

A.M.D.G.

**Livestreamed Mass
Sacred Heart Chapel
May 19, 2020
Father Hermes**

In the *Acts of the Apostles* we are told of a great earthquake that strikes Philippi in Macedonia and shakes buildings to their foundations. Philippi was named in honor of the father of Alexander the Great, himself one of the figures who towered over and defined the ancient world. And so Philippi is the first place on the European continent where the Gospel was proclaimed.

Among the many buildings the earthquake must have destroyed is the jail where Paul and Silas had been thrown. They were jailed because they had liberated a possessed and exploited slave girl and thus interfered with the profit her owners made because of her strange divinations. Now, because of the destruction wrought by the earthquake, Paul and Silas are able to get free of their shackles. However, they remain in jail in the midst of the rubble, ultimately, we later learn, out of a desire to have their court case disposed of publicly, not extra-judicially, but also out of evident concern for the unfortunate jailer who would be held responsible if they escaped.

The real earthquake, of course, takes place in the jailer's heart, who shaken to his foundations, asks for salvation. In response to this great gift, and in imitation of the Lord Jesus in whose name he has been baptized, he takes them into his house, binds their wounds, and breaks bread with them.

If the real earthquakes are those that take place in the soul of man, it is because that is where the ultimate “court case” takes place, argued not by civil magistrates, but by the “legal counsel” whom the Lord gives us, the Advocate, who pleads the case of man before God and God before man. The Advocate who convicts the world and sets the human heart free.

The Holy Spirit, the Advocate whom Jesus gives us, is constantly at work -- in the hearts of practical people of business, in the hearts of those who are wounded and possessed by the spirit of this world, and in the hearts of those hardened by brutality in every age.

The first converts of Europe – Lydia the practical cloth dealer, the possessed little slave-girl with her strange divinations, and the hardened Roman jailer – are only the first indications of the world-wide revolution brought by the Gospel and the apostolic Church. It’s a revolution in which those who come to believe are liberated from sin and the condemned ruler of this world, and made righteous before the Father from whose right hand the new ruler of the world sends forth his Spirit to renew the face of the earth. Amen.

L.D.S.