Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I recently met a man who is undergoing a major conversion in his life right now. It has been only a little over a month since he was released from jail, having previously engaged in illegal narcotics. His ordeal has obviously turned his life upside down in negative ways, especially given his failed marriage, the loss of custody of his daughter, as well as employment and   housing challenges. So what did he do? Well, a better question to ask beforehand, is **what did GOD do?**

Let us consider St. Paul. As we all know, prior to his conversion, he (as Saul) was a great   persecutor of Christians. In an attempt to capture more Christians, he left Jerusalem to go to the city of Damascus in Syria—quite a long journey from the holy city of Jerusalem. Just as he was approaching Damascus, Jesus met him, and Saul's life changed forever (cf., Acts 9:1-19). We could also consider the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). Though not as far a journey as St. Paul's was, Jesus left the region of Judea (in which Jerusalem sits) toward the region of Galilee, stopping in Samaria to meet the Samaritan woman who had been living in adultery. From this encounter, the woman, as well as many other Samaritans, believed that He was "indeed the Savior of the world" (John 4:42).

God first offers Himself to us, giving us the good news of Himself, so that we *may* partake in His mercy (cf., CCC 1846). He "invites [all] *sinners* to the table of the kingdom" (CCC 545). **He meets us *outside the fence***, so to speak—outside the walls of Jerusalem—reaching out to all those who live a life of sin, both great and small. So, what did the man I spoke with do? What did Saul and the Samaritan woman do? They **recognized truth**, and that truth can only be found in Jesus Christ. They **repented**, they **believed**, they found **hope**, and they chose to **love**. They could have rejected Christ's grace, and continued a life of sin and death, but instead, they chose **life**.

In Christ through Mary,
Mr. Andrew M. Steele