

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Stir into Flame** Third Week in Ordinary Time Monday, January 26, 2015 8:15 AM  
**2 Tm 1:1-8;** Mk 3:22-30 Sts. Timothy and Titus, bishops (We are supposed to be stirred in the Christian faith. We are supposed to experience the Spirit. That belongs to everybody.)

Today we celebrate the memorial of Saints Timothy and Titus, of whom we know very little, but they were helpers of St. Paul. In this letter there is this very interesting statement: **“For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands.”**

That statement is actually controversial because people say, “What imposition of hands? What does that mean? Is that referring to what later the Church called the sacrament of Confirmation or is that what the Church later called the sacrament of Holy Orders?” Well, it could refer to either because **in the early Church the imposition of hands was used for everybody depending on what they needed.** So everyone received the imposition of hands that we later called Confirmation. Later certain people were set apart for being deacons; they received another imposition. Others were set apart from being presbyters; they received another imposition, and so on. So things developed, but the point is **the imposition of hands is the gift of the Spirit.**

What the author says here is that we need to “stir into flame the gift of God.” So it’s one thing to receive the gift; it’s quite another to stir it into flame. For the most part we can see that **many people have received the gift, but never stirred anything into flame,** sadly, never. The Book of Revelation talks about how some people have become lukewarm; they have lost their initial fervor. That’s one form of sadness. This is another form where people never ever experience any kind of fervor, where they never experienced any stirring. But **we are supposed to be stirred in the Christian faith. We are supposed to experience the**

**Spirit. That belongs to everybody**, not just a certain group of people, people that, well, they like to go to prayer groups; they have that. No, It's for everybody. "Well, he is set apart; he is a bishop." No, it's for everybody. Everyone receives the imposition of hands and everyone receives the Spirit. But **not everyone stirs it into flame.**

And **that's our responsibility**—that's our responsibility. It's not somebody else's responsibility. People are always looking for somebody else to do something. No, this is directly addressed to, first of all, Timothy, but also to Timothy's church. Letters are written to whole communities and to everyone in it, and by extension to everyone in our church. "For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands." **We have to take this very seriously and carry it out. Stir into flame the gift of the Spirit that we have all received.**

How it is that the Church has allowed a growing cold of the Spirit, I do not understand, because it is the essence of what made the early Church the Church. **It was made the Church by the gift of the Spirit. So we have a lot of warming up to do and stirring up to do in ourselves and in those around us.**