

Going Against the Crowd



WORD OF THE WEEK ROMANS 12: 2,9-13

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.

Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good. Love one another warmly as Christians, and be eager to show respect for one another. Work hard and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion. Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times. Share your belongings with the needy, and open your homes to strangers."



PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

God our Father,
we pray asking for transformation.
Transform our hearts and minds, show us your will. Help us to be aware of the choices we make, and give us the wisdom to make the best choices.

Inspired by the example of two great Saints, Peter and Paul, help us to always do all that we can for others; not conforming to the ways of this world but being transformed, so that we can show your love to all people through our actions and our words.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



ST PETER AND ST PAUL

This week we celebrate the feast day of SS Peter and Paul. They went against the crowd to do the right thing and spread Jesus' message. SS Peter and Paul, two early Christians, were martyred (killed because of their faith) and their feast day celebrates their lives and achievements. Paul travelled around preaching God's word into a sometimes hostile world. Peter, the rock, was tasked by Jesus to organise and support the disciples in organising the Church.

However they weren't always the perfect disciples. Peter denied knowing Jesus when He was arrested, Paul actively persecuted (attacked and killed) the early followers of Jesus before he himself became a christian. But both experienced God's love and grace which transformed them. They changed their ways and didn't go with the crowd, or take the easy option. They chose to do what was right, regardless of whether it was the popular thing to do or not.

GO WITH THE CROWD OR BE TRANSFORM?

Who or what pressures us to do what we do? Wear what we wear... Talk how we talk... If we are honest with ourselves, we would say that the culture around us has a huge say in what we do, what we wear, how we act and how we talk.

And when I say culture, I'm talking about social media, movie stars, musicians, athletes, where we live, the school we go to, and the friends we hang out with. Maybe even technology and books. Maybe your parents make all the choices for you. Maybe your friends make your decisions for you because you're afraid to lose them.

These are a few examples of what could be influencing your choices. But it is important to think about them, it is important to be aware of what is influencing us and how we make the choices we do.

This week's Word of the Week calls us to be transformed not to conform or go with the crowd. We don't always have to conform to what the world tries to decide for us, especially when it means going along with the crowd and ultimately making the wrong decisions, which are bad for ourselves and for others.



TIME TO THINK...

Sometimes it is easier to just conform and go with the crowd. But what if the crowd is doing the wrong thing?

Can you think of a time when you have done something just to fit in with the crowd?

Can you think of a time when you haven't said or done something to avoid being seen as different or to avoid a difficult situation?

Can you think of the time when you have not conformed and gone against the crowd to do the right thing, or stand up for someone?

THE BEATITUDES

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.	Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.	Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.	Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus turned the world upside down. He certainly went against the crowd and calls us to do the same.

Read the beatitudes above. There are pretty counter cultural, and seem to be opposite to how we would normally behave or react. But Jesus teaches us the beatitudes as a way of living as children in God's kingdom.

Which beatitude do you find most challenging?
Which one do you find easy to live out?
Which one can you challenge yourself to do this week even if it means going against the crowd?

