

Feast of Christ the King

The One who remains faithful to us when nothing else does

In 1925 by Pope Pius XI, in response to the growing secularism and nationalism across Europe, instituted the Feast of Christ the King to maintain the pope as the principle of social order. The Doctrine of Papal Infallibility also come out of this contest.

Today is the Feast of Christ the King. I came across an article in the current issue of NCR titled "*Data shows Catholics increasingly split in political leanings*" which suggests that politics influenced the recent Catholic vote more than virtue. In this article, Gregory Smith, associate director of research in the Pew Research Center, says, "*If you dig just below the surface, what you see is that the Catholic population in the U.S. is really politically polarized along racial and ethnic lines, and that power unites Catholics during an election in a way that virtue does not.*"

Virtue.

Pope Francis addressed bishops of mission territories in September. In it, he says: "*Division is the weapon the devil employs most to destroy the Church from within. He has two weapons, but the main one is division: the other is money. The devil enters through our pockets and destroys with the tongue with idle chatter that divides, and the habit of gossiping is a habit of 'terrorism.'* Gossip is a 'terrorist' who throws a grenade — chatter — in order to destroy.

"Please, fight against division, because it is one of the weapons that the devil uses to destroy the local Church and the universal Church. In particular, differences due to the presence of different ethnic groups in the same territory must not penetrate into the Christian communities to the point of prevailing over their own good. These are challenges that are difficult to resolve, but with the grace of God, prayer, penance, it can be done. The Church is called to place herself above tribal and cultural connotations and the bishop, the visible principle of unity, has the task of ceaselessly building up the particular Church in the communion of all her members."

Power.

Herman Goering, Hitler's Reich Marshall, at the Nuremberg Trials after World War II: "*Naturally, the common people don't want war, but after all, it is the leaders of a country who determine the policy, and it is always a simple matter to drag people along whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of their leaders. This is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country.*"

Now we know we don't always operate out of Virtue or always out of Power. Sometimes we operate out of one, and sometimes we operate out of the other. Case in point: your last vote, was it cast for virtue, or was it cast out of Power? It may not always be clear. So how can we tell when we are being moved by Virtue, and when we are being motivated for Power?

Perhaps one of the great mystics of our time can help shed some light on this for us - Andy Rooney. He offers a series of insights which he calls, "**THINGS I HAVE LEARNED FOR WHICH I AM GRATEFUL**" I'm going to read them to you now, and you see if you can tell which are being moved by Virtue, and which are being motivated by Power?

- † A smile is the shortest distance between two people. - Virtue or power?
- † When you're in love, it shows. - Virtue or power?
- † Just one person saying to me, '*You've made my day!*' makes my day.
- † Sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand.
- † Love, not time, heals all wounds.
- † Everyone you meet deserves to be greeted with a smile.
- † No one is perfect until you fall in love with them.
- † I wish I could have told my Mom and Dad one more time that I love them before they passed.
- † A smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks.
- † Being kind is more important than being right.
- † We should keep our words both soft and tender, because tomorrow we may have to eat them.
- † Do not regret growing old. It is a privilege denied to many.

You all are correct! Andy Rooney's observations are all about Virtue. After bearing them, who could ever want to settle for anything less - like Power. As Pope Francis says, "*We are called to place ourselves above tribal and cultural differences so that we may be in communion with each other.*"

Let Virtue unite us and not Power divide us

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Happy Feast Day, Everyone!