

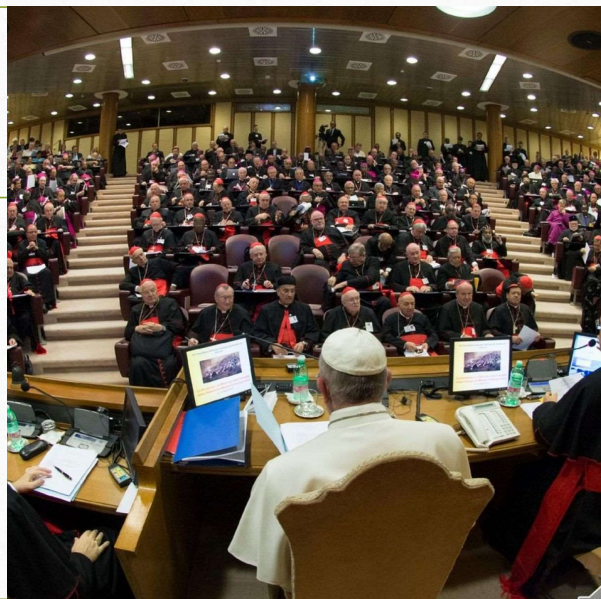
A Synodal Church

Laity, Pastors and Bishop of Rome Walking Together



Synodal Church

- “The way of synodality is the way that God wants for the Church of the third millennium
- What Jesus is asking of the church today “is all contained in the word ‘synod,’” which means **“walking together—laity, pastors, the Bishop of Rome.”**
- This is an easy concept, but it’s one that’s difficult to put it into practice, he admitted.
- (2015 Synod on the Family



SYNOD σύνοδος

- Σύν - syn - with, together
- Οδος - odos - road
- Together on the road



Council

- Latin *concilium* assembly, from *con-* together + *calāre* to call;

WHAT'S AN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL?

An assembly (Gk. *synodos*; Lat. *concilium*) of representatives (*episcopoi*) of the whole (i.e., catholic) church for consultation and decision regarding ecclesial matters.

Gk.: oikoumenikos fr. oikumene, "the whole (inhabited) world", fr. oikos="household"

21 Councils of the Church

Popes	Council Name	Year
Peter	Jerusalem	49-50
St. Sylvester I	Nicaea	325
St. Damascus	Constantinople I	381
St. Celestine	Ephesus	431
St. Leo I	Chalcedon	451
Vigilius	Constantinople II	553
St. Agatha	Constantinople III	680-681
Adrian I	Nicaea II	787
Adrian II	Constantinople IV	869
Callistus II	Lateran I	1123
Innocent II	Lateran II	1139
Alexander III	Lateran III	1179
Innocent III	Lateran IV	1215
Innocent IV	Lyons I	1245
Bl. Gregory X	Lyons II	1274
Clement V	Vienne	1311-1312
Gregory XII & Martin V	Constance	1414-1418
Eugene IV, Martin V	Basel- Ferrara- Florence	1431-1445
Julius II & Leo X	Lateran V	1512-1517
Paul III, Marcellus II, Paul IV, Pius IV, Julius III	Trent	1545-1563
Bl. Pius XI	Vatican I	1869-1870
Bl. John XXII & Paul VI	Vatican II	1962-1965

Vatican II (1962-65)



Collegiality

- In the Roman Catholic Church, **collegiality** refers to "the Pope governing the Church in collaboration with the bishops of the local Churches, respecting their proper autonomy."

From Collegiality to Synodality

- On 15 September 1965, as the Council was drawing to a close, Pope Paul VI established the Synod of Bishops
- Code of Canon Law describes it as "a group of bishops who have been chosen from different regions of the world and meet together at fixed times to foster closer unity between the Roman Pontiff and bishops, to assist the Roman Pontiff with their counsel ... and to consider questions pertaining to the activity of the Church in the world."



From Collegiality to Synodality

- More recently under Pope Francis Synods have come to the fore and he has described the path of synodality as the path that Christ desires for His Church in the third millennium.
- During his time as Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis has convened Synods on the Family (2015), on Youth (2018) and on Amazonia (1999).
- The difference under Pope Francis is that the consultation is much wider and has been extended beyond bishop to representatives of the laity.

Synod (Council) of Jerusalem

- The tradition of holding Synods at times when the Church faces particular challenges or decisions stretches back to the earliest days of the Church and the Synod of Jerusalem (c. 50AD) that is recounted in the Acts of the Apostles (chapter 15).
- This Synod dealt with the question of whether Gentiles who converted to Christianity should be required to follow the rules of Judaism that are laid out in the Torah.

