



ST. AQUILINA

Fsuffer for Your sake in order to
reign with You, I died for You in order
to live in You . . .

– *Part of Troparion of St. Aquilina*

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Regional All Saints Sunday

June 17, 2012

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Next Sunday is the feast day of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. Our celebrations will conclude with festal anointing.

+++ We are currently enjoying the grace of the Apostles' Fast which concludes with the holyday of the Prime Apostles, Peter & Paul, our parish patronal feast day. Please observe this period by sacrificing for personal salvation and the good of our parish.

+++ A very happy and blessed Fathers' Day celebration to all our parishioners today. We offer prayers of intercession for our beloved fathers, living and departed. We invite all our faithful to pray and offer candles for their continued good health and for the repose of their souls. God grant you Many Blessed Years and blessed repose, Eternal Memory!

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week: Tithe Offering, \$700.00; Candles, \$100.00; Food Coupons, \$200.00; Special Gift, \$100.00, for a total of \$1100.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offer their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Anna Zacharyczuk, Eleni Pallas, Debra Szmaida, Paul Szmaida, Marilyn Korba, and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$100.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ Please be certain to see a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$1100.00 on this project to date!

+++ **The Clothing Drive is a permanent on-going project in our parish. Please bring any type of clothing and fabrics along with stuffed animals and shoes for the benefit of our parish. The bags can be left in the vestibule or on the front porch of the rectory. Please invite your friends and neighbors to assist us in disposing of unwanted clothing, shoes and fabrics.**

+++ **We remember only those who are present for the entire Divine Liturgy should come forward to receive Communion. The entire Liturgy means "Amen" to "Amen."**

+++ **Please pray the Lord our God grant us an enrichment of our spiritual lives for his glory.**

+++ **We need a volunteer to be in charge of arranging trips to the Lancaster Co., Pa. Theater for our parishioners. Please see Father immediately.**

+++ **May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!**

The Holy Spirit
and
Conversion

As the Holy Spirit does not fail, but is given to those who ask, souls are no more difficult to convert now than at any other time. The approach must be different, as the road to the soul of the Roman was different from that to the Jew. In psychological terms, every conversion starts with a crisis, moral or spiritual. The moral crisis begins with a moment or a situation involving some kind of suffering, physical, emotional or spiritual with a dialectic, a tension, a pull, a duality, or a conflict. The crisis accompanied, on the one hand, by a profound sense of one's own helplessness, and on the other hand, by an equally certain conviction that Almighty God alone can supply what the individual lacks.

If there were only a sense of a helplessness, there would be despair, pessimism, eventual suicide. This is, indeed, the condition of the present day pagan; he feels the total inadequacy of his own inner resources against the overwhelming odds of a cruel universe and falls into despair. He has one-half of the necessary condition for conversion – namely, a sense of crisis – but he fails to link up his powerlessness with the Divine Power which; sustains and nourishes the soul. In such a situation, paganism gives place to what may be called creative despair; “despair” because the man recognizes his spiritual disease, “creative” because he knows that only a Divine Physician can bring about healing.

The crisis of conversion is sometimes spiritual rather than moral. This is frequent among those who have been seeking perfection, but are not yet possessed of the fullness of the faith and sacramental Mysteries. Some such souls have led a good life on the natural plane; they have been generous to the poor and kind to their neighbors and have furthered at least a vague fellowship with all people. Others have had a smattering of the supernatural life; they have led as Christ-like a life as they know how, living up to faith in him as they see his light. The crisis in their souls begins at the moment when they either recognize that they have tremendous potentialities not yet exercised or begin to yearn for religious life which will make greater demands on them as it also reveals more and more of the opportunities and challenges accorded believers in Christ Jesus. The seeking soul desires the fullness of faith response.

Up to that moment of crisis, they have lived on the surface of their souls. The tension deepens as they realize that, like a plant, they have roots which need greater spiritual depth and branches meant for communion with the heavens above. The growing sense of dissatisfaction with their own ordinariness is accompanied by a passionate craving for surrender, sacrifice, and abandonment to the will of God. The shift from mediocrity to love may be occasioned through the example of a saint, the inspiration of spiritual reading, the desire to escape from mere symbols to divine

reality. However, it comes, there is a duality present from the moment the soul hears Christ saying: *Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect* Matthew 5: 48.

