

The Catholic Parish of St Luke

Benyon Grove, Orton Malborne, Peterborough. PE2 5XS

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

*What are you most excited about in your life right now?
What's your biggest achievement?
What are you most proud of?
Tell us about your wife / kids!
How do you spend your free time?
What are your hobbies?*

Our meeting on the
Thursday 19th October 2023
was attended by nine



Our spiritual topic was :

October being the Month of the Rosary
The group recited
The Luminous Mysteries of the Holy
Rosary in Church

This was followed by discussion on today's
Gospel : *Lk 11: 47-54* — "The Key to
Knowledge" and a Papal reflection on the
Gospel.

The evening finished with supportive
conversation and a variety of suggestions to
progress the fellowship :-

Sunday 22nd October transferred date of
the Feast of St Luke - The group requested
to "bring and share" a plate of food for a
celebration after the 12.00 noon Mass.

Discussions continued over supper of
Homemade Cottage Pie with Carrots &
Green Beans accompanied by Hot and Soft
Drinks

This Sunday's Gospel
(29th Sunday of the Year)
Matthew 22:15-21

Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar

The Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap Jesus in what he said. And they sent their disciples to him, together with the Herodians, to say, 'Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man's rank means nothing to you. Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied, 'You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with.' They handed him a denarius, and he said, 'Whose head is this? Whose name?' 'Caesar's' they replied. He then said to them, 'Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God.'

Reflection

Seeing to the heart

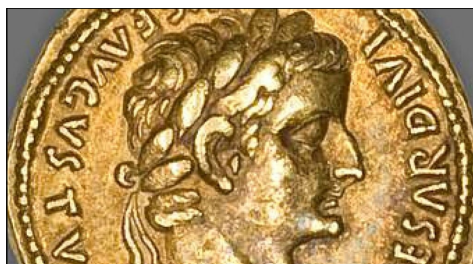


Image: the head of Tiberius on a Roman coin

We are so used to Jesus being opposed that we don't take stock at the beginning of this Gospel to see how curious the alliance between the Pharisees and the Herodians

really is. The Pharisees, with a strict understanding of the Law and its wisdom, would see any kind of involvement between the Jewish people and outsiders as, in some sense, sacrilegious. Pharisees would oppose paying tax to Caesar on this religious basis. The Herodians are supporters of the dynasty of Herod the Great and owe allegiance to his three living sons who had portioned up Judea for themselves under the sovereignty of the Empire. They would have no qualms, religious or otherwise, in paying the tax.

We stand in the middle of Matthew's extended account of the teachings which Jesus gives between Palm Sunday, and the events of his Passion later in Holy Week. That Jesus is so greatly opposed, and opposed by strange alliances of people, only serves to underline the coming rejection in his Passion.

What is truly chilling, though, is the way in which those of the Herodian and Pharisee party address Jesus. *Teacher, we know that you are true, and truthfully teach the way of God.* This is, of course, true. But they are saying something of Jesus that is true, but for wicked motives. It is deeply insincere, and only said because they wish to entrap him. At heart this is a corruption of the Gospel, an anti-Gospel, where the truth is spoken, but only to bring about destruction, to become a trap. The same could be said for the very opening of the Gospel Reading. The Greek tells us that the Pharisees *took counsel together*. Taking counsel — our ability to come together for reflection — central to the life of any community, is in this situation perverted into a plot. The

common pursuit of the truth, and true statements uttered for false motive, become weapons to kill Him who is Truth itself.

All of this is the more extraordinary because they try to entrap one who sees to the very heart of the human person. God does not see as we see; we look to appearances, God looks to the heart (*cf* 1 Samuel, 16:17). But in doing so, they condemn themselves. They say to Jesus in verse 16, 'you are not afraid of anyone, because human rank means nothing to you.' The RSV has it as '[you] care for no man; for you do not regard the position of men,' but the Greek text means something more like you do not look on the face of men. Now they utter a truth which has finally ensnared them. They confess that the one they address does not look at their faces, but on their hearts. They are being prophetic in spite of themselves — much like Caiaphas in John's Gospel when he tells the Sanhedrin that it is better that one man die for the people (John 11:50).

Jesus is aware of their malice: he does not look upon the face of things, but probes to the heart. And the word which he uses to describe malice here is related to the one used in the Lord's Prayer to describe the Evil One. Our English translation focuses less on the person of the Evil One, and more on evil as a general category, but in this encounter with the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians, he is battling against the forces of darkness which are gathering around Him as he faces his Passion. These antagonists are like the wicked man described in Psalm 7: here is one who is pregnant with malice, conceives evil, and brings forth lies. Like that man in Psalm 7, these antagonists dig a pitfall for the Lord, they dig it deep, but it is on their own heads that their violence falls.