Acts 15

The Jerusalem Council

The Jerusalem Council
The Watershed of the Book of Acts

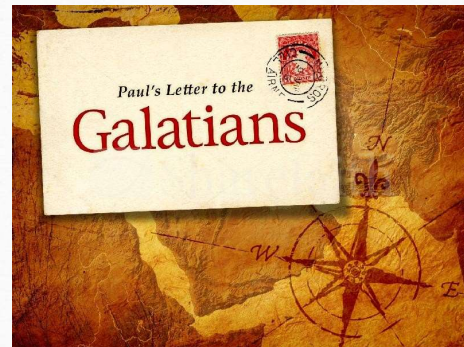
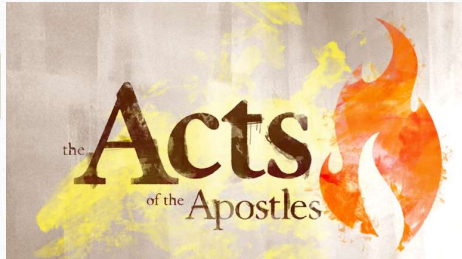
15

1-14

16-28

The Book
Of Acts

The Jerusalem Council



The Early Church - a Jewish Community

- A Law-observant Jewish community going to the Temple daily
- A sect within Judaism rather like the Pharisees, or the Sadducees
- BUT they believed that the messiah had come in Jesus Christ
- “This Jesus God raised up, and of that all are witnesses.”
- “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Early Church - a Jewish Community

- Acts 2:46
- Every day they continued to gather together by common consent in the **temple** courts, breaking bread from house to house, sharing their food with glad and humble hearts,

Acts 2: 46, 47

"Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."



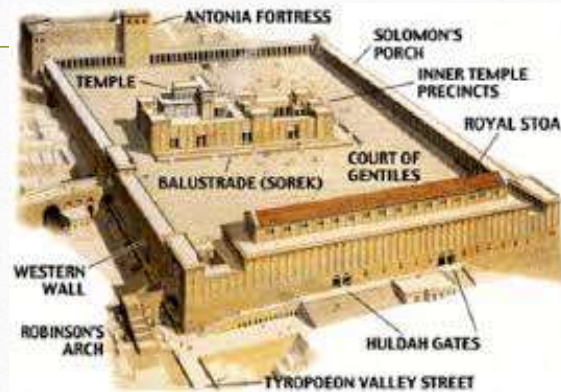
Peter Heals a Crippled Beggar in the Temple

- **3** One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon.



The Apostles Heal Many in the Temple

- ¹² Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in **Solomon's Portico.**

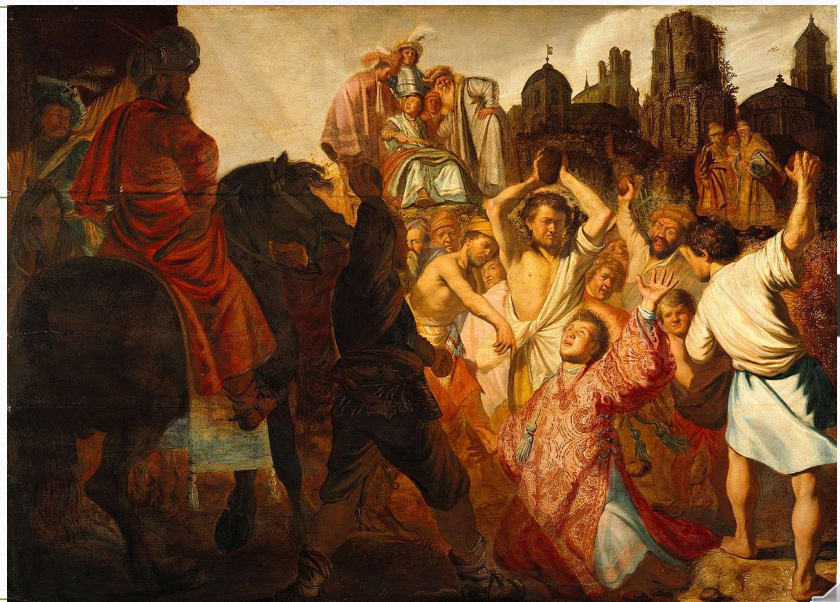


Jerusalem Council

- The early church initially comprised orthodox Jews who kept and revered the Law of Moses
- According to that Law Gentiles were ritually unclean
- They didn't keep all the purity laws of Judaism. They didn't abstain from forbidden foods
- Contact with Gentiles could make Jews unclean too.
- Jews and Gentiles mixed as little as possible.
- They never came into physical contact or sat down at table together and ate together for fear of being "contaminated"

