

innocent
preaching
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One morning this week I walked into the parish office after Mass and the first thing I heard was the word "whoops" coming from the lips of one of our staff. I just froze. They said "Everything's all right." Now I don't know about you, but I get real nervous about a workday that starts with the word "whoops."

You can almost hear that word in the background of today's first reading from Acts. It's the day of Pentecost, right after the Holy Spirit came to the apostles in tongues of fire. Peter stands up in the town square, hollers for everyone's attention, and says, "Look, folks, Jesus the Nazorean was a man God sent to you with miracles, wonders, and signs as his credentials. It was clear to everyone that God sent Jesus, and you killed him." You can almost hear people say, "Whoops."

social service
preaching
Peter's technique would not win high marks today. ~~We~~ don't win people over by telling them how much they messed up. ~~We~~ can almost guarantee people will dislike ~~us~~ if all ~~we~~ do is blame them for things. Family members of all ages fall into this trap. We berate and belittle other people whom we love. All we do is reveal our own smallness because we don't affirm people while we confront them. Too often we say, "You messed up," when we could say, "I love you for trying, but let's look for a better way." Another sign that the Holy Spirit guided the early church was Peter's blundering manner in preaching the Gospel.

When someone we love makes a mistake, it is proper to correct them, but it's hurtful to blame them. We shouldn't ignore the mistakes of others, but we should be helpful when we correct.