

**A Glimpse of My Heart**  
**By: Fr. Thomas James, SVD**

As we celebrate the 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time liturgically, we also realize we are living in a tumultuous global time and uncertain situation. Paul is challenging the Galatians along with us, men and women of the modern world to live a qualitative Christian life with Christian moral values. Liturgically, Ordinary Time indicates we have celebrated our Major Feasts and now we must find a balance in our Christian living and continue our Spiritual Growth. We have journeyed from Lent, celebrated Holy Week, experienced Resurrection of Our Lord, His Ascension to the Father, and Pentecost. In His departure He has left the disciples with the gift promised by the Father, “the Holy Spirit” to lead and guide them and unlock their misunderstanding so that they could be engaged in God’s Will and Work in the world, that same Spirit passed on and received by us. Today Pope Francis is urging and challenging us as Paul challenged the Galatians to do the same.

Among the Galatians there had arisen a major conflict. The conflict stemmed from some Galatians who believed that Gentiles who became Christians had to observe the whole Jewish Law if they wanted to follow Jesus and be saved! This is not the first time this conflict has arisen. There were also other groups who tried to do the same, putting unnecessary burdens on newcomers and disturbing their peace of mind. Paul realized this theological approach was causing dissension, selfishness, envy, resentment and destroying God’s Word, instead of joy, peace and love of neighbor was being destroyed. If this continued the Gifts and the Fruits of the Holy Spirit would both continually be misinterpreted and destroyed.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul writes, “freedom sets us free from the yoke of slavery”, a freedom to choose with responsibility, choices rooted with ownership, valued investments and responsibility surrounded by boundaries, realizing my neighbor also has freedom and boundaries that must be respected; as Paul says do not use freedom for the flesh, that is licentiousness, with true freedom according to Paul we serve one another through love, for St. Paul the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”!

In our contemporary world, our contemporary churches, communities and lives we struggle with some issues that St. Paul addresses in his letter to the Galatians. In all of his pastoral letters to those first Christian Communities, the Galatians are the only ones he does not have a prayer of thanksgiving or share his gratitude for them or with them. But more importantly in this letter he shares his love for them by challenging them not by appeasing them or overlooking their immoral behavior but by sharing the truth with them. We all know and experience what truth is and can be a freeing experience but sometimes it tends to make us miserable.

When we fail to live up to the challenges outlined by St. Paul to the Galatians, passed on to us, we do as the participants did in today’s gospel, we have a ready excuse or blame others.

In our just completed retreat we reflected on **“OUR INDIVIDUAL CALL BY CHRIST”** and **“INVITATION BY CHRIST TO FOLLOW HIM.”** LIKE THOSE IN THE GOSPEL, **JESUS SAYS TO THEM ALSO INCLUDING US, “NO ONE WHO SETS A HAND TO THE PLOW AND LOOKS TO WHAT WAS LEFT BEHIND IS FIT FOR THE KINGDOM”!**

**IN RESPONDING TO OUR CALL AND SAYING YES TO OUR INVITATION WE CAN RULE OUT REGRETS!!!**