

Fr. Mark's Message

February 2019

"Be Leaven Today"

Even though we may not be bakers, we all know that to make bread you need not only flour but yeast as well. What the yeast does it produces a change in the flour. The enzymes do something positive which allows us to enjoy the bread.

As disciples of Jesus, Missionary of the Father, we are called to also be like the enzymes of the yeast, which are very much alive, and produce in society today, something positive.

At the time of the Reformation, Fr. Francis De Sales, known for his calm, was sent to a region of Switzerland, a harsh land for such a kind preacher. Most of the people had switched to the new Protestant Church. Besides being fanatics, they were also rude with him.

Since he had gotten no results in the cities, he decided to try in the small towns in the countryside. Not much luck there either. Many would shut the door in his face. What would he do? He would slip under the door a flyer with the main truths of our Catholic faith. On one occasion, nobody welcomed him for the night. It was very cold with snow on the ground. He decided to sleep by the open oven of the bakery in town... still warm after the last use for the day. His perseverance paid off. He started seeing the fruits of his labor. Conversions back to the Catholic faith appeared here and there like mushrooms... Francis De Sales was no baker but acted as leaven which transformed people around him.

You and I are meant to be leaven for our society and culture, bringing the living Gospel to others, careful not to be affected or infected by the negative elements present around us today. We cannot forget that we are missionary disciples and lose the apostolic zeal of the first followers of Jesus.

The question "How can I serve you?", when directed to God, it expresses our desire to do his will. It is the same question that Saul asked on his way to Damascus, when a great light blinded him and caused a drastic change in his life.

When that same question is directed to the people we live with, we are sharing our desire to love others as we love ourselves.

It's the same question the teacher of the law asked Jesus and he replied with the parable of the Good Samaritan and concluded telling him: "Go and do the same."

Bishop Luis Augusto Castro, from Tunja, Colombia, (a Consolata Missionary) retells the story of Peter, who spent his entire life among the lepers in the Dutch Guyana. Someone who saw him, wrote the following: "I saw how he was treating the sick. Those who could not help themselves, he would feed them one by one and give them a drink. He would go and search for water. He would cut the wood for them, clean their poor shacks, make their simple 'beds'... He would treat their bad sores; wash their bloody and infected bandages. The doctors used to remind him to be prudent, for God's sake, to avoid being infected. To them he would respond saying: 'Don't worry. These are our brothers. God will protect us.'" In fact, even though he worked among the sick for over 25 years, the leprosy didn't touch him. Let us be 'living' leaven today.

Fr. Mark Marangone S.X.