



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

4 February 2019, 9:02 AM

Summary reflection 2: If you want to be exalted, humble yourself

The following is a summary reflection of the second talk given by Father Raniero Cantalamessa to the US bishops during their 2019 retreat:

A person begins by wanting to be with Jesus, to be his follower, and to be in relationship with Jesus, to be his friend.

And that involves being taught and formed by Jesus, to adopt a new way of thinking and acting: not according to the way of the world, but according to the way of God.

This is called metanoia, and is illustrated in the passage about Peter rebuking Jesus for accepting suffering and death, and then Jesus in turn admonishing Peter:

"You are not thinking as God does, but as human beings do... Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it" (*Mark 8:33-35*).

The new way of Gospel or Kingdom thinking and acting taught by Jesus is upside down in relation to the way of the world:

Jesus teaches that if you want to save your life, lose it (by serving others); if you want to be first, make yourself the last of all; if you want to be exalted, humble yourself.

It's okay for Jesus' followers to aspire to be first, to be great; after all, Jesus addresses whoever wishes to be great, who want to be first.

But according to Jesus' new way of thinking and acting, the way to achieve greatness is by denying self for the sake of others, making yourself the last of all, the servant of all.

Jesus would have his followers turn from me to thee, to God and others: to worship and obey God; and with kindness and gentleness to pardon and serve others, any other, whether she or he is deserving, asks nicely, is aware of the cost, or is grateful.

The way of the world teaches that happiness and fulfillment is the result of living for me first, saving oneself, being number one, having others at your beck and call.

But experience (not to mention the Grant Study done by Harvard University) supports what Jesus teaches: living for, giving to, helping out, and sharing with others results in happiness and fulfillment here and in the hereafter.

Jesus exhorts all who glory in the name Christian – Laity and Religious, Deacons and Priests, Bishops and Popes – to live according to this new way of Gospel or Kingdom thinking and acting.

Do you live for me or for thee... for yourself, or for God and others?

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque