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THE  
CATHOLIC  
HOUR

Series: *First Words  
and Lasting  
Impressions*

Talk #2: "God's Work  
Gets Done"

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Deacidified



If there is no business but the Father's and Christ is about it -- is He to be about it alone? The answer is in His whole life, but particularly in the second recorded word Jesus speaks in the Gospel.

A crowd had gathered at the side of the Jordan River to listen to the new preacher who had come out of the desert. A certain John, who baptized people and told them the kingdom of God was at hand, had fascinated the inhabitants of the area with his strange dress of goat skins and his words of penance. He had told them he was merely preparing the way, that One would come after him who was preferred before him, One Whose shoe he was not worthy to tie. Suddenly the very Person of whom John was speaking - Christ - walked into the crowd and down to John.

Christ presented Himself for baptism and made ready to move into the water. John was confused and hesitated; he pleaded to be excused: "I ought to be baptized by Thee and comest Thou to

me?" Christ's answer is like all God's answers to men -- direct and deliberate:

"Suffice it to be so now," Jesus says, "for so it becomes us to fulfill all justice."

The second lesson of Christ had been established -- the work He was on might be His Father's, but He would have all of creation effect it with Him. Here, in one scene, is the sign of that fact. John was the instrument and water was the agent that Christ put to use to manifest His presence among men; for when He stepped out of the river the heavens were opened and a voice was heard to say, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

The whole creation was used to cooperate in showing forth Christ -- the things of earth, the things of heaven and the men who lived on one and were destined for the other. The whole of creation was to be like a universal voice crying out: "This is My beloved Son..."

The hint that creation was to cooperate was given in the prophetic use of men and creatures in the Old Testament; but, Christ brought the hints to dramatic incarnation by being born of the Blessed Virgin, using her flesh and blood to fashion for Himself the chief instrument

for saving men. There were to be other instruments all along the way, instruments for His time:

A star would light the way to where He lay...angels would announce His birth...animals would warm Him...flowers of the field would serve for illustration; grain would feed Him. He would walk upon a sea or quiet its raging waters and it would hold Him up as the Son of God. A road beneath His feet would be strewn with palm branches because He walked upon it, and it would carry Him along to the cries of "Hosanna to the Son of David"; a mountain would be content to be His pulpit and a breeze would be eager to carry His words to the crowd beneath Him. Dead men would rise at His touch to show His power and reveal Him as the anointed one... even the very devils themselves would obey His command to depart, and cry out His identity to the world: "What have we to do with Thee, Son of God?"

And instruments for later generations: Water would give itself over to the hand of God that it might become the element for a sacrament. Blessed and set aside for baptism, it would bring

forth Christ from a soul born in Original Sin. Oil would give itself over and let its anointing qualities be supernaturalized so that they may confirm a child in Christ or conform a priest to Christ or console a sick person with Christ. Bread and wine would not refuse to give over their substance and be changed into the Body and Blood of Christ that we might be nourished with the sure food of a salvation.

The whole world was to cooperate in the work of salvation. The whole world does cooperate...except, one creature... man!...the one creature for whom all the work has been done. The creature for whom the roads were walked and the mountains climbed and the water dignified and the oil blessed and the bread and wine consecrated. Man could...man would...man did...man does...cry out in opposition to the plan:

"Non Serviam! ... I will *not* serve!"

Oh! some men have served...I do not mean to be discouragingly and so pessimistically dolorous. Many have served but cooperation is not for some or many...cooperation is for all. We are all God's and all of heaven is for all of us. Democracy does not equalize people...but the need

to be saved does...the principle of equality is in the purpose of God. Salvation is the world's vocation and therefore the first vocation of the intelligent part of that world. Man's part in the plan of God is to live in line with all the rest of creation and cooperate, intelligently.

But where marriage is ruptured and sun-dered and taken on and put off until it be-comes a barren joke, what intelligent co-operation do the wanton participants of double and triple marriages show to those who must attempt the perilous adventure after them?

Where morals become a gag upon loose-minded, loose-living personalities and they flaunt their vulgarities and obscenities and find imitators among the rest of the people, what cooperation do the licentious show to all who courageously live a God-given code?

Where graft is acceptable and you get as much as you can while the getting is good; where sex-experience becomes a hygienic necessity; and moral standard bearers become bores to polite society; where the catch phrase of endeavor becomes nothing higher than the maxim of a bunch of corner hoodlums: "What-ever you do...DON'T GET CAUGHT!"... What cooperation do any of these show to a plan or a purpose or a Providence

that wants all men to be saved?

To void this purpose, to oppose this plan, to scout this Providence is to hamper Christ, the Worker. Salvation cannot be achieved for men if man violates the orderliness of God. Sin is against God and therefore sin is a refusal to serve God in whatever part of His plan comes to us and a rejection that affects all others trying to move forward in the plan. The problem of salvation becomes complicated because man complicates it with uncooperativeness. Sin impedes the Worker, Christ, and every sinner penalizes himself and every other soul. Sin is not an isolated break in the plan. It is a chain reaction whose consequences carry on for generations. Witness the sin of Adam... it did not end in the Garden, it has reached to us.

God's purpose has worked against that sin and every other sin since that time. The answer to the disorder of Adam was Christ. "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

The only members of the human race who have found peace are those who assent to the overall purpose of life that all men be saved -- those who see every action that happens in the world as part of that need. Tragedies, losses, defeats,



humiliations, failures, tears, sorrows do not come into their lives as things that God does to them...it is not "Why dost Thou do this to me?"..."Why did you do these things to us?"...rather they persist in realizing that Christ is about the Father's business of saving the world. Somewhere, someone has failed... the chain reaction of the failures has come down to them and their duty is to adjust the plan with Christ that He might accomplish the business of God the Father.

Christ is working almost alone today. From the appearance of the world around us, one gathers that you wouldn't have to fight your way through a crowd to get to Him. We have statues of all kinds of Christs...Christ the Worker and Christ the King and Christ the Savior...but none of these symbolize what might better be the real idea of Christ today...Christ the rejected. We have theorizers and thinkers and writers and puzzlers and pundits and preachers who keep coming forth with their little talks of what's wrong with Christianity for men, and you realize that they do not know what they are talking about. There is nothing wrong with Christianity for men...the wrong is that men are not for Christianity...

they are for themselves. Christ has not failed men. . .men have failed Christ and been uncooperative.

You can serve Him best now by determining to cooperate at least in your own salvation. If you cooperate in your own salvation, you won't, then, thwart the plan for others. The old expression: "No one goes to hell alone," is equally true of Heaven. . .no one goes to Heaven alone. You can't be saved alone because to be saved you will have to give yourself to Christ, once you have given yourself He will use you for someone else, as He shows us how He used all other things in creation.

Aiding Him in saving yourself will be aiding Him in saving others. . .you will be His hands or feet or tongue or heart. You will be His signs and posts along the way showing Him forth. . .cooperating with Him will bring the same thing that it brought the day that John cooperated. The Heavens will be opened and a voice will be heard saying: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

You may not hear the voice as it strikes in the heart of someone who sees you cooperating with Christ. . .but it is not necessary for you to hear the voice

to do your job. . .it is enough for any of us to work with Christ, to be dignified as is water that others may be reborn in faith; supernaturalized as is oil that others may be confirmed in faith; to be transformed as is bread and wine that others may be sustained in faith. . .it is enough to cooperate.

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