

Easter 3 / Confirmation / May 1, 2022

Acts 9:1-22

**“Then he rose and was baptized...And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying,
‘He is the Son God.’”**

The conversion of St. Paul is one of the most important events in the history of the Christian Church. Our lesson begins reading, “But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priests and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way...he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” The reading concludes with Saul confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus, “by proving that Jesus was the Christ.” What an amazing transformation in the spirit of Saul, whom we know best by his Roman name, Paul. How did that happen?

It happened by the power of God’s word, the same word by which God comes to us in worship, in private reading, in study and in our conversation with other believers. Christ came to Saul in a vision. But in the vision Christ spoke to Saul as He does to us, in His word. He spoke and through His word, He worked in Saul’s heart the miracle of repentance and faith. During the next three days Christ spoke again to Saul through the disciple Ananias, by whom He was baptized into His death and resurrection. The scales fell from Saul’s eyes physically and spiritually. He saw that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, the Saviour of all who believe.

Christ comes to all of us through His word. Through His word He makes us wise unto eternal life, by inspiring our hearts to faith and enlightening our minds to know Him as Saviour. It is important for us to be in the word. The first thing Saul did after He came to faith and was baptized was to tell people about Jesus and to prove to them through the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. He proved Jesus is the Christ, not through His experience of the vision, but through the words of scriptures.

We have the same access to Christ and to the knowledge of God our Saviour, for we have the same scriptures. In fact, we have the words of the Old Testament explained in greater clarity by the words of Paul, the apostles and evangelists, all of whom lead us to Jesus as the Christ, so we would believe in Him as Saviour and follow Him as Lord. Like St. Paul, we are blessed to know Jesus as Saviour and empowered to make His name known in our lives. We do this by the words we speak, by the way we deal with the joys and sorrows of our lives. We do this by telling people about Jesus, giving witness to the hope we have in Him.

Confirmation Sunday is an opportunity for our confirmands to give witness to their faith and the hope they have in Christ. Through the word and washing of baptism, the Holy Spirit opened their hearts to believe. Through the hearing of the word in Sunday School, worship and at home, the Holy Spirit opened their minds to understand what their hearts believed at baptism. Today, the Holy Spirit opens their lips to confess the faith into which they have been baptized.

We give thanks for the testimony of their faith and the effect the word has had on their spiritual growth and development. We pray God to continue His good work in them and to bring it to fulfillment in the resurrection to everlasting life. Most of all, we give thanks for the gospel of Jesus. It is in our hearts that we may believe. It is on our lips that we may confess with Paul, the apostles and the church of all ages that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of all who believe. In Jesus’ Name. Amen

God, who has begun a good work in all of us, bring it to completion in the day of Jesus Christ.