



Saint Paul: An Overview of His Letters

The Catholicism of St. Paul

Tapping into Theology

July 11, 2017

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Preview

Biographical Vignette & Context

- Early life
- Education
- Later life

Apostolic Significance

- Initial relationship with the Church
- Conversion and Jesus' choice of Paul as Apostle
- Apostle to the Gentiles

Scriptural Contribution

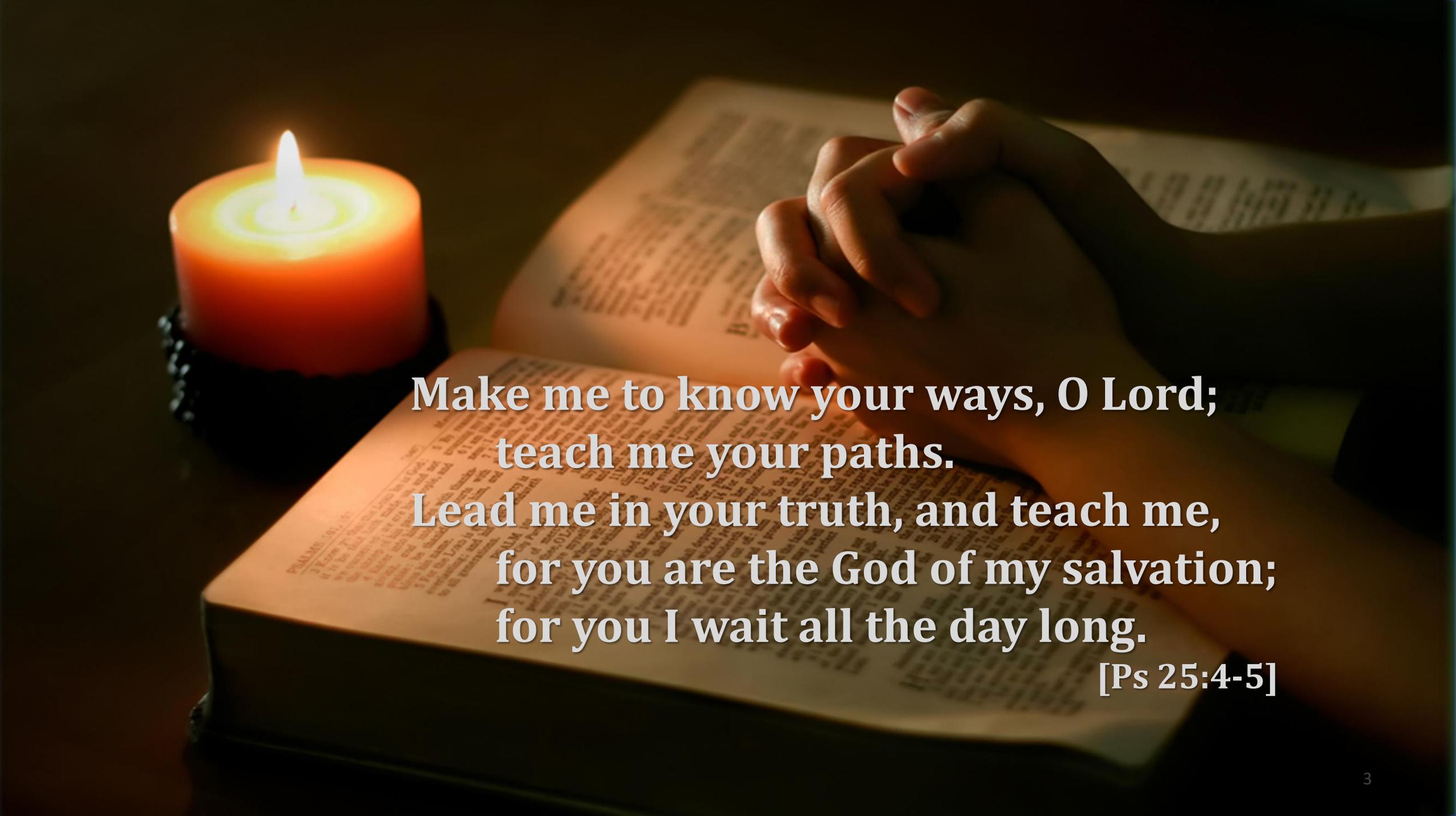
- Three Major Pauline Themes
- Four Marks of the Church

Criteria for interpreting Scripture in accordance with the Spirit who inspired it

- 📖 Be attentive to the Content and Unity of Sacred Scripture
- 📖 Read within the Living Tradition of the whole Church
- 📖 Be attentive to the Analogy of Faith

CCC 112-114

St. Paul's doctrine is Catholic!

A photograph showing a person's hands clasped in prayer over an open Bible. To the left, a lit candle provides a warm, soft light. The scene is dimly lit, emphasizing the spiritual nature of the activity.

**Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long.**

[Ps 25:4-5]

Early Life

Born ca. 5 AD in Tarsus, Cilicia [Acts 21:39]

Benjimate Jew and Roman citizen

Saul = Hebrew for “pray for”

Named for Israel’s first king, a Benjimate

Paul = Latin for “small, little”

His Family

Father was a Roman citizen [Acts 26-28]

Sister and nephew [Acts 23:16]

**Prestigious family → Sent to Jerusalem to study
under Gamaliel of the Hillel pharisaic school**

A Tent-maker [Acts 18:3]

A Pharisee [Phil 3:5]



Feast: June 29



Education

**Pharisee (*peras*, Aram.) = to separate (for a life of purity), pure one
Studied Mosaic Law in Hillel school**

Headed by Gamaliel

Interpreted the Law more liberally

Tolerated 'the Way' (Christianity), to some extent

Adopted many of the stricter precepts of the Shammai school

Interpreted the Law strictly

Took 'purity' to an extreme

Manifested stricter interpretation into persecution of 'the Way'

Immersed in Jewish Scripture, tradition, history, and the Law

“Paul represents mission, theology, and evangelization, the outward and energetic dimension of the Church’s life. Paul was the first theologian in the tradition, the first to practice the art of faith seeking understanding.”

Bishop Robert Baron



Later Life

Persecuted converts to 'The Way' . . . until he 'saw the light'

The 'first exegete' of the New Covenant era

Ordained apostle to the Gentiles by Peter, James, and John [Gal 2:9]

Founded and nurtured many churches

Rabbi, mystic, missionary, polemicist, author, Apostle

Imprisoned in Rome's Mamertine prison

Martyred at the command of Nero ca. AD 67

Apostolic Significance

Initial relationship with the Church

Conversion and Jesus' choice of Paul as Apostle

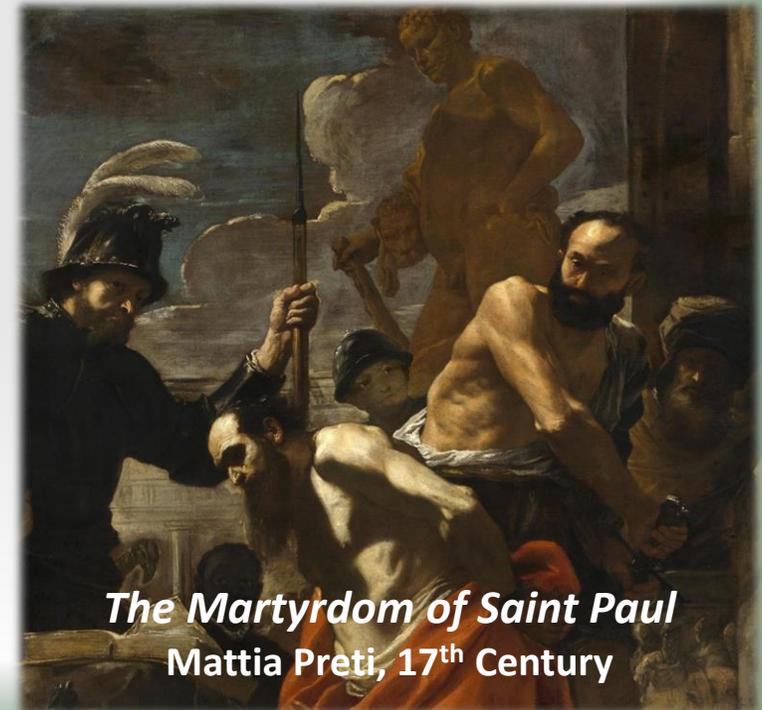
Missionary journeys

Scriptural Contribution

Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians,

Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians,

1 & 2 Timothy, Philemon, Titus; Hebrews



The Martyrdom of Saint Paul
Mattia Preti, 17th Century

Initial Relationship with the Church

His duty to eliminate 'The Way': *I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women . . . [Acts 22:4]*

