



## Scripture

**Old Testament:** "And if anyone loves righteousness, her labours are virtues; for she teaches self-control and prudence, justice and courage; nothing in life is more profitable for mortals than these." Wisdom 8:7 from The Poverty And Justice Bible: Catholic Edition.

**New Testament:** "But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of you opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls." Luke 21:12-19 from The Poverty And Justice Bible: Catholic Edition.

## Catechism

"Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith; it means bearing witness even unto death. The martyr bears witness to Christ who died and rose to whom he is united by charity. He bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine. He endures death through an act of fortitude. 'Let me become the food of beasts. Through whom it will be given me to reach God.'" Catechism of the Catholic Church #2473 quoting St. Ignatius of Antioch, Ad Rom. 4, 1:Sch 10,110.

## Comment

Christians are widely held to be the most heavily persecuted faith group on earth, partly due to the sheer size of numbers (more people follow Christ than any of the world religions) and partly because of the geographical spread of believers across continents and nations. Pope Francis commented that those who persecute Christians make no distinction between Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant. By celebrating the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, let us remember the ecumenism of blood that unites Christians and pray that governments that persecute Christians may also experience their own 'Damascene Conversion'.

## Organisation of the month

Christian Solidarity Worldwide is an ecumenical Christian human rights organisation that specialises in defending and promoting human rights and in particular, the right to freedom of religion and worship as set out in Article 18 of the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Visit their website at [www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk) for more information

## Pray, Think, Act

**Pray:** that God the Father, in the name of His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ may, by the power of the Holy Spirit inspire and protect Christians who are suffering for the Faith. May they experience the protection of Mary, Help of Christians.

**Think:** the next time that you go to church, you are committing an offence in various countries around the world which could lead to your imprisonment.

**Act:** Visit their website at [www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk) for more information about how you can support its work, such as by making a donation or joining the organisation as a member.

*"Do as much as you can. God will do what we ourselves cannot do."  
St John Bosco, Letter to Cagliero, November 13, 1875*