

## Reflection for Saturday 10 October

The first reading at Mass this week has been taken from St Paul's letter to the Galatians. Today's reading comes from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter where the Apostle Paul has been contrasting the Jewish law with faith in Jesus Christ.

The law had its uses in keeping us in contact with God but it could not bring us into a living relationship with him. That could only come through faith in Jesus Christ. As Paul says in Chapter 3 vs 24 "So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith." Then in vs 25 he says, "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; vs 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith."

When Christ came he justified us by faith. That is, he made us righteous through no merit of our own, nor through any good works we may have done, but through faith in him who died on the Cross and was raised on the third day. That justification began at our baptism when we were set free from sin and made one with Christ in in his body the Church.

But that is only the beginning of our relationship with him. We were only declared righteous by Jesus Christ. We now have "to become what we are". In other words that new relationship in him has to become a reality in our lives. So begins our salvation through a life dedicated to him. We have now put on Christ and we have to grow into him. Whoever we are irrespective of race or gender we are one in Christ. That is where the sacraments come in. Jesus is in them, changing us, allowing us to grow in him. The Lord is there when we were confirmed by the bishop as he laid his hands on our head and anointed us with oil of chrism, in hearing the words of absolution spoken to us by the priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and in the Blessed Sacrament when we receive Christ's precious body and blood, transforming us into his likeness. St Paul puts it so much better in Galatians, chapter 2 part of vs 20, "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

We do not live just by rules and outward observance of our faith, although the teaching of the Church is important, guiding us how to believe, but by the Spirit, who is working in us as we receive the sacraments, and in our prayer.

May we all receive the power of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to become the sort of people God wants us to be, and then to be sent out to live and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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