

## MIGRANTS MASS

MONDAY 3 MAY 2010.

‘In his days, justice shall flourish and peace, till the moon fails’

These are the words we have sung together this morning. We sang them over and over again. They are powerful. They express our hope, our conviction. They express our trust in the Lord, that his day is coming and that He will care for us His people.

These words also express our need, for so many of you are away from your first homes, so many of you sense a lack of peace and a lack of justice. But in His day, justice shall flourish and peace, until the moon fails!

I welcome you all to this Cathedral this morning. I and my fellow bishops invite you to know that here you are at home. This, the Catholic Church, is your home. Here you are appreciated, treasured and, indeed, welcomed.

This is a big Cathedral, but it is barely big enough for us all. Perhaps what we need is a big tent, a tent with no sides on it, so that all can crowd round and move freely, and enter from all directions. That would be great!

Indeed, you know well, when St John wrote about the coming of Our Lord, he called the humanity of Jesus, his coming among us, the tent of God. Jesus is the tent of God. In him God pitched his tent in this world, so that all might find a home, come in, and be welcomed.

This is what we celebrate in this Mass: the presence of Jesus, the tent of God, here among us, drawing us together, teaching us that we belong to him and therefore to each other. He teaches us the gift of hospitality, the skill of drawing us in. His are the lessons we are to learn if, in our society too, we are to be a sign of hospitality and integration.

But there is a deeper truth to learn in this tent of God, in this Cathedral.

This tent of God is pitched not only here on earth but also in heaven. Jesus is here. And he is with his Father in heaven. He is at the same time earthly and heavenly, for the tent first pitched in Bethlehem is now his risen body. It always remains a human body, with the mark of its wounds still there for us to see. This Body of Christ embraces all humanity, for he draws us to himself. Yet it is also a risen body. And so it unites us with God. Here we are one with God.

What Christ does among us here, he also does in heaven. Here he renews the sacrifice of his death on the cross, and in heaven that gift of love is for ever offered to the Father. Here he unites us to himself. So, we can know that we are united with God, who is the loving Father of us all.

What am I trying to say? Let me use the words of St Augustine. When he taught his people about the Eucharist, about the bread on the altar which has become the Body and Blood of Christ, he said these words:

‘See, on the altar, the sacrament of who you are and of what you are to become’

What wonderful words. When we gaze on the Body of Christ held before us during Mass, we can know that this is who we truly are. We are the Body of Christ. We are given so that others may have life. We are formed and shaped by love. We are alive in Christ!

When we gaze on the Body of Christ held before in this Sacrament, we can also know that this is what we are going to become: the risen Body of Christ, enjoying all the fullness of life and love in the mystery of God, in his new creation, when justice shall flourish and peace, until the moon fails!

Now we know who we truly are! We are sons and daughters of God, destined to be with Him for ever. Now we see our true dignity! Now we see the true worth of all that we do! Everything about us is given for the glory of God! Everything is to be done so that his kingdom may be glimpsed and may be fulfilled, in his day.

Today we think especially of the importance and value of work. The first reading, from the Book of Genesis, has described God’s work for us. In doing so it lifts a veil on the true meaning of our work. We learn that in God’s creative work he expresses something of himself, so that his work bears the image of God himself. The same is true, in a lesser way, for us. All our work, whether voluntary, casual or paid, bears our mark, carries our image.

No matter what it is we have to do; no matter if it may seem that no-one sees or appreciates our work, it can be done to the best of our ability and it bears our mark and carries our seal.

For all work is done in the sight of God. Everything is seen by Him. In God's eyes, it is all important, every little counts. In the kitchen here in Archbishop's house, there is a card sent by the craftsman who was renovating the kitchen. It is a picture of Our Blessed Lord. On it are the words: He is watching! And then: Give him a good show!

Who can better illustrate the value and meaning of our work than St Joseph? That humble and lovely man kept his eyes on the boy. And the boy was the Son of God. We are to do the same. Whatever our task, we can keep our eyes on the Lord and in Him find our companion and our consolation.

In our kitchen, along with the card, there is a lovely statue of St Joseph to keep teaching me that lesson!

Today we rejoice in our wonderful gift of faith. We thank God for our faith through which we get a glimpse of who we truly are. In faith our eyes take in all the present scene, with its hardships, its loneliness and its pain. But our eyes can also see through this present world to all that lies at its core. Here, in this open tent, we know that God is with us; that nothing happens outside of his gaze; that he sees all with his gaze of love, knowing the path we will take until his day truly comes and we find our true home.

So let us walk together in this faith, rejoicing in our diversity, thrilled by the glimpse of our unity and confident that he is with us always. Amen.

+Vincent Nichols