



A weekly reflection by members  
of the Precious Blood Community

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“Unless you are circumcised according to the Mosaic practice,  
you cannot be saved.”

**(Acts 15:1)**



Whenever I come across debates in the Scriptures between the Apostles and the Jewish people, or between Jesus and the Pharisees, a recurring question arises: in our relationship with God, what is fundamental the law or human dignity?

Before entering into this discussion, it is important to note the context of this passage. Certain people from Judea came to Antioch and taught that “circumcision is the only way to salvation.” For many Jewish people, their relationship with God was deeply rooted in the law. However, Jesus challenged this mindset by teaching that human dignity comes before any law.

Today, we live in a wounded world marked by a “chosen people” mentality, where racialization still shapes access to success and opportunity. People are discriminated against and disenfranchised every day, often for no reason other than their skin color, religion, or cultural background. More than ever, we are called to engage in urgent dialogue to eradicate the divisions that persist in our society.

Paul and Barnabas were appointed and sent to Jerusalem to discuss and clarify this issue. In my understanding, they were sent as peacemakers and bridge-builders, promoting unity among believers. In the same way, we, too, are called to foster equality in a compartmentalized society where privilege is often measured by what one has rather than by who one is.

So, where do we stand? Are we on the side of rigid law-making, or on the side of peace-making and bridge-building? As my highly respected professor and brother in the Divine Word, Fr. Steve Bevans, SVD, once said, our primary concern as Christians today is not converting people to God, but rather discerning what kind of God we preach. Let us remember that the antidote to the “chosen people” mentality is unity and equality for all.

Joao Pinda Neto, MDiv, will be graduating this May from Catholic Theological Union, receiving his Masters of Divinity degree. He has also participated in the Reconciliation Certificate offered by the Schreiter Institute. To learn more about Catholic Theological Union, [click here](#). To learn more about the programs offered by the Schreiter Institute, [click here](#).

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