

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Mar 23rd 2017

Nation Under God

They walked in the hardness of their evil hearts and turned their backs, not their faces, to me. Yet they have not obeyed me nor paid heed; they have stiffened their necks and done worse than their fathers.

When you speak all these words to them, they will not listen to you either; when you call to them, they will not answer you. Say to them: This is the nation that does not listen to the voice of the LORD, its God, or take correction. Faithfulness has disappeared; the word itself is banished from their speech.

The excerpts from the first reading in Jeremiah sound more like the political commentary you now hear on CNN or Fox News about the unrest in our country -- complete with stiffened necks, turned backs and walking with hardness in their hearts. "This is a nation that does not listen to the voice of the LORD, its God, or take correction."

Why is this? Can we blame it on Twitter, Facebook or the 24/7 cable news stations? Maybe, but even if they all disappeared, I am not optimistic that our divisiveness as exhibited over the last decade would end, and our nation would soon be united. I have come to the personal realization that the more I watch, listen and read about our political malaise, the more I am not letting the voice of the Lord be the touchstone upon which I rely.

Maybe the solution to this growing problem is to remember that more important than the opinions and comments of those who align themselves with red states or blue states, Democrat or Republican, are the teachings of Christ and how we should first and foremost view the vexing political problems that are dividing our country through the lens of our faith. Maybe if we spent as much time praying and serving those in need as we do watching cable news or Twitter feeds, we would be in a much better state of mind.

I assume these challenges and the solution is generally the same in each country, accounting for the differences which our various cultures and politics involve.

As we move into the last days of Lent and continue our daily examination of conscience, let's focus on what Christ says we should do for others and not the rancor of political commentators. Maybe we need to reread the Beatitudes in Matthew 25:31-46 in light of today's issues and think about how we can be part of the solution instead of a nay-saying part of the problem. Remember, if we feel compelled to pick a side in these seemingly endless controversies, the smart move would be to pick Christ's side.

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