

Living the Spirit Some Personal Thoughts

You will recall how often I have mentioned over the years how these inserts to our parish bulletin are meant to be a sort of conversation with a priest. How infrequent the faithful have the chance to have such a conversation. Priests spend most of their lives in a way beyond conversation. Their preaching may sometimes have a conversational tone, but usually must be all about serious matters. Here may I remind you that spiritual truth always is serious, no matter how it is packaged by words.

In this insert I would like to just ramble on in a way that includes thoughts that come to me. I would first of all mention that I do not spend all my life on a plane of spirituality. There is also something called “living” in the title of these writings. So I find myself thinking of how enclosed the winter makes me. It seems days go by that one stays indoors. There is something that means loneliness with such days. In this I share the same so many others. Call it old age with its inevitable decline.

The news these days seem to show that the nation is also growing old, and experiencing some decline. Clearly its moral compass is skewed. There is so little sense of political compromise with divisions in many aspects of national and international life. One must wonder what one is to make of Iran’s announced intention to float warships along our coast.

What can one say about Obamacare? My concern centers on its inability to uphold the right of conscience in healthcare matters. Meanwhile I am thankful that I am the recipient of good healthcare by devoted doctors and others. One must also be aware that the ACLU is fighting our bishops for having ethical and moral norms on healthcare. They see them as a danger to woman’s healthcare. Of course, they are no such thing.

Pope Francis is presenting us with some food for thought. His expressions, however, do need interpretation. I have not seen much to show how his Argentine background plays into his thoughts and actions. I do know that his view of clericalism (life of the clergy) does derive from his experience. Many in the culture of South America still see the clergy as divided between the wealthy and the poor. How blessed American Catholics are that by and far the majority of their clergy never forget they are simply from the people.

Are there teachings of the Church worth writing about? Certainly one must ask faithful Catholics to read and study what the meaning of the seven sacraments is. I am happy to believe that even our little ones seem to know about Baptism. I recall how at the children’s Mass whenever I mentioned Baptism, the first grades shows their happiness that they are indeed children of God.

Reconciliation or Penance seems to be open to an increase in numbers, after some falling off in its use. Of course, Catholics will always have some idea of how they need sin forgiven. And yes, it will always take courage to face one’s personal need.

Holy Eucharist. This Sacrament brings us into a close personal union with Jesus. But we need to understand it also unites us with one another in the communion of the Church. Our appreciation for this sacrament needs to be expressed in ways that go beyond our weekly Mass. I am filled with hope when I see our young people living their faith in very obvious devotion to the Eucharist.

Matrimony. That is our word for marriage. Perhaps the current teaching has to be that marriage is a covenanted union of one man and one woman – and God. Our opposition to same sex “marriages” does not come from any hatred to persons of any so-called orientation. That is something being used to make our views be cast aside by the political world.

Holy Orders. What can be said about the way the world now considers Catholic priests? I am rightly, I think, upset that only the failures of priestly life are published, while so much constant good remains almost unknown. I have this feeling every time I am aware of how a good priest sets all aside to visit the dying!

Anointing of the Sick. My own desire is to receive this sacrament whenever I may need it. I hope my readers feel the same way. But I do know that given the lack of priests these days, one needs to have a plan. Do you?

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I will not write about Confirmation. Even here changes are coming, as Bishops delegate this Sacrament to pastors etc. What a sad necessity it seems to me.

Let me share some other thoughts here. I am so glad that a celebration of Msgr. Sacks’ fiftieth anniversary is being planned. I have felt blessed to live in his company for over twenty years. I believe the parish has been fortunate to have his pastoral competence for so many years. But competence is not enough – and there has been much more. I shall let you to think about what that more has been and is.

I am always grateful for the prayers of others. I admit that when I am not well I so easily forget the spiritual value of suffering. I think most of us do. My best Christmas gifts this year as always were the Masses arranged by the Staff. They are wise not to wait until I die to give this gift!

Well, it is still snowing as I write, although it is slowing down. School may well be in session tomorrow. The place will come alive again, and life will take its busy pace. And I will have to think about what themes I should write about in future inserts. So I must pray: Come Holy Spirit! Only He can make what I write have the spiritual meaning and power I would like it to have. You will do well to seek His aid in helping you to grow in faith and hope and love. Through these virtues we come to know God.

God love you always!
Monsignor Morrison

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