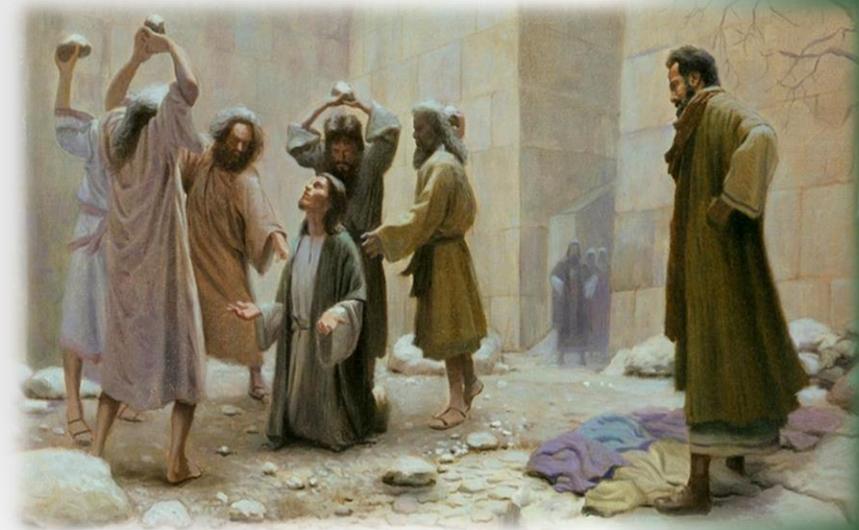
The authority at the stoning of Stephen

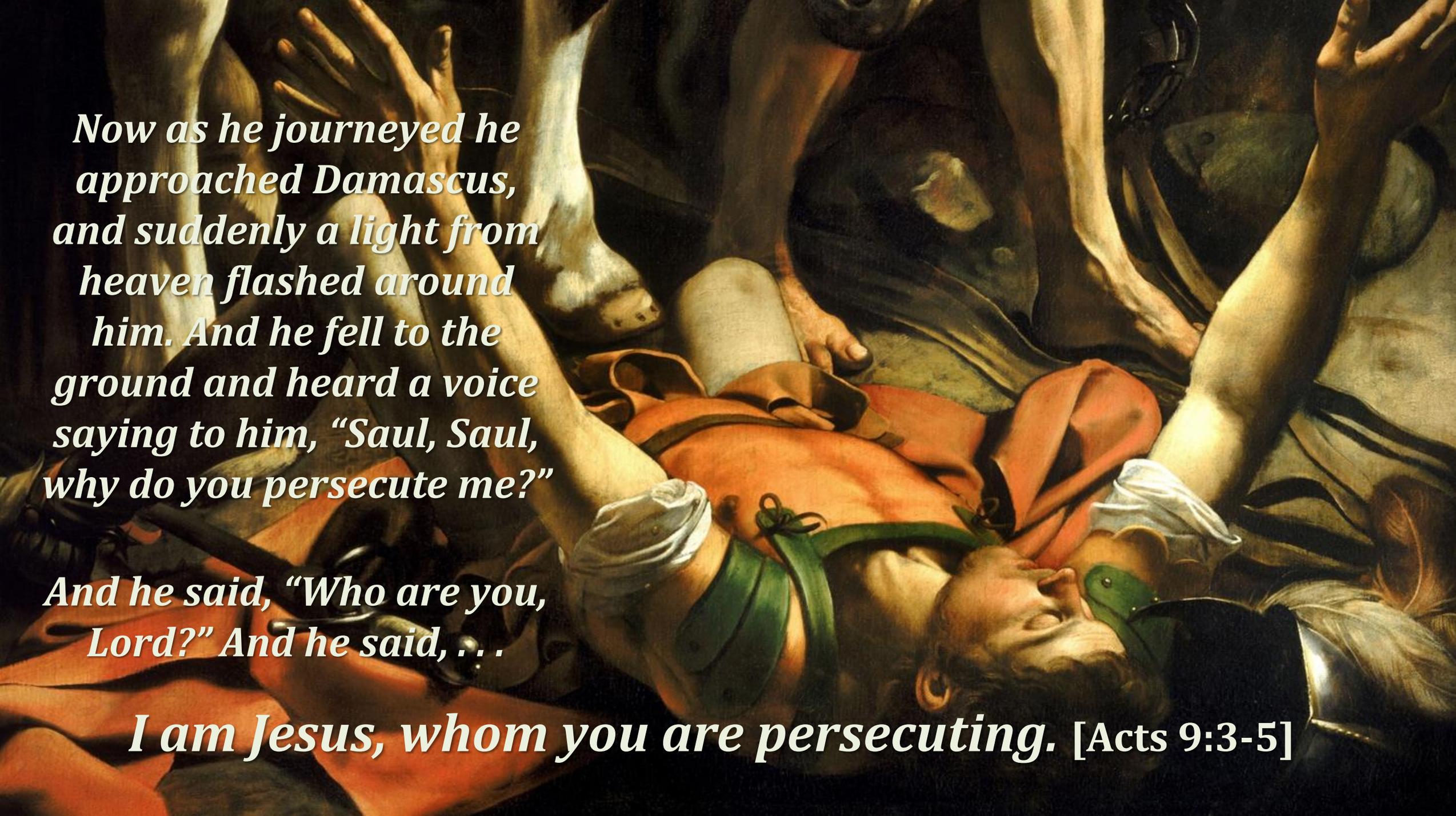
The witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And Saul was consenting to his death. [Acts 7:58; 8:1]

Stephen's speech likely affected Paul [Acts 7]

Recounted 'Salvation History': call of Abraham, God's three Covenant promises, call of Moses, the exodus, wandering in the wilderness, Moses' prophecy that "God will raise up for you a prophet", the Decalogue, Joshua leading Abraham's family into the Promised Land (1st Promise fulfilled), the kingdom of David (2nd Promise fulfilled), and the murder of the prophesied "Righteous One" (Christ)

Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. [Acts 9:1-2]





*Now as he journeyed he
approached Damascus,
and suddenly a light from
heaven flashed around
him. And he fell to the
ground and heard a voice
saying to him, "Saul, Saul,
why do you persecute me?"*

*And he said, "Who are you,
Lord?" And he said, . . .*

I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. [Acts 9:3-5]

Conversion and Jesus' choice of Paul as Apostle

The light of Christ that blinded Paul illuminated his intellect

After three days, Ananias told to lay hands on Paul

After laying on of hands, Paul regained his sight and was Baptized

Immediately, Paul proclaimed Jesus, "He is the Son of God." [Acts 9:20]

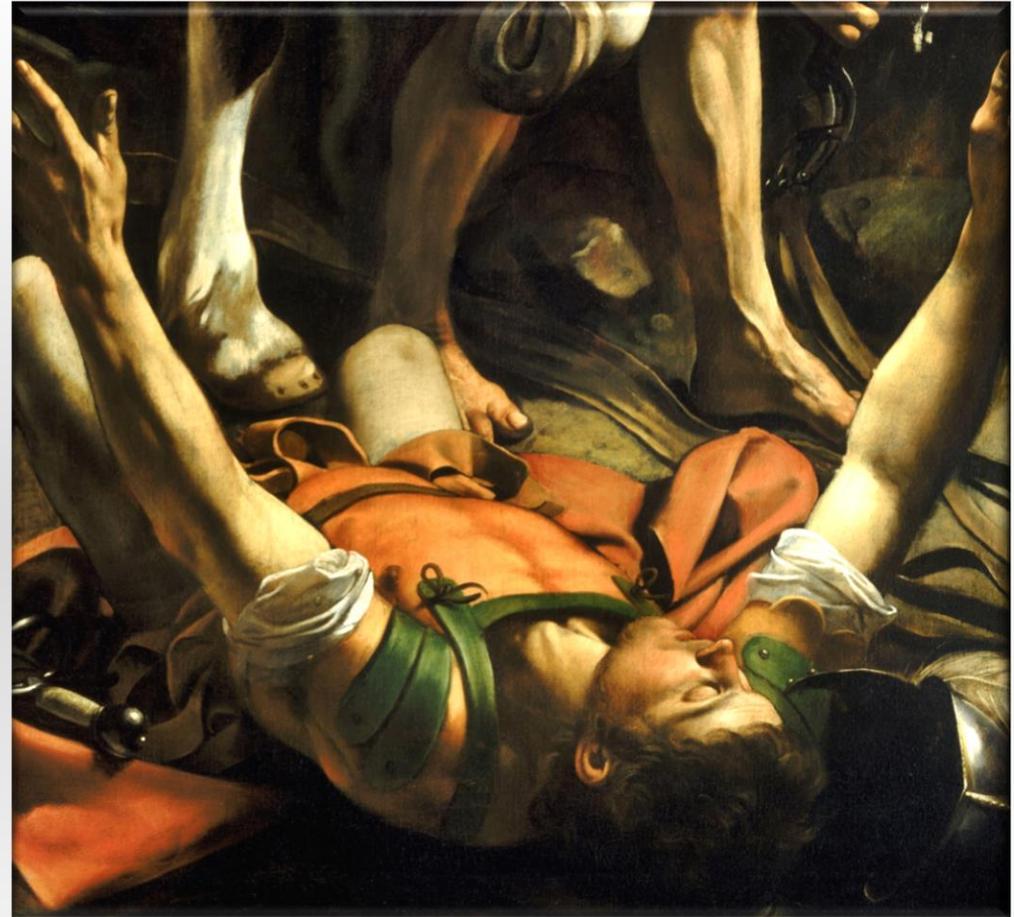
Conversion, renewal, is the work of Divine intervention

For Peter, at Caesarea Philippi it was gradual

For Paul, on the road to Damascus it was an event

For everyone, *metanoia* should be a life-long, life-changing process

When Jesus becomes the light of our life, all things are made new.



