

Remembering

Acts 7:30-53

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 with the growing community in Jerusalem. The first Christian community remains a model, as they prayed, followed the apostles' teaching, served the poor, and celebrated in their homes. We are seeking to enter into the experience of the resurrection with them and to join in their mission as witnesses.

Today we remember St. George on his feast day. In slaying the dragon, he models our spiritual combat with the ancient serpent.

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

*"Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it he wondered at the sight; and as he drew near to look, the voice of the Lord came, 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and did not dare to look. And the Lord said to him, 'Take off the shoes from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have surely seen the ill-treatment of my people that are in Egypt and heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.'

"This Moses whom they refused, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' God sent as both ruler and deliverer by the hand of the angel that appeared to him in the bush. He led them out, having performed wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years. This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren as he raised me up.' This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount

Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living oracles to give to us. Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt, saying to Aaron, 'Make for us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and rejoiced in the works of their hands. But God turned and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets:*

'Did you offer to me slain beasts and sacrifices, forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? And you took up the tent of Moloch, and the star of the god Rephan, the figures which you made to worship; and I will remove you beyond Babylon.' "Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, even as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen. Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations which God thrust out before our fathers. So it was until the days of David, who found favor in the sight of God and asked leave to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; as the prophet says, 'Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool. What house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?' "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

Reflection

Stephen continues to help his accusers to remember. Once again, they know the story of salvation history, but this exercise in memory is meant to help them place themselves within the unfolding narrative. Their ancestors saw the wonders of God, but yet they rejected him and went after strange gods. The Jews are doing something worse at this moment. They not only rejected God's commandments but put him to death when he came in the time of visitation. Stephen is now witnessing to this truth by calling them to awaken to their blindness.

Remembering helps us as well. We have to continue remembering the great works of God in salvation that we hear in Stephen's narrative as well as the works God has done to bring us to freedom in our own time. We have to remember so that we do not fall back into our old ways. Living in freedom, we must refuse to bow down to dumb idols that seek to bind us in slavery.

This is why we are forming a Plan of Life to keep us in the good habits of freedom. We rejoice in the freedom that God has given us in the resurrection and want to preserve it through prayer, asceticism, and fraternity. Pray that the Lord will help you to continue to grow throughout this Easter season.

Week 2 Action Items

Build your new prayer routine.
Try a Trappist or monastic beer for celebration
Keep your fraternity strong.