

On Resentment and Surrendering Expectations

By Fr. Jack Schuler

It seems to me that too often we plot to use God to get what we want. Say some prayers or do some things so that we get something, some kind of blessing. I remember I think of that, I had a sophomore, young woman who was a pretty good volleyball player. She told me, she said, before every game, "I light a candle so we win." I said, "What if somebody on the other team lights a candle?"

Or certainly, kind of a gross example would be the Christian nationalists using God for political reasons. That's not the way it should be. And what happens, as we see in the gospel, that once you don't get what you want, like workers that came out first, they grumble and what surfaces is resentment. So they resented the landowner.

So an interesting definition of resentment, a description the other day, it said, resentment is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die. But resentment is what poisons the person who carries it. So, you have that resentment that it's not going to hurt the other person, it hurts us.

I think, again, a big example this past week for me was President Trump didn't get the decision he wanted for the Kennedy Center to keep his name there, so I'm going to close it down. Poison after poison after poison.

I ran into an interesting story reading this book by a whistleblower. And he talks about when he was young that he wanted to make sure that wrongs were righted. He said, "That got me in trouble with my parents and teachers, and one day I really got a lesson. My friend and I were at the Mardi Gras parade, and he took some beads off one of the floats. And a policeman came up and arrested him. So I went over and I said, 'What's going on, officer?' He wouldn't answer me. I said, 'Give me your name and badge number.' He said, 'Sure, put your hands behind your back. You'll see it on your arrest warrant.'" So he's in the wagon with his buddy. And the float goes by. It's a song from the Rolling Stones. "You can't always get what you want."

And that's kind of the lesson from today's scriptures. Because as it says in Isaiah, "My ways are not your ways. My thoughts are not your thoughts." And so we come to grips with those kinds of resentments, those things, we're not getting what we want.

You know, tomorrow is the high feast for the Jews, Yom Kippur. And Yom Kippur is, I feel like, an Old Testament feast, kind of exciting, and especially Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is the only day in the Old Testament, in the Hebrew Testament, when the high priest could go into the It's the most sacred place in the temple called the Holy of Holies.

And there, the priests would put blood on the ark and then would come out and place a goat in front, and place the sins of the people on the goat, and then shoo the goat out into the wilderness. There go the resentment, the sins, et cetera. I've always wanted to do that in the church.

So we don't have Yom Kippur, but we have the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a sacrament of healing. So if we can recognize what Jesus did, he did not get resentful for all that was happening to him. So may we allow our Eucharist to be that healing for us, because you can't always get what you want.

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