

**When what is celebrated is real, the celebration is not soon over and done with**

So many celebrations drown in preparations these days; in fact, often it seems that the preparations are the celebration, and the celebration itself little more than an afterthought, a moment in time, soon over with and forgotten. For that matter, it often seems that the celebration, soon to be over and done with, is more important than that which is celebrated.

Think about weddings; it seems that in our day and age, as marriage itself has come to mean but little to most - and particularly is the awareness lost to many, that marriage as the ordinance of God is a life-long obligation and commitment - all the more preparation, and money, go into planning perfect weddings down to the smallest details, lavish and luxurious celebrations of what are already long time relationships, sometimes even with the parties themselves being very well aware that the relationship might not be long for this world.

Just for the record, it is not a thought I have ever had with regards to any wedding over which I myself have presided; still, I have the impression that it is a cultural trend of our day and age that to many, marriage itself means much less than the wedding, the celebration more than the supposed reality supposedly celebrated.

Many relate in a similar manner to the feasts of the faith. To many, Christmas is all of December - even if they piously make sure to call their early Christmas celebrations "Advent" - and by the time Christmas comes, it is, for all intents and purposes, over and done with, and all that is left is an afterthought, because it was always all about the preparations, it was never really about Christmas, and certainly not about Christ. In Church, though, Christmas only begins at Christmas, and lasts for a full twelve days, and ends it so soon only to give way to another feast of which pretty much only the Church of Christ knows, and His Christians.

Easter lasts even longer, a full seven weeks; it is prepared for with almost a full seven weeks of penitential meditation on the sufferings of Christ and the price He had to pay for our ungodliness and our other evil. And just like Christmas, Easter ends only to give way to yet another great feast; but that is for another day.

What this reflects is that the feasts of the faith are not so much about the feasts themselves, but rather about the realities they celebrate. The celebration of the resurrection of Christ continues all through the year, as the risen Saviour lives in His Church and gives Himself to His Christians, with the salvation He has won for all sinners with His sufferings and death.