

## THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW...

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## ...IS FIRMLY ROOTED IN THE OLD



The New Year, like a book with blank pages not yet written, is unfolding before us and like a shapeless landscape it awaits us to give it, little-by-little, colour and form.

No matter what we may choose to do, there are certain parameters which is best not to be ignored.

The new pages of our own personal book, the colours in our landscape, however novel and different we wish them to be, however hard we work towards our goal, do not cease to be supported by everything which preceded them.

The new always is the continuation of the old.

The blossom and the fruit always are the continuation of the seed deeply rooted in the earth.

The stronger and deeper the roots, the better and healthier the fruit thereof.

The above is true regarding us, human beings; we build upon the old, preserving whatever we deem good and useful, giving place to the new.

Each generation builds upon the heritage which the previous one left it. Each one of us adds his/her own personal touch, inspiration and contribution upon which the younger generations will stand.

This natural process goes on whether we are aware of it or not.

However, we are not mere "children of time", but, also, children of the Church; we belong to the body of Christ and to the "sacred time" of Salvation.

In the light of faith we know that we are rooted in God's People.

Firmly rooted in the memory and anamnesis of the Church, we experience the present bathed in the warmth of divine love, following in the Son of God's footsteps.

And the Lord who always is new, without beginning or end, without change, who never grows old, accompanies us in our every project, initiative and movement.

### *All is new*

*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

(2 Cor. 5, 17-21)

## The Tradition of the Church



In order to preserve the Gospel in its integrity and alive in the Church, the Apostles left the bishops as their successors: They gave them their teaching authority.

This transmission, which is the work of the Holy Spirit and distinct from the Holy Scriptures –although closely connected to them, is called **Tradition**.

Through Tradition the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, continues to transmit to every generation all that she is, all that she believes.

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church, §77, 78)*

It is important to not forget the historical origins of the Church, her roots in space and time, as well as her divine origin: Christ is true God and true man and He founded the Church, a divine and human institution at the same time.

We are well equipped with all we need in order to march forward, looking with optimism upon the future, for the future is not “something” but “Someone”.

## In the Church only

We must learn the truth from those who possess it, i.e. from those who are the Apostles' successors.

Because they are the ones who keep our faith to the unique God and Maker of all.

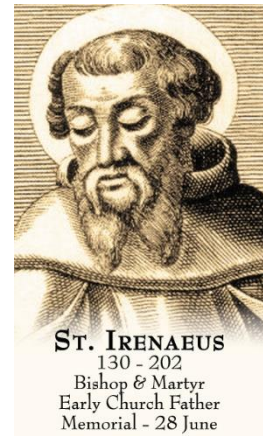
They increase our love towards the Son of God, who has done marvelous things for us.

The successors of the Apostles are the ones who interpret the Scriptures, without danger of error, without blasphemy towards God and in honouring the Patriarchs and the Prophets.

**The true, correct and authentic interpretation of the Scriptures is found only in the Church!**

*(Saint Irenaeus, 2nd century)*

This is what Saint Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, wrote among others, in the 2nd c. when the Church was confronted with grave heresies spread far and wide throughout the then known world.



## Did you know...

The first day of the week in Greek is **Kyriaké**, i.e. “belonging to the Lord“, from the Greek word **Kyrios =Lord**.

The word Kyrios for the Christian – applied to the person of Jesus, is equivalent to **a confession and a statement of faith in His divinity and His Resurrection**.

In the countries of Europe linguistically connected to Latin, the first day of the week is also called the day of the Lord, e.g. **dimanche** in French, **domenica** in Italia, **Domingo** in Spanish, from the Latin word **Dominus=Lord**.

In the Western and Northern regions of the Roman Empire the first day of the week kept, up to the present time, its older name, that of **Sunday=the day of the Sun**, **Sonntag** in German, **zondag** in Dutch etc.

**Sunday was, for the first time, made a public holiday on 7 March 321 AD**. during the reign of Constantine the Great.

The joyful character of Sunday was so important in the first Christian centuries that one reads in the “Teaching of the Apostles“, a book of the early 2nd century:

“The Christian must be joyful on the Day of the Lord and not let sadness or unhappiness get hold of him, for then he sins”!

## Glorious in power

This year the theme chosen for the **week of prayer for the unity of Christians** (18-25 / 1) is “Your right hand, o Lord, is glorious in power”.

This is a verse taken from the book of Exodus (Ex. 15, 6) and is part of a thanksgiving hymn, which Moses and the Israelites sang after their miraculous escape, (exodus means exit in Greek), from the slavery of Egypt around 1200 B.C

With this theme all Christians are invited to meditate upon the great care and love which God has for His people and, also, to realize that nothing can stand in the way of those who love Him.

As mentioned, the above verse is found in the Old Testament; it is important to be aware of the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments.

The background of the New Testament is based upon the Old and its roots run deep into the times of the Patriarchs and the Prophets.

These Patriarchs and Prophets experienced a particularly close relationship to God and their obedience to the divine call hastened the arrival of the “fullness of time” and the Incarnation of the Son of God.

The Church carries within herself the memory of all God’s marvels for the sake of mankind and, during the liturgical cycle, re-activates and relives the Mysteries of Salvation, from its very beginning to the Conception, Birth, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus and the founding of the Church, up to our times and beyond.

## *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*



*There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—  
Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.*

*The rainbow comes and goes,  
And lovely is the rose;  
The moon doth with delight*

*Look round her when the heavens are bare;  
Waters on a starry night  
Are beautiful and fair;  
The sunshine is a glorious birth;*

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*By William Wordsworth, (1770-1850)  
From "Recollections of Early Childhood"*

## The doctor's ministry



**Adrienne von Speyr**, 1902-1967, was not only a theologian and a mystic, but also a doctor of medicine. Actually she was the first ever woman medical student in Switzerland!

A convert to Catholicism, she devoted herself wholeheartedly to her practice, considering it as a *diakonia*, i.e. a service, and offering all her strength and abilities to God in her service to the patients.

To the end, she lived in total availability towards all and everyone, with compassion, prayer and special care to the poor.

She advocated for medicine to enter the "*School of the Beatitudes*", i.e. the doctors to be humble and meek and adopt a **holistic approach** to their patients, taking into account their religious and spiritual reality too.

The doctor's solidarity to the patient is an integral part of his medical ethos and responsibility.