

# Encouragement Encouragement

November 2015 – Issue 52  
**REVERENCE AND RESPECT**

THE HOST APOSTOLATE  
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*Dear Lord and Father of mankind  
Forgive our foolish ways!  
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,  
in purer lives thy service find,  
in deeper reverence praise,  
in deeper reverence praise.*



This word 'reverence' comes into many of our hymns and Psalms and is found in more modern hymns also. 'Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here; **Come bow before him now with reverence and fear:** In Him no sin is found - we stand on holy ground.'

Today this word has been linked with a kind overzealous demonstration of prayerfulness an over pious attitude. All this is a rather sad reflection on the deepest meaning and truth of the word itself tries to portray.

The word reverence comes from the French 'révéler' and Latin 'revereri' translated often as 'fear'. We also here of it in the more negative sense that people today lack reverence and respect for elders or reverence in our worship and churches.

Yet the word signifies a very important part of our Faith and that is that we hold those things above our understanding with awe and reflect on the mystery behind them. Sailors often speak of the sea and its dangers in these terms or people who work in difficult situations of danger speak of respecting nature or not taking things for granted in any way.

To revere something is to hold it as 'sacred' or exalted, or to hold it in deep and unusual affection. We often speak of revering the memory of someone close to us or a very special person either to us or that served others in a particular way bestowing gifts and favours, courage or charity. In a sense we revere and respect the lives of Saints because they were good and holy people indeed 'godly people'. At the start of this month we remember the Saints with a special feast day on

the first of the month. Soon we will see the Canonisation of the parents of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, (often called The Little Flower), Louis and Zélie Martin, a married couple to be so graced 'together' for how they lived their lives and brought up a family. St Thérèse herself said of them that they were parents 'more fit for heaven than earth.'

The fourth commandment tells us to honour our mothers and fathers and to this extent to be respectful to them. Some people do revere the memory of their parents too, and pray in thanksgiving for their lives. This month is a month for the Holy Souls which especially remind us of those that went before us and lived lives that we should remember. We also pray for those who perhaps lacked something in their lives and require our prayer but we should still respect them and pray honestly for them. We are all made in the image and likeness of God and therefore we must not forget those who preceded us. The feast on the second day of the month requires us to do just that.

So, to be respectful and the revere something is to hold it in esteem and gratitude. If this is so for us as human beings, often beset with failings and faults, not to mention sins how much more this is so for God himself. It is impossible not to revere and be respectful of our Creator God on who all life depends, all that was and is created, all that He has made available for us, all that He and only He is. He is the great 'I Am' he made us and we belong to Him. Not only do we have to revere Him but hold him in awe and yes 'fear'. Now at this point some people would disown this word for we associated it with the kind of fear that leads us away from something. We associate fear with alarm and terror and wish to turn away from the language that stops us associating with this kind of God. Yet the word fear and reverence are closely linked as are respect and awe. Reverence has been substituted for the word Piety when we speak of

the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and yes, they are *gifts*.

So Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety (Reverence) and 'Fear of the Lord' (Awe and Wonder).

With the gift of *piety/reverence*, we have a deep sense of respect for God and the Church. A person with reverence recognizes our total reliance on God and comes before God with humility, trust, and love. Piety is the gift whereby, at the Holy Spirit's instigation, we pay worship and duty to God as our Father indeed and overwhelmingly loving Father who gave us His Son to die for us.

With the gift of *fear of the Lord/wonder and awe*, we become aware of the glory and majesty of God. A person with wonder and awe knows that God is the perfection of all we desire: perfect knowledge, perfect goodness, perfect power, and perfect love.

(N.B. Definition comes from the new Catechism)

In one way reverence, respect, piety, awe and wonder and fear of the Lord are difficult to separate and add to what is so crucial to our relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In these days where it seems to be more important to maintain our position, be on our guard against the things that we consider even if not true, to belittle us, the above terms and sentiments are not considered useful or relevant. Yet they are crucial to our understanding of God and each other. If we cannot respect our fellow friends and neighbours, if we cannot tolerate differences, if we cannot realise that like us they are made in Gods image and likeness then we will find it hard to truly love them as God loves us. Equally and fundamentally if we cannot reverence God and have a humble and respectful attitude to Him, not demeaning, but a truly reverential one, then we will never understand why He teaches us the many things that we find so hard to do.



Yet if we do revere Him, His promise to us is indeed great. Through the Old and New Testament we have evidence of how faithful He is to those who do revere Him. In Psalm Thirty-Two we have the

following words:

The Word of the Lord is Faithful..... The Lord looks on those who revere Him, on those who hope in his love, to rescue their souls from death, to keep them alive in famine.

So how do we express 'reverence'? Clearly we speak to those that we care for and respectfully, but with love in our heart. This in essence is

prayer. We reflect this in our exterior mannerism not falsely but genuinely. We bow or kneel we stand, sing we keep silent or pray openly but with a true devotion not 'pietistically' to draw attention to ourselves but with true reverence or piety. This applies to how we speak to our neighbours as well as to Our Father in Heaven. Having respect for all people is a mark of true reverence and a gift.

As well as this reverence for all the things of God His creation, for life in all its phases, for authority, for those in positions of responsibility whether temporal or spiritual indicates an obedient spirit. It is also marked by a thankful and grateful heart always willing to praise God for the 'wonder of our being'. We must learn to revere the Lord and love him with all our hearts.

Halina Holman

### *Pope Francis... Rome 2014*

**Today we would like to dwell on a gift of the Holy Spirit that often becomes misconstrued or treated superficially, but rather touches the very heart of our Christian life and identity: it is the gift of *piety*. (Reverence)**

**It indicates our belonging to God and our profound relationship with Him, a bond that gives meaning to our life and keeps us sound, in communion with Him, even during the most difficult and tormenting moments. This relationship with the Lord is not intended as a duty or an imposition. It is a bond that comes from within. It is *a relationship lived with the heart* it is our friendship with God, granted to us by Jesus, a friendship that changes our life and fills us with passion, with joy. Thus, the gift of piety stirs in us above all gratitude and praise. This is, in fact, the reason and *the most authentic meaning of our worship and our adoration*. When the Holy Spirit allows us to perceive the presence of the Lord and all his love for us, it warms the heart and moves us quite naturally to prayer and celebration. Piety, therefore, is synonymous with the genuine religious spirit, with filial trust in God, with that capacity to pray to him with the love and simplicity that belongs to those who are humble of heart. If the gift of piety makes us grow in relation to and in communion with God and leads us to live as his children, at the same time, it helps us *to pass this love on to others as well and to recognize them as our brothers and sisters*. And then, yes, we will be moved by feelings of piety — not pietism!**

**Feast days in November.....**

**1<sup>st</sup> All Saints Day ( Sunday) 2nd All Souls Day**

**4<sup>th</sup> St Charles Borromeo 10th St Leo**

**11th St Martin of Tours 13th St Frances Cabrini**

**16th St Margaret of Scotland 17th St Elizabeth of Hung.**

**21<sup>st</sup> Presentation of Mary 22<sup>nd</sup> Christ the King**

**24th St Andrew Dung-Lac 30th St Andrew Apostle**

**29th First Sunday in Advent (year C)**

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