

Conversion of St. Paul

Friends in Christ,

Today is the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.

St. Paul - who once tried to tear apart the Church.

His conversion to Jesus Christ, changed the world.

On this Feast Day, let us hear a bit of what St. John Chrysostom has to say. He says:

'Paul, more than anyone else, has shown us what man really is and in what our nobility consists.

Each day St. Paul aimed ever higher;

each day he rose up with greater courage,

and faced the many dangers that threatened him.

This is why he would write:

'I forget what is behind, but push on to what lies ahead.

When St. Paul saw that death imminent, he told others to share his joy: 'Rejoice and be glad with me!, he wrote.

And when he was mistreated, he said:

'I am content with weakness, mistreatment and persecution. These he called the weapons of righteousness,

thus telling us, that he derived immense profit from them.

Amid all the traps set for him by his enemies, with exultant heart he turned their every attack into a victory for himself;

beaten, abused and cursed, he boasted of it as though he were celebrating a triumphal procession and taking trophies home; he offered thanks to God for it all:

'Thanks be to God who is always victorious in us!, he said.

The one thing St. Paul feared, was to offend God; nothing else could sway him. Therefore, the only thing he really wanted was always to please God.

He knew himself to be loved by Christ.

Enjoying this love, he considered himself happier than anyone else;

To be separated from that love, would be in his eyes the greatest torment; the pain of losing the love of God - that loss alone would be hell.

Being loved by Christ he thought of himself as possessing everything: the world, the angels, the present and the future,
the kingdom, the promise and countless blessings.
Apart from that love nothing saddened or delighted him.

Paul set no more value on the things of the world than withered grass.
As for the people enraged against him, he paid them no more heed, than gnats.

Death itself and pain and whatever torments might come were but child's play to him;
he was happy that he might bear some burden for the sake of Christ.
So says St. John Chrysostom from the Breviary today.

Well, we should be like St. Paul.
Confess our sins, begin anew, and live entirely for the love of Jesus Christ.
As he would say:
'Forgetting what is behind, we must push on to what lies ahead.'