

Following the Way

Acts 19:21-41

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 fighting through difficulties. Whenever we set out on mission, there will be many obstacles. We have to remain faithful, no matter the challenge, and look for new ways to witness to Jesus.

Today we celebrate the feast of St. Matthias the Apostle, who was chosen to fill the place of Judas. We follow his faithful witness over and against Judas's act of betrayal.

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 have taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Reading from the Book of Acts

Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. About that time there arose no little stir concerning the Way. For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. These he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. And you see and hear that not only at Ephesus but almost throughout all Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable company of people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may count for nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship." When they heard this they were enraged, and cried out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

So the city was filled with the confusion; and they rushed together into

the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. Paul wished to go in among the crowd, but the disciples would not let him; some of the Asiarchs also, who were friends of his, sent to him and begged him not to venture into the theater. Now some cried one thing, some another; for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, wishing to make a defense to the people. But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all with one voice cried out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? Seeing then that these things cannot be contradicted, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against any one, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges against one another. But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, there being no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." And when he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

Reflection

Rage and confusion. This is how our reading describes the mob forming to oppose Christians. Does this sound familiar? The crowd has nothing to say when the people are asked why exactly they are rioting. They do not know what they are doing or why they are doing it. They are simply bent in hatred of Christians because they heard that this new Way might jeopardize their income.

The crowd is lost, but the Christians are moving toward a goal—they are following what Acts calls "the Way." This is how the first Christians spoke about following Christ. Jesus himself is the Way, and by having faith in him, Christians walked in his footsteps. They became signs of contradiction in the world that would challenge the established order. In that sense, Demetrius, the silversmith, was right when he sensed the old order was passing away and a new Way was emerging.

The Christians caused a stir in Ephesus. Can we say the same? Are we living differently, as a sign of contradiction to our worldly society? Are we clearly walking differently along the Way of Jesus?

Week 5 Action Items

Pray about your mission.

Watch an uplifting movie.

Stay vigilant with technology use.