

The Order of Service for Home Worship

The Conversion of Paul, Apostle



Hymn 1: Let saints on earth in concert sing.

1. Let saints on earth in concert sing
With those whose work is done;
For all the servants of our King
In heaven and earth are one.
2. One family, we dwell with him,
One Church, above, beneath;
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.
3. The people of the living God,
To his command we bow:
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.
4. E'en now to their eternal home
There pass some spirit's blessed;
While others to the margin come,
Waiting their call to rest.
5. Jesu, be thou our constant guide;
Then, when the word is giv'n.
Bid Jordan's narrow stream divide,
And bring us safe to heaven.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father of glory, holy and eternal, look upon us now in power and mercy. May your strength overcome our weakness, your radiance transform our blindness, and your Spirit draw us to that love shown and offered to us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we come into the presence of our heavenly Father let us seek his forgiveness of our sins that we may know his peace in our hearts.

Lord Jesus, mighty God and Prince of Peace.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, Word made flesh and splendour of the Father. **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, glory be to God on high;
Alleluia, to the Saviour who has gained the victory;
Alleluia to the Spirit, fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluia, Alleluia, to the Triune Majesty.**

Collect: Almighty God, who caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world through the preaching of your servant Saint Paul: grant that we who celebrate his wonderful conversion may follow him in bearing witness to your truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

1. 4-10

Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.' Then I said, 'Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.' But the LORD said to me, 'Do not say, "I am only a boy"; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.' Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, 'Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 67.

Response: Let the peoples praise you, O God, let all the peoples praise you.

May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,
that your way may be known upon earth,
your saving power among all nations. (R)

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. (R)

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.
The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, has blessed us,
May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere him. (R)

A reading from the book of the Acts of the Apostles. 9. 1-22

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' The men who were travelling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.' The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much

he must suffer for the sake of my name.' So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.' All who heard him were amazed and said, 'Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?' Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Open our hearts, O Lord, to receive the words of your Son.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. Matthew. 19. [24-26,] 27-30 Glory to you, O Lord.

Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, 'Then who can be saved?' But Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.' Then Peter said in reply, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?' Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Meditation: *Jesus ends this week's Gospel reading with the words "Many will be last, and the last will be first. These words can help us as we celebrate the Conversion of S. Paul. The conversion of S. Paul is related in dramatic fashion for us in our reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Paul was born in Tarsus and was raised*

as a Pharisee. Known as Saul he had been an enthusiastic persecutor of the early Church. He was present at the stoning of Stephen and approved of his being killed. Saul was on a mission to cleanse the synagogues of Damascus of Christians when Jesus revealed himself to Saul, asking him, "Why are you persecuting me?" Temporarily blinded Saul was taken to Damascus to recover where he encountered a Christian Ananias who restored Saul's sight in the name of Jesus. The whole episode changed Saul's life completely. His name was changed to Paul and he became the Apostle to the Gentiles, and one of the most enthusiastic and loyal of disciples to Christ. Saul, the persecutor of Christians, who might have considered among the least and last of people became the one of the first and foremost among the heroes of the early Church. The conversion of S Paul shows us how the love of God extends to all people and that no-one is beyond his call to work with him in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. Amen.

In the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with Christ let us bring our prayers for the Church and for the world to our heavenly Father.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, for the leaders of the Church among them Mary our Bishop. We pray for the clergy and people of our diocese and for our own ministry area; that, following the example of saint Paul the Church may faithfully work with Christ to proclaim the saving love of God to the world.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the people of the world, for the victims of violence and oppression, for all suffering the effects of natural disaster and for those suffering from famine or drought; may there be peace where there is conflict and hope where there is despair.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own community, for our families, friends and neighbours. We give thanks for all who serve the needs of the vulnerable; open our eyes and hearts to your love as you opened the eyes and heart of S. Paul so that Christ may make his home in our hearts that through us the light of his love may shine in our community.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick, for those who are bereaved, for the lonely and isolated and all in any kind of need. We hold in our hearts before God those known to us who are in need at this time and all whose names are recorded in our intercession books; may they be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and consoled with the love of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have died. We remember before God our own departed loved ones and we pray for the recently departed and those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. May they share the eternal glory of heaven in the company of all the saints.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us bring all our prayers to our heavenly Father as we pray together:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Peace:

Jesus said, Peace I bequeath to you; my own peace I give you; a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you.

The peace of the Lord be with you and with all those whom you love.

And also with you.

Let us pray:*

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for his is alive and reigns now and for ever. Amen.

The Blessing:

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

God give you grace to follow his saints in faith, hope and love, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be mong you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn 2: And can it be?

1. And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain?
For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
2. 'Tis mystery all! Th'Immortal dies:
Who can explain his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love diving!
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.
3. He left his Father's throne above
So free, so infinite his grace;
Emptied himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race;
'tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me.
4. Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.
5. No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.