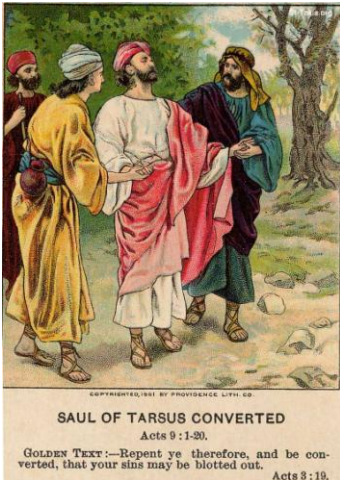
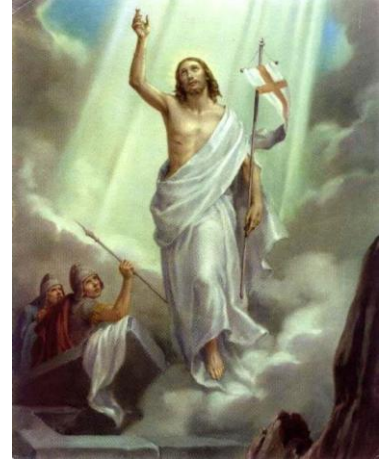


Resurrection Grants New Life

It is obvious from the epistles of St. Paul that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was his source of hope and conviction. Despite being forewarned of his imminent death, he resolutely testified before Governor Felix saying: ***“I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God...that there will be a resurrection of the dead...”*** (Acts 24:14-16). Later in the same oration, he asks his accusers whether, ***“they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, ‘Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day’”*** (Acts 24:20-21). Following St. Paul’s testimony, Festus consulted King Agrippa and described the conflict between St. Paul and his accusers in one sentence saying: ***“...they had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.”*** (Acts 25:19). St. Paul’s conviction was not based solely on the recognition of a historical event, but rather on his personal encounter with the resurrected Christ and his experience with the power of Resurrection to grant him *new life*.



Ironically, a *new life* through Resurrection does NOT begin after death as some people might erroneously assume – *new life* begins in the present by being *born again*. As our Lord was speaking with Nicodemus, He explained that no one could ***“see the kingdom of God”*** unless they were ***“born again”*** (John 3:3). To Nicodemus’ surprise, Christ was not speaking in terms of a physical rebirth, but a spiritual rebirth. A spiritual rebirth entails being forgiven of past disappointments, failures, and evil habits and receiving a fresh start free from guilt and sin. St. Paul believed that ***“if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”*** (2 Cor. 5:17). It is only through genuine repentance and a firm belief in Christ’s resurrection that we are able to ***“put to death”*** (Col. 3:5) our carnal desires so that we may ***“walk in newness of life”*** (Rom. 6:4).

Unfortunately, many refuse to accept the grace and calling of a *new life* and prefer to live with *new* material possessions. However, if one tastes the flavorful fruits of the Resurrection as St. Paul did, no one would ever desire to consume the bland mush of sin. St. Paul says in his epistle to the Philippians, ***“I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead”*** (Phil. 3:8-11).

Through the Resurrection, St. Paul was *born again* and was given a fresh start to serve the Church he had been persecuting for years. Hope in the Resurrection gave him peace, comfort, and confidence to preach the Gospel through agonizing trials and unbearable tribulations. If the Resurrection transformed St. Paul into one of the best apostles, how will the Resurrection transform you?

Fr. David Hanna
fr.davidhanna@gmail.com