

## 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday B, 2009

It may not have been by design that the Scriptures for this Mass, taken together, point to the unpopular truth that ‘all men are *not* equal.’ This fact—which should be obvious to anyone who will admit reality, the evidence of his own eyes—hits hard upon our American, egalitarian ears. The slogan we’ve come to accept as a tenet of our political gospel is that all men are equal, or, as the Declaration of Independence phrases it, all men are *created* equal. Without intending a full-blown critique of that proposition, nor a defense of how it might be rightly understood, I only wish to advert to the potential danger in it towards the idealistic fantasies that are gaining such a strong foothold in the world today. This is the dreamy idealism that has fueled the program of socialized medicine which, as you know, is now being proposed for our country. But whatever one wants to make about the pros and cons of universal health care, there are some menacing issues that both accompany and undergird it which are positively ominous. I want to speak only of a few of these matters today, not only because they are insidious, being subtly coated with a veneer of respectability, but also because they are sometimes given a Christian gloss which further masks their malignancy.

The first of these is the imposition of an artificial *uniformity*. On the plus side of things, we human beings have the fine propensity for creating order, for symmetry and proportion. These can be seen, for example, in the architectural design of this church building which reflects a harmonious balance and design which is pleasing to behold. But the beauty of this orderliness would be lost if there were imposed on this church a dreary uniformity that eliminated all variety: if, for example, all the colored glass windows were replaced by monochrome, or if all the materials of the structure and all the accouterments were reduced to a single element (oak, for example, or concrete). Without contrast and variety there would be a monotonous sameness, a rigid uniformity which would express rationality alright, but a rationality gone amiss: not a human, but an *in*-human application of reason, indeed an oppressive ‘totalitarian’ infliction of order upon the material world. (People often complain about this very thing in many of the modern, cold and un-religious kinds of churches that have been built in the last forty or so years.) While hardly anyone would want in the world raw, untamed nature to have full sway so that

God's command to 'subdue the earth' would be ignored, yet there can be too much of a good thing, too much *control* which reduces freedom, strains beauty and creates a straight-jacketed hell out of our imperfect yet still in many ways good world.

These thoughts may seem ill-suited for a sermon since the religious element is—thus far at least—lacking. But there are indeed some fundamental doctrinal points that are presumed here, the first of which is that the world God made was perfect in the beginning, but became defective somewhat after original sin. Knowing this, one can't pretend that original sin never happened and try to reconstruct the ideal world—Paradise—as it existed before the Fall, where everything was in a state of perfection. This can never again happen. Second: the tendency of some people to want to enforce a rigid order on man for a perfect society always has the *opposite* effect whenever it is attempted; things turn out actually *worse* than before.

If we consider (here now are the religious and moral applications) the great social and political threats of our time: in *politics* by flirting with Communistic—that is to say, a feigned egalitarian society enforced by dictatorial control over all aspects of human life (predicated, mind you, on the appealing promise of the elimination of poverty and misery); or in the *social order* by the attempt to redefine marriage, to abort babies, to control population, to engage genetic controls for creating perfect human bodies, or in the educational experiments to effect uniform thinking of the citizenry through indoctrination education in our public schools—these would require for their success the coerced agreement of the mass majority having been beaten into agreement by a controlling police state. We then can see the logical consequence of this stringent kind of dictated policy in the order for the extinction of the Catholic Church, the murder of its priests and of all religious-insistent people. Then the Prince of This World would reign supreme and permit all sort of lawlessness and wanton conduct which God abhors. (If you think this is an extreme position, you are ignorant of the history of the last century when the Church and millions of otherwise innocent human beings suffered indescribable agony and death due to terror-imposing governments having idealistic schemes).

The Scriptures today speak of both the rich and the poor (the poor, our Lord once

said, you always have with you—even though we are bid to come to their relief); they speak also of those of sound physical constitution and of those impaired (whom we must assist). But nowhere in the Scriptures do we find the proposal for a make-believe paradise that would enforce uniformity or equality upon everyone. The fact is that we live in a *fallen* world. With the right use of our human resources of mind and will and further equipped by our Catholic faith, we are meant to help this fallen world to be healed by love, by Christian charity, and *not* by the inhuman rationalized schemes which promise a heaven on this earth but which always deliver an inferno instead.

Let us indeed seek to change the world and to make it better, to enrich it, to subdue it by the exercise of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, by prayer, by the Mass, by personal adherence to the Commandments, and by using our ‘noodle,’ our minds, to do whatever is *humanly* possible to make a world where order includes freedom, where variety lends beauty to life and where a disciplined freedom allows civilization and culture to flourish. This is the effect of Christianity when it is rightly applied, the effect of the Gospel of Christ, of the love that can transform the world.