

Persons of Disinterest

By Fr. Dan Gehler

The Lord tells Israel that if they truly want safety and security, they must seek justice, humility, and his law: The unjust are destined for destruction by their own iniquity. Justice is about giving each person their due, and making amends when we haven't. It's about always seeking to do the right thing without a lot of questions or hand-wringing, even when doing the right thing is hard.

Sometimes doing the right thing seems to put us in the minority. The Lord says today that being the minority is not a problem. If being honest and doing the right thing puts us in the minority, it is a minority the Lord himself shelters.

The "remnant" are those Israelites, that minority, who strive to do the right thing and who'll be the seed of the new People of God when the Messiah comes.

Paul reminds the Christians of their humble beginnings. They were "persons of disinterest" before the Lord came and made them strong and wise in him: Our Lord revealed that the Gospel was for everyone, no matter what their background, social standing, wealth, or talents were. That meant salvation and glory were for all. Paul reminds the Corinthians today that this lofty calling should not go to their head. They have no importance that they did not receive from Our Lord. If there's any pride to show, it's to be proud of Our Lord.

Christians are often seen by the worldly as foolish, weak, and uninteresting. Yet these “persons of disinterest” show the power of God through living a holy, simple life that often leaves the worldly envious and questioning their own happiness and choices in life.

In the eyes of the world, and, often in the eyes of these “persons of disinterest” it seems they are giving up something and receiving nothing in return, but we see that the beatitudes are promises to those “persons of disinterest” that all their legitimate and noble aspirations will be fulfilled: Each description of someone “blessed” in our Lord’s estimation is not a description of striving to be interesting, but striving for something nobler and persevering when faced by trials and difficulties.

Living a “blessed” life brings benefits that cannot be obtained in any other way. They are the path to a relationship with God, and Heaven itself. It’s through our humility and “disinterestedness” that the Lord shines in our lives and in the lives of others.

Christianity began in the lower classes of Greco-Roman society, and at the beginning, it stayed there, even though the Gospel was preached to all. The upper echelons of Roman society didn’t pay attention to them when they were just considered, at first, another sect of Judaism. As Christianity spread, not only in the empire, but among the empire’s enemies, the Roman authorities grew concerned, and the first persecutions began. Simply being Christian became a crime.

Christians try to live a Christian life, yet to society, this simple, unassuming life often makes them “persons of interest” and a potential threat to the worldly.

If you run down the list of today’s Beatitudes and remove the words “Heaven” and “God” from Our Lord’s promises you will have a pretty good list of what the worldly want too. They want power, satisfaction, security, happiness, and comfort, but they’re not seeking it in God, and ultimately, they’ll fail.

As believers, we can fall into the same trap. We can strive for a “kingdom,” but not the kingdom of Heaven, and as believers, we know that every other kingdom fades away. We need not even consider all the wrong turns we take in life seeking a kingdom that will fade away if we ever achieve that “kingdom” at all.

The Beatitudes are attitudes that become our roadmap to everything noble and truly worthwhile. Meditate on them this week and see how you can “beatify” your outlook and get on track for real success: a holy life from here to Heaven.