

Readings for the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
Extraordinary Form

1 Corinthians 10: 6-13

Brethren, let us not desire evil things, as they did. And do not become idolaters, as some of them did, as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.” Let us not indulge in immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell within a single day. Let us not test Christ as some of them did, and suffered death by serpents. Do not grumble as some of them did, and suffered death by the destroyer. These things happened to them as an example, and they have been written down as a warning to us, upon whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall. No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it.

Luke 19: 41-47

At that time, when Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If this day you only knew what makes for peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. For the days are coming upon you when your enemies will raise a palisade against you; they will encircle you and hem you in on all sides. They will smash you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another within you because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.” Then Jesus entered the temple area and proceeded to drive out those who were selling things, saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.’” And every day he was teaching in the temple area.

Zeal for your House

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost – 1 Cor 10: 6-13 / Lk 19: 41-47
Ave Maria Catholic Church, August 7, 2022 – Fr. David M. Vidal

In the gospel, Saint Luke writes that Christ drove out the sellers from the temple, and Saint Matthew indicates that Jesus drove out the sellers and the buyers. The number of buyers was much greater than the sellers. Driving them out was beyond the power of a carpenter's son, as He was thought to be.

Jesus with his divine authority said: “*My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves,*” (Lk 19: 46). The evangelist John also recalls Jesus saying: “*Take these out of here and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.*” (Jn 2: 16). Then, the disciples remembered the words of Scripture, “*Zeal for your house will consume me!*” (Jn 2: 17).

Jesus' zeal and love for the Father's house do not stop at a temple made of stone. The temple also has another meaning according to the teachings of Origin: “*By the Temple, we may understand the soul where the Word of God dwells.*” The souls are the temples that Christ came to clean and restore.

In his *Summa theologiae* (I-II q.28 a.4) Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches: “*Zeal, whatever way we take it, arises from the intensity of love. Love of friendship seeks the friend's good: then, when it is intense, it causes a man to be moved against everything that opposes the friend's good.*” And he adds: “*This intense love for God’s honor consumed Christ unto the point of death. And the words of John 2:17 became literally true: “The zeal of your house has eaten me up (or consumes me).”*”

Let us reflect on Jesus’s words: “*My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves . . . Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.*”

Our souls are supposed to be a house of prayer.

Prayer is an act of friendship. This is how St. Teresa of Avila describes it: “*It is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us,*” (Life 8:7).

Prayer is a matter of building friendship with God through Jesus Christ who came to the world to make us his friends: “*I no longer call you slaves . . . I have called you friends,*” (Jn 15:15). Now, friendship requires communion of mind and heart. If we are not in communion with Jesus’s values and desires, how can we call ourselves his friends?

Then, when we pray, we learn to lift our hearts to “Our Father in heaven.” In prayer, we praise the gift of holiness, and we express our desire to welcome God’s kingdom and accomplish God’s will in our lives.

Our souls are supposed to be “a house of prayer,” however, if we do not pray, we lose communion with Jesus’s values and desires, and we become a marketplace.

When we do not pray, our souls become like a market shop where you find a Bible next to a deck of poker cards on the top of the water heater. In this market shop, the true value of things disappears. In this market shop, everything is sold and bought according to the passersby’s interest.

In the market shop of the world, an action against God’s commandments can even be named as *sinfully good!* In the world’s market, something can be sinful and good at the same time and in the same respect! This is one of the many contradictions of the world.

This is the immediate effect of being a marketplace: “*The loss of the sense of sin and the lack of interest in God’s friendship.*” Then, after God’s friendship is lost and the sense of sin is completely forgotten, what remains is “*a den of thieves.*”

Jesus invites us to share his zeal. The zeal for God’s house must consume us!

By our incorporation into Christ through baptism and after receiving the seal of the Holy Spirit, we are called to be guardians of the honor of God.

If we love God with great zeal, how can we not be moved by the offenses that are committed against Him? The zeal for God’s glory and honor compels us to work against anything that offends Him.

Fighting for God’s honor here on earth will be our glory in heaven. The time spent in the salvation of souls will be repaid well. That was the conviction of Saint Francis Xavier, the Apostle of the Far East, and the Patron Saint of all foreign missions. He used to say: “*To go to the ends of the earth, to save one soul, and then to die is a lot worthy to be envied.*”

Working for God’s honor, the salvation of our souls, and many other souls is our mission too as much as it was the mission of Saint Francis Xavier.

That was also the conviction of Saint Joseph Cafasso, a holy priest and confessor, who said: “*If a soul in heaven could have a desire, it could certainly be to be in our place, to have a day, an hour, or even a moment to prevent an offense against God and to enjoy in heaven the comfort of having saved the honor and glory of his God.*”

The zeal for God's house must consume us!

As we participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, let us pray for this holy zeal for God's honor and glory, and for the salvation of souls. This was Jesus's thirst on the cross. During Holy Mass, let us make Jesus's thirst our own thirst. Amen