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"Who are you?" (Acts 9:5).

Acts 9:1-20; John 6:52-59

The importance of St. Paul cannot be overestimated in the New Testament. Some have called him the founder of Christianity because his experience and theological articulation of the Christ event influenced the Gospel writers and shaped the essential spirituality of uniting ourselves to the Paschal mystery of Jesus. By baptism we are incorporated into Christ, pattern our lives on his life, death and resurrection, and share in the fullness of his glory as children of God.

The Acts of the Apostles retells the story of his conversion on the road to Damascus three times, and Paul describes his encounter with Jesus in Galatians 1. While he never knew Jesus of Nazareth, he claims an intimacy with the crucified and risen Christ equal to that of any of the Apostles and authorization directly from Jesus to take the Gospel to the Gentile world. By baptism we not only become disciples, we also become members of the Body of Christ. At the Eucharist we become what we consume, other Christs in the world.

The Easter season invites us to ponder these mysteries in our own lives. The Scriptures we read with faith have the power to read us, to probe our minds and hearts so we can experience the same encounter with Jesus that formed the first disciples. The Word is alive and active, some days barely a whisper and other times a “two-edge sword” that lays open the depth of our own questions and longing to know God more intimately. The invitation is always to take the next step, to come closer, to uncover the Christ within, our real self, our secret name, the purpose for our existence.

The conversion of St. Paul is important as a point of entry into the mystery of Jesus, the Word made flesh, the visible face of the invisible God.

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