

"But they did not understand." Jesus tried to explain to them that his kingdom was not from this world. But they did not understand that teaching - they didn't get it and this should not surprise us. All too often we try to put the apostles into our 21<sup>st</sup> century American mindset and it doesn't work. They didn't have the New Testament, nor did they have the two thousand plus years of Christian theology and tradition that we have. They didn't know the rest of the story.

Christ told them he was there to set up a kingdom. It shouldn't surprise us that they were thinking Earthly Kingdom. That's what a kingdom was back then.

On the road to Capernaum they had argued with one another over who was the greatest. I find it highly unlikely that - that argument occurred in a total intellectual and conversational vacuum. No. If Christ was going to be the King in a new Kingdom, he would obviously need Princes, Judges, Ministers of State and advisors to assist him with all that political power. They knew they were his closest followers and associates, they knew they were on the short list for those political jobs --- so I suspect this argument they had, was really all about their role in his presumed earthly government. About their political power.

I suspect they were arguing politics. After all, isn't that what politics is all about any way, "Who is Greatest among us."

This is not a sermon against politics --- this is a sermon against politics in church. I grow very nervous about this time every two years. I worry that some may try to take the church back to that road to Capernaum and drag him/us through the dust and dirt of human politics.

I know Church of the Redeemer probably doesn't need to hear this, but then maybe a gentle reminder wouldn't hurt as our nation's mid-term election draws near. I know this is not a parish of Democrats or Republicans. It is not a liberal or a conservative church. It is something far more important than those contemporary political labels. It is a church that is nothing less than a part of that Kingdom that Christ himself told Pilate was not from this world. I firmly believe we are about something far greater than mere human politics.

You may disagree, but I think Christ had great disdain for secular politics. He said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." ??Met any politicians lately who truly consider themselves to be least of all?

"Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me." Are there any among us / more A-political than small children? By and large small children are not capable of politics. They are capable of giving and receiving love,

and they are capable of being least of all, but Christ said they come first in his kingdom.

We are the Church of Jesus Christ. We are the humble sheep, but we could forget that -- as we get caught up in the heat of political battle. Somehow, we might let our politics become intertwined with our faith - and then we could end up with politics in the church.

I love my country and I love my God, but the two are different. America may exist because of God - but God does not exist because of America. Jesus did not come to spread democracy throughout the world. In those years with the twelve and then the seventy and then the 500 - he never once took a democratic vote. "All in favor of going to Jerusalem, signify such by saying Aye!"

He was Christ the King and he came to establish a Kingdom - an eternal kingdom - a spiritual kingdom, an out of this world kind of kingdom. I don't find eternity and spirituality conducive to secular politics. Still we can be both good Christians and a Good Americans. We can carry our faith out there amongst the politics where it is so desperately needed, but we ought not to bring that tired old argument over who is greatest back into the church.

Today, more than ever before - the church needs to be the church.

Let us continue to safeguard "the Church of the Redeemer" as a place where the political weary can find rest for their souls. Be as politically involved as you choose

to be - out there. More power to you! We need that, but we need it out there. Just please don't bring your politics into this Holy Place.

In closing, Again, there were no incidents, nothing happened to prompt this message. I just want us all on the same page regarding the sanctity of our Parish during this time of larger community divisiveness.