and Good Shepherd, but He ordains elders. A church without shepherds is probably a place where someone without the gift works hard to make sure there are none. A real shepherd is not the head of the church, but he is the heart. A church without shepherds is as confusing as a conclave burning wet straw. When someone visits a leaderless church and there is no single and unified voice, it is hard to tell if the smoke is white or grey, or if those there are really on fire, or are just "blowing smoke." ☹

Leadership

Moses learned as shepherd
What he did not know as king
A prince and son of Pharaoh
Could not salvation bring

Peter was too strong and bold
And quick to draw the sword
His heart must first be broken
If he would serve the Lord

And then too Saul of Tarsus
Must taste Damascus dust
Before he'd rise anew as Paul
And learn low, what he must

While men still grasp for power
And strive to hold the reins
Only God can rain and shower
And choose whom He ordains

id

The First Church

“Expecting to receive something...” The lame man sitting outside the Temple in Jerusalem expected something. Anyone who has read the story knows that he received much more than he expected. Lame men visit our churches every Sunday. We cannot always give them what they expect, but like Peter and John we can give them “such as we have.” What did the first century church of Peter and John have.

1) Passion “after His passion.” There is no church without the cross. Cross-less churches are Christ-less churches. The cross and sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the center of things. At the epicenter of all our activities and affairs is the ever present reality that Jesus Christ died for our sins and it is from sin that everyone must be saved. His “passion” has now become our passion. Christ died for us. The first century church was very willing to die for Him. Passion.

2) Proofs “many infallible proofs.” The believers had evidence, proofs, and certainty that Jesus Christ was “alive.” No one needs a dead Savior. The meeting was electric with the excitement of the resurrection. No gloom and doom mourning service for these saints would be acceptable. The world still responds to infallible proofs. Those proofs are the fruits of the Spirit. That we are alive and risen with

Christ is seen in the Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Meekness, Temperance, etc.

3) Promises “wait for the promise.” Life lives on promises. Hope is the pilot light for the furnace of the living. The promise in this case was that of the coming of the Holy Spirit. God always keeps His promises. We have a book filled with them. Every time we open the Bible it is with “promise.” Today we still gather unto the promises of God, and the soon return of Jesus Christ. A New Testament church is filled with hope.

4) Power “and ye shall receive power...” Here is the origin of our word for dynamite. When God’s power came it was described as a rushing wind, and a fire and if fell on “each of them.” Each was “empowered.” A New Testament church does not reserve the power for some and not for others. Christ in us makes us equal and powerful.

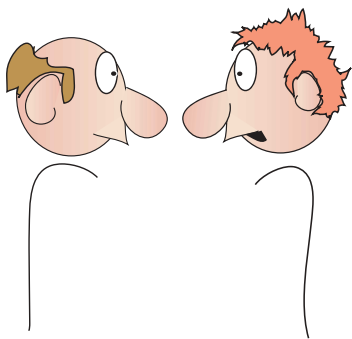
5) Prayer “...one accord and in prayer...” Long before wireless cell phones, internet, and conference calls, the early church had a direct line of communication with God. Prayer, on the surface, seems silly. Talking to someone you cannot see does not make sense to the world, but to the believer it is the lifeline and link to God.

6) Purpose “... and ye shall be witnesses...” The early church knew their mission. When we forget our purpose, we cease to be a New Testament church. Using the metaphor of a soccer match, the average church member in modern churches is not sure which goal is theirs. The world cannot afford to have a church arguing about its purpose as it dies without Christ.

7) People “..and they all continued with one accord.” The church is not a program. It is not a set of principles or practices. The church is not a building or a business. The church is people. The early church was made up of ordinary people who were gathered and drawn together by God for a purpose. A room filled with empty pews or chairs is not the church.

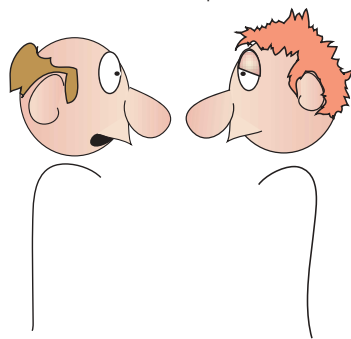
8) Purse “silver and gold have I none...” (Acts 3:6). Whatever the New Testament had at first, it was not money. They had Passion, Proofs, Promises, Power, Prayer, Purpose, People. God would pay the bill for everything He ordered. The church has spent a lot of money through the years to make itself more comfortable in this world. By today’s standards, the early church was poor, but a closer look inside a first century apostle’s purse would show it was filled with faith that was legal tender for everything eternal. 🍷

Why was the early church told to tarry in Jerusalem?



© idToons

God wanted them to weigh their hearts and make sure that they did not have a “wait” problem.



id

“We cannot help but speak the things we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:20

Only a credible witness should take the stand

Editor and Author- Ingimar DeRidder
5523 Newberry Dr. Raleigh, NC 27609
www.ingimar.com e-mail idr@ingimar.com



A Newsletter for Pastors and other Servants of Christ, 5523 Newberry Drive, Raleigh, NC 27609