

Conversion

Acts 8:26–40, 9:1–9

Each day, it's important to take your bearings. Where are you today? In the Easter season, in the scriptures, in your daily life, in your very self? Spend a few minutes getting your bearings for the day.

Let's briefly examine where we are in the Book of Acts and then begin our day with a prayer for deliverance—for ourselves, our fraternity brothers, and all Exodus Men.

You are about to be sent. The apostles have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. With them, we need to prepare for our mission.

Pray that the Lord grants deliverance to you, your family, and your fraternity.

Pray for freedom for all men in Exodus, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

A Reading from the Book of Acts

But an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert road. And he rose and went. And behold, an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a minister of Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of all her treasure, had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless some one guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture which he was reading was this: "As a sheep led to the slaughter or a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken up from the earth." And the eunuch said to Philip, "Please, about whom does the prophet say this, about himself or about some one else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news of Jesus. And as they went along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized?" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught up Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus, and passing on he preached the gospel to all the towns till he came

to Caesarea.

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he journeyed he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting; but rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul arose from the ground; and when his eyes were opened, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Reflection

God is amazing. When you think about your own conversion from sin, there certainly must be mysterious elements to it. God had you meet certain people at the right moment. He may have allowed you to have really bad or really good experiences to prepare you. And then, something happened, some moment of choice, when, with the help of grace, you made a decision to follow God and give your life to him.

We see two great examples of this today. The first, the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, shows that God's providence provides for what we need. Even if we seem isolated, traveling alone in the desert, God can still draw someone to us in that moment for support. In fact, he often does. You have to love the moment of decision for the Ethiopian: right now, this moment, look here is water! There is great power in seeing the truth and jumping into it wholeheartedly.

Secondly, we see one of the most powerful conversions in the history of the Church. If God converted Paul, then, truly, he can convert anyone. Of course he can; he is God! We can forget that, though, and think that certain people or the world, in general, is beyond saving. Sometimes it is the moment when things seem worse that God steps in to turn things in another direction. Paul's conversion is a reminder to trust in God's providence and not to write anyone off.

Thank God today for the grace of conversion, and pray that your conversion can continue to deepen and unfold.

Week 3 Action Items

Witness to your faith.

Host a game night to build community.

Reflect on your current plan.