Jesus Christ has made me his own. [Phil 3:12]



Apostle to the Gentiles

Jesus' choice of Paul

To the Jews, he was a traitor, an apostate, a false teacher

To 'the Way', although he had persecuted them, he became their "father" and steadfast advocate

To the Gentiles, he embodied the authority of Christ and the credibility of a Jew who had 'seen the Light'

James and Cephas and John . . . gave to me the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles . . . [Gal 2:9]



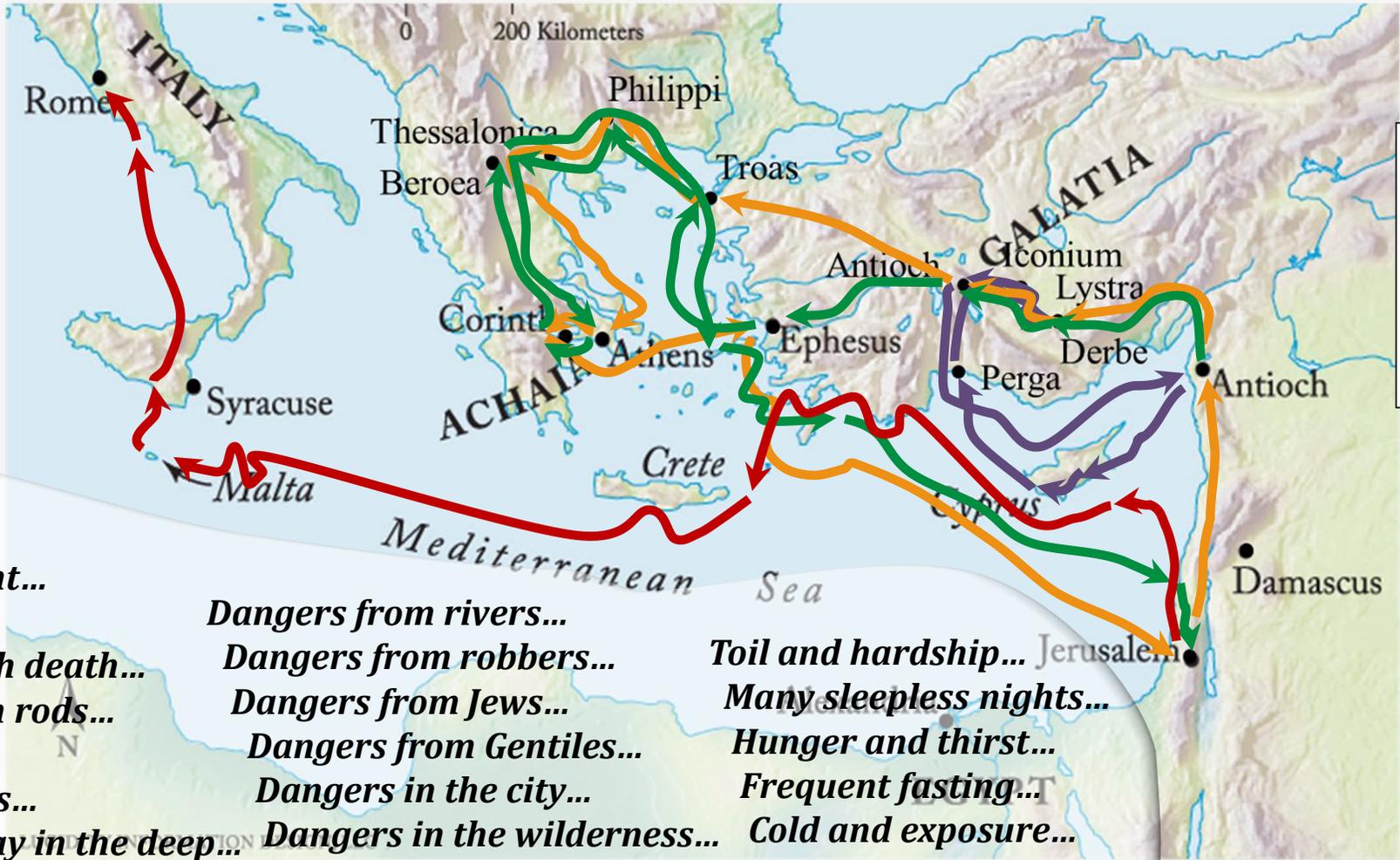
LUCIDITY INFORMATION DESIGN, LLC



Apostle to the Gentiles

Mission Journeys

Apostolic Significance



Journeys of St. Paul

- 1st Journey
- 2nd Journey
- 3rd Journey
- 4th Journey

Labors...
Imprisonment...
Beatings...
Brushes with death...
Beaten with rods...
Stoning...
Shipwrecks...
Night & day in the deep...

Dangers from rivers...
Dangers from robbers...
Dangers from Jews...
Dangers from Gentiles...
Dangers in the city...
Dangers in the wilderness...
Dangers among false brothers...

Toil and hardship...
Many sleepless nights...
Hunger and thirst...
Frequent fasting...
Cold and exposure...

[2 Cor 11:23-28]

Apostle to the Gentiles

Paul was no stranger to suffering and controversy

To many, he was a heretic, a self-serving opportunist

To others, he was the gateway to salvation

Heresies, throughout history, have been typified by doctrinal conflict

Paul is often cited as the 'authority' – by non-Catholics and Catholics

Martin Luther, *et al* and the
Protestant Reformation

Council of Trent and the Catholic Counter Reformation
Catechism of the Catholic Church (over 730 citations)

Paul is often misunderstood, misinterpreted, and mischaracterized

Heretic

Guardian of Jewish legalism

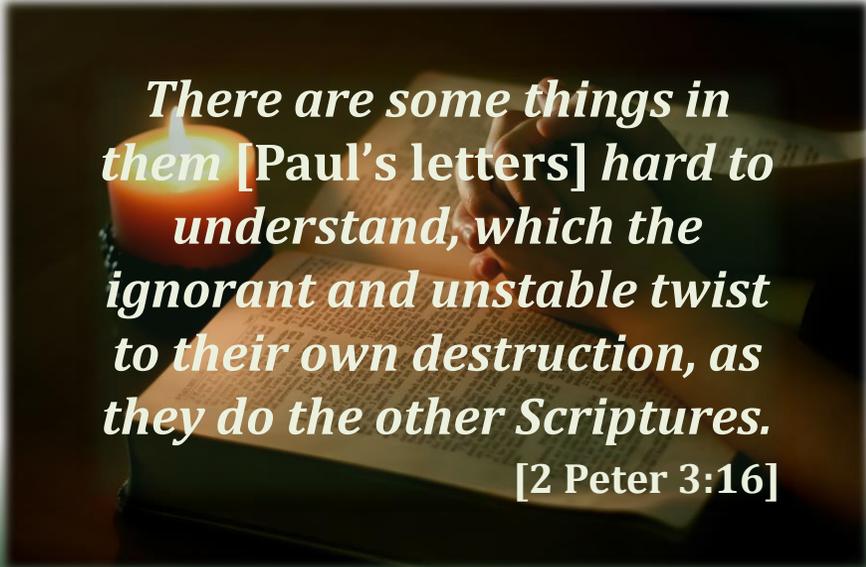
Too Greek

Too Jewish

Too gnostic

Misogynist

Against sexual freedom and
social progress



*There are some things in
them [Paul's letters] hard to
understand, which the
ignorant and unstable twist
to their own destruction, as
they do the other Scriptures.*

[2 Peter 3:16]

Apostle

Champion of Grace

Orthodox

Traitor to Jews

opportunist

Liberator of women

Advocate of true
freedom





Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? [Acts 9:4; 26:14]

Paul's theology springs from . . .

- Knowing the Hebrew Scriptures, and his training as a Pharisee**
- Experiencing St. Stephen's martyrdom discourse**
- Encountering Jesus on the road to Damascus**
- Recalling Christ's words**
- Integrating those with his knowledge of Scripture**
- Suffering in and for Christ**

Three Major Pauline Themes

- Participation in Christ**
- Salvation by Grace**
- The Church (*ekklēsia*)**

- Rebirth in Christ**
- Life In Christ**
- Eternity in Christ**

Four Marks of the Church

- One**
- Holy**
- Catholic**
- Apostolic**

Foundational Elements

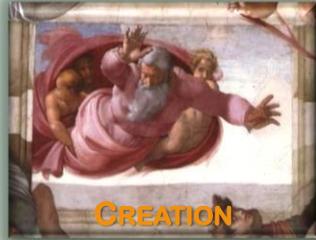
God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. **In his Son and through him,** he invites men to become, **in the Holy Spirit,** his adopted children and thus **heirs of his blessed life.**

Catechism of the Catholic Church #1



God's Economy (Plan) of Salvation

God created man to... share in his own blessed life.

