

## Conversion of Saint Paul 25 January



### About the Conversion of Saint Paul

As a young man, Saul looked after the cloaks of the men who were stoning Stephen, the first martyr. (Acts 7:59) He grew into a dedicated and ardent persecutor of Christians. However, God's ways are not our ways and today's feast celebrates his conversion, when on the way to Damascus, Saul fell to the ground and Jesus said to him: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" To which he replied, "Who are you, Lord?" and Jesus responded: "I am Jesus the Nazarene, and you are persecuting me."

Yes, Jesus reproached Saul for persecuting Christians, and it was then that Saul converted to following Christ and became known as Paul.

### What can we learn from the Conversion of Saint Paul

**Saint Paul's conversion was one that took place in rather dramatic circumstances.** There are those people for whom tragedy hits them before they truly convert and turn to the Lord. There are those people who quietly follow the Lord each day of their lives. However, each day the Lord invites us to turn away from sin and to follow Him wholeheartedly. Our whole life needs to be a reflection of Christ and a witness to Him. Our participation in the Sunday Mass is central to our faith as Catholics and is very much a part of following Christ. However, when we are dismissed from the Eucharist, we are called to follow Jesus by living a Eucharistic life, so that Monday to Saturday becomes a living witness to what we did and heard in Church on Sunday.

**God's grace is always at work in us, and He often chooses what we would consider the most inopportune of times to reveal Himself to us so that His grace can abound.** The conversion of Saint Paul is a perfect example of how God works in mysterious ways!

Part of our mission is to bring people to know Christ. There are many people in the world who, like Saint Paul, need converting. We can bring others to know Christ by being faithful to Him in the way we live our lives. In this way too, through us, God's grace can be at work, and also, we can reveal God to our neighbour.

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### Collect

O God, who taught the whole world through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Paul, draw us, we pray, nearer to you through the example of him whose conversion we celebrate today, and so make us witnesses to your truth in the world. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### Gospel

Mark 16:15-18

Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News

Jesus showed himself to the Eleven and said to them:

**'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation.**

He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned.

These are the signs that will be associated with believers:

in my name they will cast out devils;

they will have the gift of tongues;

they will pick up snakes in their hands,

and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison;

**they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.'**

### Antiphon

I live by faith in the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself up for me.

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### Hymn for the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul

As a young man, Saul, you did not know  
Jesus had died to save us all  
from all our sins and imperfections,  
**reversing our first parents' fall.**  
Saul, you stood by while Stephen was stoned:  
in this way Jesus you disowned.

To Damascus, you made a journey  
**to find those who followed "The Way",**  
to take them back and to imprison  
them in Jerusalem that day.  
It was on that road that Christ would ask  
you to change and live life anew.

Blinded by light that was so dazzling,  
you could not see for three long days.  
You turned from sin, converting to Christ,  
and giving God alone your praise.  
You were baptized, you were cleansed of sin,  
**became a witness to God's Word.**

We are all called to follow Jesus,  
leaving behind all of our needs.  
We must proclaim Jesus, the Good News,  
wherever we go plant His seeds.  
We must water them with loving care,  
giving glory to God above.

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