Personal holiness: a priority for the members of the Order

Reflections of the Grand Master - Summer 2018

Every member is well aware that the first purpose of our Order is “to strengthen in its members the practice of Christian life” – that is, to grow in personal holiness.

I am invariably impressed by the seriousness with which our members acknowledge this “first principle” and are seeking holiness. Of course, none of us is ever “completely holy.” We are all seeking to become more like Christ in every facet of our lives. St. Paul tells us that this is the special role of the Holy Spirit, for all of us “…are being transformed into [Christ’s] likeness with ever increasing glory, through the power of the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:18), and “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom 5:5).

This is an ongoing interior transformation into Christ that we don’t see directly but is gradually realized by regular prayer and sacramental participation, especially in the Eucharist and Penance. But that is not to say that our transformation into the likeness of Christ cannot be perceived. We know it can be perceived in our way of life and even in the countenance of the holy person each of us is called to be. Such has been the case in most canonized saints.

In his beautiful Apostolic Exhortation *Rejoice and be Glad*, Pope Francis suggests that “the measure of our holiness stems from the stature that Christ achieves in us… by the power of the Spirit.” He suggests further: “Allow the Spirit to forge in you the personal mystery that can reflect Jesus Christ in today’s world” for each of us is “a message of Jesus that God wants to speak to the world.”

What, we might ask, are those unique, God-given talents and gifts that the Holy Spirit is forging in me to make me “a message which the Holy Spirit takes from the riches of Christ and gives to the world”? Do I pray for the Holy Spirit to do so?

I look forward to the Consulta to be held here in Rome, November 13-16. As we discuss the role of our Lieutenants – a most timely topic – I suggest the fostering of personal holiness in our every member will be high on the list of our priorities. In that effort, the prayers of all will be helpful.

Edwin Cardinal O'Brien

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