

04 Feb 2018 Office of the Readings Reflection by Ms. Renee Valenzuela, OP

Galatians 1:1-12 and Explanation of Paul's letter to the Galatians by St. Augustine, bishop

In order to fully and truly receive the gospel, we must first open our hearts to the Word of God. We do this by acknowledging that our ways are of man, not of God. When we allow Jesus, the Word made Flesh, to enter our hearts, and truly listen, not with our ears but with our souls, we find ourselves humbled before Him. We allow Him to shape us and reform us into His creation, not our own. Only then are we capable of becoming true disciples of Christ. When we see the errors of our ways and choose God's way, we actually become that born again Christian. The old self dies so the new creation may live.

While we are given this grace at baptism, the free will to use this grace remains ours. This is what the "circumcizers" failed to do. Jesus fulfilled the old law, the old covenant, and brought it to completion, in the fullness of time. He established and subjected all people to the new covenant for the forgiveness of sins, beginning a new law for a new time. The "circumcizers" did not allow the old law to die, that the new law may live. They did not open their hearts to allow God to reform them into His new creation, despite their catechesis and baptism. The old must die so that the new may live. The old way is pleasing to men, the new way is pleasing to God. Who are we trying to please? We are not called by men, but by God. In order to please Him, we must allow Him to penetrate our hearts, our minds, our souls, that He may reshape and mold us into this new creation, in His image and likeness. This, my friends, is conversion. May we always open our hearts to God, feel His presence in our lives, become the holy ones He created us to be, and accept His will in all things. Amen.