

October 20th

Saint CORNELIUS the Centurion

Optional Memorial

According to the Acts of the Apostles, Cornelius was a centurion of the Italic cohort stationed at Caesarea. He was pious and "God-fearing" and gave alms to the Jewish community. He was the first Gentile to convert to Christianity and it was Peter who baptized him and his family, after having instructed him (Acts 10). According to some traditions, Peter also consecrated him bishop. His cult is attested already in Jerusalem in the 10th century.

The conversion of Cornelius was a decisive central event in the book of Acts because it was the first step in the journey of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Samaria, then to the pagan nations. The Word of God is to spread "to the ends of the earth", according to the desire of the risen Jesus (1: 8). Israel, the first recipient of the promises, must open up to other nations, and behold, God himself intervenes, by his Spirit, for the conversion of the first pagan, Cornelius.

The liturgy of this day highlights the role of the Holy Spirit who precedes Peter and the Apostles. It is He who predisposed the heart of Cornelius to believe in Christ. He continues with his power to act in the human heart and continues to lead the Church even further, beyond all boundaries.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: 1 Tim 2: 4

God our savior wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth.

COLLECT

Lord, who sent your angel to the centurion Cornelius to show him the way of salvation, grant that we too may become instruments of salvation for all our brothers, so that, united with them, we may attain to you.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ...

FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles 10: 25-27, 34-35, 44-49

When Peter entered Caesarea, Cornelius met him and, falling at his feet, paid him homage. Peter, however, raised him up, saying, "Get up. I myself am also a human being." While he conversed with him, he went in and found many people gathered together. Then he proceeded to speak and said, "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him".

While Peter was still speaking these things, the holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word. The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter responded, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the holy Spirit even as we have?" He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for a few days.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 98: 1. 2-3ab. 3cb-4 (R. cf 2b)

R. The LORD has shown his deliverance to the nations.

1. O sing a new song to the LORD,
for he has worked wonders.
His right hand and his holy arm
have brought salvation.

2. The LORD has made known his salvation,
has shown his deliverance to the nations.
He has remembered his merciful love
and his truth for the house of Israel.

3. All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God
Shout to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song,
and sing out your praise.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Rom 10: 13

R. Alleluia. Alleluia.
"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved".
R. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew 8: 5-11

As Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion approached him and appealed to him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering dreadfully." He said to him, "I will come and cure him." The centurion said in reply, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed. For I too am a person subject to authority, with soldiers subject to me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come here,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. I say to you, many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven."

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, look on the face of your Christ who gave Himself up for the salvation of all, so that, through Him, Your name may be glorified among all nations, from the rising of the sun to its setting, and the same sacrifice be everywhere offered to you.

Through Christ our Lord.

PREFACE

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

COMMUNION ANTIPHON Rom 10: 12

There is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by this Eucharist, we beseech you, Lord our God, that the spirit of faith with which you wondrously filled St. Cornelius may also expand in our hearts.
Through Christ our Lord.