

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



De facto the Church is at war with the powers of the world. The place where this war is waged is the Liturgy, because the Liturgy is where we affirm the Victory of Christ. But we live in confusing times, where those on the right would like to return to a theocracy, and those on the left would like a hegemony- a gentler Christianity.

In the 4th Century, The Emperor Constantine forbade sick people from attending the Liturgy, for fear they contaminate others. This prohibition was mitigated by allowing the sick to attend, but not allowing them to drink from the chalice. This rule was then changed to get rid of the chalice all together - only the priest would drink from it.

But the Emperor had another reason to eliminate the chalice from the Liturgy. For the chalice contains the Blood of Christ, the Blood, (as Jesus said), of the

New Covenant, the Kingdom of Heaven. The chalice makes present the Victory of Christ, ie Christ is above the Emperor, he is above the State. No Emperor worth his salt, no dictatorial State is going to accept that. One way to deal with it, is to simply stop people from drinking from the chalice.

It was not until the 13th Century that St. Francis of Assisi reintroduced the chalice in the Liturgy. In fact, he scandalized his brethren because he not only welcomed the sick, but drank from the same cup as lepers.

Francis understood that the chalice of the Blood of Christ could not be used as a pawn in matters of hygiene or politics. The Blood of Christ makes us partakers in His Victory over death, and announces to us and to the State that He is Kyrios, i.e., Lord, of all.

But what about the common good, what about vaccinations?

When the horrors of the Nazis' medical experiments came to light after the Second World War, the Code of Nuremberg mandated that no State will ever be allowed to impose any kind of medical procedure or cure on a population. The bodies of individuals do not belong to the State. This was not the case in Nazi Germany, it is certainly not the case in modern day China or North Korea, where the body of an individual is not one's own, but the property of the government. The government can dictate how many children are born, or what vaccinations you must get.

What does all of this have to do with Corpus Christi, and the use of the Chalice in the Liturgy? Everything.

"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had said the blessing, he broke it and gave it to the disciples. 'Take it and eat,' he said, 'this is my body.'

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he handed it to them saying, 'Drink from this, all of you, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'

From now on, I tell you, I shall never again drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father. (Matthew 26: 26-29)

The chalice has been reintroduced in the Liturgy. It is not mandated to drink from it, but in freedom we are invited to partake of the Blood of Christ Jesus, who said, "TAKE THIS ALL OF YOU AND DRINK FROM IT."

Fr. Sean