

**Homily – Friday of the Third Week of Easter
Mother’s Day – Women’s Detention Center – May 6, 2022**

Saul was a fervent defender of his people’s traditions. He fought Christians and the Church bravely, because he thought they were destroying the foundations of his country. He was obviously wrong. He did not understand that Jesus is actually the glory of the people of Israel, the overwhelming fulfillment of its ultimate hope.

All of us make mistakes. The key to his error might seem subtle, but it was really a big one. He had not had an encounter with the Lord and so he was unable to believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

In the first reading, we heard what happened after “a light from the sky suddenly flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice” addressing him. Notice that Jesus does not blame Saul for persecuting the Church, but himself. The Lord said to him, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go...” At once, he did as he was told by the one he had been persecuting. Ananias was shocked too, when he received the instruction from Jesus to go and meet with Saul. He had good reasons to fear, but he also trusted the Lord and did as he was told. No matter how close we may think we are to Jesus, He will always keep challenging us to get even closer.

When the Lord revealed himself to him, Saul immediately knew that Jesus is the Son of God, and he could not keep the news to himself. After the time it took Saul to recover and to learn more about the Good News, he began “to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God”. He went out to tell everyone the Good News.

Saul is more known nowadays as Saint Paul, and his conversion marks a true turning point in the path of the early Church.

In the gospel reading, we heard the second part of a memorable speech of Jesus on the “Bread of Life”. His listeners were scandalized. Rather than explaining what he meant when he talked about to his Flesh and Blood as food and drink, he describes the effects of such food and such drink. They are, above all, life in fullness and real communion with Him. It is the food and drink that nourishes the life of the Church throughout the centuries. That is why there is no separation between Jesus and the Church. Whatever is done to the Church is done to Jesus himself.

The Church is our mother too. You are members of the Church and also her children. She nourishes and looks after God’s children, just like a mother cares for her own offspring. And like Jesus, a mother is willing to give up her whole life for her kids. Being a mother is a way to become more like God. The mission you have received to look after your children is a gift from God, which proves that he has a plan for you. No matter what, He is prepared to lead you, like he led his people and Saul until he fulfilled their hopes. Jesus is the Son of God. He has all the power to transform our lives, like he transformed Saul’s life. He loves you so much! Trust Him completely, like Saul and Ananias did!

Blessed Mother of Guadalupe, as Pope Francis has said, you are “the Mother who gives us her son Jesus.” Look after these children of yours like you looked after Him.