

Thursday of the Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 12:49-53): Jesus said to his disciples: “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!

There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

«I have come to set the earth on fire»

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Today, the Gospel presents Jesus to us as a person of great ambitions: “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!” (Lk 12:49). Jesus would like to see the fire of charity and virtue already burning. As if He would be referring to it in passing! He has to undergo a baptism, that is, the trial of the Cross, and He feels anguish until it is all over. It’s only natural, Jesus has plans, and He is in a hurry to see them accomplished. We could say He has a “Divine Impatience.” We also have ideas and projects, and we would also like to see them fulfilled straightaway. Time gets in the way. “How great is my anguish until it is accomplished!” (Lk 12:50).

It is the stress of life. It is the anxiety anyone with great projects feels. On the other hand, having no desires is like remaining at a standstill, dead, restrained; it is being sad, embittered, as being one who derives pleasure from reprehending those who actually work. People who are moving and cause others to move, who are progressing and cause others to progress, are ambitious people.

Have great aspirations! Train your goals onward and upward! Seek your personal perfection, that of your family, that of your work, that of your deeds, that of the assignments you receive. The saints have always aspired to the highest goals. They have not been afraid to face efforts and stress. They have moved. Carry on, move, too! Remember St. Augustine's words: "If, though, you say, "That's enough, that's the lot," then you've even perished. Don't stop on the road, don't turn round and go back, don't wander off the road. You stop, if you don't forge ahead; you go back, if you turn back to what you have already left behind; you wander off the road, if you apostatize. The lame man on the road goes better than the sprinter off the road." And he adds: "Always be dissatisfied with what you are, if you want to arrive at what you are not yet. Because wherever you are satisfied with yourself, there you have stuck. Always add some more, always keep on walking, always forge ahead." Are you advancing or have you stopped? Implore the help of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of Hope!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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"Prayer is nothing else than union with God. When our heart is pure and united to God, we feel within ourselves a joy, a sweetness that inebriates, a light that dazzles us." (Saint John Vianney)

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"The "yes" to following Jesus Christ includes the value of allowing oneself to be burned by the fire of His passion." (Benedict XVI)

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"The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's suffering Servant. He allows himself to be numbered among sinners; he is already "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). Already he is anticipating the "baptism" of his bloody death. Already he is coming to "fulfil all righteousness", that is, he is submitting himself entirely to his Father's will: out of love he consents to this baptism of death for the remission of our sins." (Catechism of the Church Catholic, n. 536)