

Jesus and the World

Note:

These notes are inspired in paragraph No 63/3 of the Book of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. In that place St. Ignatius entreats the retreatants to ask their Heavenly Father for the grace of “ **A knowledge of the world that filled with horror I may put away from me all that is worldly and vain**”.

Intent of these notes:

To realize the radical opposition between Jesus mentality and the mentality of the world.

To warn us lest we are drugged by “our world” away from “Jesus our Saviour”

Use of these jottings

For personal meditation and reflection.

For talks and exhortations to Christian audiences

For exhortation during an Ignatian Retreat

INTRODUCTION

What Does Jesus Mean by the Term: THE WORLD?

- Not the people of the world. However wicked and sinful. Jesus loved them; he died for them all, even for the worst sinners.
- Not the things of this world. They are God’s creation. They are all good in themselves. The Bible says “and God saw that all he created was very good”.
- Created things are The God-given-means to help us to know, love and serve Him and thus, save ourselves. They can only be called bad when through our wrong use of them, they hinder us from loving God and neighbour.
- By the word “world” we mean the spirit of the world, its maxims, its mentality and values as opposed to Jesus’ values, spirit and mentality.
- The worldly mentality is like an atmosphere wherein we breathe, move and live. An atmosphere that **poisons** our minds, that **blurs** our spiritual vision, that **cools down** our love for God and neighbour, which **chills** our good desires and takes us away from God.
- We could define the mentality of the world as a naturalistic outlook that makes our material world and our present terrestrial life an aim in itself. A mentality
 - That deifies the present life and spurns the life to come.

- That loathes prayer and sacrifice.
- That nails our minds to the earth.
- A spirit that enslaves us to God's creation, making God's creatures ends in themselves; actually making them idols to be worshipped in place of our almighty God and loving Father.
- A mentality that is inimical to God.

This spirit, this mentality, without our being aware, creeps into our minds and hearts, into our way of thinking and feeling.

Stealthily, it seeps also into our homes and makes us mundane, materialistic and naturalistic, in a word, practical atheists.

PART ONE

The Attitude of Jesus Towards the Spirit of the World Towards its Values and Mentality Was one of Open Contempt and Condemnation

Ponder , meditate and pray on the following quotes

- **“The world does hate me, because I denounce it for its evil doings.”** (Jn. 7,7)
- **“After his entrance in Jerusalem a voice from heaven was heard: “It was for your sake, now the prince of this world is to be cast out.”** (Jn. 12,31)
- **“It is for these I pray; I am not praying for the world.”** (Jn. 17, 9)
- **“I too do not belong to the world.”** (Jn. 17,14)
- Take Chapter 23 of Mathew. In the entire chapter Christ accuses and exposes the Pharisees for their ‘worldly’ mentality.
- Christ openly denounced the Scribes and Pharisees not so much as a group of opposing people, but much more so, for the mentality and value system they represented. **Christ condemned in them the world, its spirit, its mentality and its values. Unfortunately, a mentality and value system present today in our world and in our hearts too!**
- **“Do not put your trust in men; they will hand you over to courts of judgment and scourge you in their synagogues; yes, and you will be brought before governors and kings on my account...”** (Mt. 10, 17-18)

- Read and ponder and comment on: Mt. 10, 26-26; Jn. 15, 18-21; Jn. 17, 9-19
- “Blessed are you when men kill you and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely because of me. Be glad and light hearted for a great reward awaits you in heaven.” (Mt. 5, 12)
- “No one can be slave to two masters; he will either hate one or love the other; or he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both, God and money.” (Mt. 6/24)
- “He, who is not with me, is against me; and he who does not gather with me, scatters!” (Lk. 11/23)

PART TWO

The Attitude of The World Towards Jesus Was One of

Hostility and Hatred

Yes, the world we love so much, the world that promises us so much, that entices us, that very world calumniated and condemned Jesus whom we love! The world said of Jesus:

- He is a glutton
- He is a malefactor
- He is possessed by the devil
- He is the prince of devils
- He is a blasphemer
- He is an impostor and seducer
- He is a plotter, a disturber of public peace

Persecution and Crucifixion

Yes, this world so charming and sweet, this world so kind and ‘polite’, this very world

- Threatened Jesus’ life at his birth
- Calumniated him during his life
- Scourged him
- Crowned him with thorns
- Mocked him as a fool
- Spat on his face
- Crucified and murdered him.

Yes, the world we have been bluffed to love, has been, is and will be the enemy of Jesus:

- “He, through whom the world was made, was in the world and the world treated him as a stranger.” Jn. 1,10
- “He came to his own and his own received him not.” Jn. 1, 11

PART THREE

What Should our Attitude Towards the World Be?

One of Open Contempt and Ruthless Condemnation

St. James tells us:

“Have you never been told that the world’s friendship means enmity with God and that the man who would have the world for his friend makes himself God’s enemy?” (Jam 4/4)

St. Paul’s tells us:

- “As for me I will boast only of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; for by means of this cross the world is dead to me, and I am dead to the world.” (Gal. 6, 14):
- “The attitude you should have is the one that Jesus Christ had: He always had the very nature of God, but he did not think to become equal with God. Instead, of his own free will he gave it all up, and took the nature of a servant...He was humble and walked the path of obedience to death... A death on the cross...” (Phil. 2/4-8)
- “You have died with Christ and set free from the ruling spirits of the universe. Why then, do you live as though you belong to this world?” (Co. 2/2)
- “You have been raised to life with Christ. Set your hearts, then, on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth.” (Co. 3/1, 2).
- “You must put to death, then, the earthly desires at work in you, such as immorality, indecency, lust, evil passions, and greed which is a form of idol worship.” (Co. 3/5)
- “You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So, you must put on compassion, kindness, gentleness, and patience. Be helpful to one another... You must forgive each other in the same way that the Lord has forgiven you. And to all these add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity. Christ’s message in all its richness must live in your hearts.” (Co 3/12-16)

Reflection and Prayer

- Whom are you going to follow? Jesus or the world?
- Whom are you going to despise? Jesus or the world?
- Whose mentality, whose attitudes will you put on?
- Whose maxims and principles will you follow?
- Whom will you serve?

Scripture quotes for Prayer:

What a Friend We Have in Jesus!

In whom you can confide. (Jn 15/15)

Who is always ready to listen to you. (Lk 7/44-47)

Who desires what is best for you (Rom 8/28)

Who gives you joy (Jn 17/13-22)

Who supports you (Rom 1/38-39)

Who never disappoints you (Mt 7/24-25)

Who does not deceive you (Heb 10/23)

Who seeks your friendship (Rev 3/8)

Who you can look up to (Jn 6/68)

Who does not overlook anything you do (Rev 2/4)

Who wants you to be whole (Rev 3/15-16)

Who helps you to get rid of your faults (Phil 4/13)

Who assures you that your life will be successful (Jn 8/12)

Who frees you from anger and boredom (1 Cor.13/5-7)

Who gives meaning to your life (Jn 17/3)

Who plans for your life (Eph 1/18-23)

Who calls the best out of you (Mt 5/48; Phil 1/6)

Who helps you grow to be what you are to be (Rom 8/17-29)

Who takes away your burdens and worries (Mt 6/25-34)

Whom you can admire (Lk 11/27)

Who has power (Mt 28/18)

Who can change the world (Mt 21/5)

Who brings you to fulfilment (Jn 1/25)