

Encouragement Encouragement

November 2021 – Issue 124

Losses...

'Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them, may they rest in peace...'

Words that remind us of our own mortality and of our destiny and that is life everlasting. November has been identified as the month that brings this reality home to us in so many ways. Perhaps this is 'the dark before the dawn' of the birth of Our Redeemer and Advent. Even nature seems to indicate an autumn, at least in the northern hemisphere or at least a change in the southern. The trees die back and the sky can be grey and forbidding. As well as this, we celebrate the end of the First and Second World Wars and subsequent ones, and those whose lives were lost in terrible conflicts leaving a mark on whole countries and continents. We remember those that were killed and those who went before us. We pray for them and their families in a global act of sorrow. It always seems significant the Armistice is celebrated on the 11th day of the eleventh month and eleventh hour almost at the last minute of time.

We are now going through another form of loss and that is through people dying because of the Coronavirus which has affected so many millions of people, if not directly through death, then through the privations of company, loss of work or income, all of which have had a profound effect on many cultures and peoples and indeed continues. We will and must remember all those who have died because of the virus and especially those who were unable to be helped because of poverty. Loss of people that we love and care for has brought a period of deep mourning to us all.

No less should we remember the countless people that die daily because of hunger and disease, often nameless and forgotten in 'statistics' but who have families left behind, and the countless children whose little lives are cut short because of famine and the decisions of governments and leader.

We have of course to remember the lives of those

Go forth in peace, for you have followed the good road. Go forth without fear; for He that created you has sanctified you, has always protected you, and loves you as a mother. Blessed be Thou, O God, for having created me.

St. Clare of Assisi

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who lived fully, but whose life span has ended, but who have been a blessing to at least someone. Yes, may they rest in peace.

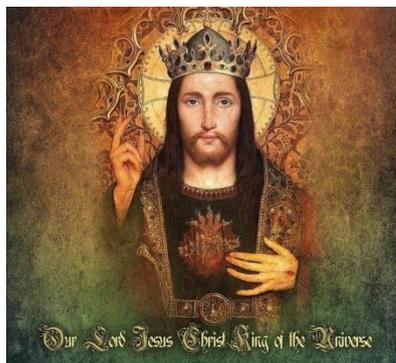
Yet another loss seems to be threatening humanity and threatens the loss of our environmental stability resulting in a change in our climate and surroundings. Is this the eleventh hour for all of humanity? Surely, many of us are grieving the decline of those things that the Lord provided for our use and pleasure such as animal species and the floral and fauna of this beautiful earth.

We are living in changing times and for many the scars are felt deep within us. Indeed this is a time of **prayer** for all the things that seem to have passed and are passing... losses great indeed.

Yet we have the promise of immortality, of a better life to follow of a life filled with light... Did not Jesus conquer death... 'death where is your victory, death where is your sting?' We know that all things will pass away leaving the victory only to the King of Kings. Do we not celebrate this in the feast of Christ the King?

However, there is another set of losses we perhaps do not reflect upon quite as much as we should...

With all the changes that are happening and crises we seem to have forgotten the value of each individual person and their contribution to life. It is easier to talk in terms of number rather than people by name, less painful perhaps, but each person is of great importance and significance. Each one has a gift, a competence, a trait that is invaluable to the whole community. These are not simply platitudes but essential to our growth and understanding, not only of community but also of love.



As we reflect on the shortfall of numbers in our churches and maybe even in work situations, we should also remember that each loss is a loss of a knowledge base, an insight an experience of life. Some may have chosen to absent themselves, others have left in fear, yet others disillusionment, but each loss should be deeply regretted and brought to prayer.

Perhaps another way of expressing this was through the comments and reflections of a young woman who had just lost her beloved Grandmother at the height of the pandemic. She said these profound words through her tears ‘who will I go to now for advice, who will listen to me and help me? Do we not realise that in our ‘old people’ we have a resource, an inspiration second to none? We cannot afford to lose even one’... profound words for an eighteen year old.

Did we not see this in Captain Tom...who walked to give others hope... at nearly 100 years old?

How true this is for the church and also society in general. This does not have to be age related for any loss is to be regretted. From a church perspective we have the prospect of an older generation trying to uphold what is clearly in decline. Falling attendance, lack of young people, confusion regarding teaching are all self-evident. More importantly, however are the skill and knowledge base that goes with their experience. While this is not necessarily true worldwide, it is nevertheless important to ponder. Our young need to be nurtured and instructed. Thoughts that come to mind are the words of the Ethiopian Eunuch who was sent to be instructed by Philip and his comments ‘How can I understand unless someone explains it to me?’ (reference to the scripture, “Please tell me, of whom does the Prophet (Isaiah) say this?” Acts. 8.34 – 40).

Unless we redress this loss of a spiritual and moral knowledge base, we leave to our children a poverty possibly worse than any other because it will deprive them of the truth!



So let us mourn the loss of our loved ones. Let us mourn the lives lost needlessly or through valour. Let us regret the inequalities in the world brought about by poverty. But let us also strive with Gods’ grace to

redress that which is passing and must not pass without our efforts to proclaim that we are people of God and one family which needs nurture but do so with Hope and courage.

‘Blessed are they that mourn for they will be comforted.’
Halina Holman

Pope Francis

Mourning, for example, is a bitter road, but it can be useful to open our eyes to the life and sacred and irreplaceable value of each person, and at that moment one realizes how short the time is. The beauty of repentance, the beauty of crying, the beauty of contrition! As always, Christian life has its best expression in mercy. Wise and blessed is the one who welcomes the pain of love, because he will receive the comfort of the Holy Spirit, which is the tenderness of God who forgives and corrects. God always forgives: let us not forget this. God always forgives, even the ugliest sins, always. The problem is within us, that we get tired of asking for forgiveness, we close ourselves in ourselves and we don't ask for forgiveness. That is the problem; but He is there to forgive. Rome 2020

Hope...

Let them go who lived life well,
Let them go that gave their all.
Hold tight their lives
for the good of soul.
Remember to grieve what
gives life and is lost
Hold fast and pass on
Everlasting Hope. HH, 18/10/21



Feast Days in November

1st All Saints’ Day (Eng. Sun 31st)

2nd All Souls’ Day

3rd St. Winefride,

St. Martin de Porres

4th St. Charles Borromeo

7th Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

9th The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

10th Pope St. Leo the Great

11th St. Martin of Tours

14th Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

16th St. Margaret of Scotland

17th St. Hilda of Whitby

21st Our Lord Jesus Christ the King

23rd St. Columban

24th The Martyrs of Vietnam

25th St. Catherine of Alexandria

28th First Sunday in Advent

30th St. Andrew, Apostle, Patron of Scotland

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