

Fyodor Dostoevsky, the great Russian writer told a story. The place is Seville, Spain. The year is 1503, a time in the middle of something called the Inquisition, where heretics and members of other faiths were tried and punished by the Church. A time at the height of the Inquisition, called the *auto de fe* where heretics were burned at the stake for their mistaken beliefs. A time headed by a man called the Grand Inquisitor, who judges all and sets their punishment.

The Grand Inquisitor is met by a most fantastic event. Christ returns to earth for a brief moment and in the midst of a crowd, cures a man of his blindness and raises the dead daughter of a prominent family. But the Grand Inquisitor, too, is in the crowd, and he commands his guards to take away Christ and throw him into prison. And such is his power, so completely are the people cowed into submission and trembling obedience to him, that the crowd makes way for the guard and they lead him away.

The Inquisitor goes to meet his prisoner and tells him that he has no right to add anything to what he has already said, otherwise He will encroach on the people's freedom of faith. The people are convinced that they have more freedom than ever, but they have brought their freedom to the Church and humbly laid it at her feet. The Church has at long last vanquished the freedom Christ thought so important, and by doing so has at long last made the people happy. Christ thought people wise and wonderful, but the 15 centuries since he came have proven that while a select few may be, most are nothing but weak, impotent and ignorant.

To prove his point, the Inquisitor revisits the 3 questions Jesus faced in the desert and his temptation to come down off the cross. "Turn these stones into bread and mankind will run after you like a flock, grateful and obedient, though forever trembling, lest you withdraw your hand and deny them your bread." But Jesus wouldn't deny us our freedom, thinking what is that freedom worth if obedience is bought with bread?

Choosing bread, he would have satisfied the universal and everlasting craving of humanity individually and together as one--to find someone to worship. We seek to worship what is established beyond dispute, so that all men would agree at once to worship it. We would at long last be a community.

Christ is stronger than the weak race of men. There are 3 powers able to conquer and to hold captive forever the conscience of these impotent rebels for their happiness--these forces are miracle, mystery and authority. "Cast yourself down from this pinnacle, for angels shall hold you up lest you fall and bruise yourself." Jesus refused, but could the weak, rebellious race of men. Are they Gods? Is the nature of men such, that they can reject miracles, and at the great moments of their life, the moments of their deepest, most agonizing spiritual difficulties, cling only to the free verdict of the heart?

Jesus refused to be tempted by miracle, mystery or authority. And in his respect for us, bade us to do the same. A few people were strong enough to follow this, but they were the minority. Most people found miracle, mystery and authority too tempting and fell into their snare.

The inquisitor too lived for a long time in the desert, seeking to rid himself of these temptations.

All his life he loved humanity, and suddenly his eyes were opened and he saw that it is no great moral blessedness to attain perfection and freedom, if at the same time one gains the conviction that millions of God's creatures have been created as a mockery, they they will never be capable of using their freedom, that these poor rebels can never turn into giants to reject these temptations, that it was not for these that the Great Idealist dreamt his dream of harmony. So the Inquisitor left the proud and went back to the humble, for the happiness of the humble.

And he realized that if someone were to rid humanity of these temptations and take them upon themselves that then this bulk of humanity could be saved too. As a side note, let me tell you that 800 years previously, Pepin the Short, King of the Franks, granted Ravenna to Pope Steven III, this was the origin of the pope's temporal power. From that point on, this temporal power grew into the Holy Roman Empire and the Church's immersion in this world. So the Inquisitor joined those who sought to correct Christ's work on earth--the Jesuits. Dostoevsky did not like the Jesuits.

By taking responsibility for right and wrong, those few took on the terrible burden of freedom for the sake of the many. To quote the Inquisitor: "We will even allow them to sin, for they are weak and helpless and we shall tell them that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission, that we allow them to sin because we love them, and the punishment for these sins we shall take upon ourselves. We will listen to the most painful secrets of their conscience, all, all they will bring to us, and we will have an answer for all. And they will be glad to believe our answer for it will save them from the great anxiety and terrible agony we endure at present in making a free decision for themselves. And all will be happy, all the millions of creatures except the hundred thousand who rule over them. For only we, we who guard the mystery, shall be unhappy."

