

From the Pastor's Office

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

St. Paul amazes me. In one of his letters he said, "I must decrease, and Christ must increase in me." Somehow, I think that maybe Paul achieved his goal at the end. At the end he must have been Christ like. At the end Paul was imprisoned in Rome. He was condemned to death. It is sad to read that nobody came forth to defend Paul at his trial. That is a bit heartbreaking. Paul goes on to say that his time of departure is at hand. "I have finished the race; I have kept the faith." It is like Paul is ready for death. I admire Paul so much. Without him the Christian Church would not be what it became. What a wonderful role model he was. What wonderful courage he faced in the face of so much opposition. Paul is resigned. There is nothing more to do. "The Lord stood by me and gave me strength." The gospel reading today is a familiar story. You have two bad ones according to our Christian tradition, a pharisee and a tax collector. The pharisees loved to lord it over people and put them in their place. The tax collector robbed and stole money from people who had little or nothing. Just like everyone, their day of reckoning came for them as well. They stand before the altar of God to make their case. Gentlemen, justify yourselves. "O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity." I don't think that's a very good way to win over God's favor. God, before you judge me, may I remind you what a wonderful human being I was. The tax collector, who had little in his favor, found his humility. He knew exactly where he was standing at that moment. You might have cheated and robbed all your life and you got away with it, but now there is nowhere to hide. Stand your ground and make your case. The tax collector knew he had nowhere to hide, so he came clean. "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." Sometimes, before God that is all you need to say. God, be merciful to me a sinner. I think God likes it when he hears that. Best wishes...



With love,
Fr. Pat