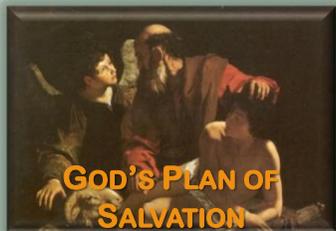


CREATION

... scattered and divided by sin.



THE FALL



GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him...

To accomplish this... God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior.

The Chosen

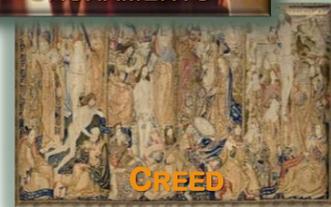


Christ

The Father's Plan Fulfilled

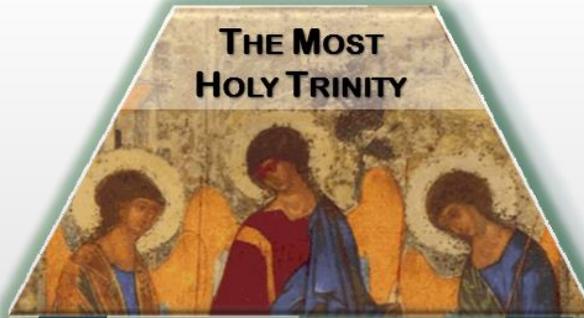
He calls together all... into the unity of his family, the Church.

The Church



CREED

...he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit...



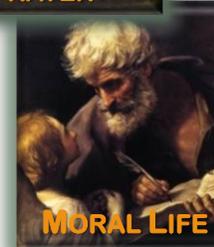
THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

To share in His Own Blessed Life!

... his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life.



PRAYER



MORAL LIFE



SACRAMENTS



We are being drawn to participate in His Divine Nature.

Participation In Christ is Paul's Most Common Topic

Paul addresses salvation, justification, faith, works/works of the Law, church, sacraments, sanctification, gifts of the Holy Spirit, etc.

Paul presents them as participation [*koinonia*] in the Person and Works of Christ

In Paul's letters, "in Christ" and "in Him" are more common than all other topics combined

Paul preaches a synergy of salvation [*synergia*, working together]

*In my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling; for **God is at work in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. [Phil 2:12–13]*

***Working together** [*synergountes*] with him [Christ], then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. [2 Cor 6:1]*

"This synergy of Christ in believers is based firmly on the grace of God. Christ's life echoes in the lives of those closest to Christ."

Taylor Marshall, *The Catholic Perspective on Paul*

"In Christ", Christ and believers work together toward Salvation.



Recalling Christ's Words

Paul's source for 'participation in Christ' is Christ's own words. . .

Abide* in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it **abides* in the vine**, neither can you, **unless you abide* in me**. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who **abides* in me**, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for **apart from me you can do nothing**. If a man does not **abide* in me**, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. **If you abide* in me, and my words abide* in you**, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

[John 15:4–7]

* **abide** (*menō*) = to reside, to remain (used 7 times)

The glory which you have given me I have given to them, that **they may be one* even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that **they may become perfectly one***, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have **loved them even as you have loved me**.***

[John 17:22–23]

* **one** (*heis*) = an individual person; identical; the same (used 3 times)



Participation In Christ: Rebirth in Christ



Participation In Christ: Rebirth in Christ

... for **in Christ Jesus** you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have **put on Christ**. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are **all one in Christ Jesus**. [Gal 3:26-28]



CCC 791: The body's unity does not do away with the diversity of its members . . . The unity of the Mystical Body produces and stimulates charity among the faithful . . . the unity of the Mystical Body triumphs over all human divisions: "For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have **put on Christ**. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are **all one in Christ Jesus**." [Gal 3:26-28]



Participation In Christ: Rebirth in Christ

*Therefore, if any one is **in Christ**, he is a **new creation**; the old has passed away, behold, the **new** has come. [2 Cor 5:17]*

*Do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ Jesus** were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore **with him** by **baptism** into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in **newness of life**. [Rom 6:3-4]*

*you were buried **with him** in **baptism**, in which you were also **raised with him** through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. [Col 2:12]*

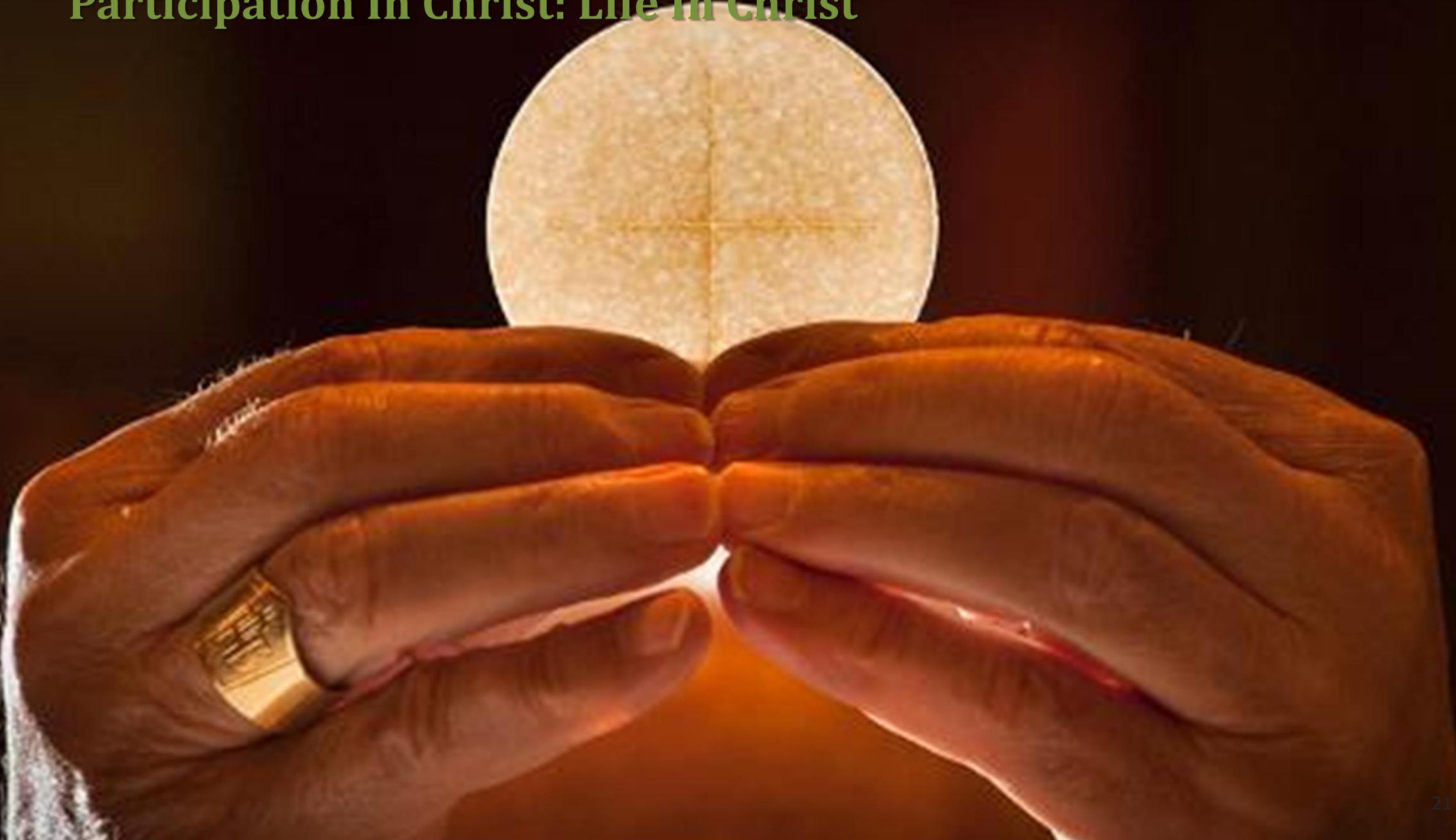
CCC 1999: The grace of Christ is . . . the sanctifying or deifying grace received in **Baptism**. Therefore if any one is **in Christ**, he is a **new creation** . . . [2 Cor 5:17]

CCC 1214: This sacrament is called **Baptism** . . . to “plunge” or “immerse”; the “plunge” into the water symbolizes the catechumen’s burial **into Christ’s** death, from which he rises up by resurrection **with him**, as “**a new creature**.” [2 Cor 5:17; cf. Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12]



Participating in Christ’s Death and Resurrection is our Rebirth.

