

Thoughts on the Daily Word

3rd Week of Easter. Monday 5th May. Readings: Acts 6:8-15; Psalm 118; John 6:22-29.

We hear today of the deacon, Stephen, proclaiming the Gospel. This is the privilege of the deacon ahead of every other member of the clergy, even the bishop. Stephen would appear to be one of the Greek speaking members of the community, hence a part of the Jewish diaspora. This could well be why he is engaged in debate by his fellow Jews from the same diaspora. They are here in Jerusalem proclaiming their loyalty to the Temple and Stephen seems to be challenging that loyalty, a dangerous thing to do. They are determined to stick to a rigid interpretation of the Scripture. Stephen stands in the line of the prophets who challenged kings and temples. In the Gospel of John Jesus does the same, asking his listeners to understand the signs, not the fundamentalist, literal meaning of rules and words. Signs are important and at this time of Mystagogy in the Catechumenate process they signify the Mysteries of faith that the new Christians are experiencing. The Greek word 'Mystery' became the Latin word 'Sacrament'. These are signs of God at work in his world and in our lives.