

SEVENTH TUESDAY IN EASTERTIDE
Feast of St. Philip Neri, Founder of the Oratorians.

Reflections: In our readings today we find two people who know that their present life is limited. **Jesus** is preparing those in the Upper Room for the events that will start to take place as soon as they leave their sanctuary. **Paul** is talking in similar terms to those around him as he prepares his long journey to Rome for his trial & martyrdom. Neither relishes the thought of being put to death. However, they do not put themselves first – not even at the risk of losing their own lives.

If either Jesus or Paul had believed that this life is the only one that there is, their preaching, life styles & ultimate self-sacrifice would make no sense.

Jesus constantly refers to his union with the Father, acknowledging God to be the first & last of all things. In John's Gospel & in religious art this is so often expressed as the alpha & omega the first & last letters of the alphabet in Greek. **Paul** had a strong belief in the Resurrection & the life to come.

In today's Gospel passage, we can see that **Jesus** is thinking beyond the events that will take place in Jerusalem & puts them in a far greater scheme. He refers to the attitudes & lifestyles of people who belong to the world as only a part of a much bigger scene. It is with this conviction – that something far greater is at stake - that he could endure the humiliation of the trials, rejection of the crowd & death on the Cross. He transforms a symbol of torture & disgrace into a badge of honour for Christians throughout time.

Paul is a follower of **Jesus** & models his life on that of his Saviour. Paul's conversion changed him through & through & he used his amazing energy to promote the Gospel all around the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. When he had run out of wiggle room, he played his final card. As a Roman citizen, he could demand that the case of his accusers could be heard in Rome. During the journey to Rome he writes letters to churches he has visited. They contain teaching, pleas for a bit more order amongst the Christians & testaments to his own faith in Jesus to encourage his fellow converts. He transforms what to many may seem a personal disaster into a touring pulpit.

The Passion of Jesus & the witness of Saint Paul have inspired people throughout the Christian era. Our Saint today is Philip Neri. Universalis contains a painting & profile of the man. After looking at the *Readings at Mass*, it is well worth taking a look at the *About Today* section & discovering more about this fellow follower of Jesus.