

15. 1. 68

Regard (HAW)
Temple Church Choir

→ "God be in my head . . ."
Morning Offering.

"For all those who are kept away from the Church of Christ by the bad example of Christians." This is one of the intentions for which the Apostleship of Prayer all over the world has asked its members to pray this month and to offer ~~in~~ the joys & sorrows and deeds of their day. It's something we've got to be very humble about and really sincere - to realise, and admit to ourselves that there are so many people whom we've kept away from Christ instead of bringing them to Him; to whom we've shown harsh and sinful weaknesses, faults, unkindness instead of Christ's love. Let us today pray particularly for those people we have failed, and, being made a little more aware of our own failure of responsibility, try to see how we can give ourselves more generously to bringing God's message of love to those who are waiting for us. We'll also have to ask God's pardon for so thwarting His plans, and in genuine repentance, renew our Christian dedication. We'll have to ask God sincerely to make us better instruments in His hands, at whatever cost to our pride, self-esteem or pet ^{foibles.}

But - wait a minute. I've been saying "we" - a nice, vague, comfortable word. It's you and me I'm really talking about. Can you honestly say that you've never brushed someone off, been short or snappy with someone because your own conscience came first, given any suspicion of acting or speaking in an unchristian way? I know I can't. And in our society, ~~the way~~ here in Hong Kong, very many of the people you meet and deal with are not Christians. The bad example is individual, as well as being the collective impression we make. And more often than not, it's because of personal contacts that people decide to become or not to become Christians. You know it was remarked of one early Christian community, how they loved one another. How does our Christian community in Hong Kong strike an objective observer? Obviously, the divisions among us must be a bad example to outsiders who know the slightest bit about Christ Our Lord who, we tell them, came to save all men and bring them together in the kingdom of His Father. This particular piece of bad example, we shall be reflecting on and praying about during the forthcoming Church Unity Week. But what about our lack of fervour, the formalism often apparent among us, the self-interest, the silence in face of injustice to others?

There are the many who call themselves Christians, but give no sign of the spirit of Christ. There are the sinners among us, influencing others to evil - and we're all sinners to some degree.

The Church is not, here, a community of the perfect & pure, a virtuous elite. The really bad Christian is still our brother in Christ - which should remind us that our salvation is not due to our fidelity, virtue or merits but to God's love which does not fail. As there'll always be human failings, so we'll always need the constant effort of repentance and renewal - we'll always need prayer with Christ; prayer for our brethren, for ourselves, for the help of the Holy Spirit for all who are groping for Christ; and we'll need charity, God's love in us: that we may bear the fruit which Christ looks for from us. In this way, with our Christian community become a sign of God's presence in the world.

Let us pray for this now, through Our Lady's intercession as we listen to this old liturgical antiphon:

Q.

Atria Redemptoris
(Antiph. of the Church)

PRAYERS (various)

Back: Canj. Fantasia
(Tough Hard Choir)