



Allocutio



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Allocutio: The God of Life.

The Gospel is about life. The whole of the Bible is saying from start to finish that God is the God who gives life, that he is the God of the living, that death was not of his making, and that even though we die in this world there is life available in another world. As Jesus said, "He is the God of the living, not of the dead". Those who are with God work for life, those who deal death pull against him and risk losing eternity. You will find Jesus in St John's Gospel (Jn 8: 39- 40) saying that the Jews want to kill him, proof that they do not know God. In his letter St. John is clear that those who are murderers like Cain (1 Jn 3: 10s) are enemies of God. Because everyone on God's side supports life and loves life and does not deal death.

A few weeks ago the Word of God made this abundantly clear. In the first reading a child is about to die and Elijah begs God to give it back life. And the child is cured. The mother replies "Now I know you are a man of God". She knows that life is proof of God and that the man who brings back life to her son must be with God.

In the Gospel that same Sunday Jesus raised the widow's son from the dead and the people say, "God has visited his people". They instinctively know that anyone who can give life must be associated closely to God. We can talk God and theorise but in the real creation God is about life and those with God only promote life; they do not kill. Because Jesus worked for life he also cured the sick so that they could live their lives to the full.

Have we not all enjoyed the good weather over the past few weeks? And all nature seemed to thrive in it. Trees, shrubs and flowers that were hesitant all made massive statements. They felt good and strut themselves. The original tweeters were singing and warbling at their best. And humans were no different. It was good to be alive. The whole of creation seemed to speak about God.

All those who work for life, like our doctors and nurses who work to not just preserve our lives but to help us get involved in life again by removing the diseases and conditions that prevent us doing our work are working with God, are friends of God. And psychiatrists who help people overcome depression or other grave conditions of the spirit so that they can also return to normal life and make a contribution are also friends of God. Confessors who absolve from sin also allow souls to get on in life.

Sadly there are many who seem to deal in death. The gangland killings associated with drugs tells us that this world is not of God. The whole abortion industry that cuts off life as it surges to live cuts across God who wants to give life. A world that exploits people and causes them to run down and die before their time lacks the touch of God's hand. Holy days which became holydays were invented to enable us commune with God by helping us refresh ourselves and enjoy his creation and - to use a modern expression - get a life. Jesus said, "I came that they might have life and have it to the full." (Jn 10: 10). That is God's will for us and if we are on his side we want to help life and promote it.

I mentioned psychiatrists. God wants us all to become people who work with him in lifting the spirits in people. Good weather helps but sometimes we can do a lot to lift spirits too. Did you notice that Jesus is about lifting spirits. So he does not have a judgmental attitude nor does he condemn. He forgives us and asks us to forgive. In other words we are not to burden ourselves or others with their sins. We are to forgive and become people truly for giving life. We are with God when we help others and encourage them and refrain from knocking and dispiriting people.



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We are life giving of course in another way. God has allowed us humans to partake in his powers of giving life and so we can procreate with him. He made our world and life exists here because he has shared his power of making life with other creatures and us. And because we share in his life- giving powers and work with him it is right that this be acknowledged in his presence. In a way that is what marriage is about. It is two people laying before him their creative capacity and asking him to bless it and make them fruitful and to help their love to remain strong so that those to whom they give life will have a loving environment in which to grow up. If the Church teaches that sexual intercourse is for marriage and not before it is simply because of its deep respect for God who is the source of all life. When we beget children we are coming very close to God and his work. It is best if we work in tandem with God in this. It is a great sadness that the begetting of life and the capacities to beget life can be treated so superficially at times and not respected as something close to God.

But no matter how it is conceived or the circumstances let us support all the women who bear a new living being within them. They are special. St. Paul speaks about God choosing him before he was born to carry out a certain mission. Every child in the womb has been given a destiny by God. We must respect that always. In these summer days then let us praise God for all the forms of life we see in all their splendour and let's enjoy that life, giving thanks from our hearts. And, following the comments of Pope Francis at his inaugural Mass in the feast of St. Joseph, the spouse of Mary, let us become custodians with God for the gift of life and protect it and support it.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill