

Finding peace in a messed-up world

There are a lot of people hurting these days. Confusion reigns. Misinformation has become a kind of new normal. There is, it seems, no more normal. We all have formed in our minds a temporal axis which we use now in common speech. We say “pre-covid” just as our elders would have said “before the war” to refer to life in general before, seemingly, everything changed. The times we remember ‘back then’ seem to have gone and are relegated to ever fading memories, doomed never to return hither. What we have now in place of those happy times past appears far more foreboding, uncertain, threatening even. Such prospects for the future must have, for our mental health, somewhat a negative effect, the same type as fear does. Fear causes us to react in different ways than we would normally so do. It brings about more caution, greater hesitancy, and can even result in inaction. In order to compensate for this lack of control over our own situation, we try to comprehend what is going on. We want answers. We need information. After all, to quote Thomas Bacon, ‘knowledge is power’ and power seems to be the thing we are lacking.

So, we go in search of knowledge. We ‘research’ what we can. We ‘read-up’ on the material. We get ourselves informed. Or do we? Many, now, will spend hours of their time following leads, reading more information, getting ‘educated’ on the ‘facts’. Many will be able to give out the results of research on covid, infection rates, vaccines,

big pharma, population control, freemasonry, global elites, climate hoaxes, vaccine passports, bar codes, big tech, hi-tech surveillance, infiltration of the Church, the Pope, the Bishops, the third secret of Fatima, etc, etc, etc. THIS has become the new normal for people!

Perhaps it is time to recalibrate our personal compasses. With regards to God, we need to love Him with our heart, soul, mind and strength. With regards to ourselves, we need to be in the state of grace, and be ready to die in that state. We need to grow in our spiritual lives, and this means we must have them as our primary focus – something that takes time and effort, on a daily basis. Fr Garrigou-Lagrange says that, “unless a man be disengaged from all things created, he cannot freely attend to things divine.” A couple of things are certain in this, namely, if you are spending time ‘doing the research’ you cannot be at peace, for your heart will be where your mind is. If you are, however, concentrating on the things of God, the things that pertain to attaining the goal you are created for AND you are in the state of grace, your heart will be at rest.

In the words of Our Lord in His Sermon on the Mount, “Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore solicitous for tomorrow; for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.”

by Fr Anthony Sumich, FSSP

Confirmations at Maternal Heart Church in Sydney 2021, with Bishop Richard Umbers.



The newsletter of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter, District of Oceania – Christmas 2021



From the District Superior...

*O Oriens,
splendor lucis aeternae,
et sol justitiae:
veni, et illumina sedentes in
tenebris, et umbra mortis.*

*O Rising Sun,
splendour of light eternal and
sun of righteousness:*

*Come and enlighten those who dwell in
darkness and the shadow of death.*

Dear Faithful,

The lines above are given to us for the Magnificat Antiphon for the 22nd December, part of the beautiful set of liturgical chants known as the ‘O Antiphons’, which are sung during the week leading up to Christmas Night. The church uses these antiphons to help us prepare for the great feast of Our Lord’s Nativity, the time of joy and celebration at our God taking on flesh and becoming man, in order to save us.

The words ‘O Oriens’ (‘O Rising One’) address Our Saviour as the one who has come to shine light into the dark places of our lives and of our world. It is from this word that we derive the English word ‘orient’, literally a turning eastward. For with the east comes the sun and with the sun comes light. Christmas then is a time for us to examine our lives and gives us the opportunity to ‘re-orient’ them; to turn them toward God and away from ourselves. We have been much pre-occupied these last 12 months with the affairs of the world. In such circumstances it can be tempting to let the Christian virtue of Hope recede into the background, just when we have most need of it. Christmas puts Hope back where it should be in our spiritual lives – squarely at the centre, next to Faith and Charity.

But Christmas should not only fill us with joyful hope

and gratitude, it should also be a time to reflect on all that has been promised to us and all that we have been given. Despite the difficulties and challenges of life, we have received much that is good from the hands of Our Lord, through the intercession of His Immaculate Mother. But in order to reflect properly, we need two things that are often in particularly short supply at this time of the year: time and space. Time to be with Our Lord in prayer, and space to peacefully reflect. In our efforts to spend time in prayer, we can use the stillness of the manger in Bethlehem on that first Christmas night to inspire us and to give us hope. Stillness can be hard to come by at this time, but we should strive to find it when and where we can. In the stillness we encounter the Christ child and the hope that His coming brings us. And in that hope we find the right attitude to reflect on the year that has just past. It has been a challenging year for all of us in so many ways, difficult as members of our secular society, but also as members of the Church. And yet Our Lord is present with us in the midst of everything. And that surely gives us confidence as we move forward.

Thank you, as always, for your support of the work of the Fraternity of St Peter in our district, and for your support of all of us as priests. Though largely unseen, your many kindnesses to us are much appreciated. We could not do what we do without them. Thank you.

In July this year, as a result of the increase in the number of priests assigned to it, the Southern Cross Region became the District of Oceania. With this change comes more autonomy and greater input into the decision making process at the General House. It is also a sign of our continued growth. Thank you for your prayers.

I hope that this Christmas is a time of great joy for you and your loved ones, and that each of you finds time and space to meet Our Lord, born in a manger, who has come to save us.

Venite adoremus!

Fr Michael McCaffrey, District Superior.

Women's retreat

14th March (4 pm) to 17th March (1 pm) 2022

Spirituality of St Catherine of Siena

Hartzer park Retreat Centre – 25 Eridge Park Road, Burradoo NSW 2576

For more information please contact Fr Adrian Wee FSSP at theoudoulos@gmail.com

For more information about the Fraternity of St Peter please visit our website fssp.net or contact us via email at enquiries@fssp.net or phone (02) 9688 4287



The Mystery of Christmas

As Christmas approaches, it is important for us to recall the significance of this solemn feast, in order not to be distracted by all the commercialism that appears to absorb the attention of everybody else.

