

Paul is converted to Christianity

Joe Sarnicola/Contributing writer

Ananais woke up from his nightmare soaked with sweat even though the evening had been cool. In the dream Ananais, a Christian, saw the Lord, and the Lord told him to go and pray for a man named Paul. This was the same Paul whose name was only spoken in whispers by Christians. Paul was a Pharisee who persecuted Christians for breaking the Old Testament laws. He was the same Paul who watched as Stephen, the first martyr, died for his faith in God.

But Ananais knew his dream really was a vision. He remembered what the Lord had said. "Go, for this man is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before Gentiles, kings and Israelites." Ananais rose out of bed, dressed and headed for the place the Lord told him Paul would be.

When Ananais found Paul, Paul had been stricken blind by a bright light that God had shined on him. The people with Paul did not know what was going to happen to their friend. Ananais placed his hands on Paul and prayed. "Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus has sent me. May you regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately Paul could see again, and he went out to be baptized.

Paul was so excited about his love for Jesus that he began to preach immediately. He also wanted to meet some of the other followers of Jesus who were living in Jerusalem. When those followers heard Paul was coming, they were afraid of him. Barn-



Linda Jeanne Rivers/Catholic Courier

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abas went with Paul to introduce him to the Christians. He told them of Paul's conversion, and how he preached in Damascus and to everyone, whether they wanted to hear the word of God or not.

As a result of Paul's courage and enthusiasm, he angered some of the non-Christians. Some of them even planned to have him killed. When some of the other Christians learned

of these plots, they arranged for Paul to escape to Caesarea and on to Tarsus. The Christians knew that Paul would be a very dynamic member of the church, and he encouraged them to work hard to serve the Lord.

With the conversion of Paul and others like him and with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the church community in the lands of Galilee, Samaria and Judea was at peace. More and more people were believing in Jesus and being baptized.

READ MORE ABOUT IT:
Acts 9

Q&A

1. Why were the disciples afraid of Paul?
2. Why did Paul have to leave Jerusalem?

Bible Accent

Paul, whose Hebrew name was Saul, was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin and was a Roman citizen.

According to Jewish custom, Paul would have started his schooling when he was 6 years old. His studies would have included Scripture and the Hebrew language. He referred to one of his teachers as Gamaliel, a scholarly rabbi in Jerusalem.

As an adult, Paul thought the early Christians were breaking Old Testament laws, and he actively criticized and persecuted them. Paul became a Christian after he was temporarily blinded by a great light from God. The same Christians he had persecuted came to his aid, and God gave him back his sight.

He wrote many of the letters of the New Testament. The stories of some of his travels are told in The Acts of the Apostles.

St. Michael Garicoits

In 1797, Michael Garicoits was born into a very poor, but very religious, French family. During the French Revolution, priests would come to the Garicoits' home to say Mass in secret for area Christians.

Michael knew early in life that he wanted to be a priest, but his parents could not afford his education. His grandmother made an arrangement for Michael to pay for his schooling by cooking and performing errands for the priests.

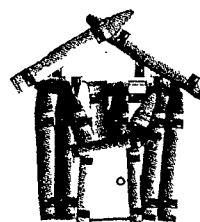
After his ordination, he demonstrated wisdom, compassion and ability for the position. He trained priests for mission work and founded the Society of the Sacred Heart of Betharram. He died in 1863, and we honor him on May 14.

Puzzle

Answer the following questions by filling in the correct New Testament book. Some questions refer to the order in which books were placed in the Bible, not to when they were written. Answers on page 4.

1. What is the name of the fourth Gospel?
2. What book tells the deeds of the early Christians?
3. What is the last book that is named after a person?
4. What book tells of the visions of John?
5. How many books have Peter's name?
6. Which Gospel opens with the genealogy of Jesus?
7. What is the first book written to the people of a city?

Kids' Club



You can win a \$50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) in response to **What can we learn from stories of early Christians in The Acts of the Apostles?**

Send your essay — including name, home address, telephone number, school and grade — to Catholic

Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624. Deadline for entries is May 15. The winner will be notified by phone. The winner's essay will be published in an upcoming issue of Kids' Chronicle.

Due to the low number of responses to last month's essay question, the editors have opted not to select a winner.

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