

Living the Spirit Ending a Year

If you are aware of the liturgy's calendar, this Sunday (November 26th 2017) is the last Sunday of the year. After Vatican II it was given over to the celebration of the feast of Christ the King. This feast had previously been celebrated on the last Sunday of October. While many Christians still follow different days of celebration, I know that the essence of this celebration is welcomed, especially today, by all believers. We need to remind ourselves that Jesus Christ is King. He never used the word to describe himself. He allowed Pilate to ask the question: Are you a king – [of the Jews]? We have the gospel answer Jesus gave to Pilate. “You say that I am a King. For this was I born and for this I came into the world that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears my words. (John 18, 27)

Certainly Jesus did not describe himself as a king of the likes of Herod, or an emperor like Tiberius. It has been Christian teaching, however, that when one comes to know the Christ, they will find Him a real king. His kingdom is not of this world. It is a kingdom of truth. He also has declared that He is the Truth, the Way and the Life. This is so because He is God. For this reason we do well to celebrate the Kingship of Christ. Recall that we are in fact members of that kingdom.

The Church faced the many upheavals in the world when Pius XI decided to establish a feast of Christ as King. The Nazis and Fascists were presenting to the world a very evil way of government. We know what happened, and the wars that followed are a source of governmental struggles in one form or another even to this day.

This year what are we to make of this feast? It is not for us to want anything that would unite the Church and State. Our Constitution does not permit it. How good that has been in forming our beloved nation. Yet, we can see how the desire never to unite both Church and State can be carried too far, by disallowing citizens to have true freedom of religion in the public square.

As for the challenges of present day society, you surely know something of them. I have just read our Archbishop Chaput's book on this theme, [**“Strangers in a Strange Land -- Living the Catholic Faith in a Post-Christian World”**]. I was happy to find how much hope he gives the reader in meeting the challenges of our time. I will give a few selections from this book on the reverse side.

Let us welcome this feast today. Even more, let us help to make our world welcome the many blessings that can come from knowing that there is Kingdom that is eternal, a kingdom of truth and life that Christ rules with the love of His Sacred Heart. Do this by loving God and loving others as He commands. Don't forget to let God love you!

Let us pray

Almighty ever-living God, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of the universe, grant, we pray, that the whole creation, set free from slavery, may render your majesty service and ceaselessly proclaim your praise. Amen.

The Archbishop writes: “Christians have many good reasons for hope. ...The Church in America has an impressive number of movements and new communities energetically alive, and some extraordinary young leaders, both clergy and lay. ...outside Europe, Christianity is very much alive and growing. And it’s not a passive faith. Jesus left us with a mandate to transform creation.” The Archbishop describes his reasons for his many writings, “I wanted to help readers apply their religious and moral convictions more vigorously in the public square as good citizens.”

One of the challenges is the fact that the Supreme Court “struck down the nation’s traditional understanding of marriage. ...in effect the Court actually went further. It changed the meaning of family by wiping away the need for the natural relationships – husband and wife, mother and father –at the heart of these institutions. ...marriage and family no longer precede and limit the state of humanity’s basic social units grounded in nature. Instead, they now mean what the state says they mean. And that suggests deeper problems, because by redefining marriage and family the state implicitly claims the authority to define what is and isn’t properly human. ... the consequences of that premise will impact every aspect of our shared political and social life.”

“If we really love God, we’ll evangelize the world he made and whose soul he created us to be. After all, we’re disciples and friends – not just servants, but friends –of the Lord of history, who died and rose again to save the world. The Church will survive to the end of time. ... the question is whether in our time life will be indifferent, fearful and corrupt or a luminous proposal to the world of a more excellent way. We are called to mirror to the world the light that came into the world, a light that will never be extinguished.”

I hope that the above selections give you much to think about, even in this busy time.

On a personal Note

It surprises me that I am finding that some want to know what is happening in my life at present. It should never be so, because when I think about it, my whole life has been an experience of being surrounded by friends with their gifts of love and care. I have decided that, given my age, it is time to gradually turn to living at our Villa. Our Bishop has generously seconded my wishes. I must confess that the recent days have not afforded a calm entrance into that new phase of life. One thing that has forced itself on me is that I simply must decide what to keep and what to discard. While I wish I could be indifferent to things, and never indifferent to people, I do find myself to have been at times, even now, just so.

The Villa is a quiet place, providing a priest a way of life that suits his real goal and mission, and his real responsibility to remain a servant of the Church. I am impressed by the way that some of my fellow priests have come to the daily Mass despite their physical difficulties. Our house is really a place of prayer. And one has to be a priest to understand our unity with one another. So I am having the best of worlds, a unity with my brother priests and with you in the parish, and I hope also and always with the Lord all of us love so much. I find many reasons to celebrate the real Thanksgiving.

God love and bless you always!

Monsignor Morrison