

# St. Francis Xavier + St. Monica

Market St, Parkersburg, WV  
Weekend Mass Schedule  
Saturday, 5pm - Sunday, 10:30am & 5pm

Harris Highway, Lubeck, WV  
Weekend Mass Schedule  
Sunday 8:30

**MAILING ADDRESS:** 609 Market Street, Parkersburg, WV 26101

**JANUARY 23, 2022**

## **Baptism**

A joyful celebration!  
To schedule class and a date  
please call the office.  
304-422-6786

## **Care of the Sick**

Please notify the pastor when  
someone is seriously ill or in the  
hospital. Sacraments or care of  
the seriously ill are administered  
at anytime, day or night.

## **Devotions**

Miraculous Medal Novena,  
Wednesday – 6:50  
Adoration – One hour before  
Mass: Mon, Wed, and Fri.

## **Marriage**

Congratulations on your  
engagement! Please contact the  
Pastor to discuss arrangements  
before setting any date.  
Preparation ordinarily requires  
at least six months.

## **Thinking of Becoming Catholic?**

The RCIA process is for you!  
Come find out more about the  
Catholic faith! Call the office for  
details.

*May the God who gives  
endurance and encouragement give  
you the same attitude of mind  
toward each other that  
Christ Jesus had.  
Romans 15:5*



**3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY** *in ordinary time*

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me  
to bring glad tidings to the poor." - Lk 4:18a*

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.



Fr. John Rice, Pastor

frjohnrice@aol.com Rectory 304-422-6786

Deacon: Rev. Mr. Doug Deem

Parish Office 304-422-6786 Fax 304-422-6789

Email: stxoffice@stx-pburg.org or secretary@stx-pburg.org

St. Francis Xavier Web Site: www.stx-pburg.org

St. Monica Web Site: www.stmonicaparish.org

Catholic Cemeteries Web Site: catholiccemeteriesparkersburgwv.org

Cemetery Manager: David Ferguson 304-422-6786

## St. Francis Xavier

**Weekend Masses**  
**Saturday, 5:00 pm**  
**Sunday, 10:30 am & 5:00 pm**

**Daily Mass**  
M & F-12:10; T & Th-8am; W-7pm  
**Holy Hour**  
1 hour before Mass, M-W-F

**Confessions**  
Saturday at 4:00-4:45pm and by appointment.

**Prayer Request**  
Wanda Christopher, 304-485-5834  
Sara Daniels, 304-485-5344

**Welcome & Hospitality**  
Shirley Smith 740-516-9411  
shirleys9411@aol.com

**Children's Liturgy**  
Leone Burd 304-482-2613

**Parish School of Religion**  
Gretchen Dowler 304-494-3379

**Eucharistic Ministers to the Sick and Homebound**  
Sally McDonie 304-428-2651  
Barb Fligor 304-428-8648

**Catholics For Life**  
Sunny Murray 304-482-6193  
Katie Walters 304-481-0578

**Rosary Altar Society**  
Mary Beth Steinel 740-896-5003

**Tuesday Evening Bible Study**  
Judy Huddleston 304-488-0720

**Ladies Friday a.m. Bible Study**  
Becky Hines 740-423-5236

**Music Ministry**  
Allan Zipf 304-482-5978

## St. Monica

**Sunday Mass, 8:30 am**

**Confessions**  
Sundays 8:10 am

**Prayer Request**  
Karen Barré 304-482-3199

**Liturgical Ministries**  
Tom Linder 304-863-6834

**Parish School of Religion**  
Kathleen O'Bara 304-483-2221

**Food Pantry, Clothing, Cards**  
Roger & Joyce Zipfel 304-863-6336

**Maintenance/Custodial Care**  
Dave Quattro 304-863-6664  
Natalie Linder 304-863-6834

## **REMEMBER THE SICK AND SHUT-INS IN PRAYER:**

- \*THE ARBORS: Ruth Baker
- \*LOVE & CARE: Mary Showalter
- \*THE WILLOWS:
- \*WYNGATE: Theresa Nedeff



**ST FRANCIS XAVIER**  
Jan 16 \$2263.00  
Church in the Dev. World \$365.00  
Attendance 211

**ST MONICA**  
Jan 16 \$79.00  
Church in the Dev. World \$14.00  
Attendance 18

**Parish Center Renovation \$385.00**  
**The second collection Feb 7<sup>th</sup> is for:**  
**the Poor Fund**

**To request a year-end 2021 statement please contact the office, 304-422-6786**

## Online Giving

You can give greener by using our Online Giving Program. Simply go to our parish website at [www.stx-pburg.org](http://www.stx-pburg.org)

You can set up the amount that you would like to give on a schedule that meets your needs and you never have to worry about writing another check, forgetting your envelope, or having cash in your wallet.

