

November Grand Prelate Reflection

Sir Knights;

During the month of November, our minds turn towards the holiday season. For many, our thoughts turn towards Thanksgiving. Most know the basic story. That is, a group of very religious folk were searching for a place in which they could worship in the manner that they chose. Their search took them to a place that is now Massachusetts. They faced a very difficult winter where many died. The Native Americans aided the Pilgrims during the next year. And, the groups came together to give thanks for what had been given to them. That is the basic story.

Most do not know that there are some additions left out of the history books. The Pilgrims set sail at the wrong time of year. They sailed during storm season. That caused their ship to be blown further to the north. They really wanted to go to the Virginia Colony. Rather than turn around, they stayed where they were. Since the fall was fast approaching in New England, the planting of crops was very difficult. Still, they tried. It didn't work out too well for them. Many died as a result of starvation. By the end of the winter, the Pilgrims were reduced to boiling their shoes for food. It was incredibly sad.

Knowing this, it might be easy to say that they got what they deserved because they made mistakes. As such, they should not have received any compassion from the Native Americans. They should not have received any of God's Grace. They simply got what they deserved. That would be simple for many to say.

Our lives are filled with occasions whereby we might find ourselves in a position to point out the mistakes of others. It is an easy thing to do. It has been said that if you want to find mistakes in others, you will surely find them. During seminary, my Homiletics professor stressed that finding fault with others is simple. Preaching the gospel is more difficult. He required us to spend most of our sermons preaching the "Good News" rather than pointing out the sin of humanity.

Perhaps, that is our message for us this month. We know that we are sinners. Except for our Lord and Savior, no one is excluded from that group. Understanding that, we can turn our thoughts to the good in others. The Pilgrims did make mistakes. But, they got through the winter. They saw the spring and learned from their mistakes. Help came to them in ways that they might not have expected. But, that is how God works. There is no set way in which God's Grace comes to us. It is given freely and in the manner that He has chosen for us.

There is no better example of that than in our Blessed Savior. There are many gospel stories of Jesus' work with people. He did not choose to spend time with one group more than another. For him, all people were the same. We all make mistakes. But, his invitation of salvation is given freely and does not exclude anyone. He gives us the perfect example of how we might interact with others.

As Knights Templar, our call is one of service. It does not exclude anyone. Rather, it includes all people. Rather than focus on the frailty of the human condition, may we ask for God's strength and guidance to be able to lift up all those who are in need. May we lift up all people wherever we may find them. In doing so, we might be living out the Thanksgiving story as it was meant to be.

May God's Peace be always with you. Happy Thanksgiving!

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