

Blaise Pascal: A lesson in conversion

For the next several weeks, I will be writing my weekly articles about famous individuals who in some way are "saintly witnesses". These people range from religious to lay, single and married, canonized and not, as well as, those of other faiths. These people help to illuminate our moral and spiritual path to holiness and to God. Blaise Pascal was a mathematical genius, inventor and a Christian writer. He spent a good portion of his life running from God. On November 23, 1654, Pascal "met" God and was profoundly converted to Jesus. His horses suddenly bolted and plunged off a bridge. Pascal was thrown into the roadway, which nearly cost him his life. He saw this as a warning directly from God. For the rest of his life Pascal carried around a piece of parchment sewn into his coat that read: *"God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of the philosophers and scholars...Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy...This is life eternal that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.' Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ...May I not fall from him forever...I will not forget your word. Amen."* From that day forward, Blaise Pascal realized that he must live primarily for God. He started out by giving much more to the poor. Pascal also wrote that we come to know God not only by reason, but even more so by faith. It is by faith that we can come to know God. *"Do not be surprised at the sight of simple people who believe without argument. He inclines their hearts to believe. We shall never believe with a vigorous and unquestioning faith unless God touches our hearts; and we shall believe as soon as he does so."*(Blaise Pascal)

—Sherrie Clutts DRE