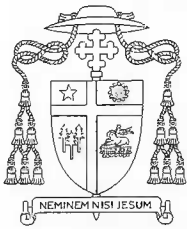


October 4, 2009



Office of the Bishop

My dear friends in Christ Jesus,

Hear *The Bishop's Appeal*, my call to you: "Live abundantly! Live in Jesus! Live in the beatitudes Jesus gives to us! Enjoy true freedom as sons and daughters of God!"

On this "Respect Life Sunday," let us rejoice and thank God that for the first time since the tragedy that began with *Roe vs Wade*, more Americans now claim to be "pro-life" rather than "pro-choice". The Catholic Church is the champion defender of life and the dignity of the human person. In this we must persevere with the help of our Blessed Mother Mary.

This is Bishop Alvaro Corrada, your bishop, reminding you that our Lord Jesus came to us "so that we might have life and have it more abundantly." (Jn. 10:10) This is the "abundant life" we seek: a share in the life and love of the Most Holy Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God, in his beloved Trinity, wants to save humanity out of love. This is God and his plan of love. From the moment of conception, our eternal life begins and continues after death – either in union with God or separated from him. Even now, in this earthly life, when we pray, when we fast, when we give alms, we live in his beatitude. We live abundantly, because already we participate in our eternal life – in our eternal worship of God. This is why the Father sent his Son to us, so that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

Secular ideology – a present-day atheism – seeks to pull us away from the beatitudes of Christ and into a life controlled by fear, anxiety, or worldly indifference. First, secular ideology frustrates us with the promise that freedom and happiness is found in the accumulation, possession, and consumption of worldly goods. It is a promise never kept! Then, when things go bad, the secular world mocks us and threatens us: "Hold on to your money. Store up riches." and "Let the poor fend for themselves. You will never have enough if you give to them." We have witnessed this deception during some of the most difficult economic times in recent memory.

Praise God that as Catholic disciples of Jesus we are rooted in the beatitudes. We are called to understand that the heart and soul of almsgiving, of prayer, penance, and fasting, is our communion in Christ. We do these things for the sake of our communion in him, for the sake of his Church, for the sake of others and, too, for our own sake, and for the salvation of many. Poor in spirit, we are happiest living in simplicity. We are happiest in the freedom of having enough goods to meet our needs and sharing what we have with others. Poor in spirit, we give of ourselves. We pray. We fast. We do penance. We give alms. The Holy Spirit within us moves us to imitate Jesus who gave of himself totally to his Father. In this life of self-sacrifice, we draw close to the Father. Then we will hear him say, "Blessed are the poor, already the kingdom is yours."

In gratitude for poverty in spirit, for the sacrifice of your penance and prayers, your fasting and almsgiving, I pray that you may have life and have it more abundantly. I pray you will enjoy true freedom as sons and daughters of God.

My dear friends in Christ, I appeal to you. I ask you to do penance, to pray and fast as you consider your gift of alms to Holy Mother Church through *The Bishop's Appeal*. Your alms given in secret will remain sacred, holy and hidden from the eyes of others. Know that our Father, who sees in secret, will reward you with his abundant life.

May God grant us all his abundant life,

Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J.

Bishop of Tyler

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