

Living the Spirit

The Journey

You may have often recalled how I have spoken of life as our “*journey from God to God.*” I have no recollection where I ever got the idea, but it has been on my mind for many days now. Little things have reminded me of it. Not long ago thinking of Pope St. John Paul, I thought of his last words as he was dying: “Let me go to the house of the Father.” This reminded me that even death can be seen as a journey. The soul leaves the body for the great adventure of eternal life, a life that simply can have no end.

Somehow in every human life there are many journeys. I do not think here only of our going on our vacations. They may be put in the category of the special journeys we so need at times for the rest and relaxation our modern world requires. There are many spiritual journeys. We journey without knowing it in our infancy into the world of the Church. Through the door of Baptism we become members of the Mystical Body of Christ. We need to journey still further along to become active and aware of our gifted state of life. [I write for Catholic readers here, or at least Christian ones.] So we journey into the world of learning.

I recall somewhat my first days of school. I walked to St. Margaret’s with my brother in the first days. Of course, soon enough I was on my own. It was a simpler world, so parents did not fear this. Traffic was not a problem. Nor were there darker fears where a child was concerned. On the journey of learning we come to know the Father as Creator. We marvel at nature’s many gifts of beauty. As the journey continued, we find our mind feeling the presence of the divine which was planted at Baptism. Soon it was the life of the soul nourished with the Eucharist. And then there was Confirmation which begins a spiritual adulthood. We learn to live with a knowledge of the history of life, our life as it was, and how it could come to be.

Life’s journey soon began to bring us to the various crossroads where we were to make our choice. In the spiritual life, our choice is vitally connected to our membership in the Church, Christ’s Mystical Body. In making our choice we may have been blessed with the quiet graces of the Holy Spirit. He helped us to discern our vocation in life. Many found themselves a partner to love and cherish and be their companion on the journey. The Church blessed the choice And there followed so many gifts to our human race. In the children that God gave there was a sense of fulfillment. If there was no such gift, the fidelity of the journeyers became itself the gift.

I have thought, of course, about my own choice. Dare I write about this? The attraction to become a priest was never fearful to me. I was bold enough to think that if I persevered in prayer God would make it all possible. And He did. I never think of this without noting that I had powerful helpers on my journey. In the spiritual world, the Blessed Mother. In my everyday existence, in the faithful of the Church.

I cannot write too much here of what the life, the living, of the priest can be and is. It is a vocation with multiple and different details. It is filled with days of joy and sometimes of sorrow. Often they come from the same source. We can think of efforts which are seen as

failures. I never saw the multitude of persons I had thought as a youth I would save from all kinds of pain and sin. I am too wise to think that every one whom I tried to serve felt the presence of Christ in me. But I am also aware that there is no priest who is not used again and again as the instrument in God's hands. Often these are hidden successes. I suppose we must not think of those other worldly kinds of success lest we fill our souls with a too human pride. Pride is a capital sin!

My life as a priest began as a teacher. I know I did my best, but my best was not perfect. Yet the Lord allowed me to come to know that some of my students really found the right path to walk on and this gave me human delight. Then I was called to work with those who came seeking an answer to their failed marriages. Judgment is never an easy task. But in the Church it must be a judgment of truth. Still, it cannot be without compassion, without the power of the God who wants all judgments be a work of love.

Those who wish to know more about my personal journey must await the revelation in the world to come. Here I want to continue the analogy of life as a journey. It is a journey for not only the individual but for the whole human race. It is well-called the history of salvation. History continues to unfold. Mankind seems to wander from event to event. It is all in time, but with many an eternal effect.

This history is revealed in our Bible. It tells how the early prophets like Abraham and Jacob travelled from place to place. In their journeys with their people they discerned God's will. More important was the fact that they came to know the true God and that God is one. Then we can read of Moses and the journey of God's chosen people from slavery in Egypt, a journey of forty years.

That Exodus journey was marked by both fidelity and faithlessness. There were disasters and difficulties – as many lives have. The people were surprised by miracles. They were given manna from heaven to nourish their bodies. They were given the Commandments to help them live a life according to God's will. In His Will peace can always be found!

Other journeys are recorded in the Old Testament for our benefit. We are made aware of the terrible journey into the captivity of Babylon. There many people remained faithful to the Law given them so long before. God heard their prayers and restored them to their homeland. [Has not God heard our prayers again and again? He answers Yes but also No to our desires. His Wisdom invades the fabric of our life making it an embroidery of loveliness.]

I may find it possible to continue to write of this theme sometime. I would start with the journey of an Archangel from heaven. His destination, to give a divine message to a Virgin named Mary. Then there would be a journey to Bethlehem. The Savior Messiah would journey up to Jerusalem to embrace a Cross. And the Spirit would journey down to a new Church, a People of God. It is that Spirit who journeys with you and me right now. He helps us live, live His Spirit!

God love and bless you!
Monsignor Morrison