

Reflection for Saturday 5th Week of Easter 2020

The Macedonia of St Paul's day included countries in the Balkan Peninsular – Greece, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Albania and Kosovo – a vast territory. It is clear from Acts that Paul was motivated and inspired to go there by the Holy Spirit. He was able to make this move in the knowledge that this is where God wanted him to go. Wouldn't we love that kind of certainty?? Questions are now being asked (*is this a prompt from the Holy Spirit?*) about what the Church will look like after the Lockdown is over. How will the Church move forward? How do people want the Church to move forward? Any response, that involves moving forward, calls for creativity and a certain amount of risk. We are more cautious about risk-taking today, and rightly so, but it is also obvious that St Paul and the apostles had great faith in the Holy Spirit as they went to Macedonia. Fortunately, Jesus warned us that evangelising would never be easy. He was always up front about the challenges and difficulties we would have to face. He did not encourage us to avoid them but to face up to them. He did promise to stand by us. The world that Jesus refers to in the Gospel is one where power, status and money come first, people come second. For evangelisers, it is people who come first. Jesus made this clear in the way that he lived his life - and his death. He gave all for us. The gospel is for people. Acts clearly shows us that the faithful helped shape the early Church. What was true then is true for us today and we should now be thinking how best to do this. If we truly trust in the Holy Spirit, like the early Christians, the Spirit will help and guide us in our reflections. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis expresses a strong belief in the importance of the lay faithful and their contribution to evangelisation. *"In all the baptized, from first to last, the sanctifying power of the Spirit is at work, impelling us to evangelization. The people of God is holy thanks to this anointing, which makes it infallible in credendo (believing). This means that it does not err in faith, even though it may not find words to explain that faith. The Spirit guides it in truth and leads it to salvation (96). As part of his mysterious love for humanity, God furnishes the totality of the faithful with an instinct of faith — sensus fidei — which helps them to discern what is truly of God. The presence of the Spirit gives Christians a certain connaturality with divine realities and a wisdom which enables them to grasp those realities intuitively, even when they lack the wherewithal to give them precise expression."*

Q: Why do the French eat snails?

A: They don't like fast food.

It's a sunny morning and the Bear family is just waking up. Baby Bear goes downstairs and sits at the table. He looks into his small bowl. It is empty! "Who's been eating my porridge?" he squeaks. Father Bear arrives at the table and looks into his big bowl. It is also empty! "Who's been eating my porridge?" he roars. Mother Bear sticks her head out the kitchen door and yells, "For Pete's sake, how many times do we have to go through this? It was Mother Bear who got up first. It was Mother Bear who woke everybody else in the house. It was Mother Bear who unloaded the dishwasher from last night and put everything away. It was Mother Bear who went out early to fetch the newspaper. It was Mother Bear who set the table. It was Mother Bear who put the cat out, cleaned the litter box and filled the cat's water and food dish. And now that you've decided to come down stairs and grace me with your presence, listen good because I'm only going to say this one more time: **I haven't made the porridge yet!**"

Laudato si week 5th Anniversary