Things start to change

Martyrdom
of Stephen



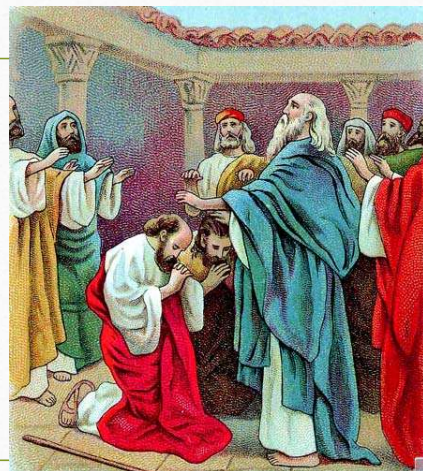
The Church in Antioch Acts 11:19

- Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. ²⁰ But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord.



Barnabas and Saul Commissioned Acts 13:1

- **13** ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.





First Missionary Journey

- They went first to the synagogues and preached to Jews
- At first the Jews listened but then turned against Paul and Barnabas
- Rejected by the Jews they went to the Gentiles
- The Gentiles listened and believed and were baptised

Meanwhile things were happening to Simon
Peter

Simon Peter's Vision



Acts 10

- Noon – Rooftop
- Praying – trance
- Saw giant sheet with animals in it

Peter's Vision

- *Rise, Peter, kill and eat!*
- Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean."



Peter's Vision



- *Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.*
- Happened 3 times
- Messengers from Cornelius arrived just then asking Peter to visit
- Spirit said, "Go."

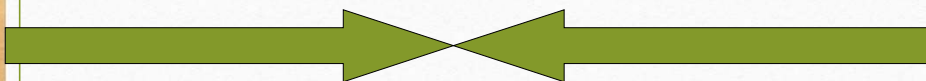


Cornelius was a Roman Centurion

- **God-fearers** were Gentiles who associated with the Jews but had not become complete converts to Judaism.
- They were well-known in Judaism, went to synagogue, prayed with Jews but didn't go as far as being circumcised
- They were attracted by the **Monotheism** and **Morality** of the Jews.
- Cornelius prayed and gave to the poor.

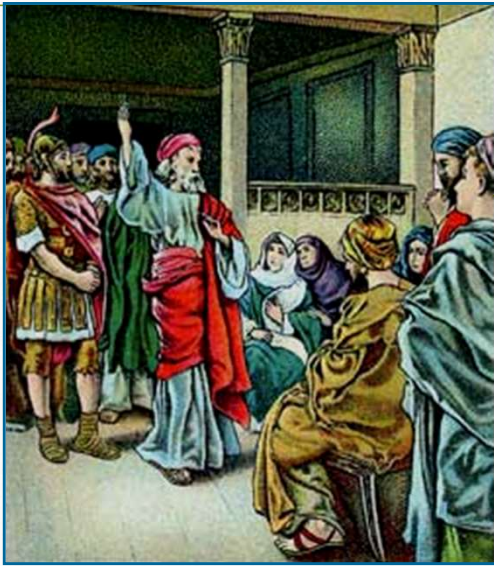


Jew and Gentile Meet



- Cornelius had gathered his friends and family
- The vision/dream was to show Peter that he could enter the house of the Gentile
- *Simon Peter goes into the house of Cornelius*
- **The Walls Come Tumbling Down!**





Peter's Sermon

- ³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all.

While Peter Was Still Speaking...

- The Holy Spirit broke into Peter's sermon!
- the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word.
- Pentecost revisited
- Spoke in tongues just as the apostles had at the 1st Pentecost
- Holy Spirit came before they were baptized



The Baptism of Cornelius

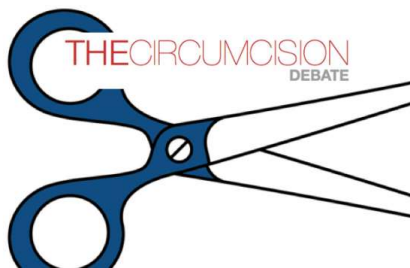
- ***Peter had no choice***
- ***Can anyone keep these people from being baptized? (47)***
- **The Holy Spirit made the next step very clear – He kicked open the door for Gentiles to enter.**
- ***He (Peter) ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.***

Things Change

- Simon Peter had baptised a Roman centurion and his household (Gentiles)
- Paul and Barnabas have baptised Gentiles in Cyprus, Perga, Lystra and Derbe (Asia Minor)

