

**THE 12<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 'C'**  
**(Zechariah 12:10-11; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 9:18-22)**

**June 20, 2010**

The old Jewish prayer reads: ***“Blessed are you, Lord, our God, ruler of the universe who has created me a human and not beast, a man and not a woman, an Israelite and not a gentile, circumcised and not uncircumcised, free and not slave.”***

Before his conversion to the Christian faith, Paul, then known as Saul, recited this old Jewish prayer with holy pride. As a Jew, the question of those who were children of God and those who were not, those inside and those outside, was very important to Paul. The traditional answer which he learnt from childhood is that the Jews, the children of Abraham, were the people of God. People of other nations, the Gentiles, belong outside of God’s family.

In addition, among those inside, some are more equal than others. Men, for example, had special privileges and advantages over women. But after Paul’s conversion to Christianity, he realized that the ethnic privileges which the Jews believed they had over the Gentiles, and the gender advantages which men believed they had over women were not part of God’s will and design. He came to realize that in Christ ***“There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; for all are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).***

Brothers and sisters, one can rightly testify that the greatness of Paul lies in his readiness to abandon his old belief, when his newfound faith in Christ so demanded. He abandoned even those practices that were so dear to him for the sake of the kingdom. What about you and I? Are we able to let go our old belief and biases for the sake of our new found faith in Christ?

It is unfortunate that 2,000 years after Paul, many Christians still do not believe that we are all equal before God. Many still believe in racial, gender and cultural superiority. Paul challenges us today to step up and allow our faith to shape our ideology, to step up to the demands of our new faith in Christ.

As we continue with the Eucharistic celebration, we shall all be invited, like the disciples, to proclaim our faith in Christ. Let us, therefore, promise God that we shall not pull back when the implications and challenges of the faith we proclaim dawn on us in our day-to-day lives. Let our faith shape our ideology so as to live, always as children of God, equal before God, our Father.

**GOD IS GOOD! ALL THE TIME!**