

Daily Prayer

The Conversion of St Paul the Apostle

Wednesday, January 25, 2022

We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we hold in our prayers the ordinary moments in life—the trials and the joys—and remember the Conversion of St Paul the Apostle.

We begin by saying

O Lord, open our lips

and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Your light springs up for the righteous

and all the peoples have seen your glory.

The First Reading

'Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

'With this in mind, I was travelling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads." I asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The

Lord answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

'After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance. For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. To this day I have had help from God, and so I stand here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.'

Acts 26.9-23

The Psalm

God be gracious to us and bless us ♦
and make his face to shine upon us,

That your way may be known upon earth, ♦
your saving power among all nations.

*Let the peoples praise you, O God; ♦
let all the peoples praise you.*

O let the nations rejoice and be glad, ♦
for you will judge the peoples righteously
and govern the nations upon earth.

*Let the peoples praise you, O God; ♦
let all the peoples praise you.*

Then shall the earth bring forth her increase, ♦
and God, our own God, will bless us.

God will bless us, ♦
and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

Psalm 67

The Gospel Reading

'See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Matthew 10.16-22

In silence, we ask what the readings have to say to us today. Is there something that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?

When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle

The Canticle ~ A Song of the Covenant

**I have given you as a light to the nations,
and I have called you in righteousness.**

Thus says God, who created the heavens, ♦
who fashioned the earth and all that dwells in it;

Who gives breath to the people upon it ♦
and spirit to those who walk in it,

'I am the Lord and I have called you in righteousness, ♦
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;

'I have given you as a covenant to the people, ♦
a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind,

'To bring out the captives from the dungeon, ♦
from the prison, those who sit in darkness.

'I am the Lord, that is my name; ♦
my glory I give to no other.'

Isaiah 42.5-8a

*Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.*

**I have given you as a light to the nations,
and I have called you in righteousness.**

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God and
continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.*

The Intercessions

We pray for the coming of God's kingdom.
You sent your Child to bring good news to the poor,
sight to the blind,
freedom to the captives
and salvation to your people:
anoint us with your Spirit;
rouse us to work in his name.
By your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to bring help to the poor
and freedom to the oppressed.
By your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to tell the world
the good news of your healing love.
By your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to those who mourn,
to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.
By your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to proclaim that the time is here
for you to save your people.
By your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Use us, unworthy as we are,
to bring in your kingdom of mercy, justice, love and peace.
Empower us by your Spirit and unite us in your Son,
that all our joy and delight may be to serve you,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Our prayers conclude

Almighty God,
by the preaching of your servant Paul
you caused the light of the gospel
to shine throughout the world.
May we who celebrate his wonderful conversion
follow him in bearing witness to your truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen

We conclude

May the light of Christ our Lord shine in all our hearts.

Amen.

The Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle

Holy Day

When modern people speak of “conversion,” they usually mean some tremendous event which moves them from one way of life into its complete opposite. And so, on the feast of the Conversion of Paul, it might be thought that we are celebrating Paul's change of religion, as if he ceased being a Jew and became a Christian. The Book of Acts, with its story of Paul's overwhelming experience on the road to Damascus, has reinforced this view.

But Paul himself did not see the event in quite the same way. We have his own words in the Letter to the Galatians: “He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles.” In using such language, Paul placed himself in the company of the prophets of ancient Israel; and when he tried to say what had happened to him, he spoke in terms of a prophetic calling. So, it was not the revelation of another religion that Paul experienced. Instead, he experienced something which revealed the meaning and purpose of his whole life; and by this revelation of Christ, God also manifested the meaning and purpose of Paul's Judaism. Paul was not responding to a demand that he deny Judaism and change his religion. He was responding to a call that he share in the fulfillment of Judaism and make all other nations partners with Israel in the one salvation of God.

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