

Scripture Reading -A Reading from the Book of Prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 12:5)

If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan? The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ Be Fired Up with Zeal!

Zeal is rising above discouragement, joyful in hope, patience in affliction, faithful in prayer and willing to go the extra mile when others have quited. Jeremiah was lamenting to God about the evil people in his days and how they went about unpunished. God replied by encouraging Jeremiah to have more zeal in working for His Kingdom as His prophet.

The Scared Heart of Jesus – the epitome of zeal. Jesus is not the one-dimensional meek and humble person we would like to remember Him by. For the sake of God's Kingdom, Jesus is also aggressive and zealous. Jesus fashioned a whip and forcefully drove out the money changers and animal sellers out of the temple (cf. John 2:15). It was also Jesus who said "I have come to set the earth on fire and how I wish it were already blazing!"(cf. Luke 12:49). The burning zeal of Jesus is aptly described in the Old Testament: *I endure scorn for your sake, and shame covers My face... for zeal for Your house consumes Me...* (cf. Psalm 69:7-9). Zeal of Jesus arises from His all-consuming, total self-giving love. **God wants us to be full of zeal for Him.** God exhorts us through St. Paul: *Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord (Romans 12:11).* What causes lack of zeal?

My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge...(cf. Hosea 4:6). It is impossible to be passionate about something which we do not know or understand. It is not possible to have a personal relationship with Jesus when we do not know what He thinks or desires. How can it be possible for a person lacking a personal relationship with Jesus to be enthusiastic and passionate about his/her faith? Do I take the time to deepen my friendship and bonding with Jesus through learning more about His teachings and putting them into practice?

Unconfessed sins weigh down a soul. When people come in to do a retreat they usually look weary at the start of the retreat, and zeal is the last word to describe them. Yet after the important starting session of surrendering and a good Confession, the change in the retreatants is manifest even to the most casual observer. It seems all of a sudden there is joy in the air, and the praise and worship from the retreatants become alive, energetic and spontaneous. A soul recharged with sanctifying grace can be easily fired up with zeal for God.

Weighed down by the barnacles of spiritual sloth, laziness and indifference. Lack of a solid prayer life. Laziness is aptly considered as one of the 7 capital sins. A slothful person cannot aspire to nor answer the Lord's call to holiness. *Laziness brings on deep sleep...(Psalm 19:15).* Sincere prayer brings about communion and bonding with the Lord. Through prayers, the Sacraments and the Word, the Lord floods our inner being with a fuller measure of His Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that imparts to our lives a zeal for God.

Never forget what God has done for us. *Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all His benefits. (Psalm 103:2).* The Lord asks us to remember constantly all that He has done for us so that our love for Him may not grow cold. Frequent meditation on the sorrowful passion of Jesus affords a deeper insight into Christ's personal love for each of us and helps us to respond through a deeper love from our heart. Sanctified by a deeper love, our service to God is not made begrudgingly but powered by untiringly love and zeal through a bondage of love and devotion not of slavery or duty. Indifference and lukewarmness are transformed into zeal.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I embrace Your Sacred Heart burning with love and zeal for me with the fervent adoration and love of my Blessed Mother Mary. How I wish my heart burns with the same fire of Your Sacred Heart with love for You! Teach me how to empty my poor heart of all things so that You can take Your rightful place on the throne of my heart. As I try to go into a deeper communion and bonding with You through a deeper prayer life and loving self-denial, give me more and more of Your Spirit. I desire that my heart be fired up with zeal by the Holy Spirit so that You can see more and more of Your image in me. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, give me the fervour of Your Immaculate Heart! Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.