January 25th: Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, Apostle

Gospel text (*Mk* 16:15-18): Jesus appeared to the Eleven and said to them: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved (…)."

The "Conversion" of St. Paul

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, we mull over the total change of perspective that, on the road to Damascus (c. a. 30), St. Paul experienced while persecuting the Church: and so he began, unexpectedly, to consider as "loss" and "refuse" all that had earlier constituted his greatest ideal, as it were the raison d'être of his life. What had happened?

The "Acts of the Apostles" relate that the Risen Christ appears as a brilliant star and speaks to Saul, transforming his entire life. The dazzling radiance of the Risen Christ blinds him; but then, his definitive "Yes" to Christ in Baptism restores his sight and makes him really see. In St. Paul’s actual "Letters", even without speaking in detail, he speaks on various occasions of this most important event, in other words, that he too is a witness of the Resurrection of Jesus, the revelation of which he received directly from Jesus.

—The Risen One spoke to Paul, called him to be a true Apostle, specifically, to the Gentiles. And at the same time, Paul learned that despite the immediacy of his relationship with the Risen One, he had to enter into communion with the Church; he himself had to be baptized: only in such communion with everyone could he have been a true apostle.