

## Paul Teaches Us

Paul taught that Jesus Christ himself suffered, not as a *substitute* for sinful humanity, but as our *representative*. Christ's saving passion didn't exempt us from suffering but instead endowed our suffering with divine power and redemptive value. His life and letters offer timeless guidance for living out the Gospel today.

Paul teaches us that Baptism initiates us into Christ's saving action, and the Eucharist sustains our Christian life. Each Christian has gifts from the Holy Spirit to use for the common good.

*And take the ... sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*  
Ephesians 6:17

Paul's life was marked by persecution, yet he rejoices in the Lord always. His hope in God's promises sustains joy even in hardship.

*Rejoice in hope, persevere in prayer, endure in affliction.* Romans 12:12

Paul proclaimed the Gospel fearlessly, trusting in God's power rather than human strength.

*I can do all things in him who strengthens me.* Philippians 4:13

St. Paul teaches that faith is not about self-effort but about surrender to God's grace, living in unity, and serving others in love.

*Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*  
1 Corinthians 12:6-7

Sources include: catholic.org, Journeys of Hope podcast



Bring Socials with the Saints to your parish, listen to our podcast, and more! Visit: [PilgrimCenterOfHope.org/Socials](http://PilgrimCenterOfHope.org/Socials)  
**PILGRIM CENTER of HOPE** – Guiding people to Christ  
PilgrimCenterOfHope.org | 210-521-3377  
←Please donate to continue our mission of hope! Every bit helps.



## **St. Paul of Tarsus** *Apostle and Martyr*

**Born:** 5 A.D. in Tarsus

**Died:** Rome, 67 A.D.

**Fest Day:** June 29

**Patronage:** Missions, Missionaries, Theologians, writers, tentmakers.

Saint Paul is one of the most important and influential of all saints. Many of his writings are contained in the Canon of the Bible and have influenced the growth and development of the Church since the first century.

Paul was originally known as Saul, and he was a Roman citizen and a Pharisee. He even presided over the persecutions of the early Christians and was present at the martyrdom of St. Stephen. However, Saul experienced a powerful vision that caused him to convert to Christianity while on the road to Damascus. He was duly baptized and took the name Paul.

Paul traveled the world, first to Arabia then back to Damascus. He also visited Jerusalem to see St. Peter, the first pope and pay homage to him. During these travels, he preached ceaselessly, often drawing criticism from those who rejected his message. Jews in particular hated his preaching as they saw him convert people to Christianity from Judaism.

Paul was born in the first decade of the first century A.D., in the city of Tarsus, in the Roman province of Syria-Cilicia (today the southeastern coast of Turkey). We know he was born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28). From Acts 22: 27-29: *The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" "Yes, I am," he answered. Then the commander said, "I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship." "But I was born a citizen," Paul replied. Those who were about to interrogate him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.*

*Paul* was his Roman name. *Saul* was his name before his conversion to Christianity. As a child, he apparently received an excellent education in Greek culture, evident in his preaching and writing.

He memorized the Scriptures, entire books at a time. He studied deeply in the Law and the prophets to discern God's plan. As a young man, probably in his 20's – 30's; Saul consented to the bloody execution of the first Christian martyr, Deacon Stephen (Acts 8:1).

Saul persecuted Jews who proclaimed *Jesus* as the *Christ* (Phil 3:5-6). He thought they were abandoning the God of their ancestors in order to worship a man – a man who proclaimed himself equal to God. He was raised in the Jewish faith as a Pharisee trained in the strict observance of God's Law. At this time, Saul didn't know Jesus Christ.

Saul was upset by the early Christian Church, believing that the early Christians had broken away from their Jewish traditions. He actively persecuted the Church in Jerusalem. As the first Christian martyr Stephen was being stoned to death, Saul watched the cloaks of the persecutors (Acts 7:58).

On the road to Damascus Saul had an encounter with the Risen Jesus Christ (Acts of the Apostles 9:1–19, Galatians 1: 13–14). Jesus asked, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Paul replied, "Who are you, sir?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

This encounter caused Saul to be blinded and deeply shaken. He was led to Damascus where he was healed by a Christian named Ananias, who also baptized him. There he was healed, baptized, and welcomed in the community of believers. Saul had undergone a conversion. Jesus' life and death became, for Paul, a revelation of God's love in action.

**New Identity:** Saul changed his name to Paul and became a devoted follower of Jesus, dedicating his life to missionary work and writing letters that are foundational to Christian theology. Paul then went into Arabia (Galatians 1:17) for three years, perhaps to pray and meditate upon the Scriptures and receive further instruction & training from the followers of Jesus.

**His Missionary Journeys** – there were three. Each were lengthy and bore much fruit for the Kingdom of God.

1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey: Paul and the Apostle Barnabas (Acts 13) set out on a missionary journey.

2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey: He was accompanied by Silas (Acts 15-18). In Greece, Paul and Silas saw great success. Paul traveled to Corinth, there, he stayed a year and a half, and it was in Corinth he wrote the two letters to the Thessalonians.

3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey: Paul went by land to Galatia. (Acts 18-21) He set up shop in Ephesus where he stayed almost three years (Acts 19). In Ephesus, he wrote his first letter to the Corinthians. Later he was sent by sea to the island of Malta (Acts 27-28). Then onto Rome.

**His Death** - Tradition says that Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome on the same day, June 29. Peter by crucifixion and Paul by beheading. Paul was a Roman citizen, and Roman citizens were spared the indignity of crucifixion, for this reason he was beheaded.

Paul was executed in Rome in about 67 AD. According to ancient sources such as Tertullian and Eusebius who were historians. The traditional site of the beheading today is marked with the Church of Saint Paul at the Three Fountains. It is one of the oldest churches in Rome. The legend has it that when Paul was beheaded, his head bounced three times, and at each spot a fountain appeared. Although excavations established that the original three springs on the church grounds pre-dated the execution of Paul, it is still considered a dramatic memorial to the courageous apostle that dates back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Paul's relics are housed in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome. The tombstone reads: PAULO APOSTOLO MART  
(Latin for *PAUL APOSTLE MARTYR*)