



Daily Reflections

June 29, 2017

Scripture

Acts 12:1-11

In those days, King Herod laid hands upon some members of the Church to harm them.

He had James, the brother of John, killed by the sword, and when he saw that this was pleasing to the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also.

–It was the feast of Unleavened Bread.–

He had him taken into custody and put in prison under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. He intended to bring him before the people after Passover. Peter thus was being kept in prison, but prayer by the Church was fervently being made to God on his behalf.

On the very night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter, secured by double chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while outside the door guards kept watch on the prison. Suddenly the angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the cell.

He tapped Peter on the side and awakened him, saying, "Get up quickly."

The chains fell from his wrists.

The angel said to him, "Put on your belt and your sandals."

He did so.

Then he said to him, "Put on your cloak and follow me."
So he followed him out,
not realizing that what was happening through the angel was real;
he thought he was seeing a vision.
They passed the first guard, then the second,
and came to the iron gate leading out to the city,
which opened for them by itself.
They emerged and made their way down an alley,
and suddenly the angel left him.
Then Peter recovered his senses and said,
"Now I know for certain
that the Lord sent his angel
and rescued me from the hand of Herod
and from all that the Jewish people had been expecting."

Our Scripture Reflection

We hear the words, "The power of prayer" used from time to time and we see their meaning illustrated in today's text from Acts. While Peter was in prison, "Prayer by the Church was being fervently made." Peter was freed by an angel of The Lord. God's work assigned to Peter would be thwarted by no one, thanks to the "power of prayer."

Food for your Journey

Susan Guise Sheridan, a biological anthropologist at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, has been studying the bones of a large monastic community that lived in fifth-century Jerusalem. After examining more than 6,000 skeletal elements pulled from the crypt complex beneath Saint Stephen's Monastery, she found that the Byzantine monks shared several traits: they were robust, well-nourished men; they lived on average into their 40s; and they had bad knees.

In almost every monk over 20, there was damage to kneecaps, leg bones and heel bones. "If you consider prayer an occupation," concludes Sheridan, "then we have a case of occupational stress." -- Ellen Walterscheid, "Divine Inflammation," *The Sciences*, July/August 1997, 11.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, May I always be steadfast in my prayer to You and for others, especially those who are in need. Amen.