

Christ the King A 2020 SML  
MT 25:31-46

Without the law of Christ, there is no peace.

There is tension between politics and politics. There is tension between politics and religion. The tension between politics and religion is in the moral issues debated in our times:

- ✓ abortion,
- ✓ embryonic stem cell research,
- ✓ prayer in public schools,
- ✓ religious expression in the public square,
- ✓ the definition of marriage and family,
- ✓ teaching the objective truth
- ✓ the list goes on.

Tension between politics and religion is nothing new. Politics and religion clashed through all of salvation history and at the time of Our Blessed Lord. “Lord, is it lawful to pay the tax to Caesar or not?” Tension caused by believers placing God first in their lives is nothing new either. It was tension between politics and religion which led Pope Pius XI to institute today’s Feast of Christ the King in 1925. It was just three years after Mussolini became Prime Minister of Italy in 1922 when his

fascist government came to power. Pius XI, in his encyclical which instituted the Feast of Christ the King, addressed the:

. . . chief causes of the difficulties under which mankind was laboring. . . These manifold evils in the world were due to the fact that the majority of men had thrust Jesus Christ and his holy law out of their lives; that these had no place either in private affairs or in politics: and as long as individuals and states refused to submit to the rule of our Savior, there would be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations. Men must look for the *peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ.*..”

- ✓ Regardless of the law of the land,
- ✓ regardless if law and order is upheld,
- ✓ regardless of who wins the presidential election,

without the law of Christ, there is no peace of Christ, said the Holy Father, and it is the peace of Christ which will be prayed for so eloquently in today’s preface later in this Mass:

a kingdom of truth and life

a kingdom of holiness and grace

a kingdom of justice, love and peace.

In last Sunday’s sermon, I taught that Matthew is the most ordered of the four gospels. Matthew very distinctly alternated five narratives with five sermons, and each sermon addressed a topic of concern for Matthew's Church:

1. Matthew's famous Sermon on the Mount
2. Matthew's missionary sermon
3. His sermon on the kingdom
4. His sermon on the Church
5. And finally, Matthew's sermon on eschatology: the four last things: judgment, heaven, hell and purgatory,

and this last sermon, like the others, was very ordered with seven parables all about judgment:

1. the parable of the Fig Tree: that the day of judgment is near;
2. the parable of Noah's Day: but of that day and hour no one knows; neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone;
3. the parable of the Burglar: had the master of the house known when the burglar was coming, he would have stayed awake;
4. the parable of the honest and dishonest servants, whose master came on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour;
5. the parable of the ten bridesmaids, even though the bridegroom was long delayed in coming, there was still no time to get more oil for their lamps (the Gospel two weeks ago)
6. last Sunday's parable of the talents,

7. and this evening's (morning's) parable of the Sheep and the Goats, where there was no more time.

In the seven parables, the dishonest servant, the foolish bridesmaids and the lazy steward failed. But the faithful servant, the wise bridesmaids and the enterprising stewards succeeded. Everyone knew what to do. Some did it and others did not.

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats is the most vivid parable that Our Blessed Lord ever taught and His lesson is crystal clear. One of the things by which God will judge us is our reaction to human need, and it is a reaction that should be uncalculating. Those who performed the corporal works of mercy did not realize they were helping Christ, and thus earned eternal merit, as opposed to those who did not help, whose attitude was - had they known it was you, they would have been glad to help, as they would have been sure to receive the credit.

Homilists who reference these seven eschatological parables could be criticized for preaching judgment, hell, fire and damnation. Some say love of God, rather than fear of punishment, is a much better approach and is to be preached. And let me tell you, it is much easier to preach love of God

rather than fear of God. But unfortunately, there are some whose motivation is not love of God, but rather, fear of punishment. It is only a message of hell, fire and damnation for the dishonest servant, the foolish bridesmaids and the lazy steward. But for the faithful servant, the wise bridesmaids and the enterprising stewards, it is a message of heaven, living waters and everlasting life.

There is a reason for time clocks; there is a reason for quarterly reviews, and there is a reason why Santa makes his list and checks it twice, and the reason is accountability.

Otherwise, it's all about:

- ✓ doing as you please,
- ✓ “catching as catch can,”
- ✓ or “gettin’ while the gettin’s good,”
- ✓ or “looking out for number one.”

I would much rather use rhetoric regarding contrition, which is sorrow for sin because they have offended God, rather than rhetoric regarding attrition, which is sorrow for sin because they are afraid of the punishment. The Act of Contrition is a case in point:

O My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, because I detest the loss of heaven and the pains of hell

(what's that? Attrition.) But most of all, because I have offended Thee, My God, who is all good, and most deserving of all My love (what's that? Contrition); hence the name of the prayer: the Act of Contrition.

But again, what is unfortunate is the number of people who are not motivated by love of God, but rather are motivated by consequences.

- ✓ Regardless of the law of the land,
- ✓ regardless if law and order is upheld,
- ✓ regardless of who wins the presidential election,

without the law of Christ? . . . Pius XI said, : “Without the law of Christ, there is no peace of Christ.” But with the law of Christ, there is:

- a kingdom of truth and life,
- a kingdom of holiness and grace,
- a kingdom of justice, love and peace.