

The Question of the Week

“When you have done all you have been commanded, say: ‘We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.’”

Luke 17: 10

We have done what we were obliged to do. What are we “obliged” to do? What is the obligation placed upon us? Who places this obligation upon us? Why must we carry out the obligation? Simple questions these but very real nonetheless. You and I, as mature adults, realize that maturity carries with it certain responsibilities, and yes, certain obligations. We may shirk these obligations, but the shirking will have demonstrable effects and the good that can be done and should be done will not be done. The world will not have been made a better place. God’s desire will not have been accepted, cooperated with, and made part of our lives on this earth.

God provides all the necessary assistance and empowering. But we must be about doing our part, giving ourselves to the tasks at hand, emptying ourselves of our selfish desires just as Jesus emptied himself in his life, agony, and passion. He emptied himself not of sin for there was no sin in him. He emptied himself of the very things that the world wants us to pursue, the very things he faced in his temptations in the desert—become the Food King, who feeds everyone miraculously every day with a new kind of manna. Become the popular, well-known, and well-liked celebrity with a large following. God for the prestige and notoriety. Do you claim to be the Son of the Holy One, Jesus? Then call on your Father to do something astounding to convince us. Jump off the Temple and have him save you. Isn’t your faith great enough to want that?

Those are the temptations. But Jesus is humble. Of the earth, earthy. And of heaven, heavenly. I will do what the Father has asked me to do. I will be the Obedient Son, faithful to the word my Father has spoken, faithful to the mission He has entrusted to me. I will do this no matter what it costs me personally, no matter what the Father asks. It is my responsibility, freely chosen. It is my obligation fully embrace. It is the faithfulness that will be rewarded with resurrection. It is humility which is shown to be truly glorious. Have we been Catholics for so long and still we do not grasp this? That is the question of the week.