

Monthly Reflection:

September 2022

**TEST YOURSELVES.
DO YOU NOT REALIZE THAT
JESUS CHRIST IS IN YOU?
[2 COR 13:5]**



There are many types of tests that we are familiar with: laboratory tests, intelligence or general knowledge tests, school tests, and so on. In this passage, St. Paul proposes one test that can help us determine how we are growing as Christians. Occasionally, we must look inward to find out if we are firm in our faith. A growing realization about the indwelling presence of Jesus is proof of our spiritual progress. If we are moving forward in this realization, we succeed in the test.

The life of St. Augustine of Hippo (354 to 430 AD) is a vivid depiction of an intense journey of search for the Lord. He searched everywhere and finally, he was led to his own heart. This search is described in the Jesus Youth Prayer number 3 by the saint himself: "You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness, I plunged into the lovely things which you created."

The Holy Bible repeatedly speaks of the valuable treasure hidden in each one of us. The indwelling presence of God in each of us is called a great mystery by St. Paul (Col. 1:27). We are repeatedly reminded by Jesus, that if we love God and attune ourselves to His plan for us, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit will come and reside within us forever (Jn. 14: 16, 23). With our baptism and reception of the Holy Spirit, we have become a sacred temple where God dwells (1 Cor. 3:16). "Don't you know this," asks the Apostle.

Knowing the presence of the Lord within is so simple, yet inaccessible for most of us. What keeps us away from experiencing it? St. Augustine puts it clearly, "I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you". We are busy, busy with all kinds of preoccupations. The majority of it could be about the world, but some of it could be about spirituality. Martha was serving the Lord, yet far away from Jesus. On the other hand, we may be in the thick of things, but deeply in touch with the interior presence.



For most of us, an opening into a lively interior life starts with an 'Encounter experience' or Baptism in the Holy Spirit. When the Divine touches us deeply, we become deeply aware of the Lord walking with us or dwelling within us. Most of us are blissfully unaware of it, but we experience profound joy and peace. Praying becomes so effortless as a result. Consequently, the reception of baptismal graces and the welcoming of the Holy Spirit as an adult puts us in touch with the Lord's presence within.

If left unattended, a good fire will surely die out. Likewise, if we do not tend to the grace of the rich inner presence, it will fade away. For this, most of us need some help. So, in Jesus Youth, we challenge people to have a rich inner life, a caring community, and a fruit-filled missionary commitment so that we keep the inner fire burning.

Jesus declared, "I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly". Jesus Himself is life, and we realize His constant presence in us through abundant life, which is the source of all our joy and peace. Moreover, when we walk in the shadow of the Lord, we will be able to see the presence of the Lord in our neighbors. This new vision of Christ in the other makes 'loving the neighbor' much easier, preparing us for the joy of heaven.

"Look into yourselves and you will find that you have Christ in you. But if Christ is in you, how much more is he your teacher!" – St. John Chrysostom

-Dr. Edward Edezhath

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