

Liturgy We Live *by Dr. Gil Haas*

In today's epistle lesson, the voice of Jesus chides Paul with the words, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads." Apparently, "to kick against the goads" was a common expression in both Greek and Latin literature—a rural image, which rose from the practice of farmers goading their oxen in the fields. Goads were made from slender pieces of timber, blunt on one end and pointed on the other. Farmers used the pointed end to urge a stubborn ox into motion. Occasionally, the beast would kick at the goad. The more the ox kicked, the more likely the goad would painfully stab into his leg causing greater pain. Saul's conversion at first blush seems to have been a sudden encounter with Christ. But... based on the Lord's expression regarding his kicking back, Christ may have been working on him for years, prodding and goading him. Probably, Saul had heard Jesus teach in public places since Paul was Jesus' contemporary. Imagine Saul straining to watch Jesus, all the while grudgingly wondering how this "false" prophet could be gaining popularity. The more it goaded him, the more he resisted God's proddings.

If you have a liturgical question or an inquiry about anything that transpires during or around our worship service, please forward the question you would like researched to: gghaas@aol.com, or drop the question in the offering basin. Please note whether we can credit you as the source of the question.