These people of authority could take away the terrible burden of choice and decision from the weak masses, and ultimately lead them to salvation by treating them as children . His burning concern for the masses led him to seek a way to guide them like sheep. And the masses, sensing that through this they could find happiness on earth, would willingly cast off the oppressive burden of free will, and live in harmony with each other under the dictate of the few who carried on that burden for them.

When the Inquisitor ceased speaking he waited some time for his Prisoner to answer him. His silence weighed down upon him. He saw that the Prisoner had listened intently and quietly all the time, looking gently in his face and evidently not wishing to reply. The old man longed for Him to say something, however bitter and terrible. But He suddenly approached the old man in silence and softly kissed him on his bloodless aged lips. That was his answer. The old man shuddered. His lips moved. He went to the door, opened it, and said to Him: "Go and come no more...come not at all, never, never" And he let Him out into the dark squares of the town. The Prisoner went away.

The kiss glowed in the old man's heart, but nevertheless he adhered to his idea and continued the *auto de fe*.

Let me tell you another story. Once upon a time there existed a land where people worked as

one. There were no saved and unsaved. There was only the community. This was a great land, a strong land, and it covered more territory than any land upon the earth. Those who lived in it never worried about where their sustenance would come from. Anyone who wished to work, could work. There were no jobless. There were no homeless. Everyone was cared for equally. And no one ever feared tomorrow. There was a land like this, you know. But it's no longer here. It's gone. You've all seen it, heard about it, talked about it, and most of all, despised it. Because in it there was one thing missing: freedom. This place was called the Soviet Union.

Which is worse, the oppressive burden of freedom or the oppressive burden of no freedom? Once upon a time there was a garden. And in the garden there was peace, and beauty and joy. And in the midst of this garden God placed a man and a woman. The man he called Adam and the woman he called Eve. The man and the woman could do anything they wanted in the garden, even talk directly to God and to listen to his voice. They could do anything, except, of course, eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. They were not free, and even though they had everything anyone could possibly wish, they did not have the one thing they desired more than everything else in this Eden. They did not have the freedom to do as they pleased. So they forsook all by freely choosing to disobey God for the sake of this freedom.

Why is there evil in the world? Because freedom pervades every aspect of our world. Without freedom we are not happy. God sees no higher gift than freedom. And free things do not always choose what is in the common good. Free things collide, and collisions cause damage. And it is this damage that is the concern of Social Justice.

So it is with this in mind that I begin my talk tonight.

What I'd like to talk to you about is one of those things that makes people uncomfortable just by saying the words: Social Justice. I want to show you that this is not something to be afraid of but something to embrace, because it will make us happy.

Like my other talk, I'd like to begin in ancient Greece with a man called Aristotle. Aristotle said the goal of life was to be happy. I think it's wonderful that Robert Hunt talked to us about this same point in our parish mission, so I hope I don't have to talk a lot in order to prove it. In fact, Aristotle was nice enough to give it a big word so we know that it's true: the end toward which we are all drawn is Eudainomia, which is happiness in its truest sense and is the greatest good. Eudainomia comes from being good and leads to a good society.

Aristotle saw 4 types of people:

Virtuous: do what is good by habit. This is the happy man.

Continent: struggle and usually succeeds in doing good, but with attachments

Incontinent: struggles to do what is good, but usually fails

Viscious: do what is bad by habit.

Now, the real struggle is taking this individual virtue and bringing it to the world, or society. Aristotle calls this

Politics, the way in which the individual brings their virtue to the state.

And this is the first sense of what social justice is. You can't always see the damage that is done by not being just, but the harm done is that it keeps you from being happy because it keeps the society from being happy.

