

**Companions on the Journey**

**March 21, 2021**

**Dear Friends,**

Part of the dynamic in each family is the raising of children. What are the traits that need to be inculcated in each child so that they can grow into mature persons with a refined sense of what is right and wrong? What are the virtues that must be encouraged? What are the unacceptable ways to live and interact in a family and beyond? These are very real questions. Very practical ways of living that are to be allowed and encouraged or not allowed and discouraged. They have to do with our personal identity.

Each parent, mom and dad, has a sense of what they want for their children and what they expect. Parents learn early on that this part of parenting is relentlessly present and calls forth the greatest amount of wisdom, sacrifice, patience, encouragement, discipline, correction, prudence and perseverance they have ever experienced. I have heard parents muse quite openly that their own maturity only really came into being when they had children of their own.

There is something innate in us as human beings that enables us to recognize that there is good and there is bad. There is right and there is wrong. Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference but not most of the time. Most of the time, parents get it and get it pretty quickly and very clearly. And out of that clarity they make decisions about behavior and boundaries, what they believe will build up and what will tear down.

It helps us to remember that we all come from God and we are made in the image and likeness of God. God is One. God is Beautiful. God is Good. God is True. We are hardwired to the truth, to the beautiful, to the good, to that which is one and in harmony. We don't think about all of this very often because we have so much on our plate. But it remains true.

We now live in a culture however that is very uncomfortable about asking the question about what is right and what is wrong, about what is moral and what is immoral, what is beneficial and what is destructive. We, in our culture at the present time, are engaged in the rewriting of a number of things we long accepted as true and reliable. We now question, challenge or openly deny the truth and goodness of many things we once held as true and good.

There was a time when how we had been made was accepted pretty much universally but that is no longer the case. Our denying this truth will become more and more popular enabling us to decide individually who we are and how we want to act and live. But ignoring what God has created and substituting what we are inclined to do or believe will not serve us well—not personally nor as a society. Nor will it bring us happiness. It will lead us to go farther away from the crucial reality of our creation to “find” ourselves.

This will last for a time but it will not thrive nor bear fruit nor bring about satisfaction, meaning or joy. It will give us a sense of “being in control” which is something we prize so highly. We don't even realize how tired we will get about having to make all these kinds of decisions and—on our own—sustain and maintain them. We do not even see the pitfalls that are right in front of us.

My friends, we who believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who took on our very own flesh so that he could model for us and show us personally how to live, we must remain steadfast even when so many around us are caving in to the cultural pressure of conforming. We have to do our best to raise our children in the way of Jesus and accept the truth he is and proclaimed. And while we are at it, we must pray more and more specifically for the transformation of our culture. We are and we have what our culture truly needs. It is our task and responsibility to hold on to this even when it becomes more and more costly to do so. It is what our cross is starting to look like in the twenty-first century.

**In the Peace of Christ,**

**Msgr. McHenry**