Conversion is the introduction of a new Spirit. The unconverted man has an incompatible spiritual Rh factor in his human nature, which is corruptive; it is overcome by making him *...share in the divine nature* 2 Peter 1: 4, through a blood infusion of Golgotha, the Resurrection and Pentecost. Conversion, therefore, is totally different from proselytism, which is only a change in group membership, or the putting on of a new label. But conversion is a *metanoya*, a change of character, the becoming of an entirely new man.

THE SPIRIT MAKES CONVERTS, NOT US

The work of conversion is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, through the use of human means. The Spirit may place a rod in the hands of a shepherd, his action may induce an awareness of the absence of God in the soul, or it may create a sense of God's presence and of his actual grace working in the soul. In all instances, the Holy Spirit illumines the mind to see a truth not visible before, and strengthens the will to do things never before attempted. Job speaks of one way in which the Holy Spirit touches the soul in suffering: *Sometimes in visions of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men as they lie abed, he speaks words of revelation to teach them the lesson they need. This is one means by which he will turn a man away from his designs, purge him of his pride; and so the grave is disappointed, the sword misses its prey. Or else he will use the pains of the sick-bed for man's correction, and leaves his whole frame wasted with disease* Job 33: 15 - 19.

The priest must never think that his preaching and zeal won the convert. Lydia listened to Paul, but Scripture testifies, *...and the Lord opened her heart, so that she was attentive to Paul's preaching* Acts of the Apostles 16: 15.

Here was woman, already religious, described as a person of prayer; yet her mind needed the tuition of the Holy Spirit in order to understand what she had heard. Incidentally, Lydia was the first convert in Europe and it was from the grace of her house that the evangelization of this continent began.

Sometimes the revelation of the Holy Spirit is gradual, as with the woman at the well. We note she first called Our Lord a *...Jew...* John 4: 9, then a *...man* John 4:

12, then a gentleman when she addressed him as *Sir* John 4: 15, then ...*a prophet* John 4: 19, then the ...*Messiah* John 4: 25, and finally, ...*Saviour of the world* John 4: 42.

The jailer at Philippi was the second convert in Europe (Acts of the Apostles 16: 27 – 34), and he was moved by the Holy Spirit through fear and through the witness of the word of Paul. The Ethiopian treasurer illustrates how the Holy Spirit directs a priest to one whose conversion is divinely willed, *The Spirit said to Philip, go up to that chariot and keep close by it* Acts of the Apostles 18: 29.

Obviously the Ethiopian had some concept of religious faith, for he was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. The Holy Spirit moves even souls dedicated to sorcery and magic. Such souls in their darkness may be searching for the truth. A sorcerer named Elymas tried to turn the Proconsul, Sergius Paulus from the faith, the rudiments of which he had received from the preaching of Paul. *Then Saul, whose other name is Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit...* Acts of the Apostles 13: 8, blasted the sorcerer. Incidentally, that is the first time Scripture ascribes to Saul the Roman name of Paul. Denouncing Elymas as a son of the devil, Paul strikes him blind which is his first miracle. One wonders if Paul recalled that he himself was struck blind at the time of his conversion. Was it in order that the temporary blindness might give light, as did his own? No doubt the Apostle remembering his own case, knew that by the darkening of the eye, the mind and soul's darkness might be restored to light. It was the first appearance of Christianity before a Roman aristocrat and government official.

No soul is beyond conversion. The Lord assures us through the prophet Joel that he will make good the bad years. *Profitless years, when the locust ravaged you, Gnaw-all and Ruin-all and Spoiler, that great army of mine I let loose among you, they shall be made good* Joel 2: 25.

