



Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem ©
* Knights of Malta *

August
2012

Chancellor's Update

A Lesson From the Unjust Steward

Last month's issue, [Socialism - Never Worked](#), brought a series of questions and comments showing a basic misunderstanding of words, ideas and possibly the meaning of those two after a hundred years of changing times.

For example: "What is wrong with Socialism or Communism?"

"I lived in a communist community for almost twenty years before I left."

"What do you mean that socialism conceives human society in a way utterly alien to Christian truth?"

"What is wrong with Socialism or Communism?" Each one violates the Tenth Commandment: *Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's goods*, which requires that we not be envious of our neighbor's possessions.

It seems people (sometimes good people) confuse Charity with Socialism or Communism. For it to be charity one must be free to give or not to give; one can never be forced to give or it is no longer charity. This confusion is caused by the language and gimmicks used by socialists and the like. For example: we must give for the children, the needy, the poor and the homeless. I may choose to give money or personal assistance to someone in need. But to force me by robbing from me, or voting to take away my money without my consent because you think it is the right thing to do is STEALING. Zeal for taxing the rich is caused by coveting their goods. Who else but Socialists and Communists promote this idea?

In an explanation of the Sermon on the Unjust Steward, St. Gaudentius, Bishop of Brescia, reminds us that the Unjust Steward is the devil and that he entices those (us) who owe money to the master (God) to steal. For the Unjust Steward knew that he had NO right to his master's possessions, and did not own them, but nevertheless offered the same to those who owed the master, thus making all of those participating thieves in this transaction.

In the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII, in the section on the right use of money, explains the use of charity. We quote in part: Whence the Apostle saith, "Command the rich of this world . . . to give with ease, to communicate [share]" (Ibid., Q lxxv. art. 2). True, no one is commanded to distribute to others that which is required for his own necessities and those of his household; nor even to give away what is reasonably required to keep up becomingly his condition in life, "for no one ought to live unbecomingly" (Ibid., Q. xxxii. art. 6). But when necessity has been supplied, and one's position fairly considered, it is a duty to give to the indigent out of that which is over. "That which remaineth give alms" (Saint. Luke 11:41). **It is a duty, not of justice** (except in

extreme cases), **but of Christian Charity -- a duty which is not enforced by human law.** (editor's emphasis) But the laws and judgment of men must give place to the laws and judgment of Christ, the true God; who in many ways urges on His followers the practice of almsgiving -- "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35); and who will count a kindness done or refused to the poor as done or refused to Himself -- "As long as you did it to one of My least brethren, you did it to Me" (Saint. Matt. 25:40). Thus to sum up what has been said: -- Whoever has received from the Divine bounty a large share of blessings, whether they be external and corporal, or gifts of the mind, has received them for the purpose of using them for perfecting his own nature, and, at the same time, that he may employ them, as the minister of God's Providence, for the benefit of others. "He that hath a talent, " says Saint Gregory the Great, "let him see that he hideth not; he that hath abundance, let him arouse himself to mercy and generosity; he that hath art and skill, let him do his best to share the use and utility thereof with his neighbor" (Saint Gregory the Great. Hom ix in Evangel, n.7).

"I lived in a communist community for almost twenty years before I left." Yes, but your commune was voluntary and one could leave at anytime. But as we know from history and Alexey Komov's testimony of life behind the Iron Curtain that was not the case, if one wanted to walk across the border into West Germany or leave Poland or Hungary. Also, some socialist governments evolved into soft tyrannies in the early twentieth century and some became hard tyrannies by the end of the century. A wrong is still a wrong and two or more wrongs do not make a right. Remember, the unjust steward, the devil, didn't say write down the entire bill, just a portion, knowing that this is sufficient to start the proverbial decline.

"What do you mean that socialism conceives human society in a way utterly alien to Christian truth?" Christianity sees the individual as a creature of God. He was so worthy before God, that God came down from heaven, lived among us and died to redeem the human race. Therefore, the person is important with his unalienable rights (God given rights). Government must be the servant because God is the master. Our rights are derived from God **not** the state. Government cannot become the master of these rights unless God is dethroned. That is why every tyranny on earth in its logical progression must command atheism. That is why in every socialistic and communistic society religious freedom, private property and the family are downgraded or destroyed.

Secondary discussions occurred around the meaning of such words as government, corporations and the individual person. It seems that people do not understand that governments and corporations are NOT real persons only juridical persons. For example, you cannot tax a corporation or a building; you can only tax a real person. This thinking might explain why some people think the government or a corporation can do what a real person does. Corporations do not pay taxes, people do. It is useless to tax corporations because they just pass the cost on to the consumer. The government does not build bridges and roads but people do. Governments cannot give to individuals unless they first take it from real people.

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