

6A 2020 SML
MT 5:17-37

God chose to make a “moral” universe. As a result, the world is a battleground of good against evil, where good character emerges from the right use of freedom. Why, then, are so many just not interested in the struggle? Not interested in building good character? Why? Because indifference is so often the answer of the world for so many things, including religion.

When it comes to religion, most of the modern world believes in indifference. Very simply, this means it has:

- ✓ no great loves and no great hates,
- ✓ no causes worth living for, no causes worth dying for,
- ✓ nothing more than the status quo,
- ✓ and lukewarmness that the Lord wants to vomit from His mouth says St. John (REV 3:16)

It's the 80/20 rule: 20 percent of the people do 80 percent of the work. 80 percent of the people do nothing more than darken the doorstep of the Church – period! I've been here going on five years, and there are some in this Church who've I have yet to see smile. And I pray for them. If they are not smiling because their hearts are heavy, they need prayers. If

they are not smiling because it hasn't occurred to them to smile, then they are indifferent and they need prayers as well.

The 80 percent count as their virtue the vices for which they abstain. They:

- ✓ ask that religion be easy and pleasant,
- ✓ sneer at those who are spiritually inclined,
- ✓ dislike enthusiasm,
- ✓ love benevolence,
- ✓ and believe that no one ever loses his soul except for murder or adultery as mentioned in today's gospel.

The indifferent have:

- ✓ no true fear of God,
- ✓ no fervent zeal for His honor,
- ✓ no deep hatred of sin,
- ✓ and no concern for salvation.

They are indifferent that Our Blessed Lord gave new meaning to the 10 Commandments in today's gospel. And this indifference is nothing new.

For as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In [those] days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all

away. So will it be at the coming of the Son of Man. (MT 24:37-39)

Similarly, as it was in the days of Lot: they were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building; on the day when Lot left Sodom, fire and brimstone rained from the sky to destroy them all. So it will be on the day the Son of Man is revealed. (LK 17:28-30)

Such indifference is just wrong. Being part of the 80 percent is wrong. We can lose our souls by doing nothing, by not resisting that which pulls us down. What's true of the natural order is true of the spiritual order. The 80 percent won't stop smoking because, "Hey, you gotta die from something." What is life but resisting those forces which bring about death? If that's your argument, "you gotta die from something," well then you can argue your way through every unhealthy habit of bad living and through every choice to neglect what is good. It's the constant conflict of wanting the best but choosing the worst.

If you are not in the habit of resisting the worst through nature and more importantly through grace, you will revert to becoming Adam, as that is the ultimate consequence of the original sin.

So it is with the moral life. He loses his soul, not only by committing mortal sins, (thou shall not kill, thou shall not commit adultery), but also by neglecting the grace which prevents sin and brings everlasting union with God.

Isn't that the whole point of Our Blessed Lord diving a little more deeply under what's written in the Ten Commandments. The 80 percent would rather keep the Ten Commandments right where they are. Nope, I'm good. I haven't cheated on my wife, and I haven't killed her (yet). The 80 percent would be:

- ✓ quite comfortable with himself,
- ✓ satisfied with who he is,
- ✓ consenting to the customs of the world,
- ✓ and letting his moral inclinations run their natural course without check or balance.

And more than likely, he will float, in the easy and gentle current, downstream to eternal death, as it is written in Hebrews, "How shall we escape if we are indifferent to so great a salvation?" (2:3) Fulton Sheen says real men, real women, swim against the current.

Salvation is certainly the goal, but there is a terrible penalty for indifference. It's the lesson which Our Blessed Lord taught in the Parable of the Talents:

His master said to him in reply, ‘You wicked, lazy servant!- Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. (MT 25:26-29)

Society is full of those who have neglected their talents, whose spiritual faculties have dried up through sheer indifference, who no more think of God, other than to have a thought about God. And that’s as far as it goes.

Why do the 80 percent want to live this way? They don’t have to live this way. They can be like the 20 percent, who gird up the energy of their moral nature for a struggle:

- ✓ unlike the Apostles in the Garden, the 20 percent watch for an hour in Adoration;
- ✓ unlike those traveling the path that’s wide and leads to destruction, the 20 percent enter the narrow gate and travel the straight road.

The life Our Blessed Lord wants us to live is not the life of the 80 percent. Don’t live the life of the one who buried his treasure in the sand. Our Blessed Lord wants us to live the life of the ones who have taken up their cross daily and follow Him.

1. Hands must not be dulled by fumbling with the treasure which rust consumes, moths eat and thieves steal.
2. Taste must not be neglected by eating only the meat which perishes.

3. Eyes must not be blinded by seeing only bread and not Our Blessed Lord in the monstrance.
4. Ears must not be deaf by hearing only worldly noise
5. Noses must not be dulled by the perfumes of this world.

To these did Our Blessed Lord speak when He said, “Seeing, they see not, and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand.” (MT 13:13)

NO.

1. Hands must be quick to touch the hem of His garment, like those of the Canaanite woman.
2. Taste must be refined by receiving Our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist.
3. Eyes must be focused on the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance.
4. Ears must listen for the whispering of the Holy Spirit.
5. Noses must be absorbed by the odor of chrism in the Sacred Oil.

A great way to move from the 80 percent to the 20 percent is by joining a small group. We share faith on a larger scale during Mass. Small groups share faith on a smaller scale through faith sharing, or faith listening. In the life of the early Church, the faithful met in small groups and that is how their

faith blossomed. We are continuing small groups this Lent. Signing up is easy. There are forms in the pews this weekend. You can drop it in the plastic box at the doors of the Church on the way out.

This indifferentism is nothing new. I'll close my homily with the prophetic words of Father deLubac in 1942, in the middle of WWII, in his book, The Drama of Atheist Humanism:

In the present state of the world, a virile, strong Christianity must become a heroic Christianity . . . it will consist in resisting with courage, the lures and seductions of a false ideal . . .

- ✓ Gentleness and goodness,
- ✓ Considerateness toward the lowly,
- ✓ Pity for those who suffer,
- ✓ Rejection of perverse methods,
- ✓ Protection of the oppressed,
- ✓ Unostentatious self-sacrifice,
- ✓ Resistance to lies,
- ✓ The courage to call evil by its proper name,
- ✓ Love of justice,
- ✓ the spirit of peace and concord,
- ✓ Open-heartedness,

- ✓ Mindfulness of heaven.

Those are the things that Christian heroism will rescue Christians have not been promised they will always be in the majority. (Rather the reverse). Nor that they will always seem the strongest and that men will never be conquered by another ideal than theirs. But, whatever happens, Christianity:

- ✓ will never have any real efficacy,
- ✓ it will never have any real existence
- ✓ or make any real conquests,

except by the strength of its own spirit, by the strength of Jesus Christ.”