### 3RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



## Welcome to our Parish

If you are a visitor to St. Francis Xavier or St. Monica we want you to know how welcome you are. If you attend St. Francis Xavier or St. Monica on a regular basis, please be sure to register as a member of the parish. This will facilitate pastoral care for you and your family.

Registration forms are available online ([www.stx-pburg.org](http://www.stx-pburg.org)), in the church, and in the parish office.

You may place it in the collection basket or mail it to the parish office. **If you need to update or change your address, phone or email information please call the office (304-422-6786).**

## Bulletin

### **Announcements**

Please submit items for consideration **2 weeks before** publication. Via email: [secretary@stx-pburg.org](mailto:secretary@stx-pburg.org) or drop a type written announcement at the office.

## Will or Estate Planning

Are you thinking of remembering St. Francis Xavier Church in your will or estate plans? A bequest through a Last Will and Testament is the simplest way of creating a lasting legacy of support for St. Francis Xavier Church. Suggested language for making a bequest is:

"I give and bequest to St. Francis Xavier Church, 532 Market Street, Parkersburg, WV, the sum of \$\_\_\_ (or) \_\_\_% of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate for it's general purposes.

To report an incidence of suspected child sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency, or you may confidentially contact WV Child Protective Services at 800.352.6513. In addition to civil authorities, to report suspected cases of sexual abuse by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling -Charleston to the Diocese, please contact the Diocese at 888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880. Please visit [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org) under "Accountability" for additional information and reporting methods.

Sunday - 23 *3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*  
 St. Monica Mass 8:30 †Dick Allen (Carol Tallhamer)  
 St. F X Mass 10:30 †Veronica Lutz (Lutz Family)  
 St. F X Mass 5pm †People

Neh 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15/  
 1 Cor 12:12-30 or 12:12-14, 27/Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21

Monday - 24 *St. Francis de Sales*  
 Holy Hour 11am  
 Mass 12:10 †William Windland  
 (Mary Ann Windland & Family)

2 Sm 5:1-7, 10/Ps 89:20, 21-22, 25-26/Mk 3:22-30

Tuesday - 25 *The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle*  
 Mass 8am †Ken Crum (John Crum)

Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22/Ps 117: 1bc, 2/Mk 16:15-18

Wednesday - 26 *Sts. Timothy and Titus*  
 Holy Hour 6pm  
 Mass 7pm †Linda Crum (John Crum)

2 Tm 1:1-8 or Ti 1:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 27-28, 29-30/  
 Mk 4:1-20

Thursday - 27 *St. Angela Merici*  
 Mass 8am †Peggy Kidd (Colleen & Rick Newhart)

2 Sm 7:18-19, 24-29/Ps 132:1-2, 3-5, 11, 12, 13-14/  
 Mk 4:21-25

Friday - 28 *St. Thomas Aquinas*  
 Holy Hour 11am  
 Mass 12:10 Teachers, Educators, Catechists

2 Sm 11:1-4a, 5-10a, 13-17/  
 Ps 51:3-4, 5-6a, 6bcd-7, 10-11/Mk 4:26-34

Saturday - 29  
 Confession 4:00-4:45pm  
 St FX Mass 5pm †People

2 Sm 12:1-7a, 10-17/Ps 51:12-13, 14-15, 16-17/  
 Mk 4:35-41

Sunday - 30 *4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time;  
 Catholic Schools Week*  
 St. Monica Mass 8:30 †Dick Allen  
 (Al & Kathleen Stiefel)  
 St. F X Mass 10:30 †Bill Hull  
 (Cindy & Mike Spainhour)  
 St. F X Mass 5pm †Marian O'Hair (Mary O'Hair)

Jer 1:4-5, 17-19/Ps 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15-17 [cf. 15ab]/  
 1 Cor 12:31-13:13 or 13:4-13/Lk 4:21-30

**January 23, 2022  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**



Human history reveals many periods where people lost a sense of God's transcendence. It may even be argued that human beings have been wandering and lost more than they have been at home and focused. Human nature being what it is, we struggle with who God really is — the God of our salvation history or the “gods” of human constructs. Relying on our own designs and pursuits, we forget that we really are meant to listen to One upon whom the Spirit of the Lord rests, Jesus Christ, and not to ourselves. That same history that reveals our fickleness and infidelity also reveals God's constancy and faithfulness. God always finds us.

