

## A New Start

### Acts 3:11–26

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.

Today we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday, the completion of the Easter octave.

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

While he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's, astounded. And when Peter saw it he addressed the people, "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And his name, by faith in his name, has made this man strong whom you see and know; and the faith which is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old. Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your

brethren as he raised me up. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul that does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came afterwards, also proclaimed these days. You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God gave to your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you in turning every one of you from your wickedness."

### Reflection

You were ignorant. Could we accept this statement about our life and many of the things we have done? God is merciful to us in our weakness and ignorance; he gives us a chance to start again. What do we need for this new start? Peter spells out a whole sequence of conversion: Repent, turn again, be refreshed, accept the Christ, listen to him, and be blessed.

Divine Mercy Sunday is the perfect day to reflect on the grace of conversion. Jesus's death and resurrection are the ultimate expression of God's mercy. Jesus has sought us out, coming to us—his creatures—as our servant, in order to draw us into God's life.

We can probably look to one moment in our life when we experienced God's merciful grace breaking through our blindness—a moment of profound conversion. Perhaps Exodus was this moment of renewal or a first turning to God in regular prayer. Regardless, this movement of conversion never ends. We have to keep coming back to God, turning to his light, and living ever more faithfully according to it.

This Easter exercise should offer some relief after an intense period of asceticism, but we can't leave our prayer, asceticism, and fraternity behind. We will need to build lasting habits that make it easier to live under the kingship of Christ, listening to his will for us in obedience so that we can be blessed. Living in the promised land of Christ's resurrected life entails a mission of allowing the reign of Christ to grow within us and through us to reach others. How will you continue your process of conversion?

### Day 8 Action Item

Keep Sundays holy. Sundays belong to the Lord as his day. In addition to going to church, the whole day should be different. So many of us unknowingly resent the Lord's Day by succumbing to the Sunday blues. Let's make this the most important day of the week. God intends Sundays to serve as a sign of our freedom, reminding us that we do not live under the tyranny of the world. The Lord's Day points us to the freedom of the Kingdom of God, which pulls us out of the dominance of our normal anxieties and tasks.

Enter into the freedom of this day. After Mass, spend the day with family. You can get your fraternities together, including families. Enjoy God's creation, take extra time for prayer, enter into rejuvenating recreation,

and spend quality time with others.