Acts 14:28 – 15:2

- Not everyone was pleased with the success of Paul and Barnabas' 1st Missionary Journey

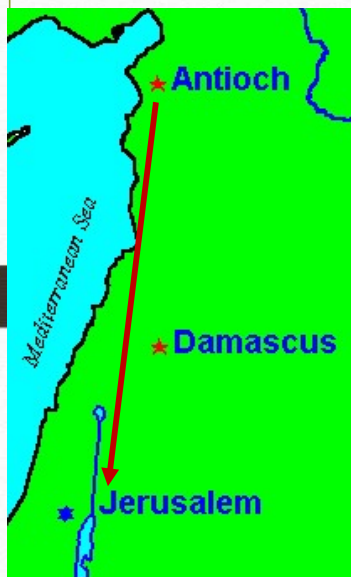


ACTS 15

15 Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

The Problem

*Those from Judea insisted that
Gentiles must be circumcised and
required to obey the
law of Moses.*



² And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders.

³ So they were sent on their way by the church,

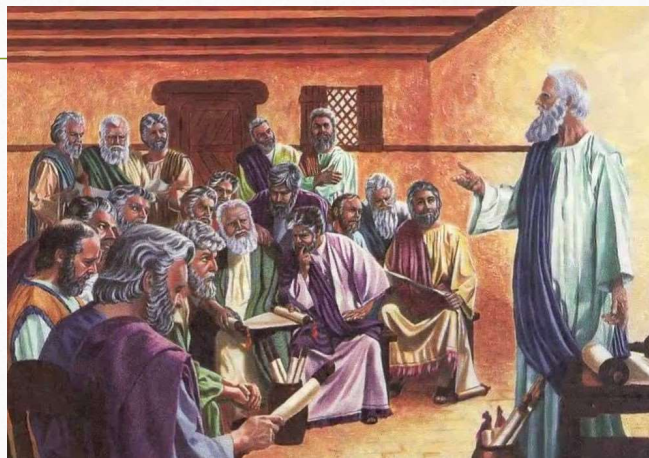
Acts 15 Council of Jerusalem

- The problem of whether the Gentiles could be baptised without being circumcised.
- The relationship between faith in Christ and observance of the Law of Moses.



ACTS 15

- ⁶The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter.



The various factions at the Jerusalem Council

Paul,
Titus and
Barnabas

Peter
and the
Galilean
Apostles

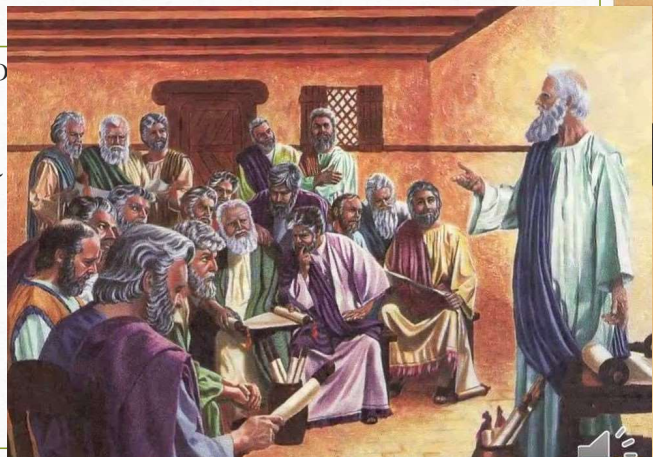
James
and the
Judean
Elders,
the
Hebrews

The Party of
the
Pharisees/
circumcision



ACTS 15

- ⁷ After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers.



ACTS 15

- ¹²The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles.



The Issue of the Jerusalem Council

Do Gentiles have to become Jews in order to be saved?



The Issue of the Jerusalem Council

What kind of Christians?

Remember Paul and Barnabas left **LEADERS** of the church behind them in the churches that they founded.

So it's not just a question of being members of the church but **FULL** members - Able to exercise leadership – have authority



¹³ After they finished speaking, James replied, “My brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simeon has related how God first looked favourably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. ¹⁵ This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written ...

Synodal Church

- Each speaks of his own experience
- All listen attentively and respectfully
- They pray about it
- They reach a decision under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit
- Not a democratic vote but reaching consensus



Listening Church

Make your voices heard Christus Vivit



- "A Church always on the defensive, which loses her humility and stops listening to others, which leaves no room for questions, loses her youth and ***turns into a museum,***"



POPE FRANCIS



CHRISTUS VIVIT
Christ is Alive

 Apostolic Exhortation
to Young People and to the Entire People of God 

Pope Francis on Acts 15

The Assembly of Jerusalem sheds important light on the way to face differences and to seek the “truth in love” (Eph 4:15).

