

Midday Prayer - 163

5-2-70 (New Year Eve)
28-1-71 (New Year 2)
14-2-72 (Eve)
326 1-2-73 (Pre-Eve)
21-1-74 (Eve)
10-2-75 (Eve) 387
will be coming

Christ our King [5th 2nd]
Deiss B 150
(RHK)

ANGELUS

These days,

This evening, when families all over HK come together to

celebrate what is very much a time of family festivity, the Chinese New Year, they ^(are) will

→ (be) doing sth. which is very close to Christian ^{celebration} liturgy, tho' most of them ^{probably} won't know it.

You may debate about whether there is any such thing as, in Tertullian's phrase, 'a naturally Christian soul': but anything that is truly human is capable of being transformed

and given its fullest expression by the presence and power of Christ. And in the celebration of Chinese New Year, in particular, there are many stories and symbols that

have an immediate parallel in what is the Christian celebration, the Eucharist. It is a pity that not more attention is given to these parallels, especially in ^{our} ordinary Christian

teaching and preaching ^{the sacraments are} [about the Mass.] At this time of the year it is worth reflecting

on some of these things in prayer, and keeping one's eyes open to find and see the deeper ^{Christ-}Christian meaning that can be carried by many of the customs and traditions

of this festival. Of course not all of them will have such an interpretation: and this is where with guidance and deep familiarity with the Church at prayer is

needed in the efforts we make at adaptation. Not to be superficial, it's necessary to bring out, develop and perfect what is of positive human value with

the universal love of Christ, and to transform what is lacking in Christian meaning. Christianity is radically different from any other, natural religion in the fact that

holiness, selflessness, concern for all mankind is the calling of every Christian. He becomes part of a community, he prays for others, not just for himself alone or for his nearest friends or relatives. Not every Christian, of course, gives witness of this;

Jubilate Deo (Pechon)
18 Cantata...
(R 20/RHK)

but this is when he fails to be fully united with Christ, his Lord - Master, and His brother. The whole human family is his, not only the blood & marriage relationships he has with a small group of people. But if a person is right in his natural family, he will more easily recognise God's call and will to form, in Christ, a new people.

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a community with Christ when God is our Father. As a new year begins, in which homage and respect are paid to the father of families and to elder brothers,

^{we} a Christian in his ^{our} celebration stn. naturally include in his ^{our} filial duty the homage and thanksgiving ^{we} he owes to the Father from whom all fatherhood is derived. In Christ

^{we have} he has an elder brother, in God's family into which he's been adopted. In this larger family there is a celebration too, when we come together around the table of

the Eucharist, to share the bread of life together, to be made one body, one spirit in Christ. Through Him there is a new creation, in which the power of evil

has already been overcome: it's not ^{just} a new moon we thank the creator of the world for, but a whole new creation He's made us part of in the death and

resurrection of Christ His Son. The longevity we pray for and wish each other is not confined to length of days and enjoyment of passing wealth and pleasure, but

is the life and love of Christ Himself which we share now and hope to share in its fullness in the kingdom of heaven in the family of God, Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

For these gifts we praise God and thank Him: it's so small, to say about, so listen now to another song of praise, [Jubilate Deo, by Flor Peeters: MUSIC

"Laudamus Te" from Francis Poulenc's setting of the Gloria, first performed in Europe [on 16th Feb 1961] (just 10 yrs ago this month)

PRAYERS

[POULENC: Gloria RS 183]

Paying off of debts: house-cleaning: starting the new year fresh: giving gifts: the joy and happiness of children: new clothes: blessings: fruits — in all the customs and associations of the new year there is great symbolism, the kind of symbolism that allows a variety of depths of understanding. Each person uses and understands it at his own level, yet it's basically the same idea all have. So a Christian celebrating the New Year should be able to "read more" into the customs he ~~sees~~ ^{shares} with others — his faith shd. give him an insight into deeper meanings, into the Christ-meaning of everyday things and special festivities. Words and pictures are not the only means we have of speaking to each other, expressing our thoughts & ideas — symbols, of one kind or another, are always part of human life, living and experience, even the most simple. [One of the big problems about the modern renewal of liturgy is really the question of symbols] ^{symbols} many old (ones) have lost any meaning for modern men, or have become so emptied of their real significance that they no longer convey what they shd. do. Yet one cannot normally invent symbols — it's like deliberately trying to invent a new word — it just doesn't work that way. But in the sometimes uncritical and hasty effort to abolish out-worn symbols that do not say anything and are not understood today, there appears to be ^{sometimes} (in some quarters anyway), a failure to realize that symbols are necessary to life, and to religious and Christian life especially, because Christian life has a dimension beyond our limited language of space and time, ^{culture} ~~man~~ and experience. A little reflection on what happens around us, in HK, or such a festival as the New Year, may open our eyes a little to the richness of celebration which shd. also mark every Christian celebration of the Epiphany.