As people wander and fumble to find their way, God is there bringing them back to holiness and giving them the assurance of His presence. We have to allow God's Word, God's life, to touch us and change us. It can make us more flexible and attentive to the sacred in all facets of life so that every day is one that is holy. Every day is a time when fulfillment is possible for one's soul. Jesus stood before those gathered in the synagogue as the fulfillment of words of promise that were echoed long ago. God doesn't forget. He always comes for us.

Now it is time to remember to go to God. Sometimes our lives are so confused and tangled that it is difficult to see the Word and hand of God. But when we realize, deep within, the depth of friendship God offers to us it really has the power to turn sadness to joy. The promise is fulfilled. Going frequently to God's Word, allowing ourselves to be enriched and rejuvenated, and pondering the certainty of God's fidelity and promise permanently transforms us. We will be more aware of the sacred and the holy and less invested in things that pull us away. ©LPi

**St. Thomas Aquinas | January 28**



One of the most famous members of the Dominican Order, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) is well-known by many for his theological work, “The Summa Theologiae.” Born in Italy, his mother wanted him to become a Benedictine and had high hopes that he would eventually become abbot of Monte Cassino, where he spent much of his youth. To change his vocation, she had him kidnapped by his brothers on his way to Paris at the age of 19. He spent two years in their captivity.

Despite this, nothing could shake him from his vocation to become a Dominican priest and he was eventually released. Once free, he went to Paris and then to Cologne, where he finished his studies with Albert the Great. His greatest contribution to the Catholic Church is his writings. The unity, harmony, and continuity of faith and reason, of revealed and natural human knowledge, encompasses his writings. The Summa Theologiae, his last and, unfortunately, uncompleted work, deals with the whole of Catholic theology.

The patron saint of teachers, theologians and students, St. Thomas Aquinas died in 1274. His life and the impact he had on the whole Church, however, remains alive today.

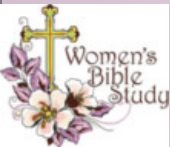
✝	ALTAR SERVERS	Extraordinary MINISTERS	LECTORS	SCRIP
Jan 29 5:00 pm	G RICE	A STIEFEL	T BORRELLI	PURCHASE IN OFFICE
Jan 30 10:30 am	J WALTERS	D MCDONIE	B ELSCHLAGER	PURCHASE IN OFFICE
Jan 30 5:00 pm	S LASKO	M EVANS	KALTENECKER	PURCHASE IN OFFICE
St Monica Jan 30 8:30 am	NEEDED	K ESKER	R ZIPFEL	GIFTS K & C O'BARA

## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES



Jan 22 - Brielle Bayne  
Jan 25 - Mary Bayne; Rebecca Dotson; Aisha Guthrie;  
Dick Hansel; Dylan Lasko  
Jan 27 - Jacob Cain; Julie Duschl; Janet McClain;  
Cole Mullens; Tom Rafferty; Katy Sprouse  
Jan 29 - Chris Heffner; Greg Herrick; Jennifer Hunt;  
Alia Ott  
Jan 30 - Chris Huddleston; Margarete Nelson

**THE BOOK CLUB** will meet at 10am in the Parish Center Library the 3rd Monday of the month. January's book is 'A Woman of No Importance' by Sonia Purnell. Join us for lively discussions!



### WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Women's Bible Study meets every Friday at 10am in the large conference room in the Parish Center. All ladies are welcome!

### COAT DRIVE



The Knights of Columbus will be collecting new and gently used coats thru February. A barrel will be placed in the church for donated coats. Coats may also be taken directly to Catholic Charities located in our Parish Center on the second floor.

### ROSARY ALTAR RUMMAGE SALE

As you are cleaning after the holidays, remember Rosary Altar Society's rummage sale! Items for donation may be placed in the hall basement at any time.



Please remember no computers or televisions. Thank you!