It reminds us that the ecclesial method for resolving conflict is based on dialogue made of careful and patient listening and on discernment undertaken in the light of the Spirit.

Indeed, it is the Spirit who helps to overcome closure and tension, and works within hearts so that they may achieve unity in truth and goodness.

THE JUDGEMENT

Acts 15

The Jerusalem
Council



For it seemed good
to the Holy Spirit and to us
to lay upon you no greater burden
than these necessary things.


Acts 15:28



The Issue of the Jerusalem Council

**Do Gentiles have to
become Jews in order
to be saved?**

No!



- 
- Food polluted by idols

 - Sexual Immorality
 - Strangled Animals
 - Blood

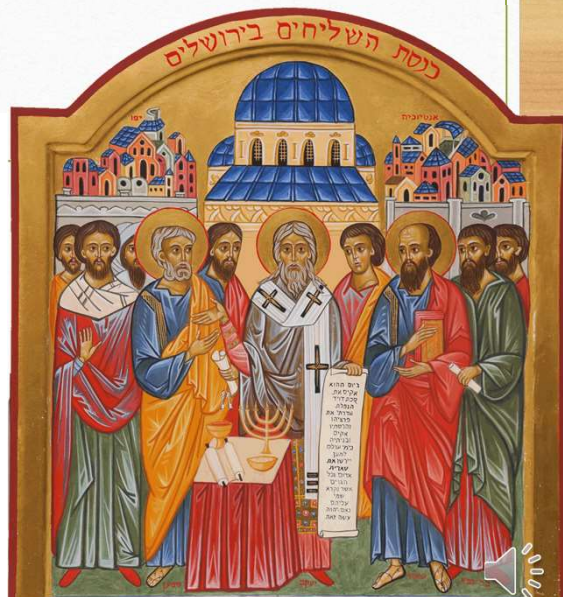
-
- The first two are essential. There is only one God and believers are expected to live a good and moral life.
 - The second two are apparently about fellowship, not salvation!
 - Laws to allow Jews and Gentiles to mix and sit down at table together

It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us

- Belief in Jesus Christ as Lord
- No taking part in pagan worship of other gods There is only ONE God
- Refrain from sexual immorality
- BUT no requirement for circumcision
- Gentiles can be baptised without first becoming Jews
- Overthrows all beliefs of the Jews as God's chosen People
- - as the only people who will be saved

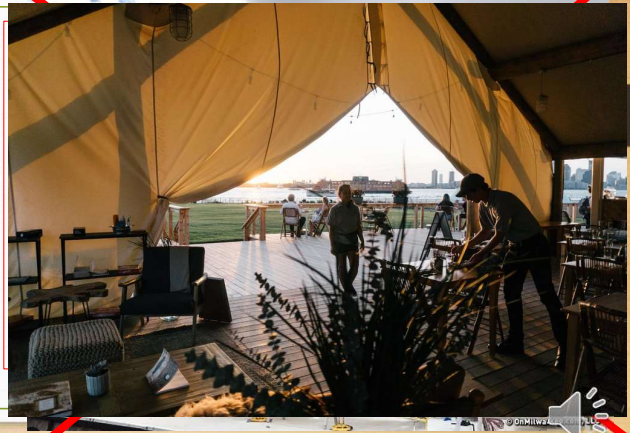
Pope Francis

- This text helps us understand synodality.
- It is interesting how they write the Letter: the Apostles begin by saying: It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us..”.
- It is the Spirit who helps to overcome closure and tension, and works within hearts so that they may achieve unity in truth and goodness.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit is proper to synodality, otherwise it is not a synod.
- It is the parlour, parliament, something else



Pope Francis

- “The very nature of the Church appears from the Book of the Acts; she is not a fortress but a tent able to enlarge her space and give access to all.
- Either she is on a journey always widening her space so that everyone can enter, or she is not a Church.



Synodal Church

- “The way of synodality is the way that God wants for the Church of the third millennium
- What Jesus is asking of the church today “is all contained in the word ‘synod,’” which means **“walking together—laity, pastors, the Bishop of Rome.”**
- This is an easy concept, but it’s one that’s difficult to put it into practice, he admitted.

• (2015 Synod on the Family)



CO-RESPONSIBLE CHURCH



"Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to **abandon** the complacent attitude that says: "**We have always done it this way.**"

I invite everyone to be **bold and creative** in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities."

The Joy of the Gospel

