

PARISH OF THE ASCENSION
THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL
January 22, 2023

COLLECT

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. **AMEN.**

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Paul said, "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**

Reader: The Word of the Lords

People: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

REFRAIN Let all the peoples praise you, O God.

May God be merciful to us and bless us, show us the light of his countenance and come to us. Let your ways be known upon earth, your saving health among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. **R**

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. **R**

The earth has brought forth her increase; may God, our own God, give us his blessing. May God give us his blessing, and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him. **R PSALM 67**

Reader: The Lord be with you

People: And also with you.

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
ACCORDING TO MATTHEW**

People: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Jesus said to the disciples, "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

Reader: The Gospel of Christ

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Almighty God,
as we celebrate this holy eucharist,
may your Spirit fill us with the light of faith.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **AMEN.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God,
you filled your apostle Paul
with love for all the churches.
May the sacrament we have received
foster love and unity among your people.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **AMEN.**