



# Daily Reflections

**April 18, 2018**

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## Scripture

### **Acts 8: 1-8**

There broke out a severe persecution of the Church in Jerusalem, and all were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles.

Devout men buried Stephen and made a loud lament over him. Saul, meanwhile, was trying to destroy the Church; entering house after house and dragging out men and women, he handed them over for imprisonment.

Now those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. Thus Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Christ to them.

With one accord, the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip when they heard it and saw the signs he was doing.

For unclean spirits, crying out in a loud voice, came out of many possessed people, and many paralyzed and crippled people were cured. There was great joy in that city.

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## Our Scripture Reflection

There is an old and true saying: "God never closes a door without opening a window at the same time." This saying is illustrated in today's reading from Holy Scripture. After the stoning of the first martyr, Stephen, a persecution

erupts which causes the disciples to flee and as they flee they spread the Gospel throughout Palestine. And, one of the chief persecutors is a man named.....Saul

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## **Food for your Journey**

Pope John Paul II has paid tribute to the Christian martyrs of the 20th century in a solemn ceremony at Rome's ancient Colosseum. Anglicans, Lutherans, Russian Orthodox and Pentecostals joined the pope in prayer in an unusual ecumenical event attended by thousands of pilgrims.

The Pope said countless Christians had been united in their readiness to die for their faith in the 20th century.

Those who died in Soviet gulags, in Nazi and Japanese prison camps during World War II, in the 1994 Rwanda genocide and during the recent fundamentalist unrest in Algeria were honored in prayer and song.

In his sermon, the pope said Christians had experienced "hatred and exclusion, violence and murder" in the modern age. He noted that some 3,000 priests were interned in the Nazi death camp at Dachau. A prayer read in Czech recalled the six million Jews who were killed in the Holocaust. The killing of more than a million Armenian Christians in Turkey during World War I was also remembered.

Saying he himself witnessed "much pain and many trials" as a young man in communist Poland, he said his generation was particularly marked by war, concentration camps and persecution.

Special tributes were paid to Russian Orthodox Patriarch Tikhon, who stood up to the Bolsheviks after the 1917 revolution, and Olga Jafa, a Russian teacher exiled to a Soviet gulag.

The tributes also included Anton Luli, an Albanian Catholic priest who spent 28 years in prison, and Paul Schneider, a Lutheran anti-Nazi priest tortured to death in Buchenwald concentration camp.

Many of the people who suffered or died for their faith were "unknown soldiers,"

the pope said.

"There are so many of them. They must not be forgotten. Rather they must be remembered and their lives documented," he said.

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## **A Prayer from the Heart**

Gracious Father, How wonderful are Your ways! What appears to be man's defeat turns out to be Your path to victory. Father, when things don't go my way and I feel like a failure, help me to remember that Your ways are not my ways, as You said to Isaiah Your Prophet (Is. 55: 8). Amen