



easter



lectionary
reading

Cycle C

Third Sunday of Easter

Lectionary #48

Reading I: Acts of the Apostles 5:27- 32, 40b-41

In the Book of Acts we see the evolution of frightened and cowering men into individuals of great boldness in their faith in the Risen Christ. Those who first cowered away from proclaiming this Lord are now exemplary **witnesses** to Christ. In this passage, the authorities have tried to stop any mention of Jesus, going so far as to imprison the apostles. Yet, through the work of God, they are released and resume preaching in the synagogue. To be true **witnesses**, it is often necessary that suffering is endured and overcome.

Reading 2: Revelations 5: 11-14

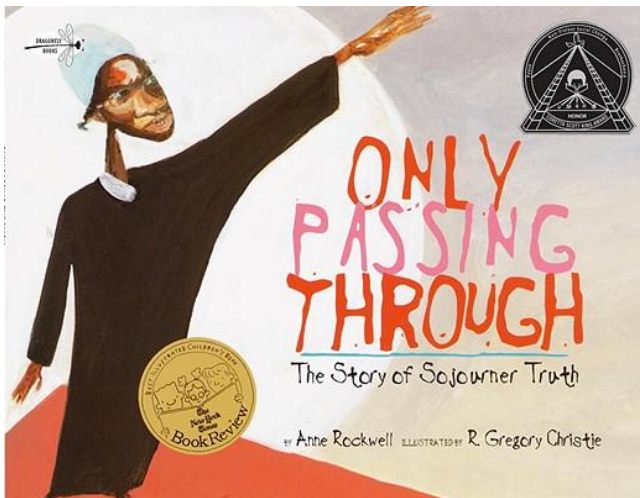
In this text from the Book of Revelations, we are in the throne room of heaven where a vast group of worshippers are paying homage to God and the "Lamb." These individuals are often referred to as **witnesses**. The intent of this reading is to bring hope to those who are suffering as a result of their **witness** to their faith in Christ.

Gospel: John 21: 1-19

There are many things that are mentioned in this very short segment of Saint John's gospel: the authenticity of the Resurrection, a glimpse of a group of men set adrift now that Jesus is no longer with them, and an opportunity for Peter to recant his denial of Jesus and to become chief **witness** and leader of the emerging Church. Just as Saint Peter was given a chance to redeem himself from his denial and his lack of **witness**, so too are we given chances by God, who lovingly calls us back time and again.



children's
story



Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth

Written by Ann Rockwell
Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie
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character
education
activity

To be a witness does not consist of engaging in propaganda, nor even stirring people up, but being a living mystery. It means to live in such a way that one's life would not make sense if God did not exist.

-Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard (1847-1949) Archbishop of Paris

Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth

The author of this book gives Sojourner Truth an authentic and resonant voice as a great **witness** to the truth about the dignity of every human being. The author opens her story as a nine-year-old little girl named Isabella who is being sold at a slave auction in Kingston, New York in 1806. After being denied the freedom that her master promised her in 1826, the young woman escapes to the home of a nearby couple who despise slavery; they then buy Isabella from her deceitful master and free her. Thus begins the story of Isabella, who becomes *Sojourner Truth*. The narrative follows the heroine through her transformation into *Sojourner Truth*, a traveling preacher who speaks against the evils of slavery. She acts consistently as a **witness** to the truth that all people are made in God's image and deserve dignity, respect, and freedom.

Witnessing=Growing

Step One: Purchase enough hard candy so that you have 128 pieces in total. Place these candies in a brown paper bag.

Step Two: Make the following statement: *Witnessing to Jesus can gather many into the Church.*

Step Three: Take one piece of candy out of the bag and tell the students that this piece of candy represents one of you who has spoken to someone about Jesus and how important your faith is to you. After sharing this with someone, that someone will then come to Church with you next Sunday.

Step Four: Now, take another piece of candy out of the bag and place it next to the original piece. Now there are two people who have **witnessed** Jesus and the faith. Now each of these two go out and share the Good News to another person each, so that four people come to Church the next week. These four then go out and bring in four more, and then there are eight, and they go and bring in one person each, and now there are 16, then 32, then 64, and finally 128.

Step Five: At this point, the students will be able to see that one believer became 128 believers in just 8 weeks!

Even on the cross He did not hide Himself from sight; rather, He made all creation witness to the presence of its Maker.
-Athanasius of Alexandria



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

Think about all the wonderful things that God has done for you. Try making a list of those things and then thank God for each of them. Once you have thought about them and given thanks, think about how you might share these things with others. This is called **witnessing**. **Witnessing** to God's goodness can take the form of words and sharing those words, but more often than not, our actions can act as **witness** to God's goodness. Think about some of the actions that you have experienced that conveyed how much God loves and cares for you. How can your actions express these things to others?

Look Feel Know Act

Often on the news and in the newspapers there are reports of all kinds of things going on in the world. Thankfully, the news also reports good things that are done by people, many of whom are rooted in their faith. Notice these good things and see how wonderful these good actions make you feel about humanity. Allow these things to find a place in your heart and memory and decide how you would like to contribute to the goodness that is experienced in the world. Decide how you will be a **witness**, both in word and action.



**closing
tool**

Throughout the Scriptures, we encounter many people who **witness** the goodness of God. The Scriptures chosen for today speak to the fact that people of faith are willing to be **witnesses** despite the danger and adversity that they face. This is certainly true for the primary character in the story of *Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth*. She, too, faced danger, prejudice, and challenges as she **witnessed** the dignity of all humans made in the image and likeness of God.

Lord God, strengthen my resolve to always be the best witness to you in both my words and my deeds. Help me, O Lord, to move more and more into being your witness by the way that I live my life. Amen.



**Santa Clara
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