

19th October, Monday week 29 in ordinary time

Eph. 2:1-10, Luke 12:13-21

“We are God’s work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning He had meant us to live it” (Eph. 2:10). The word “good in this sentence can easily be misunderstood and the Gospel gives us a stark warning. A “good life” is not a life filled with luxuries and self-endowment, but a life lived in Christ by His grace, as the letter to the Ephesians tells us. St Paul reminds his hearers that living a “sensual” life, ruled by physical desires, is not the life that God wants for us, and in the Gospel Jesus warns us to be aware of avarice as our security is not in *things* but in our relationship with the Father in Christ.

St Paul explains how this is possible; “by grace you have been saved through faith... by a gift from God” (v.8). In other words, we *cannot* live the perfect Christian life in our own strength. Only by the grace of the Holy Spirit are we able to respond to Christ’s true riches. This is a complete and total gift. The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes grace as “favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to His call” (CCC 1996). It is “a participation in the life of God” (CCC 1997). What is this life? It is, as St. Peter said, sharing in the divine life of God (2 Pt. 1:4). This is God’s own life; the relationship of perfect grace-filled love that flows between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. At our baptism we were given a share of the divine life, but because of sin, we are not always able to appreciate it or even live it fully.

But Jesus does not abandon us and through the grace of the sacraments we are restored, renewed and refreshed. When we are tempted, making the Sign of the Cross can be the shield to protect us from putting ourselves first. We can say an “arrow prayer” such as “Holy Spirit given me the

grace to....” If we know that we will have a challenging time ahead, we can ask our Blessed mother, or our patron saint to pray for us.

The good life then is not a life of self-indulgence but being the person that we have been created to be, by the grace of the Holy Spirit,* who binds us to Christ, who leads us to His heavenly Father to share in that wonderful divine life.

Carol Ann Harnett



* Picture: Holy Spirit window in St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome, which floods the building with the light of the evening sun, as a reminder that the Holy Spirit Himself leads and guides the Church by His grace. Photo © Carol Ann Harnett