

Outline of Fr. Patrick Winslow's Lecture on Lesson 4

A. Jesus' view of the Temple elite

- 1) Jesus says "destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up." Jesus is implying that *they*, the Temple elite, will destroy this Temple.
 - a) Meanings of "Temple"
 - i. His body - the true temple/tabernacle of God.
 - ii. Jerusalem Temple - the center of Jewish Worship.
 - iii. Cosmos/universe - a micro-cosmos in which man approaches God to offer sacrifice.
 - b) For each of these meanings, when Jesus says He will "raise it up."
 - i. He will resurrect His body.
 - ii. He will raise a new structure of living stones, His Church, to be the center of man's worship of God offering Him the sacrifice of the True Lamb.
 - iii. He will "raise" or inaugurate a new creation, a new beginning for the cosmos.
 - c) Throughout the gospel when Jesus exhorts His Church to watch - on all three levels.
 - i. Our own death as dying with Christ and rising with Him.
 - ii. Christ's coming in the Church as He gives Himself entirely to His faithful in and through the Church's
 - ✧ *mind* (Sacred Scripture, Church Teaching),
 - ✧ *body* (the Holy Eucharist), and
 - ✧ *soul* (Baptism, Confirmation, etc.).
 - iii. Christ's (cosmic) coming at the end of *History* as we await His return.
 - ✧ Note: The "advent" posture of the church - the ancient posture of facing east when celebrating Mass. The priest and the people faced east, representing the whole Church, waiting for the return of Christ. Because the sun rises in the east it symbolically represents the direction from which the True Light of the world would come. (Matt 24:27)
 - d) Jesus addresses all three meanings simultaneously.

- 2) Jesus' view toward mere "human faith" of the Temple elite: It is "destroying" and will destroy
 - a) the cosmos,
 - b) the Temple of Jerusalem (the practice of Israel's faith) and
 - c) Jesus, the true Tabernacle of God.
- 3) This view of Jesus demonstrated in the Temple sets the stage for His encounter with Nicodemus.

B. Nicodemus - his dialog with Jesus contrasts the gift of supernatural Faith against the mere natural faith of Nicodemus and the temple priests.

- 1) Faith.
 - a) Human faith – We use human faith to come to knowledge all the time.
 - ✧ “I was not present when man landed on the moon in 1969, however, I believe he did.” The belief that something is true because it is reasonable and worldly evidence suggests it to be so.
 - b) Divine Faith – Come to knowledge through revelation by God → supernatural gift of Faith.
 - ✧ “I believe that Jesus is God made man.” - A declaration of divine Faith - can only be made when a man's intellect is informed by something other than mere human reason and worldly evidence.
 - c) Faith in Jesus as the messiah and Eternal Son of the Father comes from God - a divine gift. “No mere man has revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.” (Matt 16:17)
- 2) Jesus' encounter in the Jerusalem Temple (that has become one of mere human faith) and the name “Nicodemus.”
 - a) Jesus did not trust Himself to man because He knew them and did not need the witness of man → He has no need for “human faith.” Nicodemus is an example.
 - b) “Nicodemus” means “people crusher.” This name represents what mere human faith can do - crush people → place heavy burdens upon them. (Matt 23:1-7)
 - c) Nicodemus is a naturally good man.
 - d) Nicodemus represents both the best and worst of human faith. “Human faith” (in the person of Nicodemus) approaches the true God enveloped in darkness, at night.
 - e) Nicodemus is drawn to the Light of Christ and is ready to confess that Jesus is the Messiah, but he is still enveloped in darkness.
- 3) Jesus declares “human faith” to be deficient - Remedy offered? Obstacle to remedy?

- a) The Remedy - one must be born anew if he is to enter the Kingdom of God. He must be born of water and the Spirit.
- i. In Greek, “anew” can mean “again” or “from above.”
 - ✧ To be born “again” → a “re-thinking” - “think again.”
 - ✧ To be born “from above” → a supernatural birth in the Holy Spirit, begins by receiving the gift of divine Faith from above.
 - ii. “Grace builds on nature.” As a rule the grace of God builds upon the natural order. Examples:
 - Our Faith never asks us to abandon reason, rather it builds upon it.
 - “Born again” and “born from above”.
 - ✧ To be born anew is an invitation on a natural level to re-think what we think we know. Rethink on a natural level → may begin the process of being born “from above” → to accept the gift of Faith from above.
 - ✧ To begin the process of born from above → receive the gift of Faith (from above) → be born by water and the Spirit – Baptism = Remedy to the problem of mere human faith.
- b) The obstacle is self-righteousness.
- i. Self-righteousness is a greater obstacle to divine Faith than sin.
 - ✧ Sinners are accepting the gift from above, the Temple elite are not. Self-righteousness is hiding behind human faith.
 - ii. Self-righteousness is the reliance upon one’s own self as the only authority.
 - ✧ Divine Faith is a gift offered by God → cannot be accepted if a man places his authority over and above God’s.
 - ✧ To be born from *above/another* → submit oneself to God. This is contrary to a self-righteous man who is in himself the only authority and will submit to no one but himself.
 - iii. Self-righteousness also leads to
 - ✧ the destruction of the Temple (in all three senses).
 - The destruction of the cosmos/temple (original sin),
 - The destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem (60-80AD), and
 - The Temple of God/Jesus (Crucifixion).
 - iv. Nicodemus, with the knowledge of Sacred Scripture, should be all the more ready to accept what Jesus is saying. But be merely “informed” by Sacred Scripture not necessarily mean to be “formed” by it.