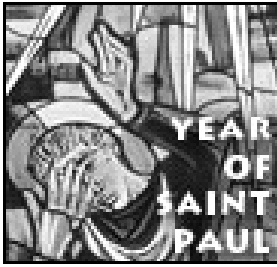


From the Pastor

June 28, 2009



13th Sunday
in Ordinary Time

End of the
Year of Paul'

Beginning of the
Year of the Priest'

On Monday, June 29th, the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, we officially close our yearlong celebration marking the Great Apostle Paul's 2000th birthday. After many months of reflecting on Saint Paul's dramatic conversion and his Jewish upbringing as a Pharisee and a Roman citizen, his intense doctrinal explanations and orthodox teachings, his many travels and perilous travails, and, of course, his biblical Letters – I must admit: I'm going to miss the guy! [*While I hope to meet Good Saint Paul someday, I pray that day will not be too soon!*]

Although [*as I hope you remember*] I had nine years elementary education at Saint Paul the Apostle School in Irvington, and I concelebrated Mass during the Jubilee Year 2000 at the Roman basilica dedicated to his honor, supposedly built over the site of his martyrdom and burial, Saint Paul Outside-the Walls [*where Pope Benedict is scheduled to preside at Vespers or Evening Prayer today to officially close the Pauline Year*], and I studied about Paul in the seminary, and I have heard his writings proclaimed countless times at Mass, in the Liturgy of the Hours, and in other prayer services, and I often preach on his theological positions, I believe this "Year of Paul" helped me to know him more personally - and grow in deeper respect for and in awe of this great man!

I hope the "Year of the Priest" will help us grow in the understanding and appreciation of the gift of Ordained Priesthood - and of the men who have answered God's call to serve the Lord and us through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. For the next few weeks we will reflect on the Petrine Ministry: the life and mission of the Prince of the Apostles, Saint Peter, and on how his role as Christ's vicar is continued through our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI. Then, in September, we'll get to know Saint John Vianney, a.k.a. as the Cure of Ars, patron of all priests, as we reflect on Ordained Priesthood in the "Year of the Priest."

Perhaps the best way to end the "Year of Paul" is to reflect on what some consider his 'Last Will and Testament': "*Whatever gains I had, these I have*

come to consider a loss because of Christ. More than that, I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him ... to know him and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by being conformed to his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead." [Philippians 3:7-9a, 10-11]

Notice Paul did not say his goal was to know ABOUT Christ, but to actually KNOW Christ – which must be our ultimate goal as well! For as Paul implied: having the best liturgies, making the most generous contributions, giving the best example of what it means to be forgiving or understanding, charitable or patient, kind or friendly is only the start - and should even be considered worthless - if we do not literally come to know Christ, if we do not come to see and serve Jesus, if we do not come to hear and worship the Lord through all these things – and in and through all we say and do! And it is by dying to our own self needs and wants, to our own plans and dreams - and by living for the Lord and according to God's will - that we have hope of attaining the goal of actually knowing Christ as did Saint Paul the Apostle!

And so we bring the Pauline Year to a close by asking the Lord to impart upon us, through the solemn blessing prescribed for the Mass in honor of Saints Peter and Paul:

*The Lord has set you firm within his Church,
which he built upon the rock of Peter's faith.
May he bless you with a faith that never falters.*

*The Lord has given you knowledge of the faith
through the labors and preaching of St. Paul.
May his example inspire you to lead others
to Christ by the manner of your life.*

*May the keys of Peter, and the words of Paul,
their undying witness and their prayers,
lead you to the joy of that eternal home
which Peter gained by his cross,
and Paul by the sword. Amen.*

Saint Paul the Apostle, pray for us! Amen!

With God's love and my prayers,

Father Mike

Reverend Michael J. Kreder