

You may remember about a month ago we heard about Saul's conversion where he became known as Paul. He wanted to find anyone who were Christians and drag them out of their homes and put them in prison. On his way to Damascus, a light suddenly came from the sky, he fell on the ground, and a voice said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" When Saul asked who was speaking to him, the voice said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

Saul learned that Jesus was not dead, but alive. The risen Jesus then directed Saul to the city where he was baptized and brought into the Church. Jesus then revealed that Saul was going to suffer for His name.

We have been reading through the Acts of the Apostles these past few weeks. If you have been following along, you know that Paul has really suffered for Jesus. When he spoke about Jesus in the synagogues, many rejected him. On one occasion, he was stoned and dragged out of the city. In Philippi, he was beaten and thrown into prison. When he was in Athens, he was mocked when he spoke about the Resurrection of the dead.

Now, we would think that Paul might be tempted to give up. The task of bringing Jesus to everyone was too hard. He may have even been tempted to think that Jesus had abandoned him. However, today we see Paul continuing on. He moves to Corinth and will work with this community for a year and a half.

Today, we see him continue to preach the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. Again, we see him face opposition and get reviled. Yet, he continues on! What a great apostle! No one has to tell Paul what it means to suffer for the name of Jesus! Tomorrow, the Lord will comfort Paul by saying, "*Go on speaking, and do not be silent, for I am with you.*"

As I think about the past two, I am very joyful for the many ways Jesus has been with you and me! I will celebrate five years of being a priest in a couple of weeks. While there have been trials (not quite like St. Paul's!), I think of all the ways Jesus has been with me: the celebration of the Mass, confessions, eating with parishioners in their homes, funerals, weddings, anointing of the sick, etc. May we always remember that Christ is with us no matter what!