

One Heart and Soul

Acts 4:23-37

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.

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 they were released they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who by the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'—for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with Boldness.

Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they

had everything in common. And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not any one needy among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need. Thus Joseph who was surnamed by the apostles Barnabas (which means, Son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field which belonged to him, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Reflection

Jesus is the true king, and yet the nations still rage against the Lord and God's anointed. Both the Jews, the chosen people, and the Romans, the greatest power of the ancient world, rejected his kingship and continued to oppose his people. What is the response of Peter and John to this persecution? They pray for boldness that they may be effective instruments of the Lord's peace.

How different the early community was from the raging nations. Rather than seeking things for themselves, the early Christians surrendered their goods to God. They chose a lasting kingdom rather than immediate pleasure or wealth. They lived differently, and therefore, they attracted attention: both from new converts and also from persecution.

They put everything at the Lord's feet for his disposal and received in return a great grace. Everyone had what was needed, and they had one heart and soul. That may sound sentimental, but having one heart means that they loved the same thing, and having the same soul means that they were all enlivened by the same Spirit. Even if we do not live exactly like them in all the details, they show us what it means to be a Christian: to give all to God and be at peace with one another in God. Christians are a source of unity and peace in the world because they are rooted not in earthly possessions and power but in what truly lasts forever.

Week 2 Action Items

Build your new prayer routine.

Try a Trappist or monastic beer for celebration

Keep your fraternity strong.