

Column051522

**Companions on the Journey**

**May 15, 2022**

Dear Friends,

Recently I came across an article in First Things written by our Archbishop Emeritus Charles Chaput. In it he says some pointed things. I would like to place them before you and ask for your thoughts and for your reflection and your prayer about their content. Mary treasured all manner of things in her heart, reflecting on them and meditating on them within herself. We would be better persons if we did more of that ourselves. Here are the three brief sentences.

*“The future belongs to people with children, not with things. Things rust and break, but every child is a universe of possibility that reaches into eternity, connecting our memories and our hopes in a sign of God’s love across the generations.”* Last week was Mothers’ Day and we spent much of it reminiscing on the amazing thing our mother’s accomplished by having and raising us. I recently saw a post from a Father Richard Hellman which stated: “I’m so proud to be Catholic today. We are singled out as the greatest threat to those who oppose the will of God.” Children are a gift. Always. Not easy. Ever. But a gift always. God does not ever make a mistake. We do. When the Father gives the gift of a new life He knows what he is about. It is for us to believe and seek to accept and in turn be transformed by this new and deeper reality, living not in fear of what is happening or what we cannot handle but in the hope of what has been given.

*“The America we now see emerging—an America ignorant or cynical toward religion in general and Christianity in particular—shouldn’t really surprise anyone. It’s a new America, made in America. Christians—including Catholics—helped create it with our eagerness to fit in, our distractions, and our lukewarm faith.”* I felt a sting in me from those words. Not because they aren’t true but because, sadly, they are all too true. For so many years Catholics were looked down on. We were always the latest emigrants whether from Italy or Ireland or Germany. We wanted to be part of this wonderful opportunity, the American Dream. We would do anything—almost. We would strive and we would sacrifice for our children that they would have it easier than we did. And that happened. But at what cost? What was the price we prayed? How much of our essential faith in Jesus did we place aside, with a wink, and then accept the approval of those we sought to fit in with? Catholics, in case you haven’t noticed, have arrived—in politics, business, commerce, entertainment, higher education. You name it and we are right there now. But sometimes our Catholic faith is used more as a prop by some of our most famous Catholics. They like to claim it when it works in their favor and put it aside when it stands in the way. BUT. It really doesn’t work like that. Our faith is a relationship with the Son of God who can neither deceive nor be deceived. There is a Day of Reckoning coming for us all. We will stand before the Lord Jesus. He knows. And we know He knows.

Which brings me to the last quote, somewhat lengthier: *“Too many people who claim to be Christian simply don’t know Jesus Christ. They don’t really believe in the gospel. They feel embarrassed by their religion and out of step with the times. They may keep their religion for its comfort value, or adjust it to fit their doubts. It doesn’t reshape their lives, because it isn’t real. And because it isn’t real, it has no transforming effect on their behavior, no social force, and few public consequences. Their faith, whatever it once was, is now dead.”*

My friends, Jesus of Nazareth was a real person. He did teach. He did perform miracles and other mighty works. He healed many people. He taught the ways of God. He challenged evil when it confronted him. If this were not so, he would not have been deemed worthy of a deadly response from those in power. It is this Jesus who asks us to place our faith in him so as to share in all that He accomplished and his victory over sin and death. There is no more serious responsibility that we have than to do what he has asked us to do. Y\To live his way. To hand this on to our children. To stand not just for something but to stand for the truth which sets us free. It is this very Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

In the Peace of Christ,

Msgr. McHenry