

The Mystery: Tabitha - a disciple restored to life



The raising of Tabitha (rh side) by Masolino, Yorck Project (2002)

In the story of St Winefride, we hear how she was horribly murdered by Prince Caradog but restored to life by St Beuno. Seems incredible? Surely such tremendous acts could only be done by Jesus – as in the raising of Lazarus and of Jairus’s daughter. Yet with God nothing is impossible and in Acts, we hear the extraordinary account of how Peter’s prayers to God enabled a holy woman called Tabitha to be restored to life and how this mystery of God’s grace brought many people to believe in Jesus Christ.

Acts 9. 36-42

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, “Please come to us without delay.” So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, “Tabitha, get up.” Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

Some things to talk and think about:

- What does this story tell us about the power of prayer and about witness to God?
- Why do you think the disciples wanted Peter to come and see Tabitha's body? What do you think they expected and thought would happen?
- Why do you think hearing about this brought many people to belief in Jesus?
- How does this account in Acts illuminate the story of St Winefride, or vice versa?



Jules and Jenny/flickr

A Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

We thank you for the example of holy women and men

Who have kept the faith and witnessed to others that they might believe.

Watch over all who seek to serve you,

And over all who are persecuted and die for your name's sake.

We thank you for the mystery of grace and miracles of healing,

We ask your blessing on all who seek you

That they might meet you through prophets in places of injustice;

Through your loving invitation and call to serve you;

At places where people come for healing and salvation;

At places where all hope seems lost.

Amen