



Reading Acts

This is a plan for reading the Acts of the Apostles during the weeks of Easter. It is in the New Testament. The first book after the Gospels.

Jesus has lived. He has died and been resurrected on the third day. He lives again! He appears to the disciples, followers and the women who were with him. And now he has withdrawn from their sight. We commemorate his leaving them on Ascension (25th May).

And after this, in Acts 1.12, the disciples return to Jerusalem and disappear up into the “room upstairs where they were staying”.

From here the drama of the first church unfolds. We follow this drama, leaping around this incredible story until the Day of Pentecost (50 days after Easter Day).

One scholar reviews the telling of the Acts of the Apostles like this;

“Acts is a book of frenetic action amid a constantly shifting scene: conspiracy and intrigue and ambush, hostile confrontations and fierce conflicts sometimes to the death, rioting lynch mobs and personal violence, and incessant travel on an Odysseus-like scale all over the

Mediterranean world, complete with shipwreck and venomous serpents, chains and imprisonment, followed in at least two instances by a successful jail-break, though only with the aid of celestial mechanics, famine and earthquake, crime and punishment (sometimes even capital punishment, without any real crime ever having been committed)." (Pelikan, p.23, 2006)

So, let's read Acts together!

Each Sunday (7th, 14th, 21st, 28th May & 4th June) we will be reading and reflecting on an excerpt of Acts. The reading plan will help you to read the story around our Sunday excerpts to get some context and help you enter in to the drama. The reading plan is not linear. We will be moving around the chapters. It may help to read the whole book through once first.

When to read?

Some of us are already the Bible in pairs. You may like to continue that with the reading of Acts or find someone to read with. Speak to Fr Richard if you do.

Find somewhere to read. Pray for understanding. And then read the suggested passages before the Sunday morning where we will reflect together as a church on an excerpt of the passage. Wonder to yourself and with your partner, (a) *what stands out to you about what the people are doing in this section* and (b) *what stands out to you about God in this section*.

Enjoy reading and sharing.

Week one for Sunday 7th May

The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2.42-47 & 3

“And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

Week two for Sunday 14th May

The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 6 & 7

“‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’ But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him.”

Week three for Sunday 21st May

The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 17

“Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said...”

Week four for Sunday 28th May

Luke 24, then The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 1

“All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.”

Week five for Sunday 4th June

The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.”