Participation In Christ: Life In Christ



Participation In Christ: Life In Christ

*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for **God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.** [Phil 2:13]*

*I can do all things **in him who strengthens me.** [Phil 4:13]*



CCC 308 The truth that **God is at work in all the actions of his creatures** is inseparable from faith in God the Creator. God is the first cause who operates in and through secondary causes. . . [Phil 2:13, 14]

CCC 1949: Called to beatitude but wounded by sin, man stands in need of salvation from God. Divine help comes to him **in Christ** through the law that guides him and the grace that sustains him. [Phil 2:12-13]

CCC 1460: We who can do nothing ourselves, as if just by ourselves, can do all things with the cooperation of **“him who strengthens”** us. [Phil 4:13]



Participation In Christ: Life In Christ

Now we **have received** not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit which is from God**, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. [1 Cor 2:12]

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are **in Christ Jesus**. For the **law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus** has set me free from the law of sin and death. [Rom 8:1-2]

CCC 2038: Faith and the practice of the Gospel provide each person with an experience of **life “in Christ,”** who enlightens him and makes him able to evaluate the divine and human realities according to the **Spirit of God**. [1 Cor 2:12]

CCC 782: The People of God is marked by characteristics that clearly distinguish it from all other religious, ethnic, political, or cultural groups found in history . . . “Its law is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us.” [John 13:34] This is the **“new” law of the Holy Spirit**. [Rom 8:2]



Participation In Christ: Life In Christ

*Indeed all who desire to live a **godly life in Christ** Jesus will be persecuted . . . [2 Tim 3:12]*

*we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because **God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.** [Rom 5:3-5]*

*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a **participation** in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a **participation** in the body of Christ? [1 Cor 10:16]*

CCC 2847: The Holy Spirit makes us discern between trials, which are necessary for the growth of **the inner man**, [2 Tim 3:12; Rom 5:3-5] and temptation, which leads to sin and death.

CCC 1329: by doing so [the first Christians] signified that all who eat the one broken bread, Christ, **enter into communion with him and form but one body in him.**

CCC 1331: *Holy Communion*, because **by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ**, who makes us **sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body.**



Participation In Christ: Life In Christ

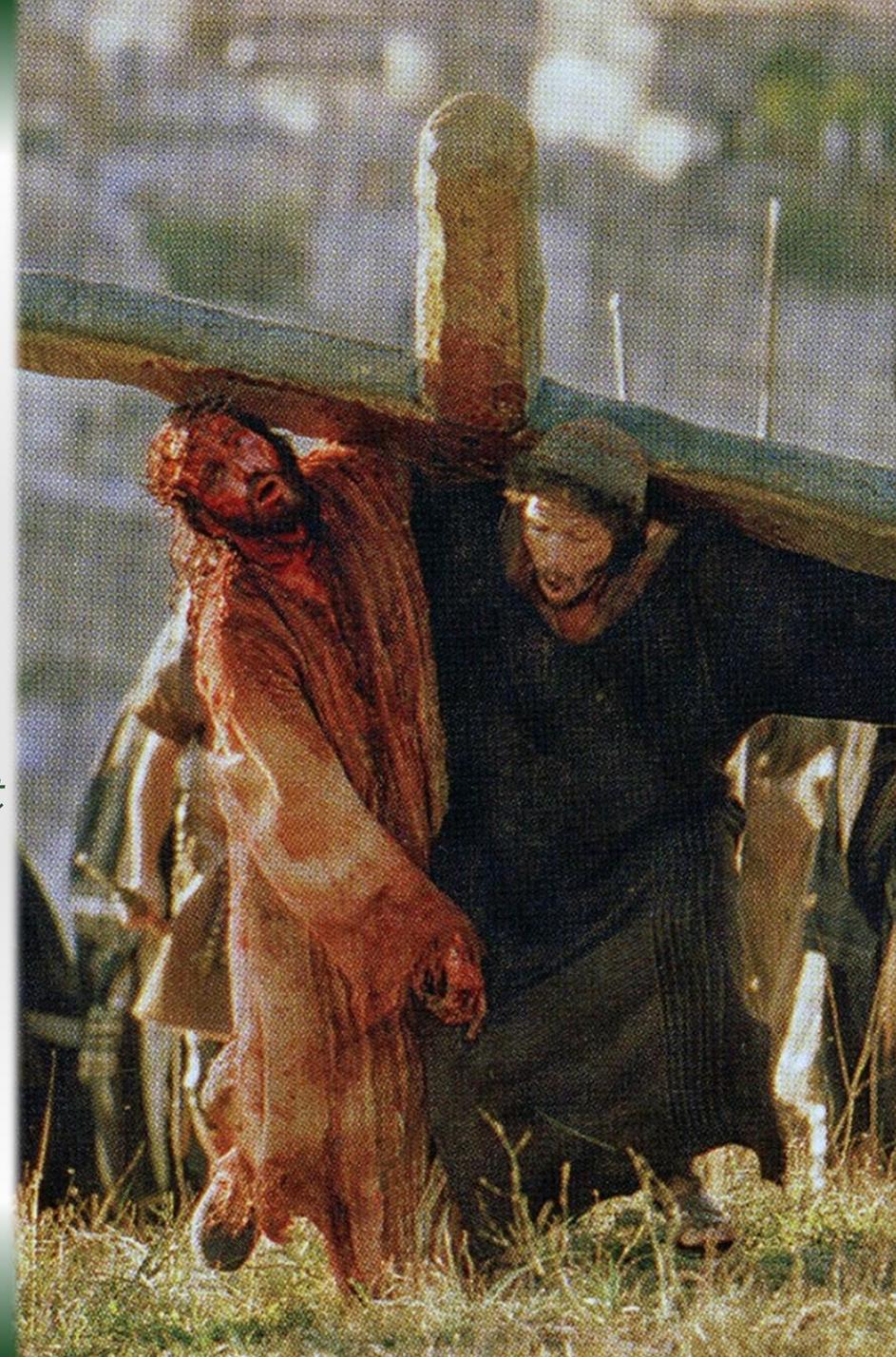
*Indeed all who desire to live a godly **life in Christ** Jesus will be persecuted . . . [2 Tim 3:12]*

*For as we **share** abundantly **in Christ's** sufferings, so **through Christ** we **share** abundantly in comfort too. [2 Cor 1:5]*

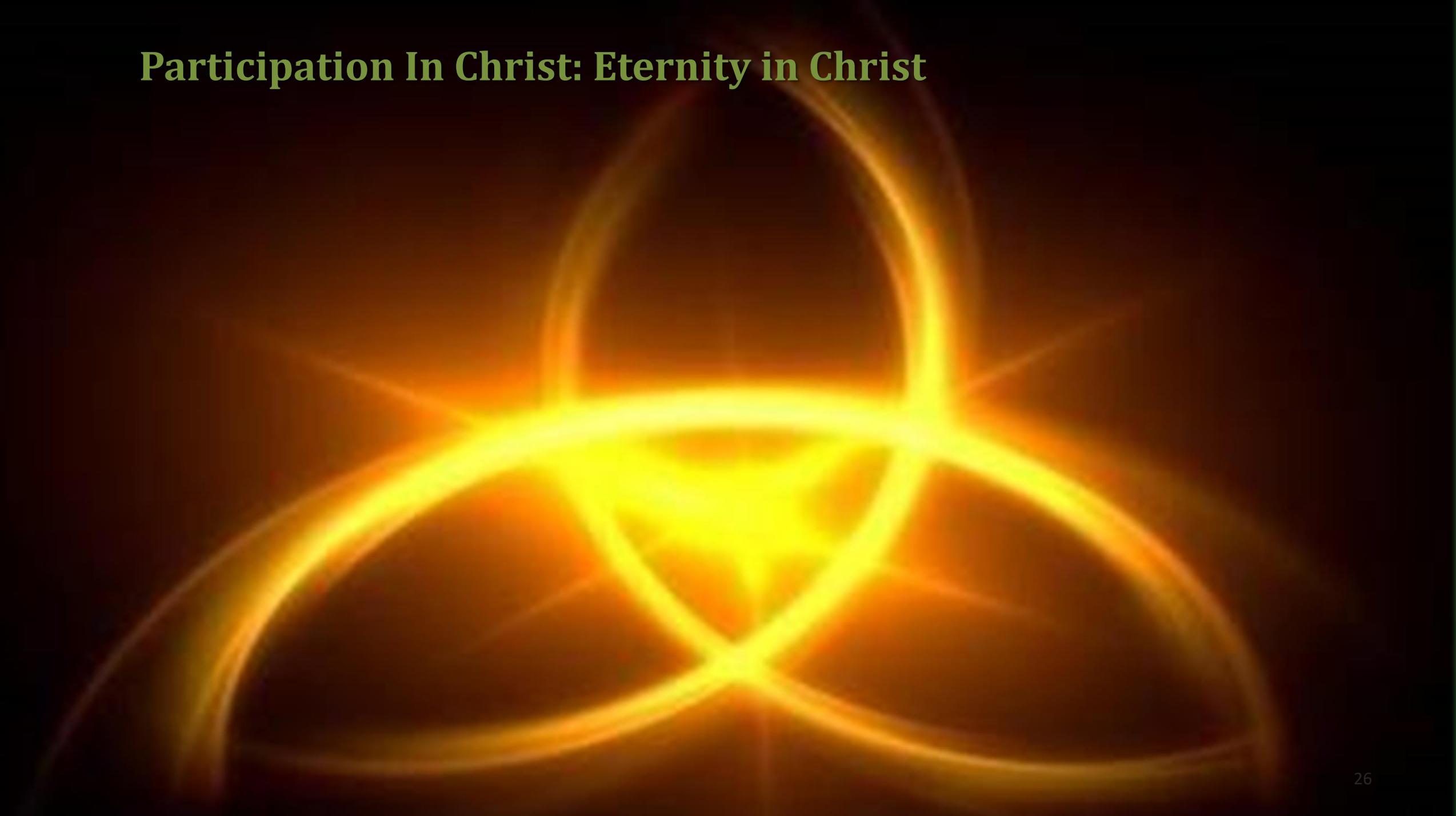
*That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may **share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death**, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. [Phil 3:10–11]*

*It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that **we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.** [Rom 8:16–17]*

Participating, sharing in Christ's suffering shapes our Sanctification.



