

28.10.68

TAPE.

Angelus

If you were present at yesterday's open-air Mass in honour of Christ the King at the Government Stadium, or if you've ever attended one of the Eucharistic Congresses which have been taking place ever & ago, you'll surely have noticed the splendour of pageantry that's part of these occasions. It's a great display, with masses of people - and it's this very fact that disturbs some people, puts them off attending occasions like this because they feel them to be too much show, too impersonal, not really like the ordinary religious ceremony of the Mass they're used to and prefer. Some more radical Catholics today would wish for a much smaller, more homogenous group of people at the normal setting for Mass; a small, intimate chapel would be their limit for size. Clearly, a deeper understanding & appreciation of the Mass as the centre of Christian life, which has been developing over recent decades & has been given great impetus by changes in the liturgy since the Vatican Council - this has encouraged <sup>a</sup> greater involvement <sup>in</sup> & closeness to the external rite of the Mass, which is very difficult to achieve in large congregations. But despite this good development, there is a case to be made, on the religious level of witness, mission, symbol, for such a vast demonstration as we saw yesterday. For we are supposed to be a light to the world, a heaven in society, and we are all one Church, one Body of Christ, and these are things which should be manifested, at least occasionally. Lavish and expensive display, of course, is not appropriate: but that doesn't mean we shouldn't, on occasion, come together en masse, as an expression, for ourselves as well as others

of our unity in faith and worship. The communion of saints, in which we believe, is a reality which can be brought home to us through symbol and external action: and a manifestation such as, here in HK, the annual open-air Mass of Christ the King, is just such a symbol & action. As we recite our nidday prayers now, let's reflect on the fact that these, or any other prayers we make, are not made in isolation but, through Christ, in union with all mankind who have received Christ's life in Baptism, all men who are our brothers.

PRAYERS.

Lord of God who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, give us peace..... Listen to this prayer now, in another <sup>human</sup> language, but saying the same thing, praying to the same Christ who is our Brother. It's a setting based on Argentinian folk melodies.

Misa Criolla  
(Argentino)

MUSIC.

Later this week, on Friday, the Church celebrates the communion of saints I was talking about earlier, in the Feast of All Saints - which used to be a day of obligation to attend Mass. Now that it isn't, perhaps it's worth reminding ourselves of what this festival is: a celebration in honour of all our brothers in Christ who are now with Him in his glory, seeing God face to face. For they are our brothers, our sisters. Not all of the canonised saints by any means appeal to everyone, as characters, heroes. What have you: those who are put before us officially, so to speak, as examples of Christian living, may not in fact be much of an encouragement to us, for one reason or another.

But there are plenty of others — and we're linked with all of them in the unity of  
 Christ's Body, in the People of God. We're still the pilgrim Church here:  
 they enjoy now the vision <sup>eternal</sup> of life of God, but are still our brothers in Christ  
 and anxious to have us join them in due time. A feast of all the martyrs,  
 and then of all saints has been observed in the Western Church from very early  
 times — the 13 May was a common date: it's not known <sup>when or</sup> how exactly the 1<sup>st</sup> Nov.  
 came to be the universal date — it may have originated in England, Ireland or  
 France, but it's certainly more than a 1000 yrs old. The other special day this  
 comes week-end is the day following All Saints — the Commemoration of all the  
 faithful departed. It's really a development from the All Saints Day, emphasising  
 that other section of the Church, on its way up through purification to heaven. There too  
 are all our brothers in faith — a response to Christ's love & his call. Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>, —  
 indeed the whole month, we tend to think most especially of special people or groups  
 of those who have died: and this is good. But perhaps we should pay more  
 attention to All Saints and the real bond uniting us all, which is the Communion of  
 saints; and as we pray for our dead, remember they're not forgotten by  
 the whole Church of which they're still members with us & with those now in glory.