



the very same vocation and purpose as the apostles themselves. We who have been baptised into Christ's death and resurrection; who have received the anointing of the Spirit; who receive from the Lord's table the very bread of heaven, have found the real purpose of our existence, which is: *to glorify God*.

Ponder on those mysteries in which we have participated, into which we were initiated, that we have received. We have died with Christ. Yes, we are dead men to this world! Not as soulless zombies, mindlessly drifting through existence, but as souls resurrected, awaiting the redemption of our bodies. We have been chrismated with the heavenly Spirit, as St John tells us in his first epistle, '*But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you.*' [1Jn.2:27] Even if our words fail in their eloquence to express them, our own actions in this world can reveal whose we are, that is, when we let our light shine before men, as He taught us in the Sermon on the Mount. And we partake of the Mystical Supper, that having repented again and again as necessary, we may be filled with grace.

If this is true for us, let us consider the implications, lest we be found false after all; not true to our avocation and calling, or like the false prophets, be exposed, for, '*You will know them by their fruits.*' [Matt.7:16] Such were the heretics and false teachers condemned by the holy fathers of that first great council.

St Leo the Great, Pope of Rome in the fifth century, taught that at His Ascension, Christ's visible presence passed over into the sacraments. Though now ascended and glorified with the glory He had in the beginning, yet He is with us to the end of the age, as He promised in the end of St Matthew's gospel. Wonderfully, the same is true of us in Christ: we are in this world; *in* it but not *of* it, our feet firmly on the ground but with our hearts in heaven, where our treasure lies. So how should we, whose souls have passed in a mystery beyond death, comport ourselves in this present life; how must we behave, think, evaluate and speak with all around us? For it is clear that we who have been incorporated into Christ will be liable to a stricter judgement if we fail to reflect what we have become. In the words of the letter to the Hebrews, '*It is impossible for those who*

*were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.'* [Heb.6.:5-6]

There have been from time to time, from place to place, particular eras and epochs, when the mind of the Church and the ways of society at large, were largely compatible. Or at least, the ways of the world payed respect to what our Faith taught by way of a moral life in the public and the private spheres. But how do we react today when this present age claims it has made *progress* in certain fields of human thought and behaviour? For to our mind what so often purports to be a high moral purpose, advancing the causes of inclusion and equality, is in reality just a reversion to bestial behaviour and a mask, covering what is, in reality, an old decadence, not seen since the times of pagan Rome.

The new public morality is not derived from the Judaeo-Christian mores that formed a once-developed civilisation, now in decline. Take freedom, for example. For us, freedom is liberation from our own fallen will and that sin which leads to spiritual death. In the current Humanist morality, freedom is anything one wants, limited only by the freedom of others. For us, what is right is whatever accords with the will of God; the new *ad hominem* morals say it is anything you like, as long as you respect the interests of your fellow human beings, and conversely, the only wrong is to obstruct or delay the freedom of others to please themselves. There is, for them, no actual notion of Sin or even of a moral norm that all must at least acknowledge. When you remove God from your moral discourse you can only measure *the good* by the finite stature of Man.

It would be very easy for us, and even easier for our children, to be enticed, beguiled, even feel at comfort and at ease with this pernicious human construction of what is right or normal. It will be, certainly, if we forget our singular purpose: *to glorify God*. We who are Christ's are here to glorify God, not to be popular. We are here to deny ourselves, not find ourselves; to follow in the way of the Cross, not to indulge in a compromise with what is evil.

Do we treat all with equity? Of course, we do, as we are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves. Do we treat all with tolerance? Of course, we do, and turn the other cheek, and let them know that toleration does not mean approval. And do we teach that all views, all ideas, all faiths, cultures and ways of life must be accepted as worthy of honour, acceptance and respect? No, we do not! For no matter how many labels of *phobia* they seek to stick upon us, as if they might dismiss us with some convenient psychological pathology, we shall call a spade a spade, as we say, and know Antichrist when we come across it.

In fact, those constant messages, urging us to do what might *seem* to make us happy, are all pervading in the modern commercial and interconnected world. The noise of the world is very loud, and the promptings of the heart that was once set on high, are soon drowned out. But this noise is toxic for our souls. Our status as Christians calls us not to pursue some notion of what makes us happy, but rather, what glorifies God.

*'If then you were raised with Christ,'* St Paul writes to the Colossians. *'Seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.'* [Col.3:1-4] There you have it! We have to grasp what has actually happened to us in and through the holy mysteries of the Church: our own transfiguration, our own resurrection, our very own ascension, *whilst still here*. And if still here, in the purity of our words and by the goodness of our deeds; through the repentance of our mind and in the chastity of our body, we shall seek not our own happiness but rather, the glory of God, that when he appears, we also shall appear with Him in Glory.