

"Rejoice always.
Pray without ceasing.
Give thanks."
— 1 Thes 5:16-18

www.graceinaction.org
January 2009

GRACE IN Action

LIVING CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP™



celebrate
January

- 1 Mother of God
holy day of obligation
- 17 St. Anthony
- 21 St. Agnes
- 24 St. Francis de Sales
- 28 St. Thomas Aquinas



In Latin, "Agnus"
means "lamb."

ancientdisciple Celebrate the Year of St. Paul



Crosiers

"In St. Paul's letters, after the name of God, which appears more than 500 times, the name most frequently mentioned is Christ's (380 times). Thus it is important to realize what a deep effect Jesus Christ can have on a person's life, hence, also on our own lives....

"Looking at Paul, this is how we could formulate the basic question: How does a human being's encounter with Christ occur? And of what does the relationship that stems from it consist?..."

"In the first place, Paul helps us to understand the absolutely basic and irreplaceable value of faith...."

"In fact, although faith unites us closely to Christ, it emphasizes the distinction between us and Him; but according to Paul, Christian life also has an element that we might describe as 'mystical,' since it entails an identification of ourselves with Christ and of Christ with us. In this sense, the apostle even went so far as to describe our suffering as 'the suffering of Christ' in us, so that we might 'always [carry] in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.'

"We must fit all this into our daily lives by following the example of Paul, who always lived with this great spiritual range."

— Pope Benedict XVI, "The Apostles"

"Christian life also has an element that we might describe as mystical."

try this It's not too late

To observe the second half of the Year of St. Paul (June 28, 2008–June 29, 2009) and venerate this great saint, try this:

- Read St. Paul's writings.
- Make a mini-pilgrimage (visit churches dedicated to St. Paul; visit www.masstimes.org).
- Pray (see The Way We Pray).
- Spread the Gospel by volunteering, taking a Bible study or donating to a missionary order.
- Try your hand at our St. Paul crossword puzzle on our website.

Visit www.osv.com for more on St. Paul, including articles, Bible study, a quiz, information on the Pauline indulgence and a free prayer card download.



See the light.

Photo by Ken Papaleo: www.highcountrycoloring.com.

defining moments

Stewardship alphabet

Veneration of the Saints: Devotion to the saints, invoked in recognition of their presence before God and capability of intercession on behalf of the living.

Vigil Light: A candle burned as an act of devotion, or for a particular intention, in a shrine or before a holy image. The flame "keeps vigil" when the person isn't present.

Virtue: A good habit of the intellect or will that enables one

to perform an action with ease. Some are infused — theological virtues: faith, hope, charity — while others develop by practice — cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance. Virtue brings to fulfillment the powers and abilities that one possesses.

Vocation: The calling from God to follow a particular way of life. All baptized people receive God's universal call to holiness, to a life of grace and union with Him; this vocation is the call that gives human life its destiny



Photo by James Baca

and meaning.

Vow: A free and deliberate promise made to God concerning a possible and better good to be fulfilled by the person making it.

Source: Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Dictionary

Visit www.graceinaction.org for more "V" words and definitions from letters A-V.

sowing seeds

Know who you are, how to live

"Constantly, Christians must beg God for the grace of conversion: the grace to know who they are, to whom they belong, how they are to live — the grace to repent and change and grow, the grace to become good disciples and stewards."

— Stewardship: A Disciple's Response
U.S. Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship

Those called by Christ typically undergo a conversion, a change of heart, as did Saul the soldier who became St. Paul. Individuals respond to the invitation to discipleship through grace. Each believer discerns spirituality through virtues, sacraments and personal prayer. Each Christian pursues holiness along an individual path, all of which lead to the Lord.

**Who are you? To whom do you belong? What must you repent?
How will you grow in grace as a disciple and a steward?**



Illustration by Quincey Benton

kids corner

Keep alive a lost art

At every Mass, we hear readings from the letters written by St. Paul almost 2,000 years ago. Today, letter writing is nearly a lost art. Most people use e-mail, but it is still fun to receive mail the old-fashioned way. Take time to write a real letter to a family member or friend. Use nice stationery or decorate a plain piece of paper. Write with a colored pen. Pick out an interesting postage stamp. Add a sticker to seal your letter. Maybe you will receive a letter in return.

Log on to www.graceinaction.org to download our free coloring book based on the life of St. Paul.

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Our Sunday Visitor

the way we pray

A Prayer for Conversions

O Blessed Apostle, St. Paul, greatest of all converts, who labored unceasingly for the conversion of other souls, inspire me with the ardor of your zeal that I may pray and work for the conversion of my brethren, redeemed in the Blood of Christ but not as yet blessed with the full light of His Truth. Mindful



Photo by James Baca

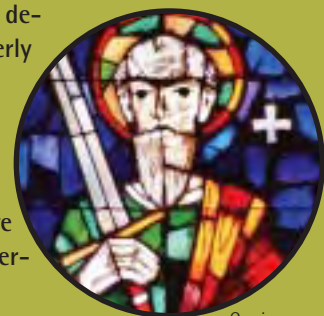
of the loving concern of the Divine Shepherd for the salvation of the "other sheep that are not of this fold," I now beg your intercession to obtain the grace of conversion for (name of family member, friend or others). May God, the Holy Spirit from whom alone this gift can come, hear my humble prayer and thus enable me to share with others the riches of my heritage of faith through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

— From "Catholic Family Prayer Book," OSV

faith fact

St. Paul's sword

Religious art often depicts St. Paul — a converted Roman soldier — holding a sword, the weapon of his martyrdom. The saint often is depicted as elderly and bearded. Since the dawn of the Church, Catholics have looked to external beauty — painting, sculpture, mosaics, architecture, vestments — as an expression of the invisible glory of God. Medieval cathedrals included sculpture and stained glass; and even the first catacombs are decorated with murals.



Crosiers