

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER - DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY (4/18-19/2009)

Acts 4/32-35, Psalm 118, 1 John 5/1-6, John 20/19-31

Maybe the first Christians communities could give all of us some sound advice on how to resolve our present financial difficulties.

When all the excitement of Jesus' resurrection from the dead subsided a bit, an interesting scenario began to develop.

The first reading from the *Acts of the Apostles* provides us with some details.

First off, Luke records how the people were so united that no one claimed anything for himself, but they held everything in common.

Credit for this development is given to the resurrection of Jesus, of course, as you might expect.

But Luke goes on to report: *"There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles; and they were distributed to each according to need."*

There were no banks involved, no annuity funds or 401Ks, no security blankets at all..

The people simply shared – and no one went hungry.

Some of the present-day conservative pundits in the media would jump on this and call it, at worst, communism, or at best, creeping socialism

And they definitely would not like it.

There are scripture scholars who believe this description by Luke was more an ideal to be realized than an actual reality, but it's in the *Acts*; there's no denying that.

So, what do you think?

Would such a community spirit have a chance of working in our all too self-centered world?

Would there be enough totally unselfish people around to make it work?

Or is it just a pipe dream?

Back in the "hippie era", a lot of young and fairly young people tried out the common life.

Some efforts were highly organized; others were hit and miss affairs.

Probably somewhere, there are still the remnants of a few such groups, but, for the most part, the "communities" failed to jell.

I wonder if any such endeavor can survive for long without a powerful organizing principle, i.e. without God.

Human nature can be frustratingly selfish and competitive.

In the Church, efforts at a common, shared life are usually the goal of religious orders or small federations of zealous Christians.

The orders and groups work because they adopt a rule of life based on religious principles.

Anyway, it's most interesting to find such efforts developing in the aftermath of Jesus' resurrection.

The love and mercy he showed in his life, death and resurrection flowed over into the life of that first Jerusalem community,

May it overflow into our families and communities as well.