

God Cleanses

Acts 10:7-35

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

When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those that waited on him, and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. The next day, as they were on their journey and coming near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. And he became hungry and desired something to eat; but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heaven opened, and something descending, like a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "No, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has cleansed, you must not call common." This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood before the gate and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down, and accompany them without hesitation; for I have sent them." And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?" And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well

spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house, and to hear what you have to say.” So he called them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went off with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his kinsmen and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am a man.” And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered; and he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit any one of another nation; but God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me.”

And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, about this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, saying, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter; he is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the seaside.’ So I sent to you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”

Reflection

Why did the Jews have to abstain from pork, shellfish, and other prescribed foods? It turns out that there is nothing wrong with those foods per se. Rather, God was trying to keep Israel as a people set apart for him. They were so unlike the surrounding nations—which they often tried to imitate—that even the food they ate was different. Giving up pork was thus a sign of giving up the idolatry of the pagans.

God tells Peter that he is making all food clean as a sign of something greater. He is making all people clean so that there will no longer be an ethnic and cultural distinction between Israel and the nations. All people will belong to him through the coming of the Messiah and his reign through the Church. By allowing Peter to partake of the diverse foods in the sheet coming down from heaven, God is welcoming the Gentile nations into his family.

God makes the Gentiles clean through baptism—a washing in water and Spirit. We, too, have received this gift of adoption and rebirth as sons of God. This gift calls us to a newness of life marked by an internal cleanliness. God wants us to live differently from the Gentiles by loving as he loves and not being satisfied with what is less than him. He wants us all to eat celestial food—enlivened by the Holy Spirit.

Pray and meditate about what it means to be clean for God. If you need to get back to Confession to renew the purity of baptism, make time for this gift. Thank God for calling you into his new creation in the Church.

Week 3 Action Items

Witness to your faith.
Host a game night to build community.
Reflect on your current plan.