

Mass, Sat. Conversion of University of Notre Dame
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The Fighter.

Tomorrow is the feast of the conversion of the gamest fighter the Church has ever known.

As a highly intelligent young man he found his religion and his race extremely unpopular. But, though himself physically small, he didn't curl up at the odds against him. He turned fighter.

Saul was a zealot of orthodox Judaism. When he learned that a Christian sect was springing up from among his own people, his blood boiled. It was trouble enough to fight united against the pagan Greeks.

He would smash these fanatical Christians. And how he smashed! At the stoning of the first Christian martyr, there was Saul. In the great persecution at Jerusalem, Saul took the lead, working havoc, according to the Acts of the Apostles, to the early Church.

He broke into Christian houses. He dragged Christian men and women to prisons. He terrorized by force and fear. Hatred of Christians turned his eyes northward to Damascus. To the high priest at Jerusalem Saul hurried "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." He wanted authorization to persecute the Christians of Damascus. He got it.

With official letters in his pocket he rode to Damascus. But on the way something happened. As he rode, a heavenly light struck him to the ground, and he heard a kind, mysterious voice call out to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad!"

Yes, it is very, very hard for anyone to kick against the goad. Out of divine resources, Jesus carried His point. That was enough for Saul (changed to "Paul" at the conversion). No pussy-footing, half-way measures for him! With whirlwind swiftness he turned Christian, saint to the core, apostle to the death.

From Damascus back to Jerusalem he travelled, now the firebrand of Christ. By land and by sea he journeyed, fighting intrigue and insurrection among Pagans and Jews. He preached, he wrote, he suffered, he fought.

And how he could take it in the cause of Christ! According to his own testimony, bitter Jews scourged him five different times, with 39 lashes each time. Three times he was cruelly beaten by rods. Once he was stoned. Three times he was shipwrecked. Often he fell into perils of robbers, into perils from his own nation, into perils from the Pagans, into perils in the wilderness, into perils in the sea, into perils from false brethren. In labor and painfulness he toiled, in watchings and hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. And near the end they put him in chains in Rome. And, finally, they beheaded him.

For what did he do it all? To bring souls into the Catholic Church. It meant that much to him. You are a Catholic, too. What do you do about it? Pity yourself because your religion imposes obligations? Fear to be known as a Catholic in unfriendly quarters? Have you ever put yourself out, even a little, to bring a soul into the Church? Did you pray for anyone during the Church Unity Octave?

Ask tomorrow for a generous measure of the fearless spirit of Saint Paul. You need it as an antidote against the sickly indifference of the age.

PRAYERS: (deceased) friend of a student. Ill, person to undergo operation; Rosemary Rausch, sister of Carl Rausch (Bronson); James Shelton, uncle of Professor Louis Buckley. Also deceased, mother of John Annas '35.