

8th June 2020

Happy Monday everyone! (well I hope so anyway).

We've come a long way, in terms of our online presence, since the end of March when so much of what we took for granted changed because of an unseen but deadly virus. At the beginning we had very little idea where this was going to lead and there is still a lot of uncertainty about the future. In my last e-pistle I said I would address the issue of Communion which, for us Christians, is such an important and regular feature of our worship. Indeed, for many making Communion is a vital to our sense of belonging to Jesus and our link with Him through history.

For those Christians of an Anglo-Catholic mind, the celebration of and participation in the Eucharist is central to what we believe. It links us directly to Jesus and to our sisters and brothers of every place and age. The blood of Christ is the lifeblood of the Church and the bread we share, the sign of the spiritual food that sustains us in this world and helps us prepare for the next. So how are we managing without the opportunity to share those most holy gifts? Of course, we have a Mass every Sunday delivered online, in that service we make a prayer of 'Spiritual Communion' but it's not the same. On Sunday's we normally make an effort to come away from home, to gather as the people of God, to sing together, pray together, eat together to be in the Lord's company and each other's. How could we not miss that? How could we not miss kneeling together at the Altar to receive the reminder of God's Spiritual presence with us in these physical elements? It is indeed a hardship, yet one we must currently endure for the sake of our own health and that of others.

You may well be thinking, 'That's alright for you to say Fr. Tom, you're a priest and still get to go into the Church building and receive the Eucharist on a Sunday, you're not missing out.' Quite right, in one sense I'm not, I am still able to receive the bread and wine as I preside at the service but it's not the same without you. The Eucharist isn't supposed to be a private matter, it's a party, a celebration of God's love that we enjoy together and even I would find it hard to party alone!

In a sense, of course we are never alone in prayer but we are allowed to join in with the constant prayers of Heaven. The Saints and Angels don't come to join us, through prayer and worship, we open up the possibility of joining in with them!

For now, we shall have to endure the restrictions laid upon us and when they are lifted rejoice but continue to be cautious, so that as many of us as possible are able to return to something like the worship we have been used to. If nothing else this period of enforced separation has enabled us to assess the place of God, the Church and each other in our lives.

Tom

And finally... A Dominican, a Franciscan and a Jesuit entered a bar, then the bartender said, "Oh my! Is this a joke!"

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