

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Co-warriors with Christ Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time Tuesday,
September 1, 2015 8:15 AM 1Thes 5:1-6, 9-11; **Lk4:31-37** (In the Eucharist we are
empowered to give of ourselves way beyond what is natural or plausible or appropriate to our
self-interest because the goal is something we can't quite see, but it is living in God.)

“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?”

One way to understand the New Testament is a frontal attack on evil by God. **God sends his Incarnate Word into the world to engage evil and defeat it.**

Now to understand this, we have to understand **evil** is not simply, as the philosophers say, “a privation of good.” **It is a privation of good, but it's a privation of good in intelligent beings.** Intelligent beings include the human race, but is not restricted to the human race, which is the problem with modern materialistic thinking. Modern materialists think that only human beings are intelligent; there is nothing more, but there most certainly is. So for example many modern scientists imagine that everything just develops by chance and then by chance the human brain evolves and by chance human intelligence, which is then the summit of intelligence. Well, not really. **Intelligence is already there before there is anything, and it's intelligence that allows things to grow and develop, and that's why there is this possibility of harmony.**

But there are also **forms of intelligence that are in rebellion against harmony and goodness and truth and beauty**, willful intelligent beings that do not want harmony, that do not want beauty, that do not want what is good or truthful. Jesus referred to Satan as the father of lies. If you think about it, one of the fundamental problems with the world is that **people are deceived** about what is real, what is true, what is good; they are deceived. Then there's also the issue of **some people just have ill will**, malice toward others. And if we look at the world in a sort of haphazard, piecemeal way, we see, well, there's a conflict over there and there's a problem over there and there's something else over here. But if we look at it altogether, **the world is under attack by this spirit of evil that is intelligent**, that is resourceful, and is free to do as it pleases. It is against this evil that now God is acting, entering into the very theater of free action, free action involving the action of both human beings and these other beings, demons and angels we call them.

So Jesus' attack is frontal and it is effective because he has authority. Now what is most important that you realize is that **Jesus has given that same authority to you.** In **Baptism** you are consecrated and you now have authority as well to work against evil and to consecrate the world in goodness. **You are given the gifts of the Holy Spirit to discern what is right.** You have the gift of right judgment. You have the gift of wisdom, and you have the gift of understanding **to personally understand in your own life and your own circumstances what is that God is promoting,** is desiring, is wanting from you and for you. You are not like this person here who is a helpless, pathetic victim. You are not; you are **baptized coworkers with Christ** and co-warriors in the battle for the world, in the battle of life, **in spiritual warfare.**

I hope none of the things that I have said would make you arrogant or overly confident and forget that **it is Christ and only Christ who really has authority.** He shares it with us, yes, but it is he who is the source of authority, and **we always have to be connected to him and subject to him** and under his authority for us to have any power at all, any ability to serve God, to work for the kingdom that Jesus announced. We equip ourselves by steeping ourselves in the word of God and allowing God to feed us with his own body and blood, the very source of our ability and our power to love others, especially to the point of giving of ourselves. **That's the whole meaning of the Eucharist, that we are empowered to give of ourselves way beyond what is natural or plausible or appropriate to our self-interest, way beyond that because the goal is something we can't quite see, but it is living in God.** And the way we get to God is by **giving ourselves away.** Jesus demonstrated this himself in his life. "He did not deem equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself." We are invited to do the same, and the results will be a new world, a new heaven and new earth. But we have to be faithful. We have to be consistent. We have to keep going.