

Memorial Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

November 21, 2016

St. Agnes Church

According to St. Thomas Aquinas,
God rules creation according to His plan.
His plan is to lead all things to their created goal.
God rules over reality by orienting and guiding things like nature, history, people, society, culture to the ends for which they have been created: that goal, that end...is goodness.
This is called Divine Providence.

For us, to be ruled by God is to be ruled by his goodness.
The plan of God, His Divine Providence, is to lead us to all goodness.
If we accept God's rule over our lives, our individual and our common activity,
will be directed toward and result in goodness.
Human fulfillment and happiness and satisfaction, human meaning and purpose,
is to be found in and realized in goodness.

Jesus Christ came into this world to reveal to us and to lead us to the goodness of the Father.
To live according to our faith in Jesus Christ
is to follow him where ever he goes believing it will lead us to goodness.
To follow in his footsteps, to follow his example, to entrust ourselves to his care,
to surrender ourselves to his rule, to choose to be governed by his instruction and teaching...
all these form the basis of a life-style of goodness.
As human beings we are created for goodness, we have a great capacity for goodness,
we can achieve great goodness. Jesus Christ is the goodness of God in our midst.

This begs the question: what is goodness?
The bottom line: goodness is part of divine creation and not human invention.
We can discover goodness but we don't determine what goodness is: God does.

In today's gospel Jesus points out: goodness is not determined by amount.
True goodness is determined by sacrifice.
The wealthy appear to be good as they contribute offerings to the Temple treasury.
A poor widow, on the other hand, appears to be miserly at best.
Two small coins isn't much, but for her it is everything.

It feels good to make a generous contribution to a cause,
to be recognized by having our names printed in program,
usually arranged from those who have given the most to those who have given the least.
Institutional reports do the same when we want to determine who is giving and who is not.
Why do we even need to know who gives what?
Because we believe justice is a matter of everyone contributing their fair share.
For the world, the currency of justice is money.
For God, the currency of justice is goodness.
To put this in a faith perspective: according to worldly justice
everyone should pay the price of their own sin.
According to divine justice Jesus Christ, who was sinless, who was without fault or guilt,
paid the price for all sin in the most perfect act of goodness: self-sacrifice.

Our prayer for today: "O Lord, give us the desire and the willingness to exceed a worldly understanding of justice. May goodness, inspired by the sacrifice of Jesus Your Son, become the currency of our lives. Amen!"