Converting souls in keeping with the priestly vocation to be ...*fishers of men* Mark 1: 17, is no easy task because each catch takes its toll of effort. But losing is the condition of gaining in the realm of the Holy Spirit. We never profit another without being aware...*power had gone out* Mark 5: 30, from us, as our Lord was when He healed the woman with the issue of blood. But who are the energetic priests? Are they not the zealous priests? Nothing is as fatiguing as boredom. And too many priests today are bored. Filled with the Spirit of Christ, a priest working with souls is precisely like the burning bush which announced itself to Moses in disclosing his vocation to him, and was aflame, but did not burn out (Exodus 3: 2). Every exhaustion of spiritual energy by a priest creates a vacuum for a richer endowment of the Holy Spirit until

souls become his passion. *It is he who gives the weary fresh Spirit, who fosters strength and vigor where strength and vigor is none* Isaiah 40: 29.

So in a parish without spiritual stone being added to spiritual stone, the Lord bids us work and labor enthusiastically. There can be no work apart from strength. Priests supply the work and God provides the power. It is comfort that makes us shirk the work of conversion. We are clothed but are we warmed by the fire of Pentecost? The wages we earn; are they put into a bag with holes, or are we laying up the richer treasury of souls and covering up the mountain of our own failings? Saving souls is the assurance of the priest's salvation. *My brethren, if one of you strays from the truth, and a man succeeds in bringing him back, let him be sure of this, to bring back erring feet into the right path means saving a soul from death, means throwing a veil over a multitude of sins* James 5: 19, 20.

Or might the observation of St. John Chrysostom in his famous tome on the priesthood strike us to greater response in priestly vocation when he rightly observes, *The road to hell is paved with the skulls of priests.*

Priests are but spiritual farmers; who till the soil while our heavenly Father drops the seeds. We make no converts. We must never count up our converts or we will one day begin to think that we ourselves, not the Lord is responsible for their presence in the Body of salvation. The very same divine energy that wrought Creation and Redemption saves souls.

THE SPIRIT AND INSTRUCTION

Instructing a soul is not arguing. One can readily and easily win an argument and lose a soul, so the priest has to be patient with bigots, even fools. If we believed the lies they believe about the Church, we too, would hate it a thousand times more than they. The priest may try to discover if the objections against the faith expressed by an enquirer are in fact intellectual, or if instead they are basically moral, that is, if they are rooted in some improper behavior. So-called "reasons" are sometimes rationalizations to justify the way people live. If it is important to find out not only what people say about Christ and His church but why they say it. This was the technique used by our Lord with the woman at the well. She introduced a theological problem when her real difficulty was a moral one, namely, her five husbands. He

nevertheless, did not cast her aside even though He saw through her pretense. Instead, He showed her what her real problem was and she was converted to reality.

The best approach of the priest to enquirers is neither to prove they are wrong, nor to prove he is right, but simply to share the salutary message of Jesus Christ, to offer bread to the hungry and drink to the thirsty. Our blessed faith is the satisfaction of the soul's desire, not the correctly presented philosophical syllogism. The priest must prepare himself carefully for every discussion. Before starting to instruct, he should spend some time in thinking up analogies, examples and answers to possible objections.

To save souls, the priest must seriously aspire after holiness. If he makes no effort to be like Christ, holiness will never be achieved. The Lord does not use dirty and soiled tools. How can priests approach sinners, if they are justified in saying, *Physician, heal yourself* Luke 4: 23? Nor can priests invite and bid fallen-aways to return to the obedience they owe the Church if they are able to question the priest's own way of living and acting and relating. *An errand these prophets ran, but none of mine; a message they gave, but not of my sending. Privy to my design had they been, ah, then they should have uttered my own warnings, and so I might have turned my people aside from false paths and erring thoughts* Jeremiah 23: 21, 22!

Instructions to the enquirer should be so formulated as to prove that priests not only believe, but actually live and love what they teach and witness. If we show little enthusiasm for the sublime truth we communicate, how shall the convert and the so-called convinced believer learn to continue to love revealed truth? The problem in the contemporary world is that there is such a disparity between theory and practice, between form and substance.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND LOST SHEEP

Our love of souls must be persistent. We get used to reading the Parable of the Good Shepherd, but do we understand that for priests it is an actual spelling out of the serious obligation and sublime privilege to seek lost sheep. Leaving a dinner, breaking an evening's entertainment, interrupting a siesta, all such efforts are summed up in leaving *...those ninety-nine others on the mountainside and go out to look for the one that is straying* Matthew 18: 12.