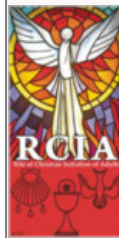
**PAINT PARTY** with Mando's Studio on January 29th at 1pm at St. Francis Xavier Parish Center. Twenty dollars per painter and needs to be paid in advance. Notify Kim Meredith (304-494-3135) or Shirley Smith (740-516-9411) for details. We have 32 spots available.

### PRAYER WARRIORS NEEDED

Parkersburg Catholic Schools are asking for intercessors who will pray for our schools. Those prayer warriors that may be interested can contact MC Heffner at [mcheffner@pchs1.com](mailto:mcheffner@pchs1.com) and she can explain more about this partnership and answer any questions.



**THE GABRIEL PROJECT** continues to help families of young children by providing the necessities and our supply is getting very low in some items. Those items are diapers in preemie, newborn, size 5 and size 7. We also need hygiene items especially wipes, baby wash, baby shampoo, baby lotion, and diaper cream. If the weather or COVID is keeping you at home and you wish to help, you can mail monetary donations to the Gabriel Project, 609 Market Street, Parkersburg, WV 26101. The St. Xavier Parish office staff is very gracious in helping us and will see the donation is delivered to us. Thank you for continuing to help us provide for children from birth to 3 years.



### ALREADY CATHOLIC BUT WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOUR CATHOLIC FAITH?

You're invited to join us for our weekly RCIA session on Sunday mornings at 9am in the parish center. Parents are especially welcome to join us while your child attends PSR. The topic presentation for Sunday, Jan 30th: Christian Persecution.



### POCKET CHANGE-IT CAN DO SO MUCH

St. Francis Xavier and St. Monica's can make a big difference with our pocket change in the lives of local mothers and babies. We will distribute baby bottles on January 23rd to fill with coins, bills, or checks for the Women's Care Center Baby Bottle Campaign. The campaign is 4 weeks and the bottles will be collected on February 20th.



This annual campaign helps to change lives by providing life-affirming education to women and men in unplanned pregnancies as well as practical support for those who have made the choice of life for their babies. The WCC does not provide or refer any patient for an abortion. For more information or to help: Sunny Murray 304-482-6193, Katie Walters 304-481-0578.



### WOMEN'S RETREAT EMBRACED WITH COMPASSION... EMBRACING THE WORLD

Please join us for our annual Women's Retreat, co-Sponsored with the DWC Office of Evangelization & Catechesis, February 25-27, 2022, St. John XXIII Pastoral Center, Charleston. Presented by Sr. Mary Dean Pfahler. The weekend will consist of presentations, quiet reflection, small group break-out sessions, media resources, and communal prayer. For more information contact Gerri Wright at 304-552-3662 or [gerwright1@aol.com](mailto:gerwright1@aol.com). You can register online at [www.dwc.org/2022-Womens-retreat](http://www.dwc.org/2022-Womens-retreat). \$150/pp single occupancy, \$125/per person double occupancy.

The **Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston** and the Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents will be hosting a retreat for grieving parents at St. Mary Catholic Church in Morgantown, WV on Saturday, March 12, 2022, beginning at 9:30 am and ending approximately 7:30 pm.



This spiritual retreat is for grieving parents whose children of any age have died by any cause, no matter how long ago. Please see the attached link for additional information including registration: <https://www.emfgp.org/events/03-12-22-one-day-retreat-at-st-mary-church-morgantown-wv/>. If you have any questions regarding the retreat, please contact Ed Cesa at 724-324-9222.



## DMCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

### FAITH FORMATION

Three five-week courses are being offered through the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF). These courses are hybrid models. They are composed of both weekly live two-hour zoom lectures as well as a rich variety of online course materials and discussion experiences through the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community For Faith Formation (VLCFF). The courses are being underwritten by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Evangelization & Catechesis, who pays 100% of the tuition and the cost of the books associated with the courses. The course instructor is Dr. Rodica Stoicoiu. For further information or to register, please contact Jeanne McKeets at [jmckeets@dwc.org](mailto:jmckeets@dwc.org) with your name, address, and phone number.

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT CYCLE 1 JAN 17-FEB 20

This course explores the stories in and behind the writings we call the New Testament. Through the study of Biblical maps, articles and religious art present on authoritative websites, our text and class discussions students can grow in New Testament knowledge, understanding and application to their life and ministry.

