

4C 2019 SML
LK 4:21-30

Are you here to compromise your values to win a popularity contest, or are you here to do the right thing, because it's the right thing to do?

This evening's (morning's) gospel begins where last Sunday's gospel ends, with all eyes fixed on Jesus, the time and place was the Sabbath at the synagogue, where religion classes were held, where the method and style of teaching and learning was debate, verbal sparring, if you will, a game of one upsmanship, at which Jesus was an expert.

The 1983 movie "Yentl," depicts this style of Jewish learning well. With high emotion, much conviction and enthusiasm did the students debate each other, with the rabbis walking up and down the tables, listening to the discussions and asking the students who were deep in debate, "Agreeing or disagreeing?" The thirst for the wisdom and knowledge of God of those men is to be nothing but admired. Why? Because thirsting for wisdom and knowledge is the right thing because it's the right thing to do.

Jesus fueled the debate, quoting that he fulfilled what the prophet Isaiah wrote, and adding, “No prophet is accepted in his own native place.”

In order to bring home to them that their self-esteem was wounded, and that His own did not receive Him, He would take His salvation elsewhere. Our Blessed Lord placed Himself in the category of Old Testament prophets, who themselves received no better treatment. He quoted two examples from the Old Testament, which was part of the sparing, quoting the scriptures to defend His position. Both of His quotes foreshadowed the direction Luke’s Gospel, namely, to embrace the Gentiles. Our Blessed Lord cited 1Kings 17, that there had been many widows among the people of Israel in the days of Elijah when the great famine came over the land, and when the heavens were shut up for over three years. But Elijah was not sent to any one of these; he was sent to a widow in Zarephath in the land of the Gentiles. Our Blessed Lord then quoted 2Kings 5, that there had been many lepers in the time of Elisha, but none of them except Naaman, the Syrian, a Gentile, was made clean. Since both examples were Gentiles, Jesus implied the benefits and blessings of the Kingdom were coming in answer to faith and not in answer to descent, to race. At this,

they became indignant, because our Blessed Lord basically told them they were no better than anybody else.

They became so indignant with Jesus they wanted to kill Him. Now Nazareth lies in a cup of hills. A short distance from it to the southeast was a wall of rock about eighty feet high which drops about three hundred feet to the Plains of Esdraelon. It is there that tradition places the scene where they “led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong.” Those of us who traveled to the Holy Land in April stood on this cliff, and from the top, you could not see the bottom. But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went away.

The hour of his crucifixion had not come, but attempts were made on His life:

1. They tried to kill Him in this evening's (morning's) gospel;
2. They tried to kill Him at Bethsaida when He restored the man who was ill for 38 years as recorded in John 5;
3. They wanted to kill Him in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles as recorded in John 7;
4. and they wanted to kill Him in Jerusalem a second time as recorded in John 8.

Not only were they incensed at Jesus for what he said and did, but they were also furious at Jesus for doing such things on the Sabbath. Our Blessed Lord healed on all the days of the week, but Sabbaths were high days of grace on which six miracles have been recorded:

1. He cast out an unclean spirit (Mark 1)
2. He restored a withered hand (Luke 6)
3. He cured a cripple (Luke 13)
4. He cured the man with dropsy (Luke 14)
5. He cured the man who was ill for 38 years (John 5)
6. He opened the eyes of a blind man (John 9)

When the scribes and the Pharisees debated Him about doing anything on the Sabbath, the verbal sparing began once again, and Our Blessed Lord quoted the Old Testament, namely, 1Samuel 21, to support His position:

“Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions were hungry? How he went into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest and ate the bread of offering that only the priests could lawfully eat, and shared it with his companions.

“The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.”

(MK 2:28) Healing on the Sabbath was an option for Jesus as

Jesus did not come here to win a popularity contest, but to do the right thing, because it was the right thing to do.

It is a timely question to ask Governor Cuomo and those who cheered in the NY State House: “Are you here to win a popularity contest (that is, to get reelected), or are you here to do the right thing because it’s the right thing to do?”

Governor Cuomo, you cannot be Catholic, quote the Holy Father, and at the same time be pro-death. It’s not a “both and.” Being Catholic and pro-death is an either or. You must choose. One or the other. Give up your faith, or let the baby live. Which is it?

Let there be no doubt in your mind, or in anyone’s mind that your decisions are not based on winning a popularity contest to get reelected, and everything to do with doing the right thing because it’s the right thing to do. To take a baby’s life a minute before the baby takes his first breath, is mortally sinful and wrong as are all abortions.

Those who promote abortion, those who have had an abortion need to run to confession and be absolved and gain as much peace as you can, because I know from the women who have had abortions and I have absolved it is a nightmare knowing that you are a mother who killed her child, and that did

not stop her from being a mother. My brother's three old son was killed in a car accident. When you ask him how many children he has, he says two: Greg, who survived the accident, and Geoff who was killed in the accident. To this day, Rob includes Geoff's name when he signs his Christmas cards. So mothers who have had abortions will forever be those babies' mothers, but they will also forever live with the fact that they killed their babies.

We need to pray for the conversion of those who think like Governor Cuomo. As a Catholic, Governor Cuomo would agree with us that standing before God on judgment day will be fairest day of our lives. As a Catholic, Governor Cuomo would also agree with us that praying for the dead can only help those who are in purgatory. Prayers for the dead cannot help those in hell.