

Dear Friends,

Here we are in May already, but still enjoying the Easter Season and looking forward to Ascension and Whitsunday (Pentecost) which occur this month. It is such a consolation and joy to realise the amazing love of the One Triune God who through Jesus Christ has called us into a living and eternal fellowship with Himself as a member of Christ's Body the Church. To be a faithful branch (member) of that Vine into which one is engrafted through Baptism is the one necessary condition of redemption, and in it and through it, like the sap flowing in the Vine, we receive the grace we need to repent of our sins and feed upon the Divine Life. We also need Holy Communion to enable us to grow in holiness and enjoy the fellowship of the Angels and Saints in the closer Presence of God the Holy Trinity in heaven.

The world is going through a terrible financial crisis, much of it caused by the worship of mammon, and many people are suffering real hardship, but there is lurking in the background something that could be far worse. Oh that ordinary Christians would awake out of their sleep of apathy, and see what is happening in the wider world and even in our own country.

The liberties which we as a nation have enjoyed are taken for granted and are now under attack. Our democracy, our freedom of speech, education, concern for the poor, the sick, and the aged; the freedom of, and respect for, women, and the equality of the sexes without destroying their differences, and racial equality; even the freedom to deny the existence of God and to chose one's religion, are all the consequence of the coming of Jesus Christ and His teaching on love, which was vindicated by His death upon the Cross and His Resurrection.

Although Christ's teachings are clear, yet there was much struggle down the centuries to have them implemented because of the greed and selfishness of man, even within the Church. Thank God through the endeavours of enlightened Christians both among the laity and the leaders of the Church, much was accomplished, and there is still much to be done.

Quite often in the past when there was a crisis people would turn to God, but will this happen again?. And if so, will people return to the Truth and give worship to God through Christ Jesus, as He has revealed His will, through His Church? For sometime now we have been bombarded in the media, television and press, by secular and atheist propoganda, and by poor political and religious leadership. Multiculturalism has never historically worked for the harmony of a nation. Of course Christianity teaches tolerance but there must be an overall common culture. The Christian Faith formed our British nation by uniting warring tribes under one Christian Monarch. Before and after the Reformation the Church was at the centre of our national life and guided our history, even encouraging the study of natural science, some of whose modern members are now trying to discredit God. We are allowing our Christian culture to be undermined at our peril.

We have just celebrated and are still celebrating that most important and wonderful event in human history: the historical fact of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the founding of His Church to continue teaching His message of love to a selfish and sinful mankind. Yet there are thousands of our people who don't know the true meaning of Christmass, Lent, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, Whitsunday, because they are no longer being taught about these things. Even the Queen's distribution of the Maundy money is given little mention in the media. The vast majority of our youngsters don't know our history, and especially the Ten Commandments on which the moral law is based and qualified by Our Lord's two. I have even been asked what is the Lord's Prayer? And so it goes on.

Where is the leadership of the Established Church demanding to be heard? There seems to be an almost deafening silence.

It is the nature of every human being to have a religion, either that revealed by God through Jesus Christ, or those invented by men, some invented through a genuine desire to discover truth, others to exercise power. In Britain much use is being made of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and of his book *The Evolution of Species* to propagate Atheism's dismissal of God. Darwin was not an Atheist but became an agnostic because the leaders of the Church of the time seemed unable to discuss rationally his discoveries and his consequent theories.

Atheism is a religion that states that there is no God and worships the human intellect and looks to Science to prove that there is no God; forgetting of course that Theology is also a Science - the Science of God.

The Christian Faith, because it is liberating and true, is once again under great persecution in many parts of the world, even here in Britain. A recent report stated that 80% of people being persecuted around the world for their faith are Christians. In last year 2008 of the about 2.2 billion Christians, 230 million suffered discrimination, hostility, marginalization, persecution, and even martyrdom. The majority of these are in Islamic countries and in China. In at least 25 countries Christians are mistreated, imprisoned or killed for their faith - they are the new martyrs for Christ! In our western world and in Britain in particular their suffering is hardly ever mentioned and if mentioned at all, certainly not highlighted. Is it because of a lack of interest or a deliberate policy?

The only solution is for everyone who professes to be a Christian to make a special effort to learn as much as possible about the Faith as taught by Jesus Christ, and about the Holy Bible, why the many books contained in it were written and what they mean. And most importantly to worship God regularly, if possible every Sunday, in His one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and to tell others about our Lord Jesus Christ and encourage them to worship Him.

As Traditional Anglicans and thus Catholic Christians who, therefore, belong to the Church, "the household of God," which the Lord Jesus Christ founded and "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20), we believe, and try to practise and "contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 4), and devote ourselves "to the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of Bread (Holy Communion - the Mass) and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). This is the Catholic teaching of the Book of Common Prayer, which though influenced by some Protestant thought at the Reformation, nevertheless clearly taught the Apostolic Faith of the ancient Church.

This is beautifully stated in the Solemn Declaration of the 1893 Canadian Book of Common Prayer: "We declare this Church to be, and desire that it shall continue, in full communion with the Church of England . . . as an integral portion of the One Body of Christ composed of Churches which, united under the One Divine Head and in the fellowship of the One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church hold the One Faith revealed in Holy Writ, and defined in the Creeds as maintained by the undivided primitive Church etc.."

Sadly this subject comes up over and over again because it is so vitally important for our salvation and the true understanding of the changeless and liberating teachings of Christ, who is God Incarnate.

I can never quite understand how individuals who claim to be faithful Church people and love the Prayer Book can remain within that body which has rejected the Biblical teaching of the same Prayer Book especially on the Apostolic Ministry as established by Christ as a guarantee of His Presence and Fellowship. The validity of a Sacrament depends not so much on the intention of the minister but the intention of the body or Church on whose behalf he is performing it. Without the right intention the words are meaningless.

For me, it is a denial of the Divinity of Christ when it is thought and said that if He were here today (as though He is absent) He would have had Women as His Apostles, Bishops and Priests of His Church.

The Traditional Anglican Communion has a Concordat, for the time being, with Forward in Faith/Cost of Conscience because they issued a document stating that although they believed the old Faith they would remain in the new Church to work for a return to her former teaching on the Sacred Ministry, but they would not accept the Sacraments from any Bishop, even their diocesan, or Priest who were involved with and accepted women in the Priesthood.

As has been said before this is very important as it is a salvation issue. Our Blessed Lord said; “unless you eat of my flesh and drink of my Blood, you have no life within you.” (John 6.53) I believe Him and am not prepared to take that chance unless the whole of His Church, both East and West guided by the Holy Spirit, says that God has changed His mind! By God's grace, I shall remain part of the Faithful Anglican Remnant and try to persuade others to return to the “Faith once delivered to the Saints” and work together for the Unity of Catholic Christendom, as Our Lord prayed that we all may be one as He and the Father are one. It is the only way to save our Christian civilization and stop the constant inroads of secularism, atheism, and Islam.

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We were very sad to hear of the death of Joan Maunder, the mother of Fr. John Maunder of St. Agatha's, Portsmouth, she will be sadly missed at St. Agatha's. We send our deepest sympathy to Fr. John, and all the family. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Your Priest & Friend,

Fr. Brian.