

# Day 7

## Conversion: Changing our hearts and minds

### Scripture

- **Acts 28:3-6**, They changed their minds.

“Paul had gathered a bundle of brushwood and was putting it on the fire, when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, ‘This man must be a murderer; though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.’ He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. They were expecting him to swell up or drop dead, but after they had waited a long time and saw that nothing unusual had happened to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.”

- **Psalms 119: 137-144**, You are righteous, Lord, and your laws are right.
- **Matthew 18: 1-6**, Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

### Meditation

The locals realized that their judgment of Paul as a murderer was wrong, so they changed their minds. The extraordinary event with the viper enables the islanders to see things in a new way, a way which might prepare them to hear the message of Christ through Paul. In our search for Christian unity and reconciliation we are often challenged to rethink how we perceive other traditions and cultures. This demands an ongoing conversion to Christ in which the churches learn to overcome their perception of the other as a threat. As a result, our pejorative views of others will be cast away, and we will be drawn closer to unity.

### Prayer

Almighty God, we turn to you with repentant hearts. In our sincere quest for your truth, purify us from our unjust opinions of others and lead the churches to grow in communion. Help us let go of our fears, and so better understand each other and the stranger in our midst. We ask this in the name of the Just One, your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer Intention:** For the various ecumenical dialogues between our church and other denominations, that they bear witness to the quest for Christian unity in Jesus' name ... We pray to the Lord.

### Questions:

- Have you ever changed your mind about someone, for the better? Why?
- How has your church related to churches and congregations with very different theological ideas and/or cultures?
- Who are the outcasts in your community? How can you better reach out to them?

**Action:** Take steps to tackle prejudice or exclusion in your life and community.