Make 2020 a Clear Vision 20/20 Year

As we start a new year, it’s ironic that our political, religious and moral vision is not 20/20. Many of the seasoned veterans of the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and ’60s have died or retired from the scene. Their departures can pull newer generations into forgetting that in very practical ways, the crusade was a movement headed by religious leaders whose voices resonated because their message awakened consciences. Strategically, those who are filled with zeal about the continued attacks on the right to life can bring their enthusiasm to broader fights without diluting their commitment to ending abortion. The stubborn cancers of racism, sexism and religious persecution cannot be allowed to return to our consciences.

For example, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops states unequivocally that “an unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law.” Think of how many of those codes are now being enacted.

2020 can be a year when we remove the cataracts impeding our moral vision. It can be a year when we decide to work in solidarity with all people of good will in advocating for justice for the born and the unborn; justice for the poor and marginalized; justice under the First Amendment so it does not become just an historic but irrelevant constitutional add-on. 2020 can be the year we defog our moral vision. It can be a year when we decide to work in solidarity with all people of good will in advocating for justice for the born and the unborn; justice for the poor and marginalized; justice under the First Amendment so it does not become just an historic but irrelevant constitutional add-on.

I would agree with St. Augustine that “an unjust law is no law at all.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Charitably Speaking by Patrick Winn

Director, Rockford Diocese Catholic Charities

 onView@rockforddiocese.org

Sharing the Joy

When each year comes to a close it is a common practice to take a look back at the year that was and sometimes beyond. The annual retrospective began early for me this year when I received an e-letter from a good friend and colleague announcing his retirement from writing.

Thirty-three years ago when I joined the Catholic press I had the good fortune to meet some pretty incredible people that included some wonderful priests and sisters. One of those priests was Father John Catoir who at the time was director of The Christophers. Some people might remember him from his many years of hosting Christopher Closeup on television.

He was a great mentor and supporter of the Catholic press and even served as the president of the Catholic Press Association for the United States and Canada. He was later honored with its highest award — the St. Francis de Sales statue. Later in his life he would lead a media ministry and become known as “The Messenger of Joy.” And that is the best way I can think of to describe him. Father Catoir did everything with a sense of joy in Christ and I am confident that’s why God gifted him with being such a skilled communicator and priest.

When I first read his letter I must confess a tear came to my eyes. But then I remembered how he always approached any problem or event — joy first. So I will try with even greater conviction to practice what I have learned from Father Catoir — lead with joy and confidence in Christ and everything else will fall into place. Thank you Father John, for your great example and friendship. Thanks for showing us the path to our Lord and may you continue to walk with Him in joy.

My Christmas gift to you dear readers, is Father Catoir’s final column.

Rejoice in all Circumstances

By Father John Catoir

“Rejoice in all Circumstances,” I agree with St. Paul, because my Faith urges me to believe everything that Jesus taught. When I believe in God the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and in His only begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, I believe firmly in the truth of His words, “I have come that your joy may be full, that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.”

I believe Jesus always told us the truth. Let’s ponder this together. Here’s how I approach this issue. Based on the words of Jesus, which were reaffirmed by St. Thomas: “The center of the personality is in the will.” Modern psychology agrees with both of them, so I have concluded that it is possible to put on the will to be grateful and joyful in all circumstances.

In spite of sad feelings we can choose joy over sorrow even in emotionally down times. Mourning the dead can be done with the focus on the eternal joy of heaven. Many find this impossible, and I understand their doubts, but thoughts can really control feelings. We can focus on the truth that heaven is a beautiful place to be. In the long run, Joy prevails over sorrow. Of course, many lack the faith to rise above their feelings, but as I’ve mentioned so often, the will has the power to control our thoughts.

If we have any hope of being a person of honor and dignity, we must follow the path toward holiness. Take a little time to think about this. The thoughts we think control the emotions we feel, which eventually control the actions we perform. We need to accept Christian ideals as worthy goals. Of course, we are weak and sinful. Of course, we need Divine help and mercy. Mediocrity is the human condition but Christ called us to perfection; therefore, holiness is not only possible, but it is our destiny.

When Jesus said, “Love one another, as I have loved you,” He knew we could rise to the challenge with the help of His grace. Wherever there is love, there is service, and wherever there is service there is sacrifice, which often involves suffering. Jesus died to give a cross to save our souls for heavenly bliss. It’s all one belief system. I believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

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