

2019.11.17 Homily by Fr. Gabor

We are coming very close to the end of the Church's year, which symbolises the end of Salvation history, which is marked by Christ's return as Universal King, that's why next Sunday, ie. the last Sunday of the Church's year, will be called the solemnity of Christ the King.

In the Gospel reading Jesus prepares us for His coming by pointing out that everything visible will be destroyed and transformed. Jesus tells this devastating news to his disciples who praise the church for its precious stone decorations and external beauty. I like how Jesus uses everyday conversations to put across an important message. He tells you also that you should not focus far too much on pursuing what is nice and beautiful in the eyes of the world; like having a nice and beautiful big house or a good car or wearing beautiful clothes or making yourself attractive and good looking, because these are only relatively important, but all these external realities will be destroyed one day. You should rather look at the heart of things, at the heart of people, at your own heart.

People are the heart of a Church building. We are meant to be the beauty of the Church, our hearts are the precious stones of the Church, because that's where the Holy Spirit, the most precious gift of the Father lives, and He inspires us all to build unity and community, and nothing will be able to destroy a Community which the Holy Spirit binds together: *'the powers of death shall not prevail against it'* (Mt 16:18, NRSVCE). A Church community and a Church group are not the same, because members of a church group don't know much each other, not even each other's names, but in a Church community members know each other's names and they build a warm and welcoming, caring and mutually supporting community. The priest's duty - my duty - is to encourage you to build such a Church community through parish social events, but I cannot force you to come along. Remember last weekend Bishop Hugh pointed out that the Church is not a filling station, but rather a bit like a pub, where people go to share a meal, which symbolises Holy Communion, and socialise, spend time together in order to get to know each other and bond with each other. So if the church is to be an indestructible community it has to build itself up into a real image of God, because God is a Communion. The real beauty of a Church is not what you see with your eyes, but what you sense with your heart when you enter through the church door; that sense of unity and warmth between you and others. This doesn't just appear out of the blue, we all have to work towards it.

In a Christian GROUP people don't work for a warm atmosphere, because they only come to see Jesus, for prayer and for Holy Communion and then go home; so there is no connection between most of them, and you can sense a cold atmosphere in places like that, they don't welcome each other. Sadly most parishes are Christian groups and not Christian communities, because it has been a long held tradition of parishes to just gather together for Holy Communion. But Holy Communion is not meant to be merely a spiritual bonding between you and Jesus, but also a visible reality between the members

of Jesus. St. Joh tells us how can you love God whom you cannot see while ignoring your neighbour whom you can see. The apostles had not merely a spiritual communion with Christ, but they also formed a spiritual communion between themselves, they shared everything, and their whole life (see Acts 2:44). So Holy Communion is meant to be more than just receiving the Body and Blood of Christ and then going home without bothering about others in the Church. We are the Body of Christ, so how can you think you are in full Communion with Christ, if you are not in Communion with His Body, the Church community? Receiving Holy Communion and not bothering about the Church community is like saying to Jesus, I want to be in communion with y our Head, but I am not bothered about the rest of your body. Can you see the point? He loves you not only with His head, but with His whole body. He sacrificed for you not only His head, but also His body. So surely Christ wants us to be in Communion not only with His head, but with the rest of His body as well.

When trials come in daily life you cannot count on the support of group members, because you do not know each other, and there is no deep level of trust between you and them, even if you are all Christians. Therefore those who are only members of a Christian group are more likely to experience a crisis of faith when trials come than members of a Christian community. Groups and group members will be decimated in times of trials as described in the Gospel reading, because there is nothing to glue them together, and that will happen at the end of time. In fact it is already happening in the midst of the trials of secularism. Perhaps because the Church is mainly a group and not a community that's why 90percent of Catholics have left the Church under the constant storm of secularist agenda and materialism, and many of those who are still in the church act as if they were only member s of a Christian group. The early Church survived under persecution, only because they were a Christian community, sharing everything.

But the Good News is that it is never ever too late to develop a Christian group into a Christian community, and it is already happening on a small scale in many parishes, including ours. There are small communities that are open to welcome others amongst them to form lifelong connections with each other in Christ, in the context of prayer, praise and mutual support and sharing, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The temples of these communities may be destroyed also, but their community itself will not be destroyed at the end of time, because their communities are glued together by the Holy Spirit; their community is like a Holy Communion: a lasting reality.