

Second Hand Preacher 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time 9 3 17

Romans 12:1-2

There is an old joke about a hearty breakfast. The chicken is dedicated because she gives the daily egg. The pig giving bacon, now that animal is committed. This slightly silly illustration does show how committed we are to be to Jesus. There should be no half way. Lukewarm Christianity can actually be harmful as it can lead to apathy and one may not practice with the commitment needed to be life changing. Sometimes if someone is cold they may be more easily converted. This is like I am with a new idea. In the idea's newness, I can Google, ask questions, and even try to find ways to experience the new idea before I commit. If the concept is somewhat familiar to me, I may not have the same zeal. We need zeal for Christ.

This zeal is what St. Paul is trying to promote in Rome. Rome is a very cosmopolitan city and there are all walks of life represented there. Most of them do not have a notion of Jesus in their background. In fact monotheism may not be something they have ever considered. That is why this letter to the Romans is so powerful. The letter was written to draw the gentile in and to encourage those who have started to make the commitment. Some of the readers may have been cold, but Paul is lighting them on fire. He wants them to be totally committed to this new way of life that is good, pleasing, and perfect. He is encouraging them to give every aspect of our being to the cause of Christianity. The idea that we are whole beings, consisting of body mind, and spirit, would have been in line with the philosophy of the day. Paul wants it all!

How committed are we? I think it is pretty easy to find ourselves in this lukewarm category. I know this happens to me. I believe that committing ourselves to greater involvement with scripture can be the catalyst that ignites the fire within. Follow the daily readings and totally absorb the weekend readings. Study them on your own and compare what you learned to the homily you hear at Mass. You may not be able to put the time in the preacher does, but anything a full and active participant of the Sunday liturgy does can be supplemented by hearing the Word of God again and taking in the words of the homilist. This practice over time will perhaps enhance our understanding of the Liturgy of the Word and hopefully bear fruit. Each of us needs to be that full and active participant helping us to be on fire for Jesus.