

## ARTICLE 27

**Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family**

**Marriage a gift from God**

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### **Marriage – Desolation & Consolation**

#### **The Season of Advent**

As I write this article Christmas is just around the corner. During the season of advent we are encouraged to prepare for the coming of the Christ child as if He were coming for the first time. It is a time of great joy and a time particularly for thanksgiving. It is a very special time for families. It is a time for reflection on the year past and for preparing great plans for the year to come. So, to finish the year on a joyful and not too heavy note, I have decided to write a Christmas article.

I have been writing for the Catholic Voice for just one year now and I would like to give thanks to God for the great blessing that this has been for me and hopefully for those who read these articles. I would like in particular to thank Anthony and Kim Murphy for giving me this opportunity and to thank them for the wonderful work they do through the paper and through the conferences that they organise.

#### **The Darkness of the World**

Recently I was in Dublin with my wife and seven of our children (the eighth is abroad) for a concert of classical music as a kind of pre-Christmas family get together. My mother was supposed to join us but came down with a severe cold and could not attend the concert. The concert was on a Sunday afternoon and on the Saturday night before the concert I went into the city centre with my three youngest children to see the Christmas lights on Grafton Street and Henry Street and to collect one of my sons who was travelling up from Cork for the concert.

As I walked around Dublin city centre that Saturday night, I saw things that disturbed me. I grew up in Dublin, the Capital of Ireland but I have not lived there since 1985. It seems to me that the city has become more degenerate than when I lived there and used to frequent the city late at night. Of course this could be down to my age and the fact that, now that I have children of my own, these things are of more concern to me than they were then, however the visible degeneracy affected me deeply and got me thinking and I started to feel down and disheartened at the moral chaos that is spreading everywhere and that could engulf my own children.

#### **The Light of Christ**

That Sunday was the second Sunday of advent and we attended the Latin Mass in St Kevin's church in Dublin. I was struck once again by the reading of the 'last Gospel' at the end of Mass. It is from the first chapter of St John and verses four through nine in particular struck a chord within me.

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but was to give testimony of the light. That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. (John 1: 4-9)

## **Christ dispenses the darkness of sin**

Christ came into the world as a light shining in the darkness, the only light which is capable of dispersing the darkness of sin. I began to realise once again the danger of spending too much time looking at the darkness. Yes, we must be aware of the darkness in our society and especially of the darkness of our own sins and sinful tendencies, but we must learn to focus our gaze on the light which is Christ, otherwise there is a danger that the darkness will overcome us. We must strive to live in the light of Christ so that we become bearers of Christ to others and in this way the world will become a brighter place.

The following Monday was the feast of the Immaculate Conception and we were fortunate to be able attend Mass with Dom Mark Kirby in the newly established Benedictine community at Silverstream Priory. In his homily, Dom Kirby told us that this was the only Mass in the liturgical cycle where the Church allows our Mother Mary to open the Mass, putting the words of Isaia into Mary's mouth. He told us that Mary, the Immaculate Conception, speaks to us from her own mother's womb.

"I will rejoice with exceeding joy in the Lord, and my soul shall exult in my God : for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; and with the robe of justice he hath covered me, as a bride adorned with her jewels." (Introit for December 8<sup>th</sup>)

## **Friends and Holiness**

After Mass, a friend who lives nearby, invited us for lunch in her home and offered me my pick from some boxes of second hand books that she had. Sometimes life is just too good! At last I have my own copy of Dom Columba Marmion's great book 'Christ, the Life of the Soul'. In the first chapter he speaks of the purpose of our lives as being to become holy. God is Holy, and only that which is also holy can approach and come near to God, therefore, if we want to be close to God we must strive for holiness and become holy.

Our friend suggested that on our way back to Knock we should call to visit Father David Jones who is a hermit living in the Meath diocese. We arrived as he was finishing his evening office and just in time for benediction of the blessed Sacrament. I arrived home that night filled with joy and consolation as it really came home to me that we have nothing to fear from the darkness so long as we strive to live in the light. I realised also that I am deeply loved by God and His blessed Mother Mary and that despite my own shortcomings, which are many, I will get to Heaven if I seek and desire holiness in my life. The same is true for all of us.

## **Let us renew our commitment to Christ**

As Advent comes to a close with the birth of the Christ child, as the skies fill with the song of angels rejoicing, as the star of Bethlehem shines forth to guide us on our way to heaven, let us renew our commitment to Christ and to His Church. Let us repent and confess our sins by availing of the sacrament of confession so that our souls, which are sometimes poorer than the manger in Bethlehem, may be prepared to welcome once again the Christ child into our midst and let us have for our new year's resolution, the desire to become holy.

In the new year I hope to return to the topic of marriage and the Church's magisterium by delving headlong into the encyclical 'Humanae Vitae' and the reaction to this encyclical, particularly in Ireland, as it is here that I believe the cause of the current problems with marriage in the world will be found, and it is also here that the solution to these problems will also be found.

But for now may I wish you and yours a peaceful, happy and holy Christmas.

These articles are free to download, to print and to distribute provided that authorship is acknowledged and contact details for the author are provided as follows.

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