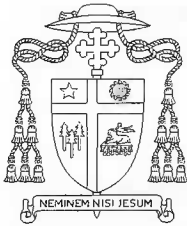


October 11, 2009



Office of the Bishop

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, free sons and daughters of God:

Our Father in heaven wants us all to live abundantly! Our Father wants us to live in Jesus; to live in his beatitude. Our Father wants us to enjoy true freedom as his sons and daughters. This is Bishop Alvaro Corrada, your bishop, teaching the faith, teaching this truth: Jesus came to us so that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

Those of the world who embrace the ideology of secularism do not accept us who are sons and daughters of God. The world is confused by the self-sacrifice of Catholic disciples that is our day-to-day experience of death and resurrection in union with Christ; that is our worship of God; that is our offertory at Mass. The world is puzzled by the witness of Catholic disciples who find holiness and happiness in our sufferings and trials; in self-denial; in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. And so, the world mocks us and rejects us in the same way it mocked and rejected Jesus. The world scoffs because it does not understand that by our dying to self, we find life – abundant life! The Holy Spirit guides us. The world may not understand, but we know we are partners with Christ in his paschal mystery. So, we give of ourselves. We live with the hope of resurrection. We enjoy true freedom because nothing can harm those who live in the Spirit of God. We live with confidence and joy because we know that Jesus is always with us, especially in the Most Holy Eucharist.

As brothers and sisters in Jesus, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry on the mission of Christ, the mission of the Church that is to live life abundantly in harmony with the Gospel; to live life well as true disciples of Christ; and to bring others to him.

This year is the “Year for Priests” – pronounced by Pope Benedict XVI – and this Sunday is Vocation Awareness Sunday. Our Holy Father reminds us that without the ordained priesthood – “there would be neither the Eucharist, nor even the mission, nor the Church herself.” As your bishop, I might add, the richness of abundant life and true freedom without those in Holy Orders to bring us the sacraments would be reduced greatly.

We praise God for the blessing of one hundred and one priests for the Diocese of Tyler. In just the last twelve months, I have celebrated the ordination of four new priests. And, I hope to celebrate the ordination of three or four new priests next year and then every year for the next several years to come. We can rejoice that God continues to bring out of our Catholic households and parishes men who are discerning their call to the priesthood and who ask to enter the seminary. We rejoice in the ninety permanent deacons and thirty-five more preparing for the diaconate.

By the grace of God, there is no shortage of seminarians, only a shortage of funds needed to educate, train, and form them in the priesthood. I am very grateful to you who have supported our seminarians with your gift of alms through The Bishop’s Appeal. What a great gift it is that you give to future generations: the great gift of priests; the great gift of the Holy Eucharist that comes by the power of God through the hands of those priests; the great gift of the sacraments they bring us to ensure that we might have life and have it more abundantly; the great gift that is the power of the Word of God preached by priests and deacons in East Texas.

May God grant us all his abundant life,

Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J.
Bishop of Tyler

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