Participation In Christ: Eternity in Christ



Participation In Christ: Eternity in Christ

*God our Savior, who desires **all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth. [1 Tim 2:3-4]*

*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that **as Christ was raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life**. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be **united with him in a resurrection like his** . . . [Rom 6:3-5]*

*that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may **attain the resurrection from the dead**. [Phil 3:10-11]*

CCC 851: God “desires **all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth” [1 Tim 2:4] . . . God wills the **salvation of everyone** through the knowledge of the truth. Salvation is found in the truth.

CCC 1006: For those who die in Christ’s grace it is a **participation in the death of the Lord**, so that they can also **share his Resurrection**. [Rom 6:3-9; Phil 3:10-11]



Participation In Christ: Eternity in Christ

*if any one is **in Christ**, he is a **new creation**; the old has passed away, behold, **the new has come**. . . [2 Cor 5:17]*

*through God **you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir**. [Gal 4:7]*

*Now **you are the body of Christ and individually members of it** [1 Cor 12:27]*

and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [Rom 8:17]

***your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you** [1 Cor 6:19]*

Participating in Christ, we partake in His Divine nature and become “heirs of his blessed life”. [CCC 1]

CCC 1265: Baptism not only **purifies from all sins**, but also makes the neophyte “**a new creature,**” an adopted son of God, who has become a “**partaker of the divine nature,**” [2 Cor 5:17; 2 Pet 1:4; cf. Gal 4:5-7] **member of Christ and co-heir with him,** [1 Cor 12:27; Rom 8:17] and a **temple of the Holy Spirit.** [Cf. 1 Cor 6:19]



*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness . . . by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become **partakers of the divine nature**.* [2 Pet 1:3-4]*

* The transformation of human nature by Divine Grace.

Participation In Christ

Our life “in Christ” is a free gift of God’s Grace

We cannot earn it

We have to accept it

We must live it

I can do all things in him who strengthens me.

[Phil 4:13]

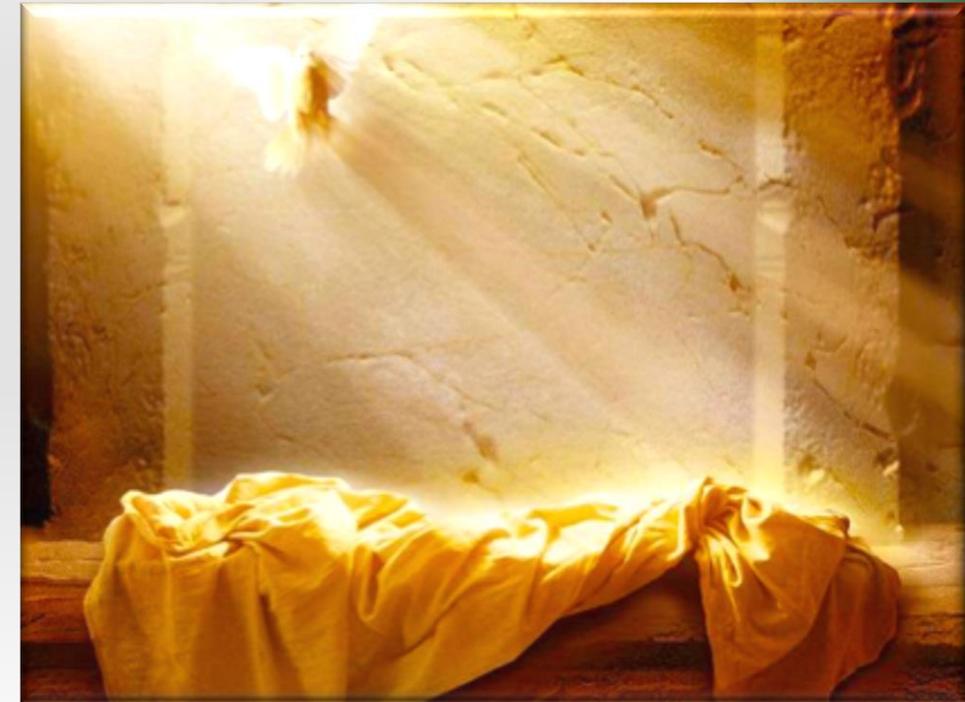


For Paul, Christ’s Resurrection is essential

If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain . . . For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

[1 Cor 15:14, 17]

**Our eternal life “in Christ” is enabled by His Resurrection – He is the “first fruits”
Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life**



Our deepest participation in Christ is in His Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? [Acts 9:4; 26:14]

Paul's theology springs from . . .

- Knowing the Hebrew Scriptures, and his training as a Pharisee**
- Experiencing St. Stephen's martyrdom discourse**
- Encountering Jesus on the road to Damascus**
- Recalling Christ's words**
- Integrating those with his knowledge of Scripture**
- Suffering in and for Christ**

Three Major Pauline Themes

- Participation in Christ
- Salvation by Grace**
- The Church (*ekklēsia*)

Four Marks of the Church

- One
- Holy
- Catholic
- Apostolic



Three Major Pauline Themes: Salvation by Grace

Salvation, justification, faith, works, the Law, works of the Law, predestination, etc. are featured foci for many non-Catholics

Appropriated by Reformation leaders

Evolved into high-profile doctrines

Rationalized and emphasized in Pauline studies

Used to separate the faithful



Paul is often misunderstood and misapplied, because many non-Catholics apply an 'either-or' hermeneutic

'All of our love must go to Jesus . . .' (there's only so much love to go around)

Loving Mary, saints, the Church, etc. deducts from the amount of love for Jesus

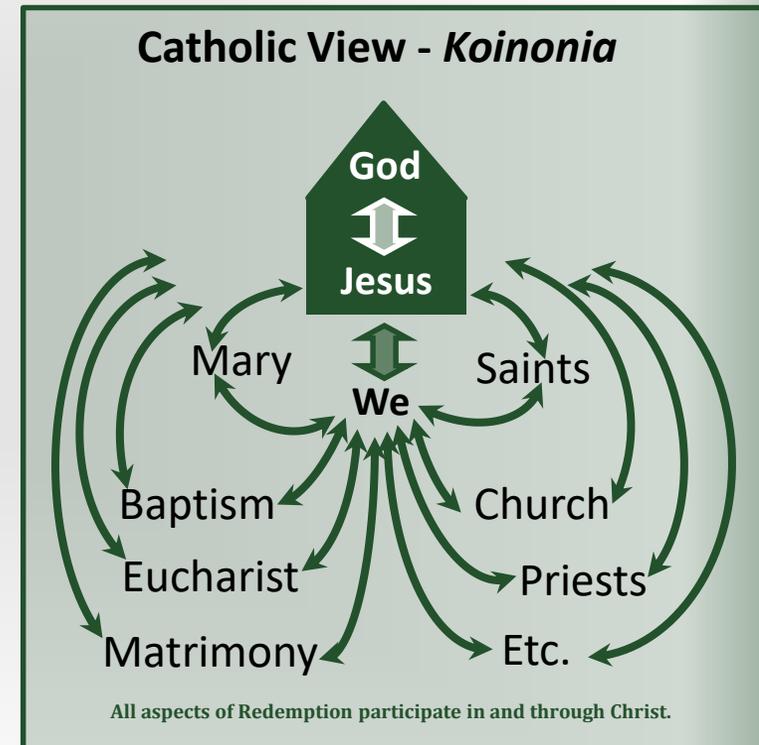
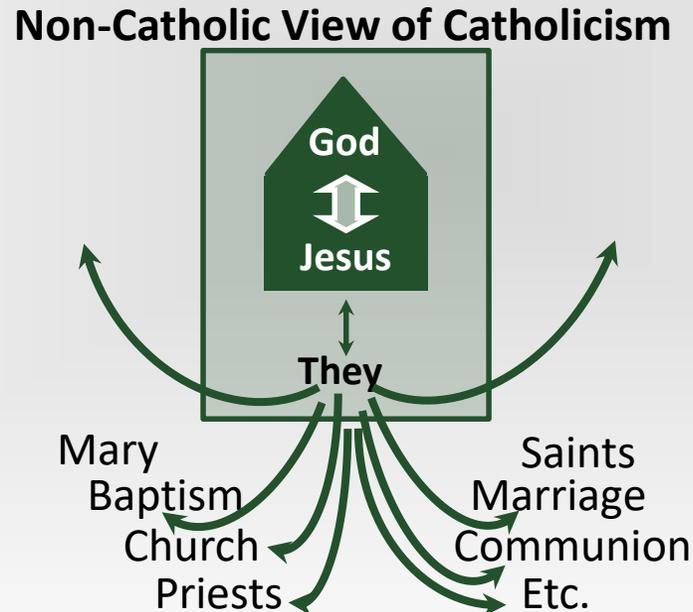
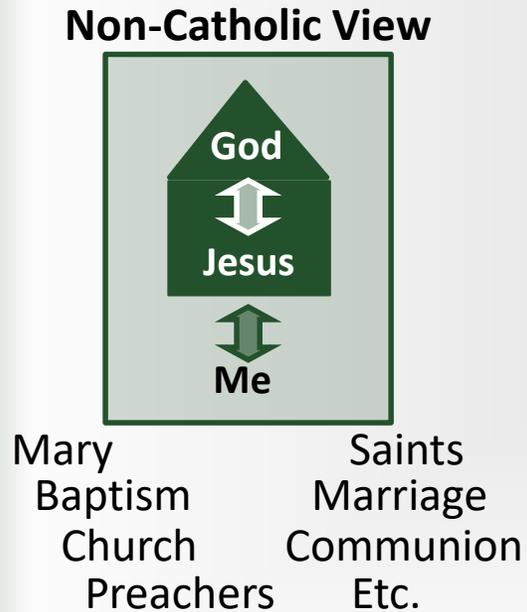
Sola fide and *sola scriptura*

Three Major Pauline Themes: Salvation by Grace

Catholics adhere to traditional 'both-and' hermeneutic

The more you love, the more love there is – love grows

We love Jesus, and we love Jesus through Mary, saints, etc.



