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And Fools Seldom Disagree

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

I mentioned the on-going danger of Pelagianism in my post this morning on the Triduum. Then, about an hour later, I read the Holy Father's sermon at this morning's Chrism Mass (h/t to Rocco), and, lo and behold, he mentioned Pelagianism too! The entire homily is worth reading. Very beautiful. And, I hope his description of what makes a good priest will guide his selection of new bishops!

Francis said:

A good priest can be recognized by the way his people are anointed. This is a clear test. When our people are anointed with the oil of gladness, it is obvious: for example, when they leave Mass looking as if they have heard good news. Our people like to hear the Gospel preached with ?unction?, they like it when the Gospel we preach touches their daily lives, when it runs down like the oil of Aaron to the edges of reality, when it brings light to moments of extreme darkness, to the ?outskirts? where people of faith are most exposed to the onslaught of those who want to tear down their faith. People thank us because they feel that we have prayed over the realities of their everyday lives, their troubles, their joys, their burdens and their hopes. And when they feel that the fragrance of the Anointed One, of Christ, has come to them through us, they feel encouraged to entrust to us everything they want to bring before the Lord: ?Pray for me, Father, because I have this problem?, ?Bless me?, ?Pray for me? ? these words are the sign that the anointing has flowed down to the edges of the robe, for it has turned into prayer. The prayers of the people of God. When we have this relationship with God and with his people, and grace passes through us, then we are priests, mediators between God and men. What I want to emphasize is that we need constantly to stir up God's grace and perceive in every request, even those requests that are inconvenient and at times purely material or downright banal ? but only apparently so ? the desire of our people to be anointed with fragrant oil, since they know that we have it. To perceive and to sense, even as the Lord sensed the hope-filled anguish of the woman suffering from hemorrhages when she touched the hem of his garment. At that moment, Jesus, surrounded by people on every side, embodies all the beauty of Aaron vested in priestly raiment, with the oil running down upon his robes. It is a hidden beauty, one which

shines forth only for those faith-filled eyes of the woman troubled with an issue of blood. But not even the disciples ? future priests ? see or understand: on the ?existential outskirts?, they see only what is on the surface: the crowd pressing in on Jesus from all sides (cf. Lk 8:42). The Lord, on the other hand, feels the power of the divine anointing which runs down to the edge of his cloak.

By way of contrast - and again, h/t to Rocco - check out the second of two photos of the incoming Archbishop of Portland, Oregon - you will need to scroll down. How tall is that miter? Does all that lace make you feel that the one wearing it is touching your daily life? Okay, if you are RuPaul, maybe, but the rest of us? And the gloves, what is with the gloves? Can't touch the mundane? I have no problem if people like the Traditional Latin Mass, especially older people who have nostalgic memories of it. But when a 52 year old is all wrapped up in something he does not remember, and I use the term wrapped up precisely, alarm bells go off. Whatever else it is, the Traditional Latin Mass is not a pastoral program for the 21st century. And, as Francis is showing us, the pastoral program for this pontificate is to model the simplicity of the Master.

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