

## May 18 /2014, first Preaching Of Felipe Suarez

It is my honor and privilege to give my first homily as a deacon in the Parish of St. Anthony.

Today we have some coincidences and incidents in the readings for today, the Fifth Sunday of Easter.

First, the reading from the Acts of the Apostles talks about the choice and consecration of the first seven deacons. Because of the need and importance of prayer and preaching the word of God, the apostles were busy and did not have enough time to devote themselves to administration, serving the needy, and caring for widows. This need, together with those difficulties, led the apostles to choose seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and Wisdom: Stephen, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas.

The choice of the first deacons serves well to show with realism how God formed and shaped this beautiful institution called the Catholic Church. It was not born already made, but it needed time, certainties and uncertainties in order to find its way. While God's love guides the work, that love does not avoid the trails on which we suffer darkness or on which we undergo internal stress.

As happened two thousand years ago, the Church survives by the grace of God, because it is an institution of Divine Order, because the Holy Spirit helps us. Still, the Church has needs and difficulties - because there are not enough vocations to help spread the gospel of God, not enough people to devote themselves to preaching and prayer. For that reason yesterday with joy, Bishop Robert Finn ordained eight new Deacons for the service of the Word of God and Evangelization. They do not have the same names as those in today's first reading, but there is one named Felipe, by the grace of God, and he is in our midst.

On the whole, the job of praying and preaching the word of God is not only that of the deacon. It is everyone's job. You must also be people of prayer and faith, we

must be people of peace. It is the only way to renew and transform our inner life and our community. In this regard the Church needs to be renewed. It must look to this double source: prayer and preaching. Praying more and renewing the announcement of the *Good News*. The founders of religious orders and communities, and also those who have begun works of mission or of charity, these people have done this very thing. It is also our job every day and with more enthusiasm now, driven by the Paschal sacrifice of our Lord.

So today we will ask Jesus, "Who are you?" He answers us in the *Gospel*, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." Well it's time to ask whether Christ is our way; that is, if we make our decisions and choices following his way of deciding and choosing; if his words enlighten us; if we welcome those who draw near as he did, and if we reject temptations and deceptions as he did.

And we also ask if Christ is our truth. If from our commitment to him flow the commitments that serve as our foundation. If we are able to present his face without empty shame and without vain pride ourselves.

And let us see if he is our life - if we you really have life when he is not there; if we seek him when it seems that he is far away; or if we run quickly to him when perhaps we have gone far away. We must believe that He is the way that leads us to the Father and that He is our salvation.

Or he may quickly answer us as he answered Philip: "You have been with me for so long, and still you do not know me, Philip?"

We must believe that Jesus is in the Father and God the Father is in Jesus. and only we can come to God the Father through Jesus, because Jesus is the way the truth and the life!