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 as a man of great longing: "I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!" (Lk 12:49). Jesus longs to see the world ablaze with charity and virtue. What a vision! Yet He knows He must first endure a baptism—meaning the Cross—and He yearns for that hour to be accomplished. Of course He does! Jesus has a mission, and He is eager to see it fulfilled. We could say He is seized by a holy impatience. We, too, have dreams and projects we want to see realized right away. Time itself often feels like an obstacle. Jesus Himself said, "how great is my anguish until it is accomplished!" (Lk 12:50).

This is the tension of life—the restlessness felt by those who carry great purposes within them. On the other hand, the person without desires is fainthearted, lifeless, and becomes a weight on others. Worse still, such a person often grows bitter, spending energy criticizing those who actually work and build. It is people with deep desires who move the world forward, who inspire others and make things grow.

So—have great desires! Aim high! Strive for holiness: in yourself, in your family, in your work, in the tasks entrusted to you. The saints always aspired to the greatest things. They did not fear effort or struggle; they moved, and in moving, they changed the world. You move too! Remember the words of St. Augustine: "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 moving—or standing still? Implore the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Hope!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "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)

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

- "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)