

Tuesday Reflection 8th June 2021

Anniversaries and commemorative days are occasions both for looking back and also opportunities for taking stock of the present and looking forward to the future.

Last Sunday marked the Feast of Corpus Christi, when we celebrate the institution of the Eucharist and the Real Presence of Christ in His Sacrament, remembering His promise that “I shall be with you always”, both in His sacramental Real Presence and in the Holy Spirit whom He sent to comfort and strengthen us.

We are fed by the Body and Blood of Christ so that we may continue His work of establishing a realm of justice and peace starting in this world, and we are mindful of the words of St Teresa of Avila that Christ has no hands to do His work but ours.

Coincidentally, last Sunday was also Tax Justice Sunday, called by the Church Action for Tax Justice.

Taxes are an imperfect means for effecting the dictum of “From each according to their means, to each according to their needs”. Tax systems are an attempt to create solidarity by redistributing wealth so that everyone has the means to lead a fulfilled life. Unfortunately, as at present constituted they are at present a very imperfect means of ensuring dignity for all as the rules are largely written by those who have at the expense of those who have not.

The previous day was World Environment Day, called by the United Nations for encouraging worldwide awareness and action to protect our environment.

So here we have two calls for action and involvement - one in solidarity with our fellow humans as we work towards a more equitable distribution of resources, and one in solidarity with the whole of Creation as we strive for balance in our dealings with our planet.

Both of these are playing out at present against the backdrop of Britain hosting both the G7 Summit and the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), at the same time as the UK Government is seeking to reduce the amount this country spends on foreign aid and is cutting spending on environmental protection.

How does this concern us? Let us go back to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, which stated unequivocally that:

the laity share in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world. They exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed towards (...) evangelisation and sanctification ... and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel.

This is a call for action and involvement. How do we rise to the challenge? How do we respond to the words of dismissal at the end of Mass “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life”?

Michael Townson