

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Week of January 30th

Reading I: Zephaniah 2: 3, 3: 12-13

Reading II: 1 Corinthians 1: 26-31

Gospel: Matthew 5: 1-12a

Dear Friends in Christ:

*“Saul was trying to destroy the church, breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord and dragging out men and women for imprisonment. As he neared Damascus a light from the sky suddenly flashed around him and he heard a voice say “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” He said, “Who are you, sir?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.”* This past Tuesday was the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, and this story of his experience on the road to Damascus was the first reading for the day. Whenever I read or hear this passage I am struck by Jesus’ identification of Himself with us, the members of the Church, His disciples. Where the story speaks of Saul’s violence against the members of the Church, the disciples of the Lord, Jesus asks *why are you persecuting me?* Not *why are you persecuting my people, or my followers, or my Church?* Jesus says *why are you persecuting me?* Have you ever thought of yourself in this way that Jesus thinks of you? Have you ever thought of yourself as Jesus? When talking about the mighty deeds and miracles Jesus did in the gospels, I sometimes hear people “distance” themselves from Jesus by saying something like *But that was Jesus, and he was God, and I’m certainly not God, so I could never do anything like that!* But again, according to what Jesus said to Paul at his conversion, we are *indeed* Jesus in the world. So, what are we waiting for? What’s stopping us from doing mighty deeds and miracles in *our* Christ-life? Fr. Dan