Last weekend, of course, was the end of Daylight Savings Time and we got that one extra hour of sleep. Well, that’s only true if you don’t have cats! Harry and Sally do not understand the concept of daylight savings, and really do not care. It was not important to them that the clock said 4 AM when they knew it was 5 AM and time to be fed. They were on the bed crying for me to get up and feed them. They can be quite persistent, loud, and determined. I did not feed them until 5 and they were not happy with me, but I had to be firm in order to get them on the correct schedule. The world may believe one thing about what time it is, but Harry and Sally follow a different clock and they are quite sure their version is the correct one. They have a particular pattern, or rhythm of life, and they are determined to follow it no matter what the world might think.

As Christians we also need to recognize that we are called to a different rhythm of life than the world would have us follow. How the world looks at life and the role and place of individuals and society is very different from the Christian perspective. How we understand issues such as equality, freedom, choice, and the very essence of what makes a person human are simply not compatible with the world’s view. Christians have always been called to be somewhat counter-cultural. We are called to seek our answers not from society, history, or current norms. Unlike the world, we do not believe that an individual can be self-defined by, or through, their own desires, preferences, preconceptions of right and wrong, or their own sense of identity. The question of who I am, and how I am called to engage in the world, is at the heart of how we are called to understand ourselves as human beings. And, it means wrestling with the issues of our time in a very different way than the world would.

And I am not simply talking about the big topics where our faith differs from the world’s view, such as: sexuality, pro-life issues, dignity and sanctity of all human life, gender issues and the like. The true rhythm of Christian life is discovered first in the small things. The big issues are important, but they can only be truly addressed when one comes to terms with the more basic issues of life, and how we are called to live them out.

From the very beginning Christians have struggled to maintain the truth. We simply need to look to our primary symbol of faith—THE CROSS! Jesus was not crucified because He taught some soundbites: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you; Love your neighbor as you love yourself, and so forth. Many times we can get caught up in soundbite Christianity which is really a hollow faith. As long as you are “nice” or “good” and follow the ten commandments you are all set, but this has nothing to do with what Christ taught. Christ taught not the easy road, but the narrow and rocky road. He said the gate is narrow and few will pass through it. Christ came to challenge people out of their life of complacency, to accept the true challenge of following Him.

Christians have accepted that challenge for 2,000 years. The first followers of Christ faced persecution, exile, beatings, and death because they simply refused to conform to the world’s rhythm of life. The Romans could not understand the Christians; all they asked was that they burn some incense and offer small sacrifices to the gods. Everyone else but the Jews did this. It was not asking too much. The Romans had no issues with them worshipping their own God, but they needed to be part of society and could not be different on this issue. But Christians recognized a fundamental truth that the worship of pagan gods was devoid of any real meaning. It was an affront to the one true God. So, a rejection of the “world’s truth” was necessary to remain in relationship with God.

The rhythm of Christian life is really based on some simple principles that are counter to the world. The first and most important is that all that is created comes about by the will of God, and by his will alone. The second is that all that exists was created with a distinct purpose, and it is our responsibility to understand God’s purpose, and to make use of what He has created only in accord with how He has ordered things. Third, God has a plan for creation, humanity, and individuals all centered on one truth—salvation. God has predestined all for salvation in Christ, but not all will accept that salvation. Instead, many will choose to listen to the Siren call of the world rather than the truth of God.

Yes, things in our life have become disordered and do not exist in full accord with God’s plan. This disorder has arisen from human choice and the rejection of God’s plan. It began with the Fall of Adam and Eve—humanity’s initial rejection of God’s will—and has continued throughout human history, either as a consequence of the Fall or individual choices.

The question then for us is: what will we choose to do? Will we accept the truth of following Christ? Will we reject the world and accept only Christ? What does that mean? It means seeking to understand God’s plan and truth. It
means recognizing that truth is not just an idea: it is a relationship with Christ. It means recognizing that the truth is objective and unchangeable. It means we must be a people of prayer and scriptures. Our truth comes only through God’s revelation of his plan, and we must seek to live every day making each choice based on that truth.

Our clock simply follows a different rhythm than the world’s!

If you have any questions about anything, please do not hesitate to ask me directly, or send your questions to me at fr.brian@chelmsfordcatholic.org. Please keep me in your prayers.