

At the centre of each of us is an inviolable temple where the Lord resides but it needs protecting, or rather recognition. This is where the image of God in which we are created remains true. This is perhaps what the disciples who have mixed and worked with the Gentiles away from Jerusalem have come to accept – you don't have to be a Jew first in order to know the Lord, in order to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit within, in order to be a Christian – a member of Christ's body which is God's way of revealing his presence to us on earth. We are touching here on that visible and invisible nature of the Church explored later by such as Augustine, and ever since. Not everyone who signs up to the Church is necessarily in it – there are other parameters to be respected – not least the parameter of love – that light which radiates out from the heavenly Jerusalem and which, if we let it, can radiate out from each one of us – but it needs protecting, or rather recognition. Because the Jews who insisted on circumcision for all are representative of a type of mentality which afflicts us still – no, you are not a Christian until you fulfil all these visible requirements, no you cannot share in Christ's life until you have fulfilled the law, no I do not recognize that you have at your centre an inviolable temple where the Lord resides – and this said almost certainly because one does not recognise it within oneself. It's the unloved unloving others.

I have in mind here a distinction made by Pope Francis in a talk or colloquium with the Union of Superiors General in 2013 in which formation came up as a central issue, particularly in view of the abuse crisis afflicting all the religious orders, and the Church generally. How to form people who are part of the People of God and don't see themselves as apart and above all the rest - how in short to form people as people, or in the Pope's words:

'We must always think of the people of God, inside the people. Think of those religious whose hearts are as sour as vinegar; they are not made for the people. To sum up: we must train not administrators, managers, but fathers, brothers, travelling companions.' (p13 Open to God. Open to the World)

Excuse the exclusive language- it's clericalism the Pope is after here but it can, of course, afflict all of us, male or female, religious or lay. He then goes on to make a very interesting distinction between sin and corruption, with regard to someone rejected by one institution but accepted into another:

'I'm not talking about people who acknowledge that they are sinners: we are all sinners, but we are not all corrupt. Sinners may be accepted but not the corrupt'

And here I think we are getting to the heart of the matter – to the need to recognise that inviolable sanctuary within each one of us which needs both recognition and protection if it is to radiate light and not darkness – that is if it is not to be so closed in on itself, so wrapped up in its own self-will, that no light can escape. To put it clumsily, we have to let the Holy Spirit in if we are to let it out.

And we can only let the Holy Spirit in, and out, if we surrender any desire of our own to control God.

'If you loved me you would have been glad to know that I am going to the Father'

This Easter period is all about God's freedom to be God and our freedom to become God's people.

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