It is a most important feast because we celebrate the Mystery of the Incarnation – God the Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, our Saviour, becomes man in the womb of the Virgin Mary, who provides Him with flesh and blood from her perpetually inviolate body to clothe His Sacred Humanity, which is the instrument of our salvation. At Christmas we celebrate His birth as an infant, which is the beginning of a brief life of thirty years or so, but nevertheless a life that surpasses all others in the splendor of holiness and righteousness, and in the abundance and excess of merit proceeding from all His good works performed for us and for our salvation.

God the Son becomes Man to be our Saviour and our Companion. St Thomas of Aquinas sings of this companionship of our Lord in one of his hymns to the Eucharist:

Se nascens dedit socium

Being born He gives Himself as companion

Convalescens in edulium

At meal with us He gives Himself as food

Se moriens in pretium

Dying He gives Himself as a prize

Se regnans dat in praemium

As king He gives Himself as a reward

(From the hymn - "Verbum supremum prodians")

It is truly an awesome thought – God, until then unseen, infinite, omnipotent, Wisdom itself, losing none of these attributes, becomes Man, finite, weak, fragile, mortal, susceptible to pain and suffering – all this to show Himself to be our one, true, faithful and constant Companion. He does this by the sublime example of His life. What event and what sentiment in that glorious life of His on this earth that does not resonate within each one of us? It was a life of hardship from the start, even in His infancy, as we see Him born in poverty, fleeing as a refugee from a tyrant to a hostile country. Throughout this brief life of His, the emotions of our Lord would run the whole gamut from sorrow to joy. There is the sorrow of His passion as we all appreciate fully. But there is also the joy, the joy in the Holy Spirit as He gives thanks to the Father for the wonders of His Wisdom revealed to little ones (Luke 10:21).

And it is not just by the example of His life. Christ is our Companion because He is truly present to us, with us, and in us, in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, which is the fountain of grace, whereby He comes to dwell within us to be the true friend who never fails through the consolation and the inspiration and the strength that flows from His presence in grace within us. A hymn attributed to St Bernard describes this with the most exquisite lyrical beauty:

Quando cor nostrum visitas

When You visit our heart

Tunc lucet ei veritas

Then truth shines upon it

Mundi vilescit vanitas

The vanity of this world becomes cheap

Et intus fervet caritas

And charity glows within

Jesu dulcedo cordium,

Jesus, sweetness of hearts

Fons vivus, lumen mentium

Fountain of life and light of minds

Excedens omne gaudium

surpassing all joy

Et omne desiderium

and all desire

(Matins Hymn – Feast of Holy Name of Jesus)

And this is what we should actually be celebrating at Christmas, the life-giving, salvific, invigorating presence of the Lord Jesus, who comes to give life and to give it more abundantly (John 10:10). As companion, Christ is not just a passive spectator of all the ups and downs of our life, but He is the active sustenance Who brings us relief in times of difficulties, and, in times of well-being, He expands and deepens and purifies our joy with praise and thanksgiving and confidence.

And we get in touch with all this when we meditate and contemplate on the life of our Lord and its events or mysteries as Dom Marmion calls them, in the mysteries of the Rosary, when we read the Gospels with a profound and lively faith, with humility and willingness to conform our lives to that of Christ in all things, thus allowing His grace really to flow within us and impel us to advance along the path of holiness to union with God through grace here on earth and glory in heaven. If we would only assimilate these salutary lessons into our minds and hearts! Then we would appreciate the name of our Lord – Emmanuel, God with us.

Fr Adrian Wee, FSSP



With gratitude to Almighty God, we congratulate Fr Brendan Boyce FSSP who was ordained to the priesthood of Jesus Christ on July 3, by His Lordship, the Most Rev. Denis Browne, Bishop Emeritus of Hamilton, NZ in St Benedict's Church, Newton. Please pray for Fr Boyce, that he be a holy priest after the heart of Christ.



Adelaide Pilgrimage

With the Ballarat to Bendigo 2021 "Christus Rex" Pilgrimage cancelled due to Covid restrictions, our FSSP Adelaide Latin Mass Community ran their own pilgrimage in honour of Christ the King in country South Australia (from 29-31 October.) After a torrential downpour on the bus route down south the evening prior, the pilgrimage officially commenced with a Sung Mass at St Thomas Aquinas' Church, Naracoorte on the morning of Friday 29th. The skies had cleared and the pilgrims, with their chaplain Fr Thomas Sofatzis FSSP, joyfully singing and praying, marched the 25km to Joanna Hall, where they enjoyed the warmth of a nice campfire and even saved enough energy for a game of soccer. Rising early on Saturday 30th, pilgrims were treated to a picturesque 16km walk to Fr Woods' park, holding Mass in the grounds, followed by lunch. The day's journey continued for a further 15km, with many of the younger pilgrims competing in a race to the day's finish line. Refreshed after spending the night at Penola Racecourse, pilgrims completed a spirited final 8km trek into Penola, concluding their travels with a glorious Sung Mass at St Joseph's Church on the Feast of Christ the King. They were treated to a delicious (and well deserved) lunch following at the Mary MacKillop Penola Centre. It was a spiritually rewarding and thoroughly enjoyable long weekend. We specially thank Fr Christopher Matala (from St Thomas' Naracoorte) and Fr Michael Romeo (from St Joseph's Penola) for their generous welcome and the hospitality with which they received us.



Christus vincit! Christus regnat! Christus imperat!