

Archbishop O'Brien's 2009 Commitment Weekend

In today's second reading from the First Letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul urges the early Christians to "*Do everything for the glory of God.*"

During this Year of St. Paul, we've adopted his words as our theme for this year's Archbishop's Annual Appeal. It reminds me of a practice from my youth: When I was in grammar school, the Sisters of the Presentation taught us to print the letters AMDG at the top of all of our homework papers. The letters are the abbreviation for an early Jesuit Motto *Ad majorem Dei gloriam*: "to the greater glory of God."

The intention to do everything for God is fundamental to our spirituality. As faithful Catholics, we strive to live our lives so that everything we do reflects gratitude to God for His goodness.

"Do everything for the glory of God": Paul is one who practiced what he preached, demonstrating zeal and perseverance in preaching God's word, and his Kingdom.

Of course, that wasn't always the case with Paul. As we know from Scripture, Paul experienced a significant conversion. Paul had been known as Saul, and he was a formidable persecutor of the young Christian Church. Yet, as soon as Saul experienced the truth of Jesus Christ, he allowed himself to be led by that truth as far as it would take him. And the truth of Christianity did take St. Paul far—both in miles and in time. In this third millennium, we still hear the words of St. Paul at many celebrations of our Mass. What was true for the early Christian communities to whom he wrote is true for us today: Do everything for the glory of God.

We know from St. Paul's first century letters that in his ministry, he consistently solicited funds for the needs of the early Church, especially for widows and orphans, the poor and the persecuted, the most vulnerable members of society. Catholics sometimes see collections as something modern, but gathering financial support for the Church is as ancient as St. Paul. Thanks, in part, to St. Paul's far-reaching evangelization, the early Church has spread to every nation, and surely, through this Premier See of Baltimore, throughout the United States of America.

On behalf of all the People of God in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and the many distant missions served by our Archdiocese, I appeal to you today for your financial support in the spirit and zeal of St. Paul. The Church is a spiritual institution, yet we face daunting financial challenges. Simply put: Without money, we cannot extend ministry.

Today, I'm asking you to do something for God: Even if you've never made a contribution to the Archbishop's Annual Appeal before, I urge you to do so today—not for me, not for yourself, not even, ultimately, for your neighbor, but for God. *Do everything for the glory of God. Ad majorem Dei gloriam!*

Thank you for your attention. Thank you for the sacrifices you make on behalf of the Church of Baltimore. May God's glory continue to bless you and your loved ones.

And now, please turn your attention to your pastor or pastoral life director, who will guide you through your appeal pledge.