

CHURCH STUFF

(A newsletter for Catholic cadets)

Week of 4 May, 2008

To my Catholic brothers and sisters in the Corps:

Sometimes, it's neat to pray with the saints...to pray with the words and sentiments that express everything they thought was important in our relationship with God.

Here's a prayer from the writings of the soldier-saint Ignatius Loyola.

In my opinion, it says it all:

Teach us, good Lord,
to serve you as you deserve:
to give
and not to count the cost;
to fight
and not to heed the wounds;
to toil
and not to seek for rest;
to labor
and not to ask for any reward
save that of knowing that we do your will.

This is what our Faith is all about.

Best wishes for the new week.

THINGS CATHOLICS CAN DO:

FOR FIRSTIES:

The BACCALAUREATE MASS will be held during Grad Week on Thursday, 29 May, at 1900 at the Chapel. No tickets are required; seating is "first-come, first-served". More information as it gets closer.

A THOUGHT FOR THE EASTER SEASON:

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS:

Have we ever really listened to Jesus' words:

"My going will be advantageous to you..." (John 16:7);

"Listen, I'm with you till the end..." (Matthew 28:20);

"If I don't go,

the Paraclete won't come to you;

but if I do go,

the Spirit of truth will come and teach you everything..."

(John 16:7 and 13).

And so, in the Easter season,
we come to the feast of Jesus' ASCENSION.

Here's what a certain spiritual writer sees in it:

“The essential teaching of Scripture
is that Christ, by his Resurrection and ASCENSION,
has departed from this PRESENT WORLD,
corrupted by sin
and destined for destruction,
in order to enter a NEW WORLD...
much more real than our present world
because it alone possesses TRUE LIFE.
However it is vain to seek 'where' it is,
just as it is wrong to imagine it 'far away'.
This NEW WORLD – where Christ awaits us –
is not far from us;
it is not 'outside' our world
but TRANSCENDS it.
It is of ANOTHER order.”

(P. Benoit, OP)

At the ASCENSION,
Christ didn't "go away":
He disappeared.
DEPARTURE causes an absence,
but DISAPPEARANCE inaugurates a hidden presence.
On ASCENSION DAY,
Christ became INVISIBLE
and began sharing his Father's infinite might.
Because of that, he's closer to each of us
than he ever was before.

He acquired the very influence
the boundless efficacy,
that enables him to fulfill everything with his presence.

His ASCENSION
is not a going-up in space
but a going-up in power.

Christ remains the most ACTIVE person
in the history of the world.

DID YOU KNOW?

St. Florian is the patron of MPs and the MP Branch.

His feast is Sunday (4 May).

Florian was an officer in the Roman army in Noricum (present-day Austria).

During the persecution of the Emperor Diocletian (AD 303), he surrendered himself to the Roman governor Aquilinus, when Aquilinus' soldiers were arresting any and all Christians in the locale.

He declared himself to be a Christian.

For this, he was scourged and afterward was thrown into the River Enns with a large stone fastened around his neck.

He gave his life for his Faith.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

...everyone taking part in Sandhurst this coming weekend...that they all may be safe.

...anyone in the Corps who's carrying a heavy burden these days, whether because of academics or Honor Boards or family problems.

...all our military brothers and sisters – and their families – throughout the world.

GOT A QUESTION?

Q: Father, I was reading some material on the web about Marquette University, and there were several references to their Jesuit tradition. I'm assuming this is a branch within Catholicism, and I was wondering what the differences were between Jesuit Catholicism and Roman Catholicism. What other types of Catholics are there?

A: The word "tradition" can be confusing.

When I think of the "Catholic Tradition", I think of the totality of beliefs that make us "Catholic". They have been handed down from the beginning of our Faith, and we believe that, together with Scripture, they embody the teachings of Jesus and the preaching of the Apostles.

But it's also possible to use the word with a small-case "t".

When you use it that way – "tradition" – you simply mean a set of customs and beliefs that influence the present.

