

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time.
October 18, 2015

Fr. Andy Szebenyi, SJ
All Saints Parish, Syr. NY

Jesus summoned the twelve and said to them: 'You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you, Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all.'

My dear Brothers and Sisters, we live in two worlds: the real one that God is creating, and the one that is a lie. The real world is the kingdom of God: a kingdom of peace, justice, love and life. The other world, the world of lies, is self-adoring, violent and destructive, a world of death. It is in this world of lies, where those recognized as rulers, lord it over them. By real or unreal, I do not mean that one exists while the other does not. I simply mean that one is true, while the other is a lie. That is why I would like to compare these two worlds not in the abstract, but from experience.

I was a teenager when I found myself in the terrifying experience of war between the German and the Russian armies. We were down in the cellar numb with fear, while the war raged over us in our street well over a month. The front line was in our street during most part of December and part of January. There was no Christmas that year. Our street was the shortest street between the mountains and the river Danube. That is why fighting sort of stuck there for so long. When this was over, the communist regime got established in our country. There was a song I heard that time roughly conveying the idea that the chains of prison were heavy on our feet, but proudly the people broke them apart. Long live the people and hail to Lenin. Long live Lenin and the people. In reality, all was made equal in terms of hard work and poverty under strict laws of communist interests, while the leaders lived in protected seclusion of great luxury, way above the law. Hungary was in an unreal world of a big lie which became obvious when the regime collapsed. It was a world of evil make belief.

I came to the US in 1963 and became a citizen in 1971. I overjoyed to live in a world of democracy. As time went on I began to wonder. I am not an expert in politics but I wonder. Are not the candidates for the presidential election already biased by the interest of huge national and international corporations? Is it the needs of the people or the power of money that determines the outcome? It is certainly not the needs of the poor. But enough of this. Let us see an example of the real world, that is God's creation.

My Sisters and Brothers, on the Le Moyne campus every lamp post carries a banner. The original banners said the following: "Spirit, Inquiry, Leadership, Jesuit." I asked myself the question: How should I interpret these words from the point of view of the real world, the one that God is creating, the kingdom of God? What is then the meaning of "Spirit, Inquiry, Leadership, Jesuit"? My guess was that Spirit must mean the Holy Spirit; Inquiry should be the love of truth, and certainly Leadership must mean service. After all, in the real world of God, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant, said Jesus. And Jesuit? I hope it means all of the above: The Holy Spirit, the Truth, and real Service. Le Moyne is an institution of education and learning. This is what I found about that in the Dutch catechism:

Education is service. To treat children as unimportant is to be self-seeking. Each child has something special and unique about it. It is a new human being, not a repetition of ourselves. The parents should serve this new life, to set it free, to be itself. I am sure that such unselfish, loving and caring service will greatly support what is real, that is the Kingdom of God.

My Sisters and Brothers, the kingdom of God is here among us. And this means that we strive to be loving and caring servants to each other in the only real world: God's creation.

Amen.