### THE WAY

Survivors of all forms of abuse across the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are invited to attend a special retreat entitled, "The Way." The Way is 3-day guided meditation and prayer program for men and women crafted around the Stations of the Cross. It is an opportunity for healing and prayer and for survivors to reflect on God's plan for their lives through prayer and sacraments. There will be opportunities for individual counseling and spiritual direction. Sponsored by the Archdiocese of Washington, the retreat is free of charge and will be held February 18-20, 2022, for women. The location of the retreat is not being publicized to protect the privacy of survivors. For more information on the retreat, visit <https://adw.org/the-way-retreat>. To learn more and to register, please contact Deborah McDonald at [mcdonaldd@adw.org](mailto:mcdonaldd@adw.org) or 301-853-4466



## TOGETHER IN HOLINESS™ FORMATION SERIES

### TOGETHER IN HOLINESS FORMATION SERIES

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR THE  
1ST MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT CONFERENCE

Saturday, February 12, 2022 | 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM  
Saint John XXIII Pastoral Center | Charleston, WV  
Early Bird Couple: \$27 | Early Bird Individual: \$18

Early Bird discount available through January 10  
Lunch Included | On-site Childcare (2-12 yrs)  
Full & Partial Scholarships Available

For more information, email the Conference Coordinator  
Michelle McDonald at [michelle@forlifeandfamily.org](mailto:michelle@forlifeandfamily.org)

# The Children's Corner

### Sharing the Gospel

The prophet Isaiah wrote about Jesus a long time before he was even born. When Jesus read Isaiah's words, they described Jesus perfectly.

Jesus did come to free people from sin, to help those in pain, and even to help blind people see.

### Prayer

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to help us.

### Something to Draw

Draw a picture of Isaiah, the prophet, writing about Jesus.

### Mission for the Week

Look up Isaiah chapter 61 and read it with your family. Then read Luke 4:14-21. Jesus kept all of those promises!



Circle these words from today's Gospel:

SPIRIT	FREEDOM	LORD
CHOSEN	SIGHT	JESUS
POOR	SUFFERS	TRUE

I A M J L U I T L A  
S B C H O S E N V E  
U P A T R H A R T I  
F R E E D O M A W H  
F N H C A L E I W S  
E F O J E S U S H P  
R B D S M I W L G I  
S I G H T L P O O R  
T Q E W A S F L W I  
I A T R U E M J E T

### ARE YOU A PARENT WITH YOUNG CHILDREN?

Check out these sites....

#### [littlesaintadventures.com](http://littlesaintadventures.com)

50+ games and activities

Kids will complete engaging activities that teach them about prayer, the sacraments, the miracles of Jesus and so much more! Download the app for free!

#### [holymen.com/pages/lenten-adventure](http://holymen.com/pages/lenten-adventure)

Fun, faithful & FREE activities for ages 5-12 for Lent

## 2022-2023 DIOCESAN TUITION ASSISTANCE PROCESS IS OPENING SOON

For the 31<sup>st</sup> consecutive year, the Diocesan Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is striving to keep Catholic school education affordable for Catholic families who desire it for their children but who may need some financial assistance to make that dream a reality. Thanks to the ongoing and genuine commitment of The Most Reverend Mark Brennan to the Catholic schools in our Diocese, funds have, once again, been allocated for distribution to Catholic families in need of financial assistance. Applying for TAP through FACTS is easy and affordable. You are encouraged to apply if your child is already enrolled or has been accepted by one of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston for the 2022-2023 school year.

