

Holy Trinity Sunday, June 5th, 2007

Fifty years ago, I was ordained on Pentecost eve. The readings spoke of a new world, Christians of many nations and tongues, a shared vision and witness of the “goodness of the Lord.”

“Shalom” ... “another advocate, the Spirit of truth, was promised” ... to teach and **remind** us of all that Jesus had said. “Whoever loves me...keeps my word.... we will come and make our dwelling with him. Fear not...”

The first reading today speaks of “wisdom,” present before creation and always...which takes **“delight in the human race.”**

Paul speaks of “God’s peace” ... and human afflictions.. He says: **affliction produces endurance, and endurance - proven character** and hope. **Hope does not disappoint....because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Spirit and given to us.**

Fifty years, is a lifetime - Every life has its own happenings. **Christ** offers: divine love, hope, mercy and life eternal. But we often tend to walk along on our own terms and hesitate to turn and face Christ because that means placing Him at the center of our lives instead of ourselves.

Remember...celebrate...believe!

In 1947: **Lawrence** was a manufacturing town ... its citizens hailed from many lands... their values were faith, work, good neighbors, whose differences and diversities were mutually shared... Bishop Lane, a Maryknoller, brought China to Lawrence, his home town, in 1939. The Xaverian Brothers taught us to become familiar with Xavier’s life and wider world....

1947: An ad in the Pilot read: **“be a trail-blazer for Christ”** - The family of Blessed Guido M. Conforti and all missionaries were being expelled from China....the Xaverians sought new possibilities on a path unknown, yet chosen because it was a path less traveled. The “Wisdom of the Lord which delights in the human family - invites us in strange ways, does it not?”

Remember...celebrate...believe!

Our God is a God of surprises. His invitations are subtly discovered along the way. Holliston was my new home with its five year daily commute to St John’s seminary... novitiate in rural Petersham, further studies with the Marists and Columbans. Ordination in 1957 was followed by two years of study in Rome at the Angelicum. E. Pakistan was my home for five years - I was headmaster of St Paul’s High School - where mother nature annually visited with hurricanes, poverty, hip deep muddy roads, shaky single bamboo bridges and wonderful people - Islam (Sunnis and Shiites alike) predominated along with Hinduism - 1964 communal riots destroyed our village, 200 Hindus were massacred. Yet Bengal taught “hospitality, respect, God’s creative educative role of turning children into men through education,” and this even amidst this poorest in jungle surrounded areas along interminable rivers of the delta of the Ganges river.(sacred places.) - “Wisdom found delight in the human race.” Indeed the hand of God was all **about us.** We had only to turn our gaze and accept

his direction.

Remember...celebrate...believe!

I was recalled to the USA and later was assigned to Rome in administration. Xavier's life was "hedge hopping islands" - I visited our missionaries worldwide often in the post Vatican council times of nation-building, unclear borders, tribalism, newness and unrest. We were "**trail-blazers** by necessity not by choice." Ours, a "God of surprises"... "Mission had become a new frontier, a school of discovery, **newness unfolding** providing **new situations** to one's eyes. How often **then** did my mind's eye return to Bangladesh as I traveled new locations? How often now do my thoughts **even now** recall Africa, Asia, Latin America...whenever I pause, reflect and remember. How apropos are Paul's words: affliction produces endurance, endurance character and hope, hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Remember...celebrate...believe!

After Rome, I hoped to go to Japan. After a few months at Catholic Theological in Chicago, I found myself in administration **for nine more years**. I went to Berkeley for two years to reflect, pull the graced moments together. I researched the history of the Xaverians in America and uncovered the genealogical American roots of Mother Bottego, foundress of the Xaverian Sisters - She was born in Glendale, Ohio, lived in Butte, MT and offered her "yes" to the Lord of history and she shared her gifts personally and through her sisters' work in numerous lands...**always with a smile.**

50 years - Jesus told his disciples: "there is much more to tell you...when the Spirit of truth comes **he will declare to you the things that are coming.....**" Mission is the ongoing presence of Christ's redemptive work in the world in every age. Mission is a voyage, we go forth as "trail-blazers maybe, or mere followers." The apostles found meaning when they turned to Christ and declared: "**It is the Lord!**" It is His work and His mission moving forward." **Trail-blazer missionaries** should walk similar paths today..

Remember...celebrate...believe!

Mission, is never the tale of a single life, it is a work accomplished in company, together. Family, friends, upbringing, and encouragement....are all God given graces in the overall accounting. Without the Lord...without you, our family of friends, relatives, **wishers well**, nothing could have happened to reach this day. I am forever grateful.

In 1947 I was the **first vocation** to a society new to this our land. China was its only field afar, its members were about 250. Our Founder, Blessed Guido Conforti had dreams open ended. Each passing year the example of outstanding "trail-blazers," veteran China missionaries imprisoned and exiled by political strategies of the day greeted us. New mission fields in Asia, Africa, Oceania, Latin America opened. America became a melting pot for Xaverian vocations of **many lands** and offered possibilities. (About 70 such students studied and were ordained, here, over 100 obtained higher education degrees). Xaverians today number some 820 members worldwide. "Wisdom" drew us all into the following which the apostolic band passed down to of each subsequent generation.

Our Founder's "motto" provided direction: "Christ in all and everywhere." Our motive force was his conviction that it is **"the Love of God which thrusts us forward"** along paths new and often untrod.

Remember...celebrate...believe!

Exciting were these 50 years, of studies, frontline apostolate, struggled times, and human crises, Vatican II, its changes, the need to listen and view things through the eyes of the crucified smiling crucifix of Xavier Castle. "Be a **trail-blazer** for Christ" - perhaps **that vocation** ad caught something of the essence of this lifetime of years.

Remember...celebrate...believe!

A number of Xaverians were **killed during their service** to their people. We share, in their struggles, conflicts, poverty, insecurity. I have known most of these men, including Fr. Cobbe who was ordained here in 1957, and killed in Bangladesh in 1974. **I, we share and follow** their tragedies, hopes, and dreams from the vantage point of "a brother(s) concerned."

Fifty years have passed - a varied tapestry of great value exists thanks to **your** goodness and kindness - and God's forgiveness and grace. We can look back together, recall, remember, celebrate and offer **thanks**, we look forward and humbly utter **"yes"** for what will be. It seemed an impossible dream, and its memories remain treasured moments possessed gratefully always. Your presence today - as we recall the "mission" we together "trail-blazed" - is a gift beyond measure - Thank you and may the good Lord reward your goodness, support and many kindnesses..during out 60 year presence in Boston...and elsewhere!

Remember...celebrate...believe!

P. R. Maloney