

WE here the encouragement to rekindle the flame of faith, the gift of God's Spirit. He should be neither timid about nor ashamed of "the testimony of the Lord," the gospel and all it entails.

this metaphor from the rekindling of a dying flame does not necessarily mean that the flame of enthusiasm had gone out or was in danger of doing so. It means that everyone must take some steps, at times but preferably daily, to "keep the flame of faith alive in your heart," to keep the memory "green," to recall the original event or experience for the purpose of re-experiencing it and its beneficial effects.

God's grace is manifested in different ways in different people, each according to God's purpose and for the good of the Church. The gift here is one of ministry to the Church.

The author is reminding Timothy to return to that moment in his mind and heart in order to re-capture and rekindle the human, psychological, emotional enthusiasm. The author is not saying to recapture the Holy Spirit or to re-receive the Spirit. The Spirit was and is there always.

"succumbing to routine" the need to "rekindle" that freshness, flame and force.

Apparently, in order to "keep the peace" and to conduct "business as usual," "routine things done routinely," Timothy has compromised on "power and love and sound judgment."

Routine makes us comfortable. It also enables us to do things more easily and quickly because we have repeated the process many times and have it down pat. This is both good and bad. If there is no routine in our lives we would be in a constant state of chaos, not knowing what to do when. At the same time routine can dull and numb us to the possibilities of the moment and, worse, the possibilities of life.

The constant repetition of the same old thing also saps our enthusiasm for any activity. Because routine is so habitual we do not have to concentrate very much on what we are doing and boredom with routine sets in. Everyone experiences this and when it hits home we experience emptiness in our lives, a lack of meaning in what we are doing at the moment.

The riter knows something needs to be done about it or the church will lose enthusiasm for the gifts of the Spirit, the very antithesis of routine. The life, excitement, enthusiasm, is slipping away under the weight of "business as usual." We have the same problem today. The church can seem so routine that it feels more like a museum or a business than a movement or a cause. How do we

capture, re-capture really, the original enthusiasm? To put it another way, how do we let the Spirit have free reign in our routine lives?

We could say that routine is really a mild form of addiction or addiction in its early stages. “keeping the memory green,” “re-kindle,” re-capture, re-experience that original power. It is an enthusiasm for their routine lives.

We can recall our first Holy Communion, and our Confirmation and recapture that “original” enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is simply another name for Holy Spirit. When we do, when we keep our memory green, that very enthusiasm moves from memory of the past into energy available for application to the present. It puts routine in a new light and we no longer fear change.

We become rejuvenated, even enthusiastic to tackle the challenges of the day. We recognize routine is necessary and even is good, provided that it does not deaden us to what is un-routine about the present moment or present challenge.

Communion at Emmanuel

Faith is like a fire; it has to be stirred at times to make it flame.

Being reminded: In the dullness of routine living we need reminders of times when life was not so routine and dull. Then, as a result of having enlivened our own spirit with awareness of the Spirit of God’s presence and activity in our lives, the routine of life itself gets lit up and we see it as a grace. The routines themselves become opportunities.

Remembering and reminding ourselves and others of the great moments in our past is not merely a walk down memory lane. It is a stimulus to rekindling the flame of faith and countering routine with enthusiasm.

Religious rituals, including the celebration of the sacraments, are routines really. All ritual is routine, a regular, repeated, even rote, way of doing something. Yes, the church can succumb to routine just as her individual members and the same remedy applies. Prayerful reminders that get us back to the center where Christ, his Spirit, and our Father are there waiting to enliven us with their spirit of power and love and self-control.