In the face of this appalling attempt to use the truth against the Truth, we can see maybe a little more how this Gospel Reading has more interesting things to say than offering evidence or weight of argument to a dispute about the relationship between the Church and the state. The Lord is resolutely set on his mission to restore our tarnished image, even an image which lies at the bottom of a pit of malice, and bringing it newly minted to the Father. This is why he does not have regard for the face of men, but rather sees who they really are, and for all of us, as with these schemers and plotters, what we might become through His grace.

Today's Gospel Reading 26th October 2023

From the Gospel according to Luke Lk 12:49-53

Jesus said to his disciples:
"I have come to set the earth on fire,
and how I wish it were already blazing!

There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished!

Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth?

No, I tell you, but rather division.

From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Reflection

Jesus says to his disciples: "Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division" (Lk 12:51). What does this mean? It means that faith is not a decorative or ornamental element; living faith does not mean decorating life with a little religion, as if it were a cake and we were decorating it with cream. No, this is not faith. Faith means choosing God as the criterion and basis of life, and God is not empty, God is not neutral, God is always positive, God is love, and love is positive! After Jesus has come into the world it is impossible to act as if we do not know God, or as if he were something that is abstract, empty, a purely nominal reference. No, God has a real face, he has a name: God is mercy, God is faithfulness, he is life which is given to us all. For this reason Jesus says "I came to bring division". It is not that Jesus wishes to split people up. On the contrary Jesus is our peace, he is our reconciliation! But this peace is not the peace of the tomb, it is not neutrality, Jesus does not bring neutrality, this peace is not a compromise at all costs. Following Jesus entails giving up evil and selfishness and choosing good, truth and justice, even when this demands sacrifice and the renunciation of our own interests. And this indeed divides; as we know, it even cuts the closest ties. However, be careful: it is not Jesus who creates division! He establishes the criterion: whether to live for ourselves or to live for God and for others; to be served or to serve; to obey one's own ego or to obey God. It is in this sense that Jesus is a "sign that is spoken against" (Lk 2:34). This word of the Gospel does not therefore authorise

the use of force to spread the faith. It is exactly the opposite: the Christian's real force is the force of truth and of love, which involves renouncing all forms of violence. Faith and violence are incompatible! Instead, faith and strength go together. Christians are not violent; they are strong. And with what kind of strength? That of meekness, the strength of meekness, the strength of love.

History of the Catholic Church in Britain Part 5 Stuart period

The reign of James I (1603–1625) was marked by a measure of tolerance, though less so after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot conspiracy of a small group of Catholic conspirators who aimed to kill both King and Parliament and establish a Catholic monarchy. A mix of persecution and tolerance followed: Ben Jonson and his wife, for example, in 1606 were summoned before the authorities for failure to take communion in the Church of England, yet the King tolerated some Catholics at court; for example George Calvert, to whom he gave the title Baron Baltimore, and the Duke of Norfolk, head of the Howard family.

The reign of Charles I (1625–49) saw a small revival of Catholicism in England, especially among the upper classes. As part of the royal marriage settlement Charles's Catholic wife, Henrietta Maria, was permitted her own royal chapel and chaplain. Henrietta Maria was in fact very strict in her religious observances, and helped create a court with continental influences, where Catholicism was tolerated, even somewhat fashionable. Some anti-Catholic legislation became effectively a dead letter. The Counter-Reformation on the continent of Europe had created a more vigorous and magnificent form of Catholicism (i.e., Baroque, notably found in the architecture and music of Austria, Italy and Germany) that attracted some converts, like the poet Richard Crashaw. Ironically, the explicitly Catholic artistic movement (i.e., Baroque) ended up "providing the blueprint, after the fire of London, for the first new Protestant churches to be built in England".

While Charles remained firmly Protestant, he was personally drawn towards a consciously "High Church" Anglicanism. This affected his appointments to Anglican bishoprics, in particular the appointment of William Laud as Archbishop of Canterbury. How many Catholics and Puritans there were is still open to debate.

Religious conflict between Charles and other "High" Anglicans and Calvinists – at this stage mostly still within the Church of England (the Puritans) – formed a strand of the anti-monarchical leanings of the troubled politics of the period. The religious tensions between a court with "Papist" elements and a Parliament in which the Puritans were strong was one of the major factors behind the English Civil War, in which almost all Catholics supported the King. The victory of the Parliamentarians meant a strongly Protestant, anti-Catholic regime, content for the English Church to become "little more than a nationwide federation of Protestant parishes."

