

Meditation 2014-02-25
Today is Tuesday following Sexagesima Sunday
Meditation Theme: “Is Saint Paul OK?”

Place yourself in the presence of Jesus Christ. Make sure He knows that every thought, action, and experience of today is dedicated exclusively to Him.

The Scenario: From the Epistle of today’s Mass

Brethren, you gladly suffer the foolish; whereas yourselves are wise. For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take from you, if a man be lifted up, if a man strike you on the face. I speak according to dishonour, as if we had been weak in this part. Wherein if any man dare (I speak foolishly), I dare also. They are Hebrews: so am I. They are Israelites: so am I. They are the seed of Abraham: so am I. They are the ministers of Christ (I speak as one less wise): I am more; in many more labours, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without: my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my infirmity. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for ever, knoweth that I lie not.

Point 1. – The Blessed Apostle Paul advises the Christians of Corinth of his credentials, and in a way so as to not appear to be bragging.

Point 2. – Paul meets all of the criteria to be not only one of the oppressed, but also to be one of the oppressors.

Point 3. – Paul has suffered much for his Faith, and for his spreading of it. He tells us all that he is like us, that he suffers like us, and the reason he endures is Christ.

Meditation: Paul’s mission, given to him by Christ Himself, was to preach the Gospel. He taught primarily the Gentiles, those who were not the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom God had invited into His kingdom. The “Chosen People” were supposed to have led all of the world to salvation behind the Messiah, but, when the time came, they refused this duty. God, knowing from eternity that this would happen, prepared the Apostles for this leadership role.

If Paul, in his extensive travels, were to come into my home and tell me all of the things I need to know, would I listen? Would I hear him over the sound of the television? Would I consider him no more than a distraction? Am I open to the word of God? Do I think I would recognize it as coming from God if I heard someone preaching it? The world is chock-a-block full of people who want me to listen to what they say. Can I tell who is speaking the truth? There are people who say many wonderful things. They sound like they know what they are talking about. They

sound like they even believe it themselves. How can I discern the truth? There has to be a measure by which I can judge the value of what those voices are prompting me to believe.

Are these preachers (both the social and political, as well as the religious) anywhere near as credentialed as Saint Paul? We know his history as a persecutor of God's Church. We know of his conversion on the road to Damascus. We know what he suffered. We know of his martyrdom. We know, or should know, what he has told us. If we take what the rest of the world is telling us and hold it up against Saint Paul, how does it stack up? We know, from the testimony of the Church's Tradition, that Saint Paul tells us the truth. We know that the truth is consistent. Anything that differs from it must be false.

Colloquy: Take a minute or two to converse with God, in any of His three Persons, or the Triune God complete in Himself. Tell Him what you have learned from your meditation, and thank Him for it.

Hold the Gain: Consider what you can do to keep the fruits of your meditation. Try to plan how you can think of them through the day, and through the days ahead. Come up with ways you can apply your conclusions to what you do in your everyday life, conversations you engage in, the choice of what movie to watch, what books you choose to read.