

Living the Spirit – Holy Week

Once again I reissue a former insert. It still is quite consonant with my present thoughts. I hope that it will be a help to you as we enter again into Holy Week. Do all you can to make it a week that finds you truly holy and your soul beautiful in the sight of the Lord and all your friends and neighbors. Live the Spirit!!

I suspect that many of you will feel the passage of time as very quick as we enter once more upon another Holy Week. In this insert I will simply ramble on, and will not duplicate past articles. I will, however, share with you my own thoughts at this time of life and year.

Recently I heard someone speaking on the Lenten observance say that it is a time for us to embrace *the good, the true and the beautiful*. Of course, we should try to do that all the time. In our spiritual life we seek to unite ourselves with the Good. In this way we can say that our prayers are a vital means to do just that. Prayer is having a conversation, as it were, with God, who is Goodness in His very Being.

How many times even those trying to live in the Spirit with faith, hope and love fail to speak of the good that is all around them! I know that has happened to me. Has it been your experience? I wonder if in this age of instant communication we resist being pulled into endless failures to use the gift of speech for good, rather than its opposite. When I watch the news it sometimes occurs to me that there is a real failing here. There is what is called the “spin.” This involves too often a lack of consideration for those being reported on. I will not give examples, because you know them as well as I.

Embracing the good at this holy season means following the traditional threefold means of becoming more holy. These are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Our fasting, spiritual experts tell us, is not just from food and drink. Our fasting is meant to be from all those lawful pleasures or necessities that lead us to enjoy a comfortable life. Comfort is fine, but doesn't it often lead to diminishing our energetic pursuit of greater goods?

So, too, how can we live Lenten sacrifice without looking around us for special opportunities to share what we have with those who lack so much? I heard just yesterday of one of our young persons who is at school. Her residence burned down, and she is left without any of her possessions. Perhaps the greatest problem is that all her academic work was lost too. Perhaps you have noticed someone who is facing some special problem. Have you? Could it be a good spiritual response to react with at least some sign of encouragement or support?

Like all holidays this Easter celebration that is coming upon us will inspire some very good things. I will see goodness in your greater devotion. More will join in the liturgies of this week and next. There will be many more good smiles upon the faces of good children.

Oh yes, do you recall how your parents, probably your mother, taught you to be good? What she meant was that you should remain good, for in your being, as in God's, you are good. Not infinitely so, but then, you have been made into a child of God. The Father created your soul, your life principle, and so, you are good. God does not create anything that he cannot call good. Read the first book of the bible and you will learn that.

We also must embrace what is true in our quest for holiness. We need to listen carefully to the Passion read to us. There we will hear in one gospel how Pilate confronts Jesus about exactly who He is, is he a King? Jesus answers that He is Truth! Do you accept this important teaching that Jesus revealed? Today so many Catholics are going around believing falsehoods as if they were true. I think of the DaVinci Code nonsense,

and of tomb discoveries etc. They allow this to weaken their faith. Faith, remember, is believing when we have no human explanation. If we have faith – and we are given infused faith at Baptism – it is up to us to expand it, to grow it as it were.

There is one truth that we can put to the test, and that is the truth about ourselves. We do this by reflection of many aspects of our life. We may, as Catholics are often accused of, place too much emphasis on our sins and failings. If you do only that, you will not get to the truth about yourself. That is why Holy Week tells us to see ourselves in the mirror of Chris's pattern for each one of us. There is goodness there for us to see and value.

Finally, we are told to embrace beauty. Beauty is, I suggest, really in the eyes of the beholder. I was in my room and my gaze fell on the large picture, a drawing made by my grandnephew of my Mother. I looked at it critically. I saw there beauty, even though my Mother was not one to spend all her time trying to maintain everlasting attractiveness. Where did this aspect of beauty come from? I think it came from me, not the picture. Memory filled in the missing something.

Am I wrong to think that you can have a similar reflection on beauty? Of course, we could think of wonderful places we have been. Or works of art we have seen? But beauty comes alive in people. What a gift they are to us as we continue our journey through life, living the Spirit. What treasures they are for us to value and preserve as God's gift to us.

Here let us recall that Jesus is truly one of those gifts. He is a Person, the Second Person of the Trinity. He is our Friend. At the Last Supper he told us He was so. No longer just his servants – although I hope we are that – we are raised into an intimate friendship with Him. No Catholic should fail to realize this happens in every Holy Communion. There we meet God as Love. We find Truth and Beauty, and it is very good indeed.

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict has written an exhortation on the Eucharist. It is called the Sacrament of Charity or Love. One newspaper said it was his love letter to God. It is a call to a love that we need to get us to our goal of eternal life. Although not easy to read, it is a good meditation for us. It is also true. And, for me at least, it is beautiful. Who can think of Jesus in the Sacrament of Love and not find goodness, truth and beauty?

Dear friends, this is my reflection on Holy Week. May it inspire in you some thoughts that are *good, true and beautiful*, and make you holy. Let our final acts of Lenten devotion lead us to Easter joy in the Lord. Please consult your parish bulletin to plan the times when you will participate in the Church's worship. The Liturgies are some of the most compelling in the year. Find in them a renewed understanding of how Jesus has loved you. Recall how dying He destroyed our death; Rising, He restored our life.

Let us pray:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world. (for Holy Week)

O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine. (for Holy Thursday)

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free. You are the savior of the world! (for Holy Saturday)

God love you always!
Monsignor David Morrison