

The Gift Arrives

Acts 1:15–26, 2:1–13

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 in Jerusalem with the apostles. Jesus has commanded us to wait for the coming of his Spirit. We unite ourselves to the apostles in prayer and in witnessing to the resurrection.

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

In those days Peter stood up among the brethren (the company of persons was in all about a hundred and twenty), and said, "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David, concerning Judas who was guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered among us, and was allotted his share in this ministry. (Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his habitation become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it'; and 'His office let another take.' So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "Lord, you know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside, to go to his own place." And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was enrolled with the eleven apostles.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

Reflection

God does not force anyone to accept his freedom. In our reading today, we see a great tragedy: one of the twelve is missing. Judas wanted to have it his way, giving into his greed and trying to control how things would happen rather than accepting God's plan. In the Roman Canon, the first Eucharistic prayer, there is a beautiful prayer: "Count us among those you have chosen." We see Matthias being chosen to take Judas's place, chosen by lot like the Jewish priests, being called to become a witness with the apostles. Judas serves as a warning for us, while Matthias provides a model of stepping into the role of an active witness to the resurrection.

The disciples were "all together" in the upper room awaiting the promise of Jesus. Prayer and fraternity marked the Christian community from the beginning. They did not await the Spirit on their own and could not act as witnesses in isolation. The Spirit, the breath of God, comes to them both as wind and fire. He blows the life of God into their souls, as a kind of divine freshness, and comes down upon them as fire, to burn up their old lives and set them ablaze with God's life.

And this fire was contagious. The gift of tongues shows God's power to get through to people even when they have their guard up. The crowds had just turned against Jesus, shouting for his crucifixion, and now they turn up to hear the disciples. Some of them are amazed, though others mock them.

How will you break through to people? With the Spirit's help? If you live like a disciple, are you ready to be mocked? How can we act as witnesses to Jesus's resurrection? Take these questions into your time of prayer.

Day 5 Action Item

Let the Holy Spirit lead you in prayer. Prayer is the heart of the Christian life. Prayerfully consider what your daily prayer should look like during the Easter Season. The baseline in the Plan of Life is 20 minutes per day and one holy hour per week. Is that enough? What other prayer habits might you be called to adopt? Consider how you might continue

to grow in prayer.

Here are a few suggestions:

Make a morning offering.

Pray the Stations of the Cross on Fridays.

Make a spiritual communion each day.

Pray the Angelus at 6, noon, and 6.

Finish the work day with the St. Michael prayer.

Start the work day with a prayer to St. Joseph. Here is one prayer you might consider:

O Glorious St. Joseph, model of all those who are devoted to labor, obtain for me the grace to work conscientiously, putting the call of duty above my natural inclinations, to work with gratitude and joy, in a spirit of penance for the remission of my sins, considering it an honor to employ and develop by means of labor the gifts received from God, to work with order, peace, moderation and patience, without ever shrinking from weariness and difficulties, to work above all with purity of intention and detachment from self, having always death before my eyes and the account that I must render of time lost, of talents wasted, of good omitted, of vain complacency in success, so fatal to the work of God. All for Jesus, all through Mary, all after thine example, O Patriarch, St. Joseph. Such shall be my motto in life and in death. Amen.