

“CHANGING SEASONS – UNCHANGING MERCY”

***“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”
Colossians 3:3***

Late fall can be a melancholy time, bittersweet in many ways. Though the colors of both land and sky are the most glorious of the year, and the smell of wood smoke and the chill in the air can be bracing, fall is still a harbinger of winter. The shortening of days, the lengthening of shadows and the dreary, overcast days and patter of chill rain are reminders of things passing away. For many of us, the question, “Where did the year go?” turns into “Where did my life go?” The spring of childhood, and the summer of youth have given way to the fall and winter of middle and old age. “Where did my life go?”

But, as the passing of seasons also marks the passing of life, each has its own particular joys and pursuits. While spring, summer, and fall are times of busyness and activity, winter can be a time of growth and reflection. A time of settling down and considering “the one thing needful that will never be taken away (Luke 10:42).” Where have our lives gone? They are “hidden with Christ in God.”

For the one in Christ, each passing day brings opportunities to live and grow in the love and mercy of Christ. Each passing day brings us chances to serve God by praying for, and helping others. Each passing day also brings us closer to our eternal home. While we may grieve our loss of youth, we can still rejoice that at that Last Day “our bodies will be made like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subdue all things to Himself (Philippians 3:21).”

A great way to keep all of this in perspective is to connect the passing of the seasons with the passing of the Church Year. Advent and Christmas, which occur in early winter, focuses our attention on God sending His Son into our flesh as our Redeemer from sin, death and the power of the devil. Midwinter sees the Epiphany season, where this Savior, born of the Jews, is the Savior of the gentiles as well. In the darkest time of the year, Epiphany celebrates that “Jesus Christ is the Light of the world; a Light no darkness can extinguish.” Late winter begins the Lenten season, where Christ, out of love for us all, travels to Jerusalem and the cross to accomplish His work of atonement for the sins of all mankind that, in Him, we might have life. Early spring is also the time of Easter. As winter must give way to spring, so death gives way to Christ’s bodily resurrection, which makes possible our resurrection, as well.

Then, in late spring, the Pentecost season begins, which first commemorates the sending of the Holy Spirit to Christ’s followers, empowering them (and us, too!) in faith and life to live for Him. Summer and fall is the general season of the Church Year, where we follow Christ’s life, works and words, all for us and for our salvation. And as fall deepens toward winter, we move to the last Sunday of the Church Year, the Sunday of the Fulfillment. As the seasons pass; as this world passes away, our attention is drawn to the return of Christ, the end of all things in this fallen and sinful universe, and the promise of all things being made new.

So, you see: just as each season of the year has its own glories and challenges; and as each season of our lives do as well, marking the time through the Church Year keeps everything in perspective. Thus, our focus will not be on what we are losing, but on what has been gained for us through our Savior Jesus Christ.

While the changing of the seasons may give us melancholy moments as we see our own lives tick by, we can confidently and joyfully know that as winter must inevitably turn into spring once more, so the winter of our lives, which are already “hidden with Christ in God” will inevitably pass away into the eternal spring of “the resurrection of the dead and the life + of the world to come.” Amen!

God’s blessings in Christ, whatever season we are in!