

## **Companions on the Journey**

November 10, 2019

Dear Friends in Christ,

One of the passionate expressions of Jesus of Nazareth was when he said that he had a baptism to undergo and he was striving to embrace that baptism. It was not so much a baptism of water as it was a baptism by fire, a baptism in the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus even said that he came to set this world on fire. Not like those forest fires currently raging in California but the fire of love. Jesus himself was sent to earth for this purpose. Jesus of Nazareth was called by God the Father to be ignited by love and to set this world ablaze with the unleashed power of sacrificial love.

Jesus was called by God to be ignited by love. We who believe in Jesus Christ are similarly called—to be on fire with love, to be ignited by love in our daily lives. We hear such words and immediately we think, “That’s all well and good but I have a family to raise and a mortgage to pay. I have responsibilities for children, spouse, parents, workplace, community. How can I be called to be even more? How can I be expected to be ignited by love? What we sometimes miss is that the being on fire with love is not something over and above our daily living. It is our daily living.

So often it is not in the great things we do but precisely in the little things that we make the biggest difference. In the nineteenth century The Little Flower, St. Therese of Lisieux, and in the twentieth century Mother Teresa of Calcutta, now Saint Teresa of Calcutta, both advocated a way of living that captured the essence of what Christ was advocating. They both spoke about doing, not so much great things but rather, ordinary things with a great love, a great devotion, a selflessness and a care. If I do the daily things and the mundane things of life but with an attentiveness, a reverence and a devotion then I do them with love and while not a grand bonfire of the vanities what is created is something new and transformative because it is done with a love that was not there before but is there now because, by the grace of God, I have responded with love. And then slowly, slowly the world is transformed by the fire of these tiny acts of love.

Next weekend our parish will launch a Campaign to ask all of our parishioners to examine their level of financial support to Saint Anthony’s. It is my firm belief that everyone can give something to spread the message of Jesus Christ. Everyone can give just a little more than they are giving at the present time. I know that it surely applies to me. I have decided to increase what I give to our parish for its support. I am asking each family to think about, pray about, discuss and then decide what the new level of support financially will be. I will ask each household to fill out a card and hand it in at Mass next Sunday when we together and individually will make our pledge of support to spread the message of Jesus Christ and to live the way of Jesus Christ. Thank you for listening. Let us do all the little things with great love and thus be ignited by fire.

In the Peace of Christ,

Msgr. McHenry