

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.  
Memorial, Saint Martin of Tours on Veterans Day  
11 November 2022  
(St. Dominic DC; Is. 61:1-3a; Mt.25:31-46)



You walk into the Sistine Chapel and your attention is riveted to the apse where Michelangelo frescoed his masterpiece in 1534. Despite the vibrant restored colors and the powerful figures, his Last Judgment obliges you to focus on the figure of Christ, the Judge of the universe, in the center. He is the one who loves us and calls us to prepare each day for eternal life.

The theme of the last times recurs frequently in the liturgy of these final weeks of the liturgical year and it is always an occasion to reflect on the direction of our lives. On this Memorial of St. Martin of Tours, an early saint, we are invited to recognize with Isaiah both call and response, to highlight the importance of the authenticity of our lives, and the ability to see Christ in others. I submit that the Veterans we honor today give us a good example to follow.

They assure us that the hope is vivid, because we can say with Isaiah and the Lord Jesus that the spirit of the Lord is upon me and He has sent me to spread glad tidings to the poor. We see it in the generosity exhibited by our men and women in uniform in community relations projects in lands far from here. We see it in their commitment to our Country.

Personally, I am grateful for this initiative to honor our Veterans and, especially to pray for them. Military service always leaves its mark and sometimes that takes the form of illness, moral injury, psychological burdens, or simply old age. It is important to express our gratitude. Last Tuesday I stood in front of Michelangelo's Pieta, that prayer in stone. Gazing at the face of Mary brought to mind the experience of parents or spouses whose loved one never returned. We remember them tonight, as well. No one can restore that loss or repay that debt.

The message of Third Isaiah hits home, because he was sent to the poor and miserable, not as a social class, but as a religious group disparaged and consigned to the margins because of their fidelity to the Lord. The prophet assures them that the Lord dwells in them, despite the desolation of their situation after the exile. They are the temple which had not yet been reconstructed after the return to the Promised Land.

It is important to allow Isaiah's encouragement to fortify you especially in this moment when political correctness can smother the zeal for preaching the truth. We must feel the power of the Holy Spirit within us, and never be afraid to proclaim the truth. Having just witnessed the midterm political campaigns and elections, we renew our commitment to speak civilly, to proclaim the truth in love, and never to forget the dignity of each person created in the image and likeness of God.

From my vantage point I see many reasons for hope, because I see young men and women who sacrifice themselves for ideals, who stand the watch and man the guard posts to keep others safe, and who are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. They demand our good example and our faithful witness. They remind us that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. I was touched this afternoon when the Master of Ceremonies at the luncheon following the installation of the new CUA President singled me out in order to thank the Veterans for their service.

Thank you also for taking this opportunity to honor our Veterans and to remember their service for us. Thank you for the great gift of your prayer. Please pray that a sufficient number of Catholic priests can be found to minister to those who serve us.

Of course, the Gospel passage obliges us to continue that looking at the other. C.S. Lewis is reputed to have observed that, "apart from the Blessed Sacrament, the most sacred encounter we have on a daily basis is with another person."<sup>1</sup>

If someone claimed to have had a vision of Christ at St. Dominic's, you would have to call the police to control the traffic and the crowds, but, on the other hand, Jesus tells us how easy it is to meet Him. We are certainly insisting in this country about appreciating His real presence in the Blessed Sacrament. Today, however, the Gospel insists on another presence.

In this passage He is presented as the Judge at the end of time. The notion is sobering. The message bids us ask fundamental questions about life, death, the direction of our lives. We might look at how we meet Christ and evaluate our standards. We might also ask if the world situation would be different if people really looked upon Christ as the center of the Universe.

There is the striking revelation that we meet Christ in anyone who comes to us in need. Jesus implies more than some humanitarian gesture here. It is a call to look upon anyone who needs our charity, time, a visit, welcome, consolation, and so forth as Jesus

---

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Barbara Golder, "Awareness, Relationship, and Serving the Human Person" in *The Linacre Quarterly*, 87:4 (November 2020), p. 374.

who reaches out to us. That changes the discourse, the standards, and the response. It means that we cannot talk about the poor or the immigrant in merely political or economic terms. We must look on his or her face and see the image of Christ.

Jesus calls us to open our eyes so that we can recognize His presence in the “distressing disguise of the poor”<sup>2</sup> to borrow an expression from St. Teresa of Kolkata. We are reminded in this celebration of the figure of St. Martin of Tours, the soldier, who split his cloak in half to cover a beggar and then had a vision of Christ covered with half the cloak. “He was indefatigable when it was time to bring joy to the afflicted, to guide those quarrelling to pardon and peace, and to point out with his example the goal to which each person tends: heaven, the Kingdom of God.”<sup>3</sup>

Pope Francis challenges us to be evangelized by the poor.<sup>4</sup> Our service to them is actually an opportunity for that evangelization to take place. They offer us an opportunity to meet Christ and to respond to Him. Consequently, that contact is an opportunity to delve more deeply into our relationship with the Lord and participate in His conquest. We honor Veterans, because they are able to set their sights on a goal beyond themselves and their needs. They serve our Country and many make the ultimate sacrifice or suffer consequences of their service for decades.

As we honor them, they can teach us. Let us look beyond our immediate needs and concerns. Let us ask ourselves what the Lord of glory will have to say at the end of our pilgrimage. Indeed Michelangelo’s Last Judgment obliges us to look at the image of Christ as Judge who tells us to see Him in the other. The quality of that ability, He tells us, will be the matter of our judgment at the end of time.

God bless our Veterans. God open our hearts to focus on what lasts forever.

---

<sup>2</sup> Mother Teresa, *In the Heart of the World*, p.55.

<sup>3</sup> Zevini y Cabra, *Lectio Divina*, 17, p. 442.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Daniel Mueggenborg, *Come Follow Me*, A, p.332.