

The Church's bell ringer dies and so they put an ad in the paper to hire one.

A armless man comes to the rectory door and says,

“Father I hear you need a bell ringer and I'd like to apply for the job.”

“Well, we do,” said the priest,

“But how could you do it since you have no arms.”

“Take me up to the bell tower and I'll show you.”

So they get up to the bell tower, the guy gets a running start,

and he hits the bell with his head...and the bell starts ringing.

However the guy was running so fast that the momentum carried him so far that he fell out of the tower, hit the ground and died.

The priest ran down to anoint him and suddenly realized he didn't even get his name and so he asked the crowd that had gathered if anyone knew his name.

One of them replied, I don't know his name but his face rings a bell.

So they put an ad in the paper again

and another armless guy comes to the door.

The priest explains what happened to the last guy and this new guy says,

“Yea, that was my brother. He's always been a little careless.

I'm much more cautious. I'm sure I'll be okay.

So the priest decides to take a chance and takes the guy up to the bell tower.

Same thing happens. Rings the bell, falls out of the tower and dies.

The priest rushes to his side and says, does anyone know his name, one guy says, “No, but he's a dead ringer for his brother.

We've all heard the saying, “Don't just stand there, do something!”

We've said it when people can't make up their minds,

When someone is procrastinating or someone is too slow to act.

And a lot of times it is pretty good advice.

Kind of like the old Nike ad, “Just do it.”

Today, however, in our first reading, Jesus offers a counter thought.

Today, Jesus tells the apostles, “Don't just do something, stand there.”

He doesn't say it in those exact words, but he says.

“While meeting with them, Jesus enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait...”

What did he want them to wait for?

He wanted them to wait for the Holy Spirit.

“In a few days” he tells them, “You will be baptized by the Holy Spirit.”

I think if we put this into context, it makes perfect sense.

The apostles had been through a lot in the last forty-five days.

They had experienced the last supper, the agony in the garden,

The mockery of a trial, the crucifixion and death of Jesus.

The resurrection...the appearances...the doubting of Thomas...

And forty more days of teaching...

That would be a lot to digest....

That would be a lot to reflect on....a lot to process

And Jesus knows this....and so he tells them....

“Don’t just do something, stand there!”

In many ways it is great advice for us,

especially when we have difficult decisions to make;

especially when we aren’t sure of the best path;

especially when our emotions are running high.

Because what Jesus is essentially telling his apostles

is to take some time, to reflect, to discern, to pray.

You’ve been through a lot...you’ve seen a lot....

You can’t understand what it all means right now....

take some time to pray.

My friends, it **is** great advice for us as well.

Too often in our lives we react to something out of emotion...

We’re angry and so we lash out.

We’re hurt and so we want revenge.

Or we’re happy and we want to stay that way...

And yet how many times do we say... I wish I had just slowed down...

gosh I wish I had taken a little more time...why was I in such a hurry?

I remember a few years ago, I was talking with a guy
who was trying to decide whether or not to propose to his girlfriend.
They hadn't known each other too long
and I can remember causally mentioning that I think it is better
for someone to date a full year before becoming engaged.
I had heard someone say one time that taking the time
to go through 4 seasons of life with someone helps you to see them
at all times of the year and that that makes a difference.
Luckily, he took that advice because today he is married to someone else.

Today Jesus issues us a caution....
Today he says: Don't just do something, stand there.
And while you're at it, while you're standing there,
Take some time to think.
Take some time to process.
Take some time to pray.