

# **Preaching Christ and Him Crucified: A Spiritual Study on the Interior Experience of Saint Paul on the Road to Damascus and of Saint Eugene on Good Friday**

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On the road to Damascus, St. Paul had a profound experience of Risen Christ as the Son of God. He accepted Jesus as the Son of God. The experience of Risen Christ shattered his idea of the Divine and opened to him new possibilities of understanding God. The Resurrection of Christ was the fundamental belief of the Saint.

During a Good Friday liturgy, St. Eugene de Mazenod the founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary had a similar experience of the Divine. This was at a particular time in his life when he was shattered and could not find meaning in his life. De Mazenod and his family were severely affected by the French Revolution. The family was displaced and young De Mazenod found himself uprooted from this familiar milieu. While gazing on the cross and contemplating on blood shed by Jesus for the liberation of humans, he came to the realization that he is saved by Christ and that Jesus is his Saviour. The love of Christ was the fundamental belief of St. De Mazenod. An experience does not arise from a universal dictum. The letters of St. Paul and the writings of St. De Mazenod are results of the reflections on their own personal experiences.

This paper is a comparative study on the spiritual journeys of St. Paul and St. De Mazenod. Focussing on the personal relationship between Jesus and Paul and between Jesus and De Mazenod, I have argued that the life of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate should be seen from the theological foundations of De Mazenod, namely God who is the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, the Church and priesthood.

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