The Old Testament too, talks about social justice, but instead of basing actions on reason alone, they added revelation as a source of guidance.

Social justice must be understood in the Old Testament thematically:

Day of Yahweh: messiah comes (not so much an individual, but a community) and the community is raised.

Righteousness: responding to Yahweh's will through the law

Covenant: promise of faithfulness by community in return for Yahweh's benefice.

The prophets called the community again and again back to these 3 themes with a sense of urgency. Among the prophets, the one who was the most socially cognizant, was Amos. He said

Social Institutions should provide opportunity for individuals to find God

Word and actions must be consistent

The New Testament furthered this sense of social justice. The 3 themes of the NT are

Kingdom of God: universal, not particular

Continuation of the Covenant

New Law -- the Golden Rule

In particular, Jesus taught universal justice with charity.

Early Church

didn't talk much about social justice because it was itself being persecuted and thus turned in on itself. But within the church, there was a strong sense of justice:

pooled their resources

sending of funds to Jerusalem to help with wider issues

deacons charged with taking care of widows and orphans

Church Fathers

Lived in communism not based on materialism but rather on love

concerned with right to private property,

but not social responsibility

common good is the basis for justice

Christians share all with each other

Edict of Constantine

Christianity is accepted

Communism of a closed community is challenged

open to all

do I have to share my goods/love with all

From this point until the middle ages there arose a struggle between the power of Church and State

Thomas Aquinas

Move from Platonic thought: perfection cannot be achieved in material world, only in spiritual

To Aristotelian thought: starts with observable data and moves to theory (opp. of Plato)

Happiness belongs not with the philosopher (Eudaimonia) but with the saint

Concerned with natural order which is founded on human nature

do good avoid evil

every action is either in accord with reason (good) nor not (bad)

no human actions are indifferent

From this comes his 9 principals of action

Implicitly or explicitly one must have a harmonious set of purposes or orientations as an effective commitment

There must be no leaving out of or no arbitrary discounting or exaggeration of any basic human values

The basic goods are human goods and can be pursued, realized, and participated in by any human being (c.f. the golden rule)

One must be able to detach from limited projects and goals for the sake of greater good and goals of life

one must be committed to their established goals, not abandoning them lightly

Bring about good in the world in one's own life and other's lives by actions that are efficient (actions judged by utility and consequences)

Don't choose to act in a way that will only damage or impede a realization or participation of any human goods

Favor and foster common good

Act in accord with your conscience

Human goods

self preservation: protection of life, rejection of murder, right to livelihood

procreation: right to marry, protection of offspring, rights of family to sustain, support and form children

intellectual/moral life: ability to seek those things necessary to intellectually enhance oneself, right to practice religion, right to lead productive life

Modern Social Justice

You must know the historical tension, the sociological question, before you can understand the answer

Rerum Novarum 1891 "Concerning New Things"

Leo XIII

Historical Setting

attacks on faith and reason by science and skepticism

Charles Lydell attacks age of earch in bible

Darwin sets out on *Beagle* to prove the accuracy of Sacred Scriptures

Copernicus and Gallileo confirmed

Politics of anarchism, nihilism and rebellion

Art of impressionism (feelings, getting at the "...ness" of a thing)

Marx: future of communism is in the West

Pope moves from temporal to spiritual authority

Age of inventions

pressure not to support the working class to but to keep society agrarian

The encyclical (addressed to society)

Individual -> Family -> Society

(marriage) (association)

Tension comes when one tries to usurp the other

Duty of worker

work conscientiously

don't damage employers property

don't riot

stay away from employers who give vain promises

Duty of employer

- don't treat worker as slave
- respect worker as truly human
- worker must not be used purely for gain
- see for material and spiritual well being
- provide for rest and relaxation
- no harsh labor imposed
- provide a wage to live, not merely to survive, on