- Who is eligible?** Any Catholic student accepted for the 2022-2023 school year in any Diocesan Catholic school (PK thru grade 12) and who belongs to a parish included on the drop-down list as part of the on-line application is eligible. Determinations are based upon a family's degree of need relative to all other applicants.
- How do I apply?** **Applications are made on-line. Go to [www.factsmgt.com](http://www.factsmgt.com), click on "Grant & Aid Assessment" and log in.** If you do not have Internet access, contact your school office for assistance.
- Cost?** The application fee is \$35. The Diocese will pay \$17.50 and families pay the other \$17.50.
- Grants:** Diocesan grants for Catholic families who have completed their applications and show financial need will receive up to 50% of the child's tuition.
- Phase I Deadline**  
**April 29, 2022** In order to receive notification in late May, applications (*including all required documentation and payment of the fee*) are to be received by **FACTS by April 29, 2022**.  
Phase I is intended for families with children currently enrolled or already accepted for the 2022-2023 school year in any Catholic school in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.
- Phase II Deadline**  
**August 31, 2022** In order to receive notification in early September, all applications for 2022-2023 (including all required documentation and payment of the fee) MUST be RECEIVED by FACTS no later than August 31, 2022. This is a firm deadline. Phase II is intended for families new to the school or who have had a life-changing event (i.e. birth, death, loss of job, major illness). If an application was submitted during Phase I, please contact the school. *Please do NOT submit a second application.*
- Note 1:** No assistance will be available from the Diocese or from any school unless:
1. an application is completed in full (ALL questions answered) and submitted
  2. all required documentation is provided, AND
  3. the family portion (\$17.50) of the application fee is paid by the deadline.
- Note 2:** **ONLY ONE APPLICATION PER FAMILY** should be submitted per school year. If you made an error or had a life event change, please do NOT submit a second application. Contact your principal and your application can be updated by FACTS.
- Questions?** If you have questions, please contact the principal of your school.

### Catholic Schools Gear up for Application/Re-enrollment Period

#### Hope Scholarship Program Creates Opportunity for New Families

Catholic schools throughout the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are preparing for the 2022-23 school year with their common application and re-enrollment period beginning in February. Schools are also preparing to welcome new students taking advantage of the HOPE Scholarship—with its application period set to open by March 2022.

The Hope Scholarship, formerly House Bill 2013, was passed last Spring by the WV Legislature. Hope Scholarship is set up to provide funds for families enrolling in private school, alternative instruction programs, or home schools. This education savings account is managed through the West Virginia Treasurer Riley Moore's office and not by the Diocese.

According to the Treasurer's website, [hopescholarshipwv.com](http://hopescholarshipwv.com), students are eligible for the program if they are:

1. A resident of West Virginia
2. Entering kindergarten for the first time in the Fall of 2022
3. Current K-11 student enrolled full time (or at least 45 days during the time of application) in a public elementary or secondary school in West Virginia in 2021-2022

The site also states that under the current school aid formula, each eligible student would receive \$4,600 annually that can be used toward private school, alternative instruction programs, or home school. The funds awarded can only be spent on education expenses such as tuition and fees, extracurriculars, tutoring, materials, supplies, textbooks, transportation, etc. Please visit the site to learn more about the program and receive updates from the Treasurer's office.



## CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

January 25th


### The Story of the Conversion of Saint Paul *-Franciscan Media*

Saint Paul's entire life can be explained in terms of one experience—his meeting with Jesus on the road to Damascus. In an instant, he saw that all the zeal of his dynamic personality was being wasted, like the strength of a boxer swinging wildly. Perhaps he had never seen Jesus, who was only a few years older. But he had acquired a zealot's hatred of all Jesus stood for, as he began to harass the Church: "...entering house after house and dragging out men and women, he handed them over for imprisonment" (Acts 8:3b). Now he himself was "entered," possessed, all his energy harnessed to one goal—being a slave of Christ in the ministry of reconciliation, an instrument to help others experience the one Savior.

One sentence determined his theology: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5b). Jesus was mysteriously identified with people—the loving group of people Saul had been running down like criminals. Jesus, he saw, was the mysterious fulfillment of all he had been blindly pursuing. From then on, his only work was to "present everyone perfect in Christ. For this I labor and struggle, in accord with the exercise of his power working within me" (Colossians 1:28b-29). "For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and [with] much conviction" (1 Thessalonians 1:5a).

Paul's life became a tireless proclaiming and living out of the message of the cross: Christians die baptismally to sin and are buried with Christ; they are dead to all that is sinful and unredeemed in the world. They are made into a new creation, already sharing Christ's victory and someday to rise from the dead like him. Through this risen Christ the Father pours out the Spirit on them, making them completely new.

So Paul's great message to the world was: You are saved entirely by God, not by anything you can do. Saving faith is the gift of total, free, personal and loving commitment to Christ, a commitment that then bears fruit in more "works" than the Law could ever contemplate.

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 a sodexo brand

Parkersburg 304-422-4020

**Catholic Cemeteries Association**  
 Ferguson Services 304-422-6786

  
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