Nothing not spiritual is sacred in the face of a spiritual need. Even the “banished” ones, those outside the Church through bad marriages, those who spurned the heart of God though He spurned them not, are not these a vital part of the ministry of each priest? *Never a soul will God suffer to be lost in the reckoning; still he busies himself with remedies to save the life of him who is banished* 2 Kings 14: 14.

The banished and separated son of the Church still remains a son and the true priest grieves as long as he is away from his home. How many couples remain in invalid marriages or just cohabiting with one another without the blessing of heaven? The love of our heavenly Father is active on behalf of even the worst and the unworthiest of souls. Grace is imparted to many who were written off by priests of little faith, for God has said, *...the death of a sinner is none of my contriving* Ezekiel 33: 11. Is not our God a Father and is not the priest likewise a “father” as well? Priests must never imitate the elder brother who would not receive back the prodigal. Here were two sons who lost the love of the Father; one because he was “too good,” and the other because he was “too bad” but the latter it was who found that love and discovered it again (Luke 15: 11 - 32).

As servants of the Most High, we have confidence in his power: *There is a stronger power at work in you, than in the world* 1 John 4: 4. Our zeal for conversion will go through three stages: a heavenly prayer, exhausting identification with others, and finally, the healing of the soul. St. Mark reminds us that our Lord, at his encounter with a deaf and dumb man, likewise performed the miracle of curing him in three steps. *He looked up to heaven, and sighed; he said, ephpheta, that is, be opened* Mark 17: 34.

The condition of the apostolate of souls is the realization that heaven grants it. To look in the first instance anywhere else, for example, to publicity or so-called organization, is to miss the source of power. If this mistake is made, we can next anticipate that costly pity and compassion in which we are one with the ignorant, the dull and deaf. Only then is the eye opened to faith, the heart to the sound of the world of God. No one can give light to the spiritually blind unless he gazes into heaven. What we as priests give depends on what we receive.

How often are the sighs of our Lord mentioned in God’s revelation to us, for example; at the sight of the hardness of hearts and unbelief, at the sight of a leper, a hungry multitude, in the face of hostility and over the dead body of Lazarus! All the ills and evil of man’s fate and conduct weighed on his priestly heart in genuine concern. So the worth of priestly effort is in proportion to the expanse of sympathy and feeling we have for unconverted souls. The depth of a priest’s compassion is the measure of his

apostolic concern and success. The example and response to the needs of souls must be the same for priests today as it was in the time of our Lord. Inspiration is not based on emotions, but on a resolute love for the salvation of souls. *At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity. They were lying prostrate from exhaustion, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, 'The harvest is good but laborers are scarce. Ask the master of the harvest to send laborers to gather his harvest'* Matthew 9: 36, 37.

Here, too, it is pertinent to meditate on the relation between the love of the Holy Spirit and the Eucharistic Presence on the one hand, and our sympathy for souls and eagerness to nourish them with heavenly food on the other. The gaze and the sigh went together in the apostolate of our Lord. Likewise the look at the tabernacle and sympathy for the sick are twins. He who prays, sympathizes; he who has the Spirit in his soul has a body that takes up a cross daily for his people; he whose eyes sweep the heavens for the grace of the Spirit, has the keener gaze for the lost sheep of the earth, even those who are in pain and separation. The habitual communion with God is the root of the priest's compassion. Pity is second; our Lord is very first!

When the Holy Spirit seeks to work in us for souls, our nature shrinks from the task. But it is something like swimming; it becomes a joy after the shock of the first plunge. We grow weary, of course, but our God is unwearied in giving us new strength. Age is not at all the determining factor. The young who lack the Spirit tire more quickly than the old who have and use it. *Youth itself may weaken, the warrior faint, but those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength, the eagles new-fledged; hasten and never grow weary of hastening, march on, and never weaken on the march* Isaiah 40: 30, 31.