Duty of individuals

Rich

- use wealth for personal development
- use surplus for development of others

Poor

- poverty is no disgrace
- true dignity rests in moral dignity

Principal of subsidiarity:

- both the individual and community are entitled and obliged to develop their own individuality and carry out their own tasks.
- higher community must promote, recognize and protect this individuality and activity
- higher community cannot
 - limit development of lower community
 - usurp their tasks
 - attempt to accomplish what they themselves in their own sphere need to accomplish

Quadragesimo Anno 1931 40 Years

Historical Setting

- worldwide depression
- World War I recently ended
- Nation states
- Capitalism and Socialism
- Impressionism and Cubism (attempt to look at something from different angles all at once)
- Secular humanism

Encyclical

Recalls benefits of the worker

Champions social and economic sections of *Rerum Novarum* against the doubts of capitalism

Examines the nature of socialism
needs reform of Christian morals

Civil authority
protect public well being and private property
must especially protect rights of the poor
secure the common good

Church authority
deal with social/economic problems
has authority over all moral issues

Property
ownership: is a right
possession: not an absolute right, critiqued by common good and the gospel
use: must be proper

Benefits of *Rerum Novarum*
Church relies on the gospel to settle issues of life and conduct
used to organize working people
Church becomes interested in social/economic issues
Catholic truths espoused by non-Catholic journals
Found way into legislature
Clergy become involved in social/economic work

Pacem in Terris 1963 Peace on Earth

Historical Setting

John XXIII elected as interim pope in 1958

Cold war

Nuclear fright

Space exploration

Breakdown of colonialism and the proliferation of nations

Encyclical

Church is hierarchical

with movements along the lines of social justice called the apostolic movement

take faith into the marketplace

3 characteristics of our age

working class has gained esteem

women take part in public life

social and political life has changed: nations do not rule other nations

Big on democracies, every government must have

legislative

judicial

executive

Calls for international interdependence

Unjust laws are not binding on citizens

Duties of individual are justice and charity

Begins Vatican II: the Church's mission to the world

Centesimo Anno 1991 100 years

John Paul II

Spoke out against the dangers of both unbridled capitalism as well as pointing out the deficiencies in the Marxist system. Sees good things in both, but rejects the rigid application of either system.

Priority of the individual over the means of production and any system must be judged whether or not it promotes the rights, dignity and self-realization of the individual person

Industrial reform

should be to enable the individual worker to get more control over his work

profit sharing

co-management

Pastoral letters

don't give policy

give direction for policy

Example: Pastoral on the Economy

people are seen by what they can do rather than who they are

corporations do not have a conscience

only laws can keep them in check

yet laws are not always enforced

Vision

the economic system is not capable of caring about the individual
policy and government decisions must provide for the individual

What did my introduction to this talk and all my words about freedom have to do with any of this? It is in our freedom to respond to the world that we have the ability to make ourselves truly happy or unhappy. And we are only truly happy if our world is happy. To demonstrate this, I want to bring you back to the time and land of Fyodor Dostoevsky with which I began this talk. I want to tell you about a contemporary of his, Count Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy was a wealthy and wonderful man, admired by many and rich from the writings for which he is famous. Tolstoy took his free will seriously, and began to philosophize about happiness. He realized that his happiness did not come from the things of this world. That by his clinging to those things for himself, we was actually unhappy. He looked around as if for the first time at the world around him and saw that all was not a tidy and warm as his comfortable life. And in 1886 he posed the question "What then must we do?" After much thought and prayer, the answer came to him: "we must give with love to all whom God puts in our path." Tolstoy took his millions of rubles and gave it to the poor. He lived a happy man amongst these poor. He espoused passive resistance long before it was popular and was a good Christian in the best sense of the word. 24 years later, on his way to a monastery, he died.

We were put upon this earth to be happy and free. Dostoevsky believed that few of us were strong enough to firmly grasp our freedom and through right use of it become happy. I pray he was wrong. "What then must we do?" It's up to each one of us to decide for ourselves.