

1. May 2025

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

“Numerous conversions in Jerusalem”

Acts 2:37-47

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.” And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The listeners were deeply touched, even cut to the heart. This is the work of the Holy Spirit and can happen when the heart of the hearer is not closed and the person delivering the message has become an instrument of God's grace. This was the case with Peter's speech. Together with the Holy Spirit, Peter reaches into the hearts of his listeners so that they are touched by the truth. As a result, they ask him the right question: “Brethren, what shall we do?”

And what is Peter's answer? It is the classic answer that must always be the first to be heard and assimilated: “Repent!”

The salvation of man consists in turning to God and away from the ways of sin and error. This call is always there, even when we do not want to hear it. We are always invited to conversion, either to leave behind evil ways or, if we are already on God's path, to deepen even more in His love and allow ourselves to be filled by Him. When man is converted, he will be able to receive the grace of baptism, as Peter assures those in today's passage who had opened themselves to the Lord and welcomed His word: "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit".

Peter has already broadened his horizons and speaks of those who will come from afar to receive the grace of faith. At Pentecost there was an "abundant catch of fish". It is possible that Peter was recalling the experience when, after having fought all night in vain, he cast out his nets again at the word of the Risen One and caught one hundred and fifty-three large fish without the net breaking (Jn 21:1-14); perhaps he was also thinking that his Lord and Master had called him from his work as a fisherman to become a "fisher of men", catching them in the net of love.

That day, after Peter's speech, about three thousand people joined the young Christian community. Peter taught them with many words, urging them to save themselves from that crooked generation.

The Lord performed great wonders and signs through the apostles, and the community of believers *"devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers"*.

Obviously the Holy Spirit worked great miracles and confirmed the nascent Church with a way of life that we can still find in certain monasteries and communities. The faithful "sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all". So they had all things in common. This is truly great, as long as it is done voluntarily and under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. It is a wonderful sign of love for the Lord and for one's neighbour, a true model of Christian living together.

Today's passage testifies to the profound unity that reigned among the faithful, a true miracle of Pentecost! The "charm of a new beginning" is perceived and the fervour of the nascent Church in prayer and in the "breaking of bread" is noted. Simplicity of heart is also mentioned.

What a joy it must have been for the apostles and for those who had already joined them to see the new converts full of joy and bearing convincing witness before the people! In fact, it is written that they enjoyed the favour of all the people because of their behaviour and conduct, and that new believers were joining them every day. So the Church in Jerusalem began to grow. The Holy Spirit had shown Himself to be the great evangeliser, driving the disciples and making them powerful spokesmen for the message of salvation.

If we live in the grace of faith, how can we not rejoice to hear and read this? We always long for souls to be saved and to find their way to faith. In recent decades, people have been waiting for a "new Pentecost" to come, in memory of the first Pentecost in Jerusalem. We still have to wait, perhaps it will come, only God knows!

Meditation on the Reading of the Day:

<https://en.elijamission.net/obedience-to-god-comes-before-obedience-to-men-2/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the Day:

<https://en.elijamission.net/jesus-comes-from-above-3/>