

Webcam Broadcast C-19 26+11

Hello Everyone! I hope you are all safe and well.

It's Monday 14th December 2020.

My basic Message this Monday is:

We have many treasures in our Catholic tradition. Among them is the prayer we call the Angelus. It is an apt prayer for this time of year as we prepare for the Birth of Jesus the Saviour.

Last time I focused a little on gratitude. The basis of our gratitude is the gift of Jesus, the Son of God, sent to save us.

I'd like to focus a little this time on 2 prayers, the Angelus and the Hail Mary. The Angelus is one of my favourite prayers and it includes the Hail Mary. Both prayers are suitable for all times, but especially for this time of Advent.

In the Catechism I had in Primary School, Question 317 was: What prayers are most recommended to us? And the Answer: The prayers most recommended to us are the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Apostle's Creed, the Confiteor, and Acts of Contrition, Faith, Hope and Charity.

Question 328 was: Who made the Hail Mary?

Answer: The Angel Gabriel and St Elizabeth made the first part of the Hail Mary, and the Church made the second part.

I always liked that particular Q & A. I think it was because I found it easy to learn off the answer.

While the Angelus is not listed in the prayers most recommended to us, it did feature in the text of prayers at the beginning of the Catechism, and that's the text I'm going to follow.

It begins: *The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.*

The mention of the Angel here brings me to a special place. In the Bible, Angels are understood to be messengers sent by God. Therefore the message they bear is not of human origin, but from God. And the message from God is always one of hope and promise that will be fulfilled, because God is faithful. Only an Angel could bear such great news! On that account the Angelus is such a happy prayer.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord:

Be it done unto me according to thy Word.

Mary's willingness to accept God's call to her is forthright and complete, such that God's Plan can proceed. It was a puzzle to her, but because it was of God, she said yes. Without that yes, we'd be sunk.

In the Hail Mary we say the phrase 'full of grace' recalling the greeting of the Angel Gabriel to Mary at the Annunciation. (Lk 1:28). Mary allowed her heart to be full of God's grace, and this was the reservoir of her strength.

And the Word was made flesh:

And dwelt among us.

These are among the most astounding words ever written. They express the fact that God became a human being so as to raise us up. There's nothing we have done to deserve such condescension. But God wants to raise us up because we are his creation.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

The promises of Christ are what we cling to in hope as we navigate this valley of tears. Those promises are well summarised in what Jesus said from the cross to the repentant criminal who was crucified alongside him:

'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'

He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.' (Lk 23:42,43).

The Angelus continues:

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the incarnation of Christ, thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may, by his passion and cross, be brought to the glory of his resurrection, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the divine assistance always remain with us.

And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

One of my memories as a child is hearing the Angelus bell ringing from across the fields from the nearest church at 12 noon and 6 pm. People would pause whatever they were doing and pray the Angelus. Next time you hear the Angelus bell, do yourself a big favour; allow yourself to be filled with grace like Mary, and pray the Angelus, either on your own or with whoever is with you. Just do it! It will bring you many blessings.

During this Third Week of Advent we pray:

O Lord, we beg you, incline your ears to our prayers and enlighten the darkness of our minds by the grace of your coming among us.

Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay!

Tóg bog é.

Until next time.

Keep safe.

Slán agus beannacht.