

## *Ordinary Time 22A 2014*

### *Do Not Be Conformed to This Age*

Throughout the summer we have been reading from St. Paul's letter to the Romans. In doing so, we have learned that we are saved by God's grace, that we are destined for resurrection life, and that God remains faithful to his promises, even though we are not always faithful to God. But in today's reading, we come to a new section of the letter in which Paul teaches us how to live the life of the Spirit we have received in Jesus Christ.

Paul begins by urging us *to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God*. What he means is this: When we live a morally good life, a life directed by God's Spirit, we are offering a pleasing sacrifice to God. When we respect our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, we are offering a holy sacrifice to God. The morally good life, then, is more than a matter of dos and don'ts; it is our offering and sacrifice to God.

But we cannot offer our bodies to God if we abuse them with drugs and alcohol. We cannot offer such a sacrifice, if we use our bodies in ways they were not intended to be used.

Paul goes on to say that we are *not to conform ourselves to this age but to be transformed by the renewal of our mind*. Before we knew Christ, we were conformed to this age. When we did not know Christ, we were under the power of

Sin and Death. But now that we know Christ, now that we have been baptized into Christ, now that we are in communion with Christ through the Eucharist, we are no longer conformed to this age; for Christ is transforming us, day by day, into his image and likeness.

We conform ourselves to this age whenever we measure ourselves by the standard of this world rather than by the standard of Christ's death and resurrection. We conform ourselves to this age whenever we are more intent on the praise of this age than the praise that comes from God. We conform ourselves to this age when there is nothing that distinguishes us from the world about us, when we are just like everybody else. We are conformed to this age when the values of this age replace the values of the gospel.

At the present time there is no greater danger to Catholicism than being conformed to this age; for when we are conformed to this age, we are no longer conformed to the pattern of Christ's death and resurrection. And when we are no longer conformed to the pattern of Christ's death and resurrection, we are no longer destined for resurrection glory. So how can we live a life that is pleasing to God? The answer is simple: We can live a life pleasing to God if we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God. We can live a life pleasing to God by conforming ourselves to Christ rather than to the world about us. Live in Christ. Live with Christ, and for Christ, and you will not be conformed to this age.