

Contemplation to Action Second Week of Easter Saturday, April 29, 2017 8:15 AM
Acts 6:1-7; **Jn 6:16-21** **St. Catherine of Siena**, virgin and doctor of the Church (If we really contemplate the wounds of Christ, the sufferings of Christ, we will be motivated to take action in a world that needs compassion.)

There is a story of Jesus walking on the water, but this one seems more that Jesus was on the shore and they ran into the shore. Nonetheless the point is **“Do not be afraid.”**

Today we celebrate the memorial of St. Catherine of Siena. Now people today talk about climate change, and no doubt the climates do change. In the thirteenth century the Swedes were making wine. It was apparently a very warm period, the whole century: bumper crops, people prospered. In the following century Europe experienced what is called a small Ice Age. The winters became very long. The rains never stopped. The crops rotted. **This was the time of Catherine of Siena. The bubonic plague ravaged Europe. When people aren’t nourished properly they can’t fend off diseases.**

Now Catherine was a woman that was particularly **given over to contemplation, especially the contemplation of the sufferings of Christ.** But contemplation is not about passivity. **Contemplation actually is an opening to the power of the Holy Spirit that eventually motivates all kinds of things.** Teresa of Avila, for example, was motivated to completely reform the Carmelite Order. **Catherine of Siena was motivated to go out into the streets and to minister to people that were dying of the plague.** In spite of being warned by her advisors, her spiritual directors, she continued this very risky business **and eventually succumbed to the plague herself.**

But there is a great lesson for us: that **if we really contemplate the wounds of Christ, the sufferings of Christ, we will be motivated to take action in a world that needs compassion.** We will put ourselves at the disposal of God, who came to share our lives completely, a God who in Christ was truly wounded, truly tortured, truly killed. And **identifying with him will make us one in spirit with all those in the world who suffer in like manner,** and we will become in some way or another helpers of God building that kingdom Jesus proclaimed.