

Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church
Bible Sharing Program
Acts of the Apostle #3:
The Early Life of the Apostles; the Second Arrest of Paul; the Martyrdom of Stephen

ICSB: Ignatius Catholic Study Bible
 NJBC: New Jerome Biblical Commentary
 SBDC: Studium Biblicum Devotional Commentary
 SBCB: Studium Biblicum Chinese Bible
 CCC: Catechism of the Catholic Church
 JR: J. Ratzinger: Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith

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| A | <u>Area of Study:</u> Acts 2:32-7; Notes: A3/1-A3/2 | |
| B | <u>Could the New Church be Communist?</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This philosophy reflects the times of Luke during which the Church was a closely knitted community under the oppression of the mainstream society. Members lived in expectation that the Last Day would arrive soon. • The centre of this lifestyle lies in love and harmony rather than the sharing of personal properties: the community will not let anyone go without basic necessities to sustain a dignified life. This same spirit is the basis for today's faith communities. Communism may promote fairness; however, it does not guarantee love and harmony. | Acts 4:32-37, 2:44-45 NJBC, BXVI "God Is Love" #20 |
| C | <u>The Punishment of Ananias and Sapphira</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their sin lies not in their unwillingness to donate all the proceeds from the sale of their property but in bearing false witness and lying to the Spirit of Truth. • Peter explains Holy Spirit = God by putting these two comments together: "Lie to the Holy Spirit" (5:3) and "You did not lie to us but to God" (5:4). | Acts 5:1-11 SBCB 5:11 note;s ICSB 5:4 ICSB 5:4 |
| D | <u>The Apostles Heal Many; are Arrested and Released</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Signs and wonders": has been used many times in the Acts (2:43, 4:30, 6:8, 14:3, 15:12); and has been used frequently in the exodus from Egypt (Ex 7:3, 11:10; Deu 6:22, 26:8). ⇒ This is the Church's first key new beginning: under the leadership of Moses, the Church of OT begins in "signs and wonders"; in the same way, under the leadership of the Apostles, the Church of NT begins in "signs and wonders". • Shadow of Peter: Those who work truly for the glory of God will not take pride in the fruits of their own labour, but see God's might in the work that seems impossible in human's perspective and glorify God. Only the false catechists will glorify themselves. • "... they were considered worthy to suffer dishonour for the sake of the name": very often hatred, antagonism, or violence results from one's unwillingness to be "dishonoured" and striving for "fairness". WWJD? Jesus also strives for justice; He is not afraid of death and oppression. The Church teaches that one should avoid violence means to solve problems. One should follow the examples of the Apostles in their joyful suffering for Christ. | Acts 5:12-42 ICSB 5:4 Acts 5:41 CCC 2243 Mt 5:10-12 2Cor 12:10 |
| E | <u>Seven Chosen to Serve</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responsibilities and order of the Diaconate originated from the Apostles. • Through work of charity, such as caring for the orphans, widows, and criminals, the seven deacons serve the Church. The Church views the importance of their work as equal to the ministering of sacraments and evangelization; one cannot be successful without the | Acts 6:1-10 Acts 6:6, SBCB notes BXVI "God is Love" #21, 22, 25 |

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| | other. | |
| F | <p><u>The Martyrdom of Stephen</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen’s speech reprimands the Jews of their rebellion and hardness of heart; from Joseph to Moses, the law, and the prophets, to Jesus, they have sinned by turning their backs and rejecting God. “You are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One and now you have become his betrayers and murderers.” They have received the law but have disobeyed it. He also points out their erroneous view regarding the Temple and the holy land of Israel. • The worshipping of the golden calf and the rituals versus the laws of the Israelites. These laws should not be the most important aspect in their lives. • The 8th Commandment: Thou shalt not bear false witness. Martyrdom is the highest form of witnessing to the truth. This is the martyrdom of St. Ignatius. | <p>Acts 6:11-7:60</p> <p>Acts. 7:51-53</p> <p>Acts 7:40-43, Lk 32, Jer 7:2-23, Ps 40:6-8, Ezek 20:25 CCC 2473-74</p> |
| G | <p><u>Conclusion:</u></p> <p>In this session, you have learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The life of the early Church is filled with love and harmony; it is not communist. • Peter used “Holy Spirit” and “God” interchangeably because the Holy Spirit is God. • The “wonders and signs” in this book witness to the beginning of the Apostolic times is the beginning of the NT Church. Both the OT and NT Churches begin in “wonders and signs”. • The Apostles recognize God in the fruits of their labour and give glory to God. They also suffer willingly and joyfully for God’s name sake. They are perfect model for all catechists and Christians. • The responsibilities of the diaconate originate in the Apostles. Deacons are appointed to serve the Church through work of charity. • Why Stephen’s speech causes the Jews to persecute him. • Martyrdom fulfills the 8th Commandment; it is also the highest form of witnessing. | |