

Bill and Bob were two guys from Raytown and every year at Easter they went moose hunting in northern Canada. One year their regular pilot could not go, so they hired Gertie from Gladstone who had her own private plane. She made two rules for them: they could take only 24 hours to hunt, and they could only bring back one moose. They agreed. They landed on a remote strip in Canada and parted. "Be back in 24 hours," Gertie said. "We'll be here," Bill and Bob replied. "And only one moose." "No problem."

Twenty-four hours later Gertie returned to the spot. She was pleased to see the men were there, but then she noticed they had not one moose, but two. "I told you guys only one moose; my plane isn't strong enough to carry two." They looked at each other, and Bill said, "The male pilot we had last year got two moose on his plane. Are you saying you're a worse pilot than he is?" Gertie said, "There's no room!" Bob said, "We can strap the moose to the top of the plane." And that's what they did.

Gertie taxied down the runway with Bill & Bob and one moose inside and the other moose strapped to the plane. She lifted off and barely cleared the treetops. She couldn't gain altitude. Finally the plane sputtered, stammered, and drifted back toward earth. She tried everything, but the plane kept going down till it skidded on the ground. The three got out of the plane a little dazed, and Gertie asked, "Does anyone know where we are?" Bill looked around and said, "Yeah, I know where we are. We're about 80 yards farther than we got last year."

This is the point of Easter, to get 80 yards farther than we got last year.

Today's first reading is a speech given by Peter after the resurrection, and it's part of a wonderful story. Cornelius was a devout Roman soldier--not a Christian. He prayed, did good works, and one day an angel appeared to him and told him to send for Peter so he could learn something. Peter, meanwhile, was also at prayer, and he saw a vision of a sheet being let down from heaven filled with foods declared unclean to eat. And Peter was invited to eat them. He saw the vision four times, and couldn't figure it out. Finally the messengers from Cornelius arrive and tell him their master wants to hear what Peter has to say. The problem is, Cornelius is not a Jew, and so far converts to Christianity had all been Jews. But Peter goes, meets Cornelius, tells him about Jesus, and the Holy Spirit falls upon the people there just as it did at Pentecost. So Peter figured, "If the Holy Spirit is here, I guess it's all right to baptize these people, even if they aren't Jews." He finally understood the vision. There are no unclean foods. There are no unclean people. *What we have* Everyone may believe in Christ. *We are all one in Christ* Peter was

*Kids*  
The ~~message~~ *message* in today's first reading ~~are~~ *is* the speech ~~preached~~ *preached* by Peter when the Holy Spirit fell upon the people. What's remarkable about this story is that there are two conversions: Cornelius converted to Christianity, and Peter converted to open Christianity to the Gentiles. They had both come 80 yards farther.

So, how is it with you? Are there unclean foods you don't eat? Unclean people you don't associate with? This Easter, let's preach the good news: We all are one in Christ. Regis E 89

*The Easter message of reconciliation, the same lesson Peter learned when he met Cornelius:*