

Msgr. Bill's Weekly Letter...

Dear Parishioners:

St. John's Revelation, (the unveiling of truth), tells us of *a new heaven and a new earth. ... I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, (that's you, me, and all the members of the Church), coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. ...will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing, or pain, for the old order has passed away."*

The One who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

But what does it mean to make all things new? Jesus did not make new laws of physics. He did not change human nature. He did not change the commandments nor the standards of justice. He did not eliminate our tendency to greed, anger, concupiscence, fear, etc.

I find this a powerful strategy that can help us reach this newness of life. Jesus tells his disciples of a new commandment. We are all familiar with the commandment to *Love your neighbor as yourself* (Lev. 19:18, Mt. 19:19, et al.) It is a basic blueprint of God's design for everyone.

Today, however, Jesus gives us an even higher commandment, *I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.* Jesus tells us to go far beyond loving our neighbor as our self. Jesus loved with a consistent disinterested love; love that looks to the other more than himself first. He boldly proclaimed this form of love and NEVER backed down from teaching God's truth.

Charles Dickens wrote in, *A Tale of Two Cities*, "*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way--in short, the period was so far like the present period that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.*"

Sounds a lot like today's culture atmosphere. In many ways for us Catholics, it is a GREAT time. It is great because we have the opportunity to stand up for Christ. We must **BE BOLD** proclaimers of God's truth. We must be ready to stand up and always give a reason for our faith — *But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope* (1Peter 3:14-5).

Being soft or mushy about our faith will not help. Our world needs boldness with charity of speech, but we must speak up. We live in a world with instant communication but we are further apart than ever. We Catholics, with God's help, can provide a path to the common good of all humanity. We have the wisdom from God that all human beings from the first moment of conception, and then for ever, we are made in His image and likeness. For some that is a hard truth, but truth it is.

We proclaim that suffering can be redemption and all of us will have some during our lives. We believe that self-mastery of our emotions, urges, etc. is a hallmark for all. We have the wonderful privilege of being ambassadors of Jesus in this life.

It is a great time to be a Catholic. Let us not squander this time of grace. Let us engage the social confusion with God's truth. We lose friends (Jesus did), be reviled by some (Jesus was), we may suffer for our boldness (Jesus did).

But above all we must remember who we are, who is our head and shepherd, our redeemer and savior, what he has asked of us, and from this loyalty to him comes an eternity of beatific joy with our loving Father, Jesus his Son, and the Holy Spirit. Nothing could be better than God's promise to you and me and he ALWAYS keeps his promises.

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Msgr. Bill