

## Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Mar 16th 2024

The Gospel today presents yet another confrontation of Jesus with the ruling class - as we read through, we immediately realise it as, all too familiar occurrence of our present times, in our society. Invariably majority of people in power, be it in the time of Jesus or in the present day, in whichever part of the world they may be, live in fools' paradise, telling themselves that the power and honour they possess are absolute and eternal! Dictators have ruled nations of the world and many of them do even today, believing nothing in the universe can overthrow them. This foolish sense of infallibility raises in them a contempt for ordinary people. They discarded common people as illiterate and uneducated.

The temple authorities realised that Jesus was a growing nuisance. He had repeatedly questioned their style of observing the Sabbath and both Jesus and the disciples were accused of breaking the Sabbath law. He welcomed the sinners and tax-collectors – the socially outcast people into his company and shared meals with them.

But what shocked the Pharisees and the high priests most was Jesus raising Lazarus to life. People regarded him as the Prophet or the Messiah. The puritans could not appreciate the openness and mercy that Jesus proposed through his life. They wanted to discredit the popularity of Jesus. Therefore, they assigned the temple Police to find faults in his teachings and to arrest him. False accusations, unjust detentions and unfair trails and wrong sentencing are nothing uncommon even in our times. Jesus will be captured and killed for raising someone to life. The irony doesn't end there: It will be through his dying, Jesus will give his life to all who come to him.

But often the law enforcement agencies remain helpless before autocratic power-centers. High Priests and the pharisees disdained the temple police because they admired Jesus. In confronting the majority, Nicodemus showed unusual courage. He had initially approached Jesus by night, afraid to identify himself publicly as one intrigued by Jesus [3:2]. Now, he had stepped out from the darkness, courageously choosing to allow himself to be identified, and, thereby, threatening the closed unanimity of the Pharisee group. (He would appear again at the foot of the Cross to bury the body of Jesus.

The history repeats. The cry of the suffering majority for justice and right to live in dignity are suppressed by the powerful minority. This minority will apparently determine the future of the hapless majority. This is the logic of this world. But the dictators and emperors have disappeared yet, Jesus and his Church live, giving God's life to the world.

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