

THE CHURCH AFTER PENTECOST

The Medallion shows the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church on the day of Pentecost (50 days after Passover). The disciples were in the upper room. Luke includes some of the women, especially Mary, the mother of Jesus. She is shown in the window. The Holy Spirit did not just come to the apostles (and their successors, the bishops) but upon the whole Church, including women as well as men (Acts 2:1-4).

Peter preaching on Pentecost. Peter was empowered by the Holy Spirit to go out and preach. The man who had been too terrified to admit he knew Jesus is now preaching Him fearlessly to the nations. Everyone in the crowd understood in his own language. Three thousand were converted that day (Acts 2:5 -41).

Stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Acts records the death of Stephen and the first prayer ever uttered to Jesus: “Lord Jesus receive my soul.” Paul is shown looking on because Acts records that the people who stoned Stephen to death “laid their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul” (Acts 7:58).

Conversion of the Ethiopian Official by Philip. Acts chapter 8 tells the story of the conversion of an official of the Ethiopian royal court by Philip on the road south to Gaza. The court official, a eunuch of the Ethiopian queen was reading the scroll of the prophet Isaiah while riding in a chariot according to the scriptures. While he was a Jew, he was a foreigner. Philip offered to explain the passage of Isaiah and connected it to Christ. The Ethiopian stopped and asked to be baptized then and there (Acts 8:26-40).

Conversion of Saul to Paul. Paul never met Jesus in the flesh but he did see Him at his moment of conversion on the road to Damascus in Syria. Paul was going there to persecute the Church and arrest its members. He saw a bright light and heard a voice ask, “Saul, why do you persecute me?” (Acts 9:1-9).

Baptism of Cornelius. The Roman centurion is baptized by Peter (recounted in Acts 10). Peter, the leader of the church, baptized the first gentile, a Roman centurion named Cornelius, along with his whole household. Faith is not therefore just for the Jews or even an individual thing. It is open to all and a gift of the Church. Peter said: “I see that God shows no partiality, but the man of any nation who fears the Lord and acts uprightly, is acceptable to him” (Acts 10:34-49). Note the tile floor which is typical of a Roman house.

