

"Politics and Our Beloved Dead!"

Letter from Bulletin of November 3, 2002

Dear Parishioners,

The month of November traditionally is marked by two concerns. Both, believe it or not, are spiritual and religious realities. One is the remembrance of our beloved dead, the other is politics with November elections.

Let me begin with the more religious of the two, elections and politics!! After all, Jesus spent a lot of his teaching on what we do for the least of our neighbor, how we love one another and how we put his wisdom and values into practice. Healthy religion is very much about compassion, service and justice which is concrete and practical. Political decisions are a big part of how we put that into practice; or as Pope Paul VI said, "politics is the highest form of charity"! While there are plenty of issues and propositions that do not have a major moral dimension, many also do. Let me repeat here, just short of an election day, the five steps (by now they should be familiar) I suggest that Catholic Christians need to take when facing value laden, moral public (and that usually means political) decisions. 1) stay in touch with and keep going back to Jesus, his words, his stories, his teaching, his wisdom; 2) do our homework and get the facts as best we can; morality after all is based on reality, on getting it right; 3) insist on and welcome our spiritual leaders, specifically our bishops, speaking out on major issues with moral dimensions or touching on basic human rights; 4) reflect not just on their conclusions, but on their reasons and arguments; 5) then, follow our own best judgment, our conscience; if that judgment is in disagreement with our spiritual leaders, so be it; but keep the door wide open for revisiting our decision if there is new information.

November is also a time to remember our loved ones who have died. All

Souls envelopes, available in the vestibule, and the "Book of Our Beloved Dead" in the front of church are two reminders. A Bereavement Mass for those who have died in the recent past will be celebrated next Sunday at 4:00 pm. And a remembrance ceremony for Msgr. Wade (d. November 1, 1999) and Margo Schorno (d. November 16, 1999) will be held at Queen of Heaven Cemetery on Tuesday, November 12th at 12:15 pm. But exactly where and how are our departed loved ones? I repeat from my Easter letter in 2000:

*"But what about the 'resurrection' and future of **our deceased loved ones**? The words and message of a Jesus who is risen and his followers who have experienced his continuing presence is a pretty good assurance, 'a blessed assurance', that our loved ones live on. I find it also confirming and reassuring that modern science describes a universe: (1) where nothing is ever lost. The old view of a three story world with an upstairs space for 'heaven' is long gone, replaced by 'billions and billions of galaxies'; but it is a universe where even the smallest atoms and energy are never lost and where Stephen Hawking ('A Brief History of Time') can describe life continuing in another dimension; (2) where there is the new found sense of the universe as a journey rather than a random series of stops and starts, and a universe that accumulates and progresses rather than turns backwards and loses what it has achieved (like human lives!); (3) and, where at the heart of each person's life is consciousness and relationship; that I believe is never lost. Our loved ones live on."*

Your Pastor,
Brian Joyce