All aspects of Redemption participate in and through Christ.

Three Major Pauline Themes: Salvation by Grace

St. Paul and St. James are often placed as odds . . .



Paul:

... a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ
[Gal 2:16]



James:

Man is justified by works and not by faith alone.
[James 2:24]

But, as you would expect, given the Divine authorship of Sacred Scripture, Paul and James are consistent.

Three Major Pauline Themes: Salvation by Grace



	Paul	James
Faith & Works	Faith = initial faith leading to Baptism Works = ritual works of the Law	Faith = faith of the professing Christian Works = good work of God through us
Justification, Sanctification, & Salvation	<i>Man is justified by faith apart from works of the law. [Rom 3:28]</i> <i>... a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ [Gal 2:16]</i> <i>For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God [Eph 2:8-9]</i>	<i>So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. [James 2:17]</i> <i>Man is justified by works and not by faith alone. [James 2:24]</i> <i>Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. [James 2:18]</i>
	<p>Faith in Jesus Christ leads us to initial Justification by Baptism</p> <p>Faithful participation in the Grace of God sanctifies us and leads us to Salvation</p> <p>The merit of good works is to be attributed in the first place to the grace of God, then to the faithful. Man's merit, moreover, is due to God... [CCC 2008]</p>	

Luther, et al

Faith = faith in Jesus Christ
Works = man's works to merit salvation

Man's will is controlled by either God or the Devil

Justification is identical to Salvation

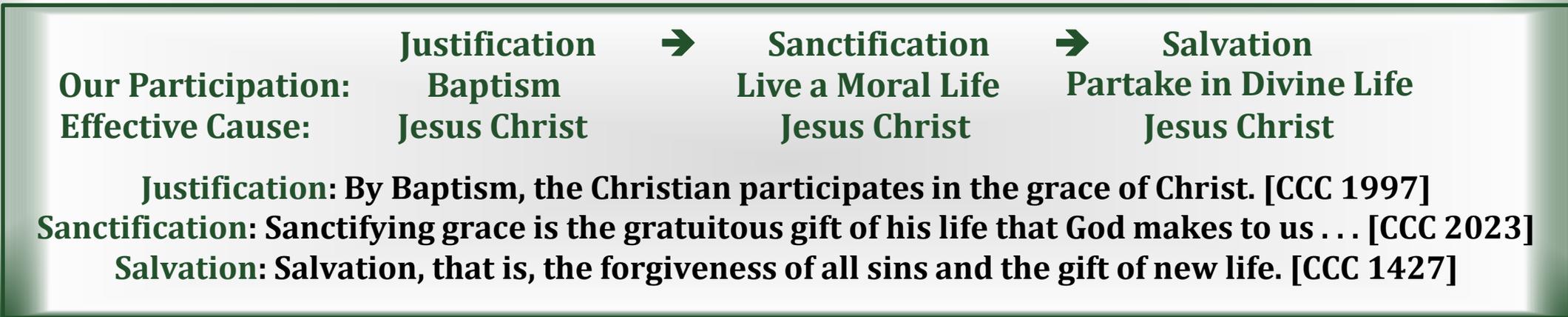
Luther edited his Bible to conform with his personal interpretation*

* "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy spirit spoke from God. [2 Pet 1:20]

Salvation by faith alone (*sola fide*)

Man is a dung hill covered by the 'snow' of Christ' death

[*Sola fide* is unscriptural]



Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? [Acts 9:4; 26:14]

Paul's theology springs from . . .

- Knowing the Hebrew Scriptures, and his training as a Pharisee**
- Experiencing St. Stephen's martyrdom discourse**
- Encountering Jesus on the road to Damascus**
- Recalling Christ's words**
- Integrating those with his knowledge of Scripture**
- Suffering in and for Christ**

Three Major Pauline Themes

- Participation in Christ
- Salvation by Grace
- The Church (*ekklēsia*)**

Four Marks of the Church

- One
- Holy
- Catholic
- Apostolic



Three Major Pauline Themes: The Church

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? [Acts 9:4; 26:14]

Jesus equated Himself with those Saul was persecuting – followers of ‘the Way’
 ‘The Way’ → assembly (*ekklēsia*, church) → Christians: *[Barnabas and Paul] met with the Church [ekklēsia], and taught a large company of people; and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians [Christianos]. [Acts 11:26]*

The Church is the Head and Body of Christ

*Now you are the **body of Christ** and individually members of it. [1 Cor 12:27]*

*He is the head of **the body, the Church** [Col 1:18]*

*And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the **body of Christ** [Eph 4:11-12]*

*... and he [God] ... has made him [Jesus] the head over all things for **the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all.** [Eph 1:22–23]*

*I am writing these instructions to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the **household of God, which is the Church [ekklēsia] of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.** [1 Tim 3:15]*



The Three Major Pauline Themes: The Church



CCC 1407: . . . by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on **his Body which is the Church.**

CCC 669: As Lord, Christ is also head of **the Church, which is his Body.** Taken up to heaven and glorified after he had thus fully accomplished his mission, **Christ dwells on earth in his Church.**



CCC 2045: Because they are members of **the Body whose Head is Christ, Christians contribute to building up the Church** by the constancy of their convictions and their moral lives.



The Three Major Pauline Themes: The Church

Paul provides an expansive theological explication of the Church, using the word *ekklēsia* some sixty-five times. For Paul, the Church is the body of **Christ, who is its head** (Col 1:18; Eph 5:22–24, 29–30) and from whom the Church receives her fullness (Eph 1:22–23; Col 1:18). The **members of the body** have different functions, as a hand differs from a foot or an eye; but they all belong to the same body, and each has its particular function (Rom 12:4–8; 1 Cor 12:4–26; cf. 1 Cor 12:27–31; Eph 4:11–14). The **Church as the body of Christ** also gives Paul the means to stress **the unity among all believers** (1 Cor 12:12; Rom 12:4). This **unity** finds its **sacramental reality** first in **baptism** (1 Cor 12:13), then in the **Eucharist**: “Because there is **one bread**, we who are many are **one body**” (1 Cor 10:17).

Scott Hahn, *Catholic Bible Dictionary*



The Three Major Pauline Themes: The Church

“We find the deepest root of his (Paul’s) surprising designation of the Church in the **Sacrament of the Body of Christ.**”

Benedict XVI, *The Apostles*

As a living organism, **the Church**, as Saint Paul expresses it, is **both head and body**. The body without the head is no longer a body, but a corpse. **But the Head is Christ.** This is the most profound content and the deepest meaning of the **sacrament**; it must take precedence over all demographics, for without it the Church and all humanity would be just a corpse.

Joseph Ratzinger, *Co-Workers of the Truth: Meditations for Every Day of the Year.*



Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? [Acts 9:4; 26:14]



Paul's theology springs from . . .

- Knowing the Hebrew Scriptures, and his training as a Pharisee**
- Experiencing St. Stephen's martyrdom discourse**
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Three Major Pauline Themes

- Participation in Christ**
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Four Marks of the Church

- One**
- Holy**
- Catholic**
- Apostolic**

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
Nicene Creed, 325 AD

Four Marks of the Church: One

One (*heis*, Gk.): unified, complete Unity in the Body of Christ

each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? [1 Cor 1:12-13]

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one in Christ Jesus.** [Gal 3:28]*

*"maintain the **unity** of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is **one** body and **one** spirit... **one** Lord... **one** faith... **one** baptism... **one** God and Father of us all ... [Eph 4:3-6]*

Participation "in Christ" permeates Paul's doctrine of the Eucharist

*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a **participation** in the blood of Christ?*

*The bread which we break, is it not a **participation** in the body of Christ? [1 Cor 10:16]*

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. [1 Cor 10:17]



Four Marks of the Church: One

CCC 813: The Church is **one** because of :

- “*her source* the highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the **unity**, in the Trinity of Persons, of **one God**, the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.”
- ... *her founder*: for “the Word made flesh, the prince of peace, reconciled all men to God by the cross, ... restoring the **unity** of all in **one** people and **one** body.”
- ... *her “soul”*: “It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful **communion of the faithful** and **joins them together** so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the **Church’s unity.**” **Unity is of the essence of the Church ...**

CCC 815: What are these bonds of unity? Above all, charity “binds everything together in perfect harmony.” But the unity of the pilgrim Church is also assured by visible bonds of communion:

- **profession of one faith** received from the Apostles;
- **common celebration of divine worship**, especially of the sacraments;
- **apostolic succession** through the sacrament of Holy Orders, maintaining the fraternal concord of God’s family.

