

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Conflicts in Loyalties** Second Week of Easter Monday, April 28, 2014 8:15 AM  
Acts 4:23-31; **Jn 3:1-8** (St. Peter Chanel, priest, martyr; St. Louis Grignon de Montfort, priest) (Our mission is to further that invisible kingdom within the world, as we see it, in which goodness reigns and justice prevails.)

Today there are people that have dual citizenship, which usually just means they have **two passports**; for example, they may have a US passport and an Irish passport. Now there are those that think that this is intrinsically wrong, against the best interests of, for example, the United States or some other country, to allow this; but it is a fact of modern life. **It could lead to conflicts of loyalty; yes, it could, but usually doesn't.**

In a similar way Jesus talked to Nicodemus about being **citizens of two different realms, the realm of the flesh and the realm of the Spirit**. They are not opposed to each other necessarily, but they could be. **They could cause conflicts of loyalty, but not necessarily.** The realm of the flesh is the realm that we can observe and study, but even this realm that we observe and study is mysterious, and there are limits to what we can observe and study. We cannot see how life actually comes about. We do not understand all the mysteries, all the secrets locked in this world.

But then Jesus starts talking about another realm, **the realm of Spirit**. He says unless you are **begotten of God**, you cannot see the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not a different place from here on earth, but it's **a different dimension**. It requires a kind of perception that doesn't come from the eyes or from the ears or from the tactile sense. It comes from another sense, a spiritual sense, and it needs to be awakened by, what he calls, "being begotten from above," **acknowledging the origin we have from God**: that we are actually not simply creatures, part of nature, which is one aspect of our existence. We are also children of our heavenly Father, one and the same, in the same person, united and

supposedly and hopefully integrated, **living a life on this planet, but serving God, having two passports.**

Conflicts on this planet may cause **conflicts in our loyalties, in which case we need to be loyal to the Father. Jesus himself went through just such a conflict.** And his utter loyalty to the Father was what led to his being raised up in resurrection. He is a model for us, for all people, and consciously for his own disciples. **His disciples are simply those who acknowledge him as model and who therefore live according to his way.**

If we are aware of our parentage in God and therefore we can see the kingdom of God in our midst, then we have to work to further that. That becomes **our mission: to further that invisible kingdom within the world, as we see it, in which goodness reigns and justice prevails.** It involves a struggle and sometimes **conflict**, but it can be resolved and the resurrection of Jesus means that **it shall be resolved in favor of God**, since in Christ and in his resurrection **God has prevailed over all forms of death.**