

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Preaching by Being Good Examples Thirty-second Week in Ordinary Time Tuesday,
November 8, 2016 8:15 AM **Ti 2:1-8, 11-14;** Lk 17:7-10 (Our role, our mission is
to stimulate goodness.)

Today we are reading from St. Paul's Letter to Titus, and it's about one basic theme: good example, good example as preaching the gospel.

Now we're not sure that St. Paul actually wrote this letter because it's rather late. Paul died in 63 A.D., so probably this was not written by St. Paul himself but one of his disciples. But the point is by the time this letter was written already **they had experienced a cooling of the enthusiasm for the so-called good news.** In other words there were people that were just ripe for evangelizing at the time of the death and resurrection of Christ, and they came into the Church and started this movement under the influence of the Holy Spirit and as people say today took off, but then started to slow down because, well, **there were just so many people ready to hear and respond.**

The Church knew very well that its role, its goal, its mission was much more than simply living as a community. It knew it had a mission to spread this gospel and it realized that many people were turned off or turning away. So now the author in the name of St. Paul is saying, look, **you must continue to preach, but by the way you live.** That is what is going to convince people; **your life style is your manner of speaking.** Words are good, but example is better. Speak and preach with your example, your virtuous life, your sober life, your intelligent life, your wise life. Let that be the message. Is everyone going to listen? No, but **there will be people deeply dissatisfied with life looking for something. They will see your virtuous life.** They will see your wisdom embodied in the way you live, your goodness. They will see that you are not like other people: slandering. That was one of the comments here, especially said about

women, but I'm afraid men are just as bad—**slandering, blabbering about nothing, about evil, about what is wrong with people. That's not proper speech for a believer.** If something has to be reported to authorities, that's appropriate at certain times, but we don't talk about what's bad about people, not people who are men and women of faith. **Our role, our mission is to stimulate goodness.**

And by the way, since today is election day, I will mention this too, that in a truly Christlike community there is not much hope put in politicians of any stripe—of any stripe, of any party, for any reason. They are part of what is in our society and we should do our best to elect good ones, but **we cannot expect much from flesh and blood. What we need in our society is the Holy Spirit and nothing less!** And if we start thinking that we can do it on our own, that our **political processes are sufficient to do whatever needs to be done, we are very foolish; and we are not then in that very idea preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.** We are letting down the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are acting as, well, all we need is ourselves. That is supreme foolishness. **We need the Holy Spirit, and we need to be the examples of letting the Holy Spirit guide and direct our lives. That is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.** That is evangelizing. And sometimes it's the most eloquent form of it.