

Conference 1

Deeper Conversion by Learning How to Use AIR

ACTS 22:3-16

Paul addressed the people in these words:

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city. At the feet of Gamaliel, I was educated strictly in our ancestral law and was zealous for God, just as all of you are today. I persecuted this Way to death, binding both men and women and delivering them to prison. Even the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify on my behalf. For from them I even received letters to the brothers and set out for Damascus to bring back to Jerusalem in chains for punishment those there as well.

"On that journey as I drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from the sky suddenly shone around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'

I replied, 'Who are you, sir?'

And he said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazorean whom you are persecuting.'

My companions saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who spoke to me.

I asked, 'What shall I do, sir?'

The Lord answered me, 'Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told about everything appointed for you to do.'

Since I could see nothing because of the brightness of that light, I was led by hand by my companions and entered Damascus.

"A certain Ananias, a devout observer of the law, and highly spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me and stood there and said, 'Saul, my brother, regain your sight.' And at that very moment I regained my sight and saw him. Then he said, 'The God of our ancestors designated you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear the sound of his voice; for you will be his witness before all to what you have seen and heard. Now, why delay? Get up and have yourself baptized and your sins washed away, calling upon his name.'"

Part I:

1. The story of St. Paul's Conversion instructs us in three elements necessary for every Christian.
2. Conversion means "to change."
 - a. Paul changed from being a persecutor of Christians to becoming a Christian.
 - b. Paul's conversion is deeper than merely a change of one way of life to another.
 - c. Paul's conversion occurred through a powerful encounter with Christ.
3. This encounter was a real renewal that changed everything about him.
4. This encounter involved Paul's consent to 3 calls:
 - a. Call to prayer: the dialogues between him and Christ
 - b. Call to holiness: the "yes" of Paul to Baptism
 - c. Call to discipleship: the acceptance to be a "witness of the faith"
5. Our deeper conversion of encountering Christ continually renews us through:
 - a. Call to discipleship by becoming a spiritual mentor
 - b. Call to Prayer
 - i. 3 forms of prayer (vocal, meditative, contemplative) especially meditative prayer
 - c. Call to Holiness
 - i. Sacraments
 - ii. Virtue
 - iii. Making judgements that follow the Will of God (knowing the will of God)
6. Our encounter with Christ through these 3 calls
 - a. Opens us to Divine Wisdom
 - b. Opens us to recognizing the Truth
 - c. Is the way that we can touch Christ's Heart and feel Him touching ours.

Part II:

1. Our encounters of God and prayer are not as dramatic as St. Paul's, but nonetheless significant.

A good example is found in **1 Kings 19:3-9,11-13**:

Elijah was afraid and fled for his life, going to Beer-sheba of Judah. He left his servant there and went a day's journey into the wilderness, until he came to a solitary broom tree and sat beneath it. He prayed for death: "Enough, LORD! Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." He lay down and fell asleep under the solitary broom tree, but suddenly a messenger touched him and said, "Get up and eat!" He looked and there at his head was a hearth cake and a jug of water. After he ate and drank, he lay down again, but the angel of the LORD came back a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat or the journey will be too much for you!" He got up, ate, and drank; then strengthened by that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb. There he came to a cave, where he took shelter. But the word of the LORD came to him: Why are you here, Elijah?

Then the LORD said: Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will pass by. There was a strong and violent wind rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD — but the LORD was not in the wind; after the wind, an earthquake — but the LORD was not in the earthquake; after the earthquake, fire — but the LORD was not in the fire; after the fire, a light silent sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. A voice said to him, "Why are you here, Elijah?"

2. Elijah suggests how we are to listen when meditatively praying.
3. Explanation of AIR Handout
4. Practicing How to Meditate, Task & Instructions:
 - a. In your own words ask the Holy Spirit to be with you.
 - b. Using your AIR handout, read the passage and ask yourself one or more of the questions that are under attractions, instructions, and recognitions.

Scripture passage of “The Cleansing of Ten Lepers” (**Luke 17:11-19**)

As he continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met [him]. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voice, saying, “Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!” And when he saw them, he said, “Go show yourselves to the priests.” As they were going, they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, “Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?” Then he said to him, “Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.”

- c. Read the passage and REFLECT or think about what struck you.
 - i. Use AIR as a guide to help you reflect.
 - 1. If something strikes you, stop.
 - ii. Write down what you noticed.
 - iii. Take time to think about what you noticed.
 - iv. Briefly write about what you took the time to think about.
- **Move on through the passage** and write down whatever you notice new. Repeat until nothing seems to speak to you.
- d. Come back to the next Conference Talk with your list. The 2nd Conference Talk will help you form a resolution.