The natural man steadily tends to exhaustion. All life lived on the creature level digs its own grave. But the man who trusts in the Unwearied God does not follow the earthly law of fatigue. Priests without zeal are tired in mind before they are tired in body. Their exhaustion is confusion due to the loss of the Spirit, if they ever had him. But the true apostle, though he may sit like his Master, *...tired after his journey, by the well,* John 4: 6, can nevertheless count a converted soul, as *...food to eat of which you know nothing* John 4: 32. Grace abhors a vacuum, as nature does. The empty house of the gospel that was not filled by the Holy Spirit was occupied by seven devils!

Thanks to the Holy Spirit, though the priest grows older in years, he becomes younger through ascent to the altar of God where youth is renewed. Exertion without the Spirit is impatience; impatience touched by the Holy Spirit, is zeal for souls.

As the diamond cutter works diamonds and the sculptor stone, so the priest works souls. *Like a shepherd he tends them, gathers up the lambs and carries them on his shoulders* Isaiah 40: 11.

In the parish the priest will carefully watch that not one such soul is plucked out of his hands *My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand* John 10: 27 – 29. Authority in the Church was not given to Peter until he made a triple promise to love. Any authority priests exercise has the same foundation. The priest is as tender in love to his people as Jacob was to his flock: *I may lose a whole herd if I overdrive them* Genesis 33: 13.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SCRIPTURE

It has been said that a characteristic gesture of many priests, when they take the Bible from a shelf, after looking at for it for a prolonged several minutes, is to tap it with the hand to knock the dust away. This may explain why pulpit orators are so fond of a few routine texts, such as *Come you that have received a blessing from my Father...Matthew 25: 34; or Come to me all you who are labored and are burdened...Matthew 11: 28; and around Pentecost, Go out, make disciples of all nations* Matthew 28: 19. Why is it that the less prepared the preacher is, the more he is inclined to “wing” it and not find it necessary to prepare carefully a soul-changing and enriching message each Sunday and holyday? Why is he more inclined to find fault with his parishioners? And the less he examines his own conscience in meditation, the more he resorts to moralistic nagging! Instead, he should rise to the challenge of St. Paul made to the Roman parishioners: *Now then, teacher of others, are you failing to teach yourself* Romans 2: 21?

The serious priest, on the contrary, assures his flock: *We are Christ's ambassadors, then, and God appeals to you through us* 2 Corinthians 5: 20. And if God appeals, He does so through his revealed word: *I preached God's gospel to you* 2 Corinthians 11: 17.

The preacher will do well to ponder the technique used by St. Paul at Thessalonica; *Over a space of three Sabbaths he reasoned with them out of scripture, expounding these and bringing proof from them that the sufferings of Christ and his*

rising from the dead were fore-ordained; the Christ, he said is none other than the Jesus whom I am preaching to you Acts of the Apostles 17: 2, 3.

When he spoke to King Agrippa, Paul used exactly the same method preaching: *Yet there is nothing in my message which goes beyond what the prophets spoke of, and Moses spoke of, as things to come, a suffering Christ, and one who should show light to his people and to the Gentiles by being the first to rise from the dead Acts of the Apostles 26: 22.*

Blessed Peter uses Scripture in exactly the same way to develop truth of faith. *Salvation was the aim and quest of the prophets and the grace of which they prophesied has been reserved for you. The Spirit of Christ was in them, making known to them the sufferings which Christ's cause brings with it, and the glory that crowns them, when was it to be and how was the time of it to be recognized 1 Peter 1: 10, 11?*

Can the preacher of today do better than Peter and Paul? Regardless of how many times people hear God's manifestation to us in scripture, they can always find something new in them. St. Paul has set out the reason why this is so. *Everything in Scripture has been divinely inspired, and has its uses; to instruct us, to expose our errors, to correct our faults, to educate us in holy living, so God's servant will become a master of his craft, and each noble task that comes will find him ready for it 2 Timothy 3: 16, 17.*

Scripture is not merely a record of historical events that have passed. Scripture constitutes for every age a revelation of God's mind and will to each individual. Many of the incidents recorded in the Old Covenant provide a perspective to give us a fuller understanding of events that occurred later and are described in the New Testament.