The Jesuits are a group of priests within the Church. They were founded around 1600 to be preachers and missionaries, and in the USA, they run lots of colleges (like Fordham, Boston College, Holy Cross and many more).

There are other groups, too. Perhaps you've heard of the Franciscans...or the Trappist monks. Each group has its own customs and identity within the Church, but they all share the Roman Catholic Tradition.

When people talk about "the Jesuit tradition" or "the Franciscan tradition", they mean "all those things that have gone into making Marquette (or Fordham or Holy Cross) a successful religious and educational institution" within the Jesuit customs and identity.

And a big part of that, of course, is the Catholic Tradition, which we all share.

So, the Jesuit traditions and the Catholic Tradition don't stand in opposition to each other: the Roman Catholic Tradition is the umbrella, and individual groups – like the

Jesuits or Franciscans – are all underneath the umbrella, and each group has its own identity within the Church.

Of course, there's also the Eastern Catholic Tradition within the worldwide Catholic Church, too. That would encompass countries of eastern Europe and Asia and the Middle East. They are under the Pope and believe the same things that Roman Catholics do, but their liturgical customs (Mass and the sacraments) are done differently.

So, there are two main branches in the Catholic Church: the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Catholic. Beliefs are the same; worship customs are different.

THEOLOGY EVERY CATHOLIC SHOULD KNOW:

RESURRECTION OF THE BODY:

EASTER meant “resurrection” for Jesus...
a resurrection from death,
a resurrection of both “soul” and “body”.
And it means the same thing for us.

For him, it meant

not simply overcoming death in some esoteric “spiritual” way.

It also meant that he did some BODILY things:

He ate fish with his followers (Luke 24);

He invited Thomas to feel the nail-prints in his hands

and to insert his fist into the wound in his side (John 20);

He used his voice to speak to Mary Magdalene (John 20), and

He gave little speeches to his witnesses,

commissioning them to be his disciples (Luke 24; Mark 16;
Matthew 28).

That's why a portion of our Creed professes our belief
in the RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

Some people think that after death, we simply become ANGELS –
disembodied spirits.

Some people think that the human body is a PRISON –
and the sooner we're rid of it, the better.

Some people think that somehow, it's better to be a purely
SPIRITUAL BEING.

Some people think that when the body is lowered into the grave,
that's pretty much the end of the whole matter.

None of these are CHRISTIANITY.

Christianity believes that in the end,

we will all be reunited with our bodies,

that those bodies will be GLORIFIED (like the body of Jesus)

and that until this happens, none of us is COMPLETE.

Thomas Aquinas (a 13th-century theologian) mentioned that

after his earthly death, his SOUL might be in heaven,
but HE HIMSELF wouldn't be.
His point was that HE HIMSELF wouldn't be in heaven
until his SOUL and BODY were reunited on the last day
and he became a COMPLETE human being again.

In 1st Corinthians (chapter 15),
St. Paul devoted some space to his thoughts about
what the NEW BODY will be like.
He didn't claim to have all the details,
but he believed that it would be such a wonderful reality
that he would be scarcely be able to comprehend it.
He compared it to a kernel and a stalk of wheat.
No one who looks at a majestic stalk of full-grown wheat
could ever imagine that it came
from a single dry brown kernel (1st Corinthians 15:35ff).
The kernel of wheat had to "die"
before it could become something new and wonderful.

So for the Christian,
the body is not an accident
nor a non-essential entity.
It's an essential part of our nature.
It's destined for GLORY.

As St. Paul said: "Glorify God in your BODY" (1st Corinthians 6:20).

UNSOLICITED SPIRITUAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

"What people don't realize
is how much religion COSTS.
They think that FAITH is a big electric blanket,
when, of course, it is the CROSS.
It is much harder to believe than not to believe.
Don't expect faith to clear things up for you.
It is TRUST, not certainty..."

Flannery O'Connor
(d. 1964)

And that's the way it is, a day like all days, filled with those events that alter and
illuminate our time...

and YOU ARE THERE!

Best wishes for the weekend,
especially to you Sandhurst people.

Know that God walks the path with all of you.
You're always in my prayers.
Woodie