



Daily Reflections

October 5, 2016

Scripture

Galatians 2: 2-14

Brothers and sisters:

After fourteen years I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.

I went up in accord with a revelation, and I presented to them the Gospel that I preach to the Gentiles— but privately to those of repute— so that I might not be running, or have run, in vain.

On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the Gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter to the circumcised, for the one who worked in Peter for an apostolate to the circumcised worked also in me for the Gentiles, and when they recognized the grace bestowed upon me, James and Cephas and John,

who were reputed to be pillars,
gave me and Barnabas their right hands in partnership,
that we should go to the Gentiles
and they to the circumcised.
Only, we were to be mindful of the poor,
which is the very thing I was eager to do.

And when Cephas came to Antioch,
I opposed him to his face because he clearly was wrong.
For, until some people came from James,
he used to eat with the Gentiles;
but when they came, he began to draw back and separated himself,
because he was afraid of the circumcised.
And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him,
with the result that even Barnabas
was carried away by their hypocrisy.
But when I saw that they were not on the right road
in line with the truth of the Gospel,
I said to Cephas in front of all,
"If you, though a Jew,
are living like a Gentile and not like a Jew,
how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Our Scripture Reflection

The early Christian Church was comprised exclusively of Jews who had converted to faith in Jesus Christ. However, as time went on and the Church began to spread, Gentiles wanted to be a part of the Church. What was the Church to do? Paul felt a tremendous calling to welcome them. Cephas (Peter), James, and John, on the other hand, were uncertain. Why? The problem boiled down to practicing the old Jewish customs and laws such as circumcision, the eating of kosher food and intermarriage with non-Jews. Debate on the issue became very heated at times between Paul and the other disciples. Paul tells us that on one occasion when he encountered Cephas, "I opposed him to his face because he was clearly wrong." Paul wanted the doors of the Church to be flung wide open with no restrictions placed on the gentles. Cephas and the others wanted the Gentiles who were allowed in to

the Church to be required to practice Jewish customs and laws. In time, Cephas and the others would pray and surrender to the Holy Spirit who told them to open the doors wide and remove all barriers. The Church would then spread like wild fire because of the Church's unity in Jesus Christ.

Food for your Journey

Here's a story of what it means to "live to God," filled with the faith of Christ (Galatians 2:19-20):

In 1994, members of the Hutu tribe in Rwanda carried out mass murders of the Tutsi tribe. At the town of Ruhanga, a group of 13,500 Christians had gathered for refuge — they came from various denominations: Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, Baptists and others. According to a witness, "When the militias came, they ordered the Hutus and Tutsis to separate themselves by tribe. The people refused and declared that they were all one in Christ, and for that they were all killed."

—E. Thomas, "Can these bones live?" SOMA (Sharing of Ministries Abroad) Newsletter, October 15, 1996, 1-15.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Make me a vibrant witness to Your Presence in my life. In doing so, may I draw people to You. Amen.