For example we have recounted for us a quarrel in Abraham's family (Genesis 21: 10 – 12). Ishmael, his child by Hagar, mocked and insulted his younger child Isaac, the son of promise, whose mother was Sarah. Sarah sided with Isaac and decided that Hagar and Ishmael should be driven out of Abraham's house. Such family quarrels and maternal revenge may not seem to have much pertinence until we read in St. Paul (Galatians 4: 30), where he explains that the casting out of the bondwoman and her son was to show that they were yet in bondage to the Law and were consequently not entitled to share in the inheritance of the Gospel.

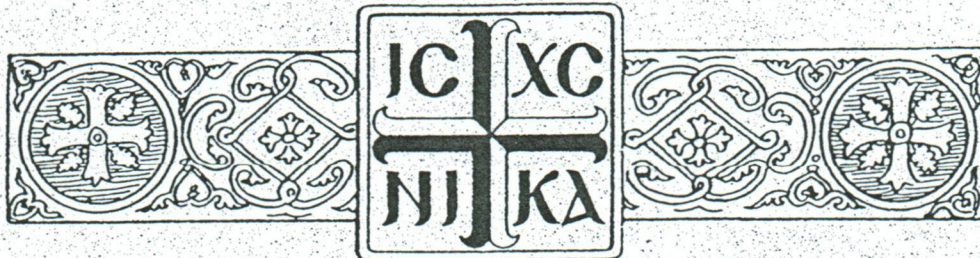
Not only does Scripture derive its inspiration from the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit alone makes its meaning clear. Before his conversion, St. Paul was versed in

Scripture, yet could not see in them that the Lord was the Christ. Our blessed Lord told the Pharisees that they poured over the Scripture but did not realize that God's Word referred to him. *Search the Scripture in which you think you have eternal life – they also testify on my behalf, yet you are unwilling to come to me to possess that life* John 5: 39, 40. Whatever beneficial effect was produced on the listener always came through the Holy Spirit. *Our preaching to you did not depend upon mere argument; power was there, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, and an effect of full conviction* 1 Thessalonians 1: 5.

When St. Paul recalled the effect of his preaching on the Corinthians, he probably had in mind his lack of success in Athens. He had given a very learned talk in Athens, quoting several of the Greek poets, but the effect was limited to one or two conversions. Thereupon he left Athens for Corinth. During the forty mile trip, he must have meditated on his want of success and tried to determine why he failed. Later on, when he wrote to the Corinthians, he contrasted preaching by philosophy and eloquence and preaching by the power of the Holy Spirit.

So it was brethren, that when I came to you and preached Christ's message to you, I did so without any high pretensions to eloquence or to philosophy. I had no thought of bringing you any other knowledge than that of Jesus Christ and of him crucified 1 Corinthians 2: 1 – 3.

There are two kinds of knowledge about Christ: the speculative and the practical. The former is obtained by study, the latter only through the Holy Spirit who alone leads us to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour.



VESPER VERSES ACCORDING TO THE EIGHT TONES

TONE 1

1. Receive our evening prayers, O Holy Lord.
Grant us remission of our sins.
You alone have revealed the resurrection to
the world.
2. All you nations encircle Sion;
Dance merrily round about her.
Give glory to the Lord risen from the dead.
He is our God.
He has delivered us from our sins.
3. Come all you nations,
Let us sing a hymn of praise to Christ.
Let us worship Him.
Let us glorify his resurrection.
He is our God :
He has delivered the world from the deceit of
the enemy.
4. Rejoice you heavens;
Sound the trumpet you foundations of the
earth.
Mountains, shout your mirth aloud.
Emmanuel has nailed our sins to the cross.
The Giver of Life has destroyed Death by
death.
He has raised Adam
For he alone loves mankind.
5. Let us sing a hymn of praise to the Lord;
He freely was crucified.

