

The birth of the Christian community

Fonts: Acts 16, 6- 10; Acts 16, 16- 24; Acts 16, 25- 39;



After he became a Christian, Saul, who was also called Paul, started taking trips with some of his companions to spread the message of Jesus.



They went to many different cities and spoke about Jesus to everyone they met, telling them about all he said and did.



They explained how Christians love one another and practice mutual love,



and that among them no one was poor anymore because they shared everything they had.

Have you also shared or put something in common?



One night, during a journey, Paul had a vision. A man stood before him and begged him:



“Come to my city and help us!”



The name of the man's city was Philippi, and it was in a distant country called Macedonia.



They left very early the next morning, convinced that God was calling them to proclaim the Gospel there.



They reached the city of Philippi and all the Jewish people came to meet with them by the river.



Paul and Silas began to tell them about Jesus. Some immediately understood the life of Jesus and asked to be baptized,



like Lydia, who invited the two disciples to spend a few days at her house.



The next day Paul was on his way to pray at the synagogue when he met a slave girl who was very strange and shouted things at them.



Her owners made a lot of money on her, because she was a fortuneteller.



Paul cured her of the evil spirit, but then the owners of the slave girl got very angry at him because they had lost their income.



So they brought Paul and Silas to the city leaders and unjustly accused them, saying:



“We are Romans and we cannot accept the strange things that these two Jews are preaching.”



The leaders condemned the two disciples and had them beaten with rods and then locked up in prison.



Paul and Silas were in a cell, but their hearts were calm and joyful and they felt the presence of Jesus so much that they started singing. All the other prisoners listened to them in silence.



At midnight a powerful earthquake broke all the chains and opened the gates of the prison.



Even the guard who was sleeping woke up and thought: “Now all the prisoners will escape and the captain will blame me!” He was so afraid he wanted to kill himself.



Right at that moment, he heard Paul calling loudly from deep down in the prison: “Stop, don’t kill yourself! We are all still here! We didn’t escape.”



The guard lit a torch and went down to the cells.



He brought out Paul and Silas, and kneeling in front of Paul, he said:



“Sir, what must I do to be save myself?” Paul answered: “Believe in Jesus and you and your family will be saved.”



The guard then brought them to his home where Silas and Paul spoke about Jesus to the whole household.



Their hearts were filled with joy and they were all baptized.



The guard cleaned the wounds of Paul and Silas and then had a meal prepared for them and they all ate together.



In the morning the order arrived to free Paul and Silas. But Paul told the officers who had brought the order:



“Your judges accused us without a trial, then beat us for no reason and imprisoned us, even though we are Roman citizens!”



When the guards reported what Paul said to the judges, they realized they had made a serious mistake.



They went to the two disciples and said they were sorry, and then sent them away in peace.



When Paul was travelling from one city to the next, he would take the opportunity to write to the various Christian communities which had come to life during his visits.



They were beautiful letters like the one he wrote to his friends in Thessalonica. In this letter he says that he feels homesick for them and can't wait to see them again. He is happy because he has heard that they are living the words of Jesus and are always trying to love one another. He urges them to continue to love more and more so that they will become saints.



Chiara: Jesus always did the will of the Father. If you always do what God wants you to do, you will be another Jesus on earth.



How Dario changed!

Dario from Argentina



"Dario, come on! Take your grandfather his shoes!"



"No, I don't want to!" Dario answered. "Why am I always the one who has to take him his shoes?" And he went to play with his little brother Enzo.



Enzo is still very little, and in playing with Dario's toy crane, he broke it. "Oh, no, not again! You always break all my things!" Dario yelled at him and pushed him so that Enzo fell down and started crying.



Dario went to school. He's in first grade. One day the teacher said: "This afternoon there will be a Gen 4 fest. You are all invited. The fest begins at four o'clock at Eugenio's house."



Eugenio's house was full of noise and confusion. Dario and seven other children from his class had come to the fest and were running around, yelling and hitting one another. They were making a big commotion.



After a while Eugenio asked everyone to sit down. Luca and Stefano, two Gen 4, begin to tell how they try to love Jesus and love others.



All at once everyone was quiet. It was beautiful to hear what Luca and Stefano were saying! Dario listened and thought: "I'd like to live like they do."



When Dario got home, his mother asked him to water the flowers. Dario went into the garden and finished the job in no time. He felt so happy.



He also brought a bag of chocolates to his grandfather. His mother was surprised and thought: "Dario's a different person since going to that Gen 4 fest!"



Always boiled potatoes!

Lene and Marianne from Holland



"Dinner is ready!" Mother called out.



Lene, Marianne and Luc ran to the table.



"Always boiled potatoes!" grumbled Marianne to herself, looking with envy at the French fries on Luc's plate.



Lene and Marianne have to follow a medical treatment. The doctor said they have to get an injection every day and can't eat whatever they want.



Lene winked at Marianne and whispered: "Hey! Don't you remember?" "That's right," Marianne answered, and started eating without making a fuss.



A little while later, their mother took them to the doctor for a checkup.



"Tell me the truth," the doctor said with a smile, "how many times have you eaten French fries?" "Not even once!" Lene proudly answers. "We are Gen 4!" Marianne adds.



"Now I understand these two little rascals!" the doctor told their mother. "You have to tell me more about the Gen 4!"