

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Dec 15th 2014

The chief priests were the official teachers of the Jewish religion. There were the ones who had all authority. They confronted Jesus with the question, “On what authority are you doing these things?” What is this these things? The context makes clear that these things referred to his cleaning of the temple, healing of the blind and lame and his teachings of Good News. As official religious leaders, they did not give authority to Jesus. Then, who gave him? They wanted to challenge Jesus. Jesus could have said that he needed no authority to do what was good or he received the authority to do good to the poor and the suffering from his Father who is all goodness. But he did not do so. Instead, he used the old proven technique of answering a question with a question. He shifted the attention from himself to John the Baptist. John was not approved by the Jewish leaders but people had high regard for him and for his teaching. Thus the tricky question, “What authority did John baptise?” The chief priests did not want to approve John nor offend the people who had high regard for him. Well, their reply “we do not know” partially admitted that it was from God. Yes, every child of God has the authority to do good. Rather, every child of God must do good to everyone and everywhere. We need not be afraid of anyone to shout against injustice or do what is good. Like Jesus, we have another living example in the person of Nelson Mandela!

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