

Living the Spirit
More Summertime Thoughts

“Summertime...and the livin’ is easy...” As I write this there is a real downpour, and others are still facing the drive to work. Yet, there is the promise made by the radio weather expert – there will be great days ahead, maybe into this weekend. When we look at the ordinary events of our life, we can, no doubt, find times when our spiritual life is easy. We manage to avoid great temptations that would turn us into enemies of God. We manage to find the grace we need to say our prayers -- at least sometimes. To see Christ present in others – one has only to see on TV the valiant persons who struggle to help others in natural disasters. Sometimes the heroic comes closer to home in the everyday care given to the children or the elderly. Sometimes the heroic remains quite unknown to the world, but well observed by the Lord Who sees all.

It is not easy to address serious themes in this time of the year. There is a desire to rest from such thinking. Even our Congress takes off for a long vacation. In other times the Pope would escape Rome’s heat and go to Castel Gondolfo. I have read that Pope Francis has decided to stay where he is, and only visit the summer residence once or twice. I have not felt able to escape from Our Lady for parts unknown. I can find comfort and solace where I am.

What are your days like? Is there anything spiritual that is a part of your daily schedule? Is it possible that even saying a small, tiny prayer on rising seems too much? The chances are getting harder. For one thing the children must soon be readied for school. Yes, there is that word –“school.” This lets me think just how much our parish is concerned with our children. We can be proud of their accomplishments in growing into fine young persons, and then into responsible adults. Here and there I can note how faithful to their religious faith they are.

Soon we will begin a descent into autumn times. Another song reminds us: *“the days grow short when we reach September...”* or is it November? As this time comes upon us our spiritual life faces many possibilities. Perhaps this is the year when we will join the Bible study group. Maybe, we will be active in other ways in our parish life. And there is still a greater field for our activities in the Diocese.

We are called by Pope Francis to GO and to do this with the power to NOT BE AFRAID. In the final days of this Year of Faith, our task is to evangelize. Simply put this is to tell the good news. We do this by word and by actions that fulfill the Lord’s command to live the commandments in love. I believe that this good news would be best understood as making the presence of Jesus very real to us.

Jesus told us through his first followers that He would not leave us orphans. He promises us to remain with always. Where, then do we find Him? Certainly our Catholic faith comprehends the reality of the Sacraments. We must live out our Baptism and Confirmation. In a special way we must be examples of all those marvelous spiritual gifts. And we can be just that. Although it is a work that takes a lifetime, it really does

happen. Ask those who have singled out others as examples at the time of their approaching Confirmation at Gift Fest.

Did you read last week's meditation on the Eucharist on the reverse side of my insert? Then you know that Jesus does come into your daily life with that great Sacrament. The Eucharist is a real communion with Jesus. When you receive Communion what have you to say to Jesus? Sometimes it is hard to speak. Then maybe it is time to simply listen to what He may have to say.

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Sometime ago I listened to a discussion on EWTN about the state of women in the Church. I came across some of the notes I took as the program proceeded. As I want to discard such notes as these, I think that I will now share the thoughts engendered by that program. Perhaps I may also mention that one of the things Pope Francis talked about on his way home from Rio was the need for women to have more active roles in the Church's life.

Today there are attacks on what the media (some of them) call its attack on women. By teaching that abortion is wrong, the Church is seen as against women and their "rights" and choices. The fact is that history shows how the Church has fought to stop the objectifying of women, treating them as objects for the sexual pleasures of men.

The history of the Church begins with the role of a woman. It is Mary. What a part she played in the work of Jesus Our understanding of this is why we Catholics so love Mary as our very own Mother. Throughout Christian history there has been progress toward a true realization of how women are to be a part of the work of God which is mankind's redemption. [Politically correct: "humankind!]

Today there are women who work in the Vatican in many decisive roles. There will be need for more in that ministry. But we must not forget that already women are the great evangelizers. That is how most of started to be Christian! Our mothers taught us about Jesus. (I hope our fathers did, too.) Today women not only are great educators, teachers, but they also are an integral part of healthcare. They find a way to balance work and home, professions and family. And many see young women today among the most active persons of faith, accepting the orthodoxy of the Church's teachings. Perhaps there will be a continuing refashioning of issues. One example is to make a real effort to be concerned about abortion for gender selection. It has been said that there are 200 million women not in the world today because of this and similar acts against women.

Let us use the word "empowerment" with a wide understanding of the role women have to play in the world of today. Let's find out just how Catholic women can vitalize the faith where they are. Let us recall that their role is like that of the Magdalene who was told by Jesus to go and tell His followers that He is risen from the dead. That good news is waiting to be told by all of us. We must not BE AFRAID!

God love you always!
Monsignor David Morrison