

Indifference and response

That which characterizes in our age many people in their relationships with God is usually negligence and indifference. The example, however, of the conversion of the Apostle gives hope to all of us that we are able to change our dispositions, our thoughts, our actions at whatsoever moment of our life. All the time of our life on earth is “an acceptable time” of change, of conversion. So what if we squandered time from our youth or the period of our maturity in the vanity of the world. So what if even at this moment many people are living outside God’s will. If there is an internal disposition, God is eager to enter into us through His grace and to invite us near Him.

And just as the Apostle said that God revealed himself “in me”, that is, in him, in the same manner it is certain that He is waiting to be revealed to each one who is interested also, who seeks, strives innately for God. God Is eager to reveal to us His presence in the person of His Son. He alone knows God the Father because He Himself is also God. He sends forth the Holy Spirit to whoever seeks Him. And he doesn’t need to search for Him for long. He is in the Church. He is the Church. Our conversion towards the Church is a conversion towards Christ. And conversion to Christ is a turning to the true God.

Archim. Ch. N.

SUNDAY November 10 8th **Sunday of Luke** Erastus, Olympas, Rodion, Sosipater, Quartus, Apostles of the 70, Holy Father Arsenius of Cappadocia Our Holy Father Gregory, Bishop of Assa.

Third Tone, Ninth Eothinon, -Epistle St.Paul's Letter to the Galatians 1:11-19
,Gospel Luke 10:25-37

NEXT SUNDAY November 17 9th **Sunday of Luke**, Epistle Galatians 2:16-20
Gospel Luke 12:16-21



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“CONVERSION TO CHRIST”

During the time of His presence on earth and with the beginning of His delivering work Christ selected a group of disciples, the later on Apostles who were awaiting the Messiah according to the foretelling of the prophets from Moses up to John the Forerunner. His teaching was eagerly received by His disciples and after the descent of the Holy Spirit they were scattered to all of the then known world to preach the Gospel of salvation. (Mt. 19:19-20).

However God’s providence wanted to call to the apostolic work a person also who was not numbered among the twelve Apostles, nor was he among the group of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. The Lord selected for His Apostle a fanatic Jew, a fanatic Pharisee, a persecutor of the Apostolic Church, the holy apostle Paul, the former Saul (Gal. 1:13-14).

SUNDAY'S EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 1:11-19

BRETHREN, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when 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, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

“Calling and acceptance

It is undoubtedly worthy of admiration and wonder how a person who not only had not accepted Christ and His teaching, but was furthermore opposed to it, a persecutor of all those who believed in Jesus Christ, was called to serve God.

The Ap. Paul explains to us that his calling was God's desire: “God was pleased, who separated me from the womb of my mother”. It was God's will to select him already from his mother's womb.

Also that his calling took place because God wanted to reveal His Only Begotten Son, “to reveal His Son in me”. God examines the dispositions of the human soul, because He is the only one who knows better than whatsoever man as His creator. And when the dispositions

are good, the Father reveals the Son, because “no one knows the Son really except only the Father” (Mt. 11:27).

Based on this ascertainment, He knows beforehand, being omniscient, who will accept His calling. And at the appropriate time He reveals His will, He calls him in order to reveal to him the divine majesty and the delivering sacrifice of His Son and to make him a colleague, a vessel of choice in the salvation of the world. It is that which the Apostle says in another text of his: “Those whom God knows from beforehand that they will respond to His calling those He also called” (Rom. 8:29).

Calling and conversion

In the case of the Apostle to the Gentiles in order for him to accept the calling he had to change his train of thought and from a Pharisee to become a follower of the Nazarene, from a persecutor to become a dedicated disciple and apostle. And it is not easy for such a conversion to occur without the almighty intervention of divine grace. Paul himself says that He who called by His grace” did his conversion. He who had destined him, He who called him and helped him to convert with the energy of His grace. In this manner the power of God is proven Who is able to convert dispositions, trains of thought, wills, decisions and actions of men and to suit them to His will. So long as a response exists.