

*In this period of "Ordinary Time" we pray you will discover a new awareness of God's Word and God's love and presence in your lives through these reflections.*



**Our Lady of the Fields Church  
Scriptural Review & Reflections  
Saturday & Sunday December 2 & 3, 2017**

*For more information on any of the parish Faith Enrichment programs contact the Evangelization and Faith Formation Office & Staff or  
Dr. Little at [tlittle@olfparish.com](mailto:tlittle@olfparish.com)*

### **Paul's takes his chance in Jerusalem**

We pick up our story again where Paul has just been beaten and narrowly escaped being killed by a mob (again!). Soldiers are carrying him into their barracks and Paul is in a vulnerable, even helpless position. Yet, he sees his chance to do in Jerusalem what he had done in so many other places, to speak to his fellow countrymen, his beloved even if they are misguided, fellow Jews of their own Messiah. Read again Chapter 22: 6-11. Imagine yourself standing in the temple's assembly space "listening" to these words from this apostle. How would you react and why?

People then and now have tried to find any explanation for Paul's experience other than the one which means that it actually happened. He proclaims that Jesus really is alive and He addresses people and transforms them from persecutors into preachers. Paul is not finished with his story but he has now staked out the ground on which he will walk. He is spoken to a name above every other name. Now Jesus has led him to face a mob of people just like the person he himself had once led and been.

As Paul wrote to the Romans only weeks before this uproar, his fellow Jews do indeed have a zeal for God, but it is not yet blossomed into enlightenment! They are still ignorant of God's righteousness and how God acts in their world and in their own history. Paul now announces God has acted supremely in this Jesus as the revelation of an untiring and promised faithfulness to the covenant. If only they would stop and see for just a moment what God had promised through the Messiah! And it all began in Jesus almost precisely on this spot! Do we see what God is about now and here?

### **The Acts of the Apostles: A Book for Disciples:**

#### **Acts Ch. 22: Moving to Rome**

***We see again in the beginning of chapter 22 a pattern not unlike Paul's activity in other venues. He waits for cooler heads (in this case the Romans') to prevail, makes sure that the charges leveled against him are not sustainable and then presents himself as a Jew of the highest pedigree and training, a speaker of Greek and a thinker thoroughly at home with the world of ancient philosophy and rhetoric, as well as a Roman citizen who knows his rights, under the law, and is very resolute to use them as necessary.***

***We assume that Paul had to prove his Roman citizenship. There were several punishments for anyone claiming untruthfully to be a citizen. Some sources say you could even be put to death for it. But in fact there was a way of proving it. It may seem unlikely that Paul still had the proof after all he been through, but there was an official badge, a little double-faced tablet made of bronze known as a diploma. It functioned both as a birth certificate and as a citizenship token. So Paul tells his story of faith, from his birth into the guidance of Rabbi Gamaliel as a strict Jewish believer and a persecutor of the new faith, including his witness to the martyrdom of Stephen. He relates how on the way to Damascus he is brought low and delivered from his blindness by the power of Jesus and brought to his role as a witness of God's action to the Gentiles.***

***The Jews react badly to Paul's instruction, causing enough of a ruckus that the Romans worry about the peace they were not keeping well. The Tribune threatens to discipline Paul by a scourging, and Paul reminds the tribune he would do well to avoid binding or a flogging without a public trial. Paul confounds the army and is headed for an hour with the High Priests, just as he wanted!***