“The Church is not simply about unity – as valuable as that is – but about unity in God’s love rooted in truth.” Archbishop Charles Chaput, “A Letter to the Romans”



Four Marks of the Church: Holy

Holy (*qadosh*, Hb., *hagios*, Gk.): to be set apart for special purpose

Christ makes the Church Holy

*Husbands, love your wives, as **Christ loved the Church** and gave himself up for her, **that he might sanctify her**, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the Church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, **that she might be holy** and without blemish. [Eph 5:25–27]*

*For **we are the temple of the living God**; as God said, “**I will live in them** and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [2 Cor 6:16]*

God poured out His Holy Spirit on the assembly [*ekklēsia*] at Pentecost – setting the members apart.



Four Marks of the Church: Holy

CCC 823: “The Church ... is held, as a matter of faith, to be **unfailingly holy**. This is because Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is hailed as **‘alone holy,’** loved the Church as his Bride, giving himself up for her so as to **sanctify** her; he joined her to himself as his body and endowed her with the **gift of the Holy Spirit** for the glory of God.” **The Church, then, is “the holy People of God,” and her members are called “saints”.**

CCC 867: **The Church is holy:** the Most Holy God is her author; Christ, her bridegroom, gave himself up to make her **holy**; the **Spirit of holiness gives her life**. Since she still includes sinners, she is “the sinless one made up of sinners.” Her holiness shines in the saints; **in Mary she is already all-holy.**

CCC 257: [God’s plan of salvation] is a “grace [which] was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,” stemming immediately from Trinitarian love. It unfolds in the work of creation, the whole history of salvation after the fall, and the missions of the Son and the Spirit, which are continued in the **mission of the Church.**

The Church is set apart for “the missions of the Son and the Spirit.”



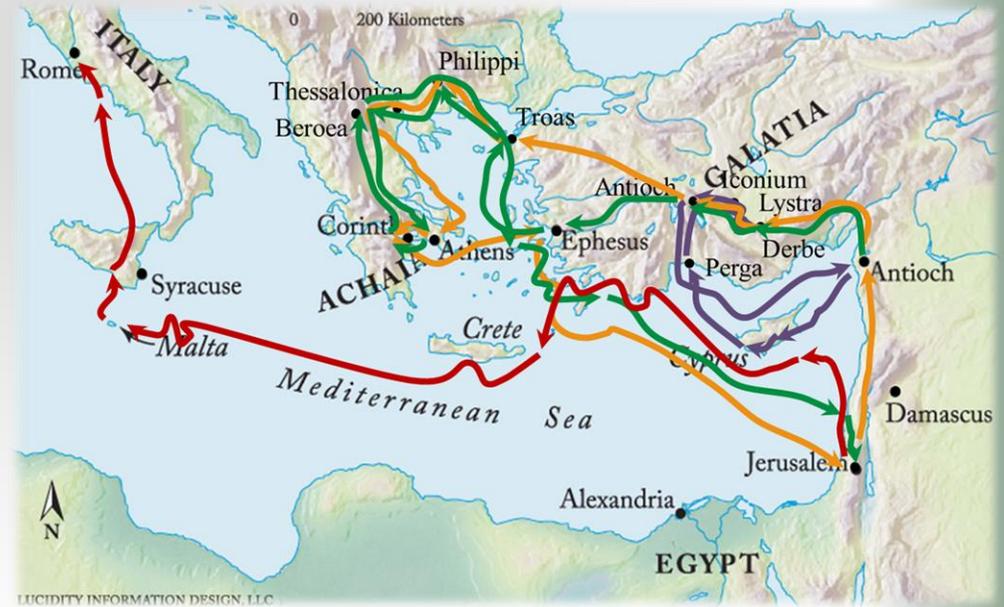
Four Marks of the Church: Catholic

Catholic (*kataholos*, Gk.): according to the whole, complete, universal Church throughout all [*ekklēsia kataholos*]

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one** in Christ Jesus. [Gal 3:28]*

*To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make **all men** see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; that **through the Church*** the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. [Eph 3:8–10]*

*and he has put **all things** under his feet and has made him the **head over all things for the Church**, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills **all in all**. [Eph 1:22–23]*



* Note: Paul does not say 'through Scripture'.

Four Marks of the Church: Catholic

CCC 830: . . . the Church is **catholic** because Christ is present in her.

“Where there is Christ Jesus, there is the **Catholic Church.**”*

CCC 831: ... the Church is **catholic** because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the **whole of the human race**. In her **subsists the fullness of Christ’s body united with its head . . .**

Go therefore and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them . . . [Matt 28:19–20]

CCC: 834 Particular Churches are fully **catholic** through their **communion with . . . the Church of Rome** “which presides in charity.” “For with this church, by reason of its pre-eminence, the **whole Church**, . . . the faithful **everywhere**, must necessarily be in accord.”



* St. Ignatius of Antioch: “Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.” [*Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*]

Four Marks of the Church: Apostolic

Apostolic (*apostolikós*, Gk.): sent, as on a mission

*Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them** . . . [Matt 28:19–20]*

Mission confers Authority – Paul cites the apostolic authority of the Church given to the Apostles by Christ

*I am writing these **instructions** to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the **household of God, which is the Church** of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth. [1 Tim 3:15]*

Paul guides Timothy in making successor bishops (*episkopoi*) *what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to **faithful men who will be able to teach** others also. [2 Tim 2:1–2]*



Four Marks of the Church: Apostolic

CCC 857: The Church is apostolic because she is founded on the apostles, in three ways:

- she was and remains **built on “the foundation of the Apostles,”** the witnesses chosen and **sent on mission by Christ** himself;
- with the help of **the Spirit dwelling in her,** the Church keeps and hands on the teaching, the “good deposit,” the salutary words she has heard from the apostles;
- she **continues to be taught, sanctified, and guided by the apostles** until Christ’s return, through their successors in pastoral office: the college of bishops, “assisted by priests, in union with the successor of Peter, the Church’s supreme pastor . . .”

CCC 870: “The sole **Church of Christ** which in the Creed we profess to be **one, holy, catholic, and apostolic . . .** subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him.



Christ's Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic



So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

[Eph 2:19–22]

One: in whom the whole structure is joined together

Holy: and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Catholic: So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God

Apostolic: built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone



So, What Have We Covered?

Biographical Vignette & Context

- Early life
- Education
- Later life

Apostolic Significance

- Initial relationship with the Church
- Conversion and Jesus' choice of Paul as Apostle
- Apostle to the Gentiles

Scriptural Contribution

- Three Major Pauline Themes
 - ✓ Participation in Christ
 - ✓ Salvation by Grace
 - ✓ The Church (*ekklēsia*)
- Four Marks of the Church
 - ✓ One
 - ✓ Catholic
 - ✓ Holy
 - ✓ Apostolic

When interpreted and understood within the context of the Content and Unity of Sacred Scripture, the Living Tradition of the whole Church, and the Analogy of Faith, St. Paul's doctrine is clearly and unambiguously **Catholic.**



Resources

Apostle of the Crucified Lord, Michael J. Gorman, 2003.

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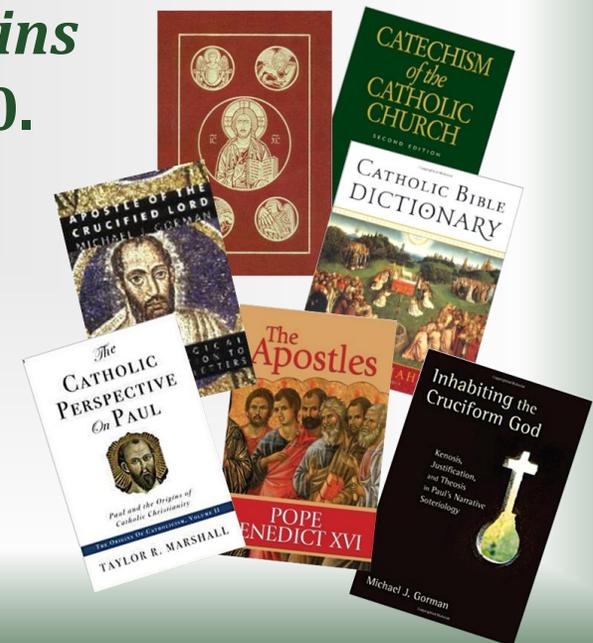
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Saint Paul: An Overview of His Letters

The Catholicism of St. Paul

Tapping into Theology

July 11, 2017

Phil Pratt