

Living the Spirit About Several Themes

Sometimes as I begin to think of what I might write in these inserts I come up with a thousand ideas. Most of them are quickly forgotten. I find myself right now with thoughts of many themes which seem to be going nowhere. So this is bound to be a more personal and less focused adventure for you into my many faceted mind.

You know it is remarkable how many thoughts we humans manage to have in any one day. Today my mind goes to the various birthday greetings sent me by the school children. I say to myself I really have to share the thoughts of children about birthdays of people like me. Some of their greetings hint at their wonder as to how I got to be so old. I wonder about that, too. Some manage to remind me of what my life is all about for them. I enjoyed all the many hopes that my birthday would be a day that was “cool, filled with cake and lots of gifts...” I am also happy to see how good our children are at artistic efforts and writing skills.

How can one ignore the simple but beneficial wisdom that comes from children? There really is a spiritual lesson for all of us in our encounters with children, if we are ready to learn it. Living according to the will of the Spirit of God is just about learning anew such wisdom. I also think of how we are all God’s children, and may have some wisdom of our own as His gift to us.

A second theme occurs to me as I think about the great blessing we are to experience in a few days. It is the blessing to the Church that will give to its mission many new deacons. Our parish is especially blessed in the three men who will be ordained to that noble and important Order in the life of the Church.

Many people really have not studied much about the diaconate. This Order is of apostolic origin as to its timing. Its real origin comes from the power that the Lord gave to the Apostles to organize His Church. We can recall Saint Stephen, the very first deacon who gave a perfect witness to the Gospel as the Church’s first martyr.

Today the Church in its restored permanent diaconate has many witnesses to the good news of salvation. In a way every deacon (and priest and bishop and religious and lay believer) is a witness, a martyr for the faith. The very word “martyr” means witness. While I do not mean to imply a martyrdom of being killed for the faith, I truly believe that we are called to sacrifice ourselves in many ways. We are to be true witnesses, even if it costs us a great deal. How else can we be a part of the mission of the Church in our very personal vocations? Some ways are so ordinary that most of us hardly think of them as sacrificial, let alone worthy of being considered holy. Yet they are!

Our deacons will be called upon to inspire others by their service in the Church for God’s People. They will join the many others – there are about 18,000 deacons in our country – and will make the new evangelization of our culture a reality. Will their works be successful? That is for God to decide. But we can be sure the Church is always blessed by the dedication of those who are called to minister in the Church.

Let us take time not only to congratulate our deacons but also to pray for them – and their families who join them in the sacrifices demanded of that Order. May the Lord bless them and bless us through their ministries.

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Let me turn to another theme. I was surprised by the recent poll in the Morning Call about what Catholics in our Diocese all about. Like every poll it is not a really good and certain way to discover absolute truth. It was interesting to see how many who profess to be active Catholics admit so openly that they really do not accept its teaching of the Church. I see this as simply because we are in a hostile cultural environment. Without a doubt many wish to attack Christianity. Our enemies are becoming more active than we have experienced in our country.

I do not mean here to try to answer the errors in the newspaper article. It is only reporting what a poll revealed. It is clear the Church has a long way to go to reach its members with good solid education in the things spiritual and of God.

I always recall how Rose Kennedy gave an interview about her faith. It was an inspiring one, as she recounted the terrible facts of her life that included assassinations and other tragedies. She mentioned that she left the answer to it all to God. She also said she told her children that if they had a problem with a doctrine etc, they should find a book or find a priest or someone to help them find the answer.

Sadly, we priests are an aging resource. But there really is a way for all of us to find answers. Sometimes in certain circumstances there is no answer to our questions this side of eternity. Sometimes we have to realize that God's answer may be No, rather than Yes, to our requests. The good news is that in the life to come we will see how very right God always was and is! Our Easter faith must remind us that there really is to be a life to come. That is the meaning of the Resurrection!

I would like to suggest that if you have doubts about any of the teachings of the Church, that you find the information you need to sustain and strengthen your faith. I myself have not been blessed with many doubts. This is because I had the opportunity to study theology and to have the years to see God's answers in my ministry. So many people share their faith without our realizing that is what they are sharing. That has certainly been my experience in life. I hope it has been yours.

Still, I do manage to want to learn more about the kind of problems noted in the article mentioned above. So I treated myself to buying six new books. One reveals that the real crisis in the Church today is one of authority. Many make themselves the authority in deciding the truth that the Lord has left to His Church.

Let us ask the grace to live our faith with a true realization of God's plan for our salvation. Let us come to understand that living our faith will mean serving Him, not ourselves, and not the prophets of this world. My grandmother always had a saying on the wall of her kitchen. [In German] - it read simply: **“Me and my house we will serve the Lord.”** May you and your house have the same determination to serve Him by your faith and love. That is what makes us an Easter people.

God love and bless you always!
Monsignor David Morrison

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