He suffered and was buried for us;
He rose from the dead.
Let us all say :
O Christ, confirm your Church in the true faith.
Give us your peace.
You are gracious and You love mankind.

6. Let us, although we are unworthy,
stand at your life-giving tomb, O Christ, our
God.

Let us give glory to your loving kindness.
Although sinless, you were crucified and died.
You granted resurrection to the world.
You alone love mankind.

7. Let us sing a hymn of praise to the Word.
He is co-eternal with his Father.
He was born of the Virgin in a wondrous way.
He freely accepted crucifixion and death for us.
He rose in glory.
Let us all say : Glory be to You, O Lord,
Life-giver and Savior of our souls!

8. Glory be to the Father ✚, and to the Son, and
to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and
forever. Amen.

Let us sing a hymn of praise to the Virgin.
She is the glory of the whole world.
Formed by human seed, she became the mother
of the Lord.
She is the gate of heaven, beauty of the
faithful.

She was seen as heavenly; the tabernacle of
the Divinity.

She tore down the wall between God and men.
She brought peace and opened the Kingdom
of Heaven.

Let us hold fast to her, the anchor of faith.

Let us receive as our stronghold the Lord
Who was born of her.

Be of good cheer, have confidence, people of
God.

He will fight our enemies for us;

He is all-powerful.

At the Apostichon

1. By your suffering we have been saved from
suffering, O Christ!

By your resurrection we have escaped corrup-
tion.

O Lord, glory be to you!

2. Let creation rejoice; let the heavens be glad.

Let all people cheerfully clap their hands.

Christ our Savior has nailed our sins to his
cross.

He has crushed Death by his death.

He has granted life to us by raising Adam;

He alone loves mankind.

3. O Creator, King of heaven and earth,

You alone love mankind.

You freely accepted crucifixion.

When the Abyss received you, it moaned.

When the souls of the just met You, they
rejoiced.

Adam awoke and rose when he saw You.

What a wonder!

The Life of all freely tasted death.

He enlightened those who cry out :

O Lord, risen from the dead, glory be to You!

4. The faithful women who carried spices

Weeping hastened to your tomb.

They could not find your body.

They learned from the angel great and won-
drous news.

They told the disciples :

“ The Lord is risen granting great mercy to
the world. ”

5. Glory be to the Father ✝, and to the Son, and
to the Holy

Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

The prophecy of Isaiah has been fulfilled in
you, O Virgin!

You have given birth, and after birth you
remained the same.

The Lord born of you is God;

He has renewed all creation.

Do not reject the supplications we offer to
you, O Mother of God.

You have carried the Compassionate Lord;

Have pity on those who come to you.

Intercede for the salvation of our souls.

THE MARTYR AQUILINA

The era of the early Church was a time of great unrest and persecution. For anyone to stand firm in their Christian Faith required great strength and conviction — doing so would commonly lead to torture and death. This is why the story of the Martyr Aquilina is such a remarkable one, for she was only 12 years old when she began her work as a young missionary. Aquilina was born in Byblos in 281 AD. Even at an early age, she showed an eagerness to learn as much about Jesus Christ as she possibly could. Through her words and example, many other children in the community embraced Christianity and were baptized. When the pagan magistrate Volusian learned of this, he had Aquilina summoned to appear before him. He chastised the young girl for “. . . leading her friends away from the religion of our gods” and threatened her with severe sufferings. Amazingly, Aquilina stood her ground, proclaiming that her faith would allow her to endure whatever she had to face. The enraged magistrate had her beaten so severely that he thought she had died. He ordered her body to be thrown outside the walls of the city. Imagine his surprise when Aquilina — after being revived and ministered to by angels — appeared before Volusian the next day. The magistrate then had her imprisoned and issued an order of execution that would be carried out the following day. When the soldiers came for her in the morning, however, they found that she had fallen asleep in the Lord during the night — God had spared her from the terrible death that had been planned for her. When the persecution of the Church ceased during the time of the Emperor Constantine, her relics were taken to Constantinople where a great basilica was built in her memory.