



## Diocese of Rockville Centre New Evangelization

*"... the Church needs genuine witnesses for the new evangelization: men and women whose lives have been transformed by meeting with Jesus, men and women who are capable of communicating this experience to others. The Church needs saints. All are called to holiness, and holy people alone can renew humanity."*

*Pope John Paul II  
August 2004*

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Theme: Saint Paul

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### ENCOUNTER: With The Lord Jesus

Now Saul, still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, that, if he should find any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them back to Jerusalem in chains. On his journey, as he was nearing Damascus, a light from the sky suddenly flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" He said, "Who are you, sir?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do."

*Acts of the Apostles 9: 1-6*

#### For your reflection:

- I. Saul (Paul) is full of hatred towards the disciples of the Lord. Yet, with his soul so steeped in sin, the Lord Jesus comes to him. Saul encounters Jesus not when he is full of grace but when he is full of sin. What message is there in these verses for us in our own spiritual journeying?
- II. In Saul's encounter with Jesus, Jesus identifies Himself with those Saul is persecuting. How does Saul's experience help us understand what is sometimes involved in meeting Christ?
- III. Jesus gives Saul a command to follow that has the effect of saying that he (Saul) is no longer in control but Jesus is instead. How does this part of Saul's encounter with Jesus help us discern and reflect about our own encounter with the Lord?

### CONVERSION: To The Way Of The Lord

Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus. For three days he was unable to see, and he neither ate nor drank. There was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight and ask at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is there praying, and (in a vision) he has seen a man named Ananias come in and lay (his) hands on him, that he may regain his sight." But Ananias replied, "Lord, I have heard from many sources about this man, what evil things he has done to your holy ones in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to imprison all who call upon your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for this man is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before Gentiles, kings, and Israelites, and I will show him what he will have to suffer for my name." So Ananias went and entered the house; laying his hands on him, he said, "Saul, my brother, the Lord has sent me, Jesus who appeared to you on the way by which you came, that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately things like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. He got up and was baptized, and when he had eaten, he recovered his strength. He stayed some days with the disciples in Damascus

*Acts of the Apostles 9: 8-19*

#### For your reflection:

- I. Saul's conversion begins in earnest when he had to be led by the hand to Damascus. With our own strong will and penchant for independence, are we as willing as Saul to be led by others to conversion?
- II. Fasting is part of Saul's conversion experience. Do you use this traditional spiritual practice to assist you in your own conversion to the ways of the Lord?
- III. Ananias has difficulty believing that Saul is chosen by God for such a special mission. Are you willing to accept people into your life whom you may judge more severely than God does?



## EUCCHARIST: "I Am Not Worthy To Receive You"

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes. Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.

*1Corinthians 11: 23-29*

### For your reflection:

- I. In this section of Paul's letter to the people of Corinth, he gives us Jesus' words by which the Holy Eucharist was instituted. These words come in a section of his letter in which he wishes to address problems that existed in their liturgical assemblies. Highlighting these words, Paul is highlighting the central element of the Eucharistic Mystery, which gives direction to the entire Christian life. How does Paul's method in helping the Corinthians help you in your understanding of the Eucharist?
- II. In reference to verse 27, do you receive the Eucharist in a state of grace? What are the consequences of not doing so?
- III. What happens to the unity of the Body of Christ, the Church, should there be little regard for the worthy reception of Holy Communion?

## HOLINESS: "So Be Perfect As Your Heavenly Father Is Perfect"

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

*Colossians 3: 12-17*

### For your reflection:

- I. It is customary to make an examination of conscience before going to sleep at night. Use these verses to help with this practice.
- II. Take time with each virtue Paul mentions to understand how you may put it into practice in your own life.
- III. Verse 16 reminds us that the call to holiness is not an end in itself but is meant for the building up of the Body of Christ. Are you concerned with the type of example you are giving to your family, co-workers, friends, neighbors, and enemies?

## MISSION: "You Are Witnesses Of These Things"

Now I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel preached by me is not of human origin. For I did not receive it from a human being, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you heard of my former way of life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it, and progressed in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my race, since I was even more a zealot for my ancestral traditions. But when (God), who from my mother's womb had set me apart and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him to the Gentiles, ...".

*Galatians 1: 11-16*

### For your reflection:

- I. We, as Paul before us, go out to witness not to our own way but to the Lord Jesus, who is the Way. Do people see Jesus' Way being lived out in us?
- II. In verse 12, Paul makes it very clear that the content of the message was received by him; not created by him. Is our way of living based more on our opinion and those of our society than on the gospel of Christ?
- III. The whole tone of these verses is to recognize that one's mission in life is to be so full of Jesus that we proclaim Him with all we say and do. Do we start each day with this as our intention, our mission in life?



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Secretariat for the  
New Evangelization  
Diocese of Rockville Centre  
P.O. Box 9023  
Rockville Centre, NY 11571  
(516) 678-5800 x309  
[rfigliozzi@dvcc.org](mailto:rfigliozzi@dvcc.org)