

Living the Spirit Celebration

Today we have three themes for our reflection. The Year of Mercy comes to an end. I refer you to the three previous writings for a good meditation on what this has meant to the Church and, I hope, also to you. Today is the feast of Christ the King. This feast celebrates our right and duty as followers of Christ the King to fulfill our civil duties as He would want us to do. Finally, our third theme is our parish celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of our parish church.

Christ the King

This Sunday the Church celebrates the great victory of Christ in regard to the governance of the nations. He is declared as CHRIST THE KING. This is not in any sense a merely political title. Jesus allowed himself to be called a king by Pilate, because He is a king. His Kingdom is not of this world. It is this Kingdom to which we belong and to which we owe a spiritual allegiance.

Our duties to Jesus as King is to keep the commandments that involve our relationships with our fellow human beings. One aspect of fulfilling these duties is to realize that we are called to be good citizens of the country to which we belong. We are to obey its legitimate and morally good laws. At the same time, we cannot in conscience obey those laws that would command sinful actions. So far we have been able for the most part to have a government that sustains us by not commanding sinful actions. However, we are beginning to see how government has decided to have social goals for our society that are inherently evil or contrary to our faith.

I can only say that it will be a difficult time in the future. The government which once was clearly intent on preserving conscience rights seems to be slowly moving to infringe on those rights. Could we see some day that abortion will be mandatory? What about assisted suicide, death for the elderly? Have you heard about the war on Christian values now being somewhat accepted by political parties?

Let me suggest that we ask ourselves how Jesus really is our personal King. Do we really want to be a part of His Kingdom, not just at the end of this life, but even now? Jesus told us the kingdom of God is already in our midst. It is not a kingdom only in regard to religious matters but affects all our Christ-centered life. The Church is for us the embodiment of this kingdom. It is for us to be loyal to the Church in those matters that are necessary to sustain our faith. It is time to realize that as Catholics we cannot pick and choose everything about our membership in this community of faith.

Let us also study how we Catholics should act in regard to our duties as citizens of our beloved country. And not only to the country but to its individual members. We owe one another respect for human dignity. We also owe the government fulfillment of our many obligations to keep our government working to assure life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Here we recall how Jesus said: ‘Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar; give to God what belongs to God.’

To fulfill our obligations to both kingdoms, we must not allow ourselves to be passive second-class citizens as some have wished to make Catholic Christian. At the same time we will not allow ourselves to be false or treacherous members of our Church. Do not fail to pray to the Lord to bless our dear country and keep it safe from all evils that would divide us from one another. [Nothing I have written means my engaging in politics. Do not read it so.]

Our Lady's Church

Our parish celebrates today the 25th anniversary of our parish church. How do we celebrate this? A look at the history of the Israelites gives us a hint. When finally they were able to build the temple in Jerusalem, they celebrated with great festivity. It was festivity marked first by many sacrifices to the God dwelling among them in the temple. They also made great feasts for the people. So overjoyed were they that they had the temple as a holy place of worship that they celebrated every year. They rejoiced to have a suitable beautiful dwelling for the presence of God.

How much more should we see this celebration of our church as a time to thank God, to adore Him and praise Him. He is present among us in our midst, under Eucharistic signs at Mass and in our tabernacle. He comes to us with His Word in the many Masses we celebrate and other times of preaching.

Let us at this time remember those who have offered so much that we may have such a place for our worship of the Lord. All churches are built with the many sacrificial offerings of the faithful. Ours certainly was. It is maintained by like sacrifices. Let us be Church in our church, people of faith, hope and love.

Father, each year we recall the dedication of our church to you service. Let our worship always be sincere and help us find your saving love in this church. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, pray for us.

May God bless us all by helping us experience many spiritual joys at Our Lady!

An Ending

The Year of Mercy ends with this feast day of Christ the King. In this ending we must not see any end to the great mercy the Lord has for all of us as sinners who repent and desire to do nothing more than to love Him with all our being. We will not close any of the doors we have opened to divine grace. We will pray to the Lord to give us the graces we need. We will pray for His mercy on our world and especially for our country. Our spiritual life will be a life filled with showing mercy to others. The Church will still remind us of our duty to perform the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Here at Our Lady we will renew our determination to teach our children how to love God and one another. We will have our doors open to where we can find the Lord, ever present among us. Our greeting today is not a Farewell to anything, but a Welcome to all the good the Lord gives us in our church, in our homes and in our workplaces.

*God love and bless you always!
Monsignor Morrison*

Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy! Lord, have mercy!