

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

People who are my age and older sometimes like to reflect on the “good old days.” Gasoline prices these days might prompt a remembrance of, say, forty years ago. When I was finishing grade school and beginning high school in Mobile, I can remember that gas prices might occasionally reach thirty cents per gallon. Then service stations on the old Mobile Bay causeway would engage in “gas wars,” occasionally lowering the price of a gallon to about nineteen or twenty cents or so.

Quite a contrast between twenty cents and four hundred cents a gallon! Motorists in Spain, on the other hand, are paying about eight dollars a gallon. People are driving much less frequently in Spain. No doubt if the price of gas continues to rise in this country, we will begin to change our habits. We may begin to drive smaller, more fuel efficient vehicles. We may even figure out ways to use our cars less frequently.

Circumstances, as we can see, can lead us to change the way that we live. What about our lives as Christians? Are we as careful when we examine our Christian lives as we are when we come to a conclusion about how we should spend our financial resources? Financial resources are, after all, temporary; but the way that we live as Christians has ramifications not only for our temporal existence but also for our eternal existence as well.

Socrates said that “the unexamined life is not worth living.” It would be good to add that without examination, it is impossible to live the Christian life. It is not only on the Commandments that we need to examine ourselves. It is also the gospel teachings of Jesus that we must consider if we are to discover whether or not we are living as the Lord would have us live.

Examination of our conscience need not be heavy and burdensome. The process, in fact, should lead to a greater hope that the Lord is calling us to walk in his footsteps and invite others to share in his life. As we look into our heart of hearts, let us pray for ourselves, our parish, our local Church of New Orleans, and the Universal Church. Spiritually speaking, summer can be a very profitable time.

In our Lord,
Donald A. Hawkins, S.J.
Pastor