The restoration of the monarchy under Charles II (1660–85) also saw the restoration of a Catholic-influenced court like his father's. However, although Charles himself had Catholic leanings, he was first and foremost a pragmatist and realised the vast majority of public opinion in England was strongly anti-Catholic, so he agreed to laws such as the Test Act requiring any appointee to any public office or member of Parliament to deny Catholic beliefs such as transubstantiation. As far as possible, however, he maintained tacit tolerance. Like his father, he married a Catholic, Catherine of Braganza. (He would become Catholic himself on his deathbed.)



James II was the last Catholic to reign as monarch of England (and Scotland and Ireland).

Charles' brother and heir James, Duke of York (later James II), converted to Catholicism in 1668–1669. When Titus Oates in 1678 alleged a (totally imaginary, a hoax) "Popish Plot" to assassinate Charles and put James in his place, he unleashed a wave of parliamentary and public hysteria which led to the execution of 17 Catholics on the scaffold, and the death of many more over the next two years, which Charles was either unable or unwilling to prevent. Throughout the early 1680s the Whig element in Parliament attempted to remove James as successor to the throne. Their failure saw James become, in 1685, Britain's first

openly Catholic monarch since Mary I (and last to date). He promised religious toleration for Catholic and Protestants on an equal footing, but it is in doubt whether he did this to gain support from Dissenters or whether he was truly committed to tolerance (seventeenth century Catholic regimes in Spain and Italy, for example, were hardly tolerant of Protestantism, while those in France and Poland had practiced forms of toleration).

James earnestly tried "to improve the position of his fellow Catholics" and did so "in such an inept way that he aroused the fears of both the Anglican establishment and the Dissenters. In the process, he encouraged converts like the poet John Dryden, who wrote "The Hind and the Panther", to celebrate his conversion. Protestant fears mounted as James placed Catholics in the major commands of the existing standing army, dismissed the Protestant Bishop of London and dismissed the Protestant fellows of Magdalen College and replaced them with a wholly Catholic board. The last straw was the birth of a Catholic heir in 1688, portending a return to a pre-Reformation Catholic dynasty. Observing this was Princess Mary, James' daughter by his first wife, and her husband "'Stadhouder Willem,' whose wife stood to lose her future thrones through this new arrival."

William and Mary and the Catholic Church

In what came to be known as the Glorious Revolution, Parliament deemed James to have abdicated (effectively deposing him, though Parliament refused to call it that) in favour of his Protestant daughter and son-in-law and nephew, Mary II and William III. Although this affair is celebrated as solidifying both English liberties and the Protestant nature of the kingdom, some argue that it was "fundamentally a coup spearheaded by a foreign army and navy".

James fled into exile, and with him many Catholic nobility and gentry. The Act of Settlement 1701, which remains in operation today, established the royal line through Sophia, Electress of Hanover, and specifically excludes any Catholic or anyone who marries a Catholic from the throne. In 2013, this law was partially changed when the disqualification of the monarch marrying a Catholic was eliminated (along with male preference in the line of succession). The law was also changed to limit the requirement that the monarch "must give permission to marry to the six persons next in line to the throne." Still, Catholics today once again are permitted to hold Wolsey and More's office of Lord Chancellor as did Catholics before the Reformation. Cardinal Henry Benedict Stuart, the last Jacobite heir to publicly assert a claim

to the thrones of England, Scotland, and Ireland, died in Rome in 1807. A monument to the Royal Stuarts exists today at Vatican City.



Monument to the Royal Stuarts in St. Peter's Basilica

In the 21st century, Franz, Duke of Bavaria, head of the Wittelsbach family, is the most senior descendant of King Charles I and is considered by Jacobites to be heir of the Stuarts. Though direct descendant of the House of Stuart, Franz has said being king is not a claim he wishes to pursue.

DIARY DATES

Over 60's Turkey & Tinsel Christmas Luncheons and Entertainment

Friday 1st, 8th and 15th December
12.30pm to 3.00pm
Tickets & Menu available from the Parish Office @ £9.50 per person

Social Evening Men's Fellowship with the Ladies' Bible Group

Wednesday 13th December at 7.00pm

Grand Christmas Draw Tickets NOW ON SALE

To be drawn on 17th December.
Obtainable from the Parish Office.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED Saturday 25th November

From 10.00am to 4.00pm
To help set up the Church for the "Towards Advent" event.

THIS WEEK'S SOCIAL SUPPER

Homemade Lasagna
(Vegetarian option available)

Beers, Tea, Coffee, Cola and Fruit Juice
