



From A Bishop's Journal

Moved by the Spirit (7) "May the Joy of Easter Enlighten your Life, Alleluia!"

People of God, Sing to Your Lord

In one of his catechism classes on prayer, St. John Vianney, the Curé of Ars, stated: "Man has a beautiful task, to love and to pray. You pray, you love: this is man's joy on earth." Recapitulating Saint Peter's great revelation regarding the baptised, the composer Father Lucien Deiss wrote: "People of priests, people of kings, people of God, sing to your Lord." We discover in the song the great wonders that God was pleased to work among His people: the priestly function that leads us to offer our entire lives to the Lord, the royal function which places us at the service of our brothers and sisters, and the prophetic function which induces us to act like Christ and in his name. Besides, the blessing of the holy oils reminds us of this threefold mission: baptised in Jesus, confirmed by the Spirit, ordained priest and bishop for service to the people of God, and comforted in our times of sorrow, we are always witnesses to our beloved Saviour.

Sing to Your Lord!

Father Deiss urges us to rediscover what we are, and he presses us to sing and praise the Lord unceasingly. Using the great statements of Holy Scripture, he gives us more than eighteen reasons to praise the Lord. He writes: "We praise you, O beloved Son of your Father, we sing of you, Son of the Virgin Mary. We sing of you, Splendour of the eternal light, we sing of you, Light shining in the dark. We sing of you, Messiah proclaimed by the prophets, we sing of you, Messiah awaited by the poor." It is so important to fix our gaze on Jesus, on him who was, who is, and who is to come. We then discover that Jesus, the Word of God by whom everything was made, became flesh and perfect man, took upon himself the salvation of humankind, and recapitulated all things in himself. As Vatican Council II states: "The Lord is the final end of history, the point towards which the aspirations of history and of civilisation converge, the centre of the human race, the joy of every heart, and the full accomplishment of their desires. He is the one who was raised from the dead by the Father, and who was exalted and seated at His right hand as judge of the living and the dead."

Sing with all Your Strength!

Father Deiss continues: "We sing of you, Mediator between God and man, we sing of you, O Priest of the new Covenant. We sing of you, Lamb of the eternal Passover, we sing of you, Tabernacle of

the new Covenant. We sing of you, Shepherd who leads us to the Kingdom, we sing of you, O Spring welling up with grace. We sing of you, true Vine planted by the Father, we sing of you, true Manna that gives us life." Our personal and community experiences have helped us discover more and more, from Sunday to Sunday, from one Lent to another, from one Holy Week to another, the great mystery of Christ into whose likeness we are more and more shaped through baptism, confirmation, priestly and episcopal ordination, and the anointing of the sick. In the Eucharist, we become more and more what we receive, the Body of Christ. Through the forgiveness of sins, we share the life of Christ, and through marriage, human love becomes a sign of Christ's love for his Church. How great they are, the sacraments of Jesus Christ!

Sing Even Louder!

Father Deiss continues his litany of the holy names of Jesus: "We sing of you, Image of the invisible God, we sing of you, First-born of creation. We sing of you, you are raised up in glory." Names reveal a person's mystery, especially those names which all of tradition has attributed to Jesus Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Sing with all Your Heart!

Father Deiss ends his song with words of praise: "We praise you, eternal Wisdom and Word of God, O Christ our brother come to save us. We praise you, Morning Star, herald of the day, Light of the New Jerusalem. We praise you, O Son of Abraham and Son of David, O Christ our King, meek and humble in heart, O living Path and way to heaven. You are our Peace, by the blood of the cross." We feel as though the titles rush into one another in order to better grasp the figure of Jesus who has come to free us. As they unveil to us the great mystery of Jesus and the mystery of the Church, the Fathers of the Council teach us that these realities cannot be separated.

Sing with all Your Life!

"We praise you, Victim sacrificed for our sins. O Corner Stone, rock of Israel, gather your sheep into one sheepfold. Fountain of living water for our thirst. We praise you, O living Bread come down from heaven. O fruitful Vine, we are your branches. We praise you, O King of justice and king of peace, first fruits of those who have died. One day you will return to judge the world." May these moments of reflection and adoration we take during our lives help us discover more and more the life and mission of Jesus. Jesus made us members of his body, through baptism. Through confirmation, he gave us his breath of life. In forgiveness, he reconciles us with himself. He gives us his body and blood, in the Eucharist. In Christian marriage, he gives us concrete signs of his love for humankind. Through ordination, he gives his Church ministers to proclaim his Word, to celebrate his sacraments, and strengthen communion among his people. Finally, the anointing of the sick is a comforting presence of the Lord to the sick. Let us never stop praising and singing to the Lord because we are a people of priests, prophets, and kings, an assembly of the saints, the people of God.

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