

Keeping God First (Episcopal Idols)

Idolatry is defined as: the worship of a physical object as a god or an immoderate attachment or devotion to something (or someone). The key word in this definition is of course “immoderate”. The word immoderate speaks to excessiveness; in this case, an excessive devotion or reverence shown.

It is not uncommon for an adjutant to show great devotion, reverence and loyalty to his leader. I am reminded of Peter, who when he was confronted with those who sought to take his master away, he acted...violently! Two of the four Gospels record that they “laid their hands on Jesus” with obvious intent to physically remove him. I can imagine the disciples were already tense at the situation unfolding before their eyes. Truly this level of devotion is desirous of those who seek to serve in the adjutancy.

The trouble lies when our loyalty slips from reverence to worship and we set our leaders up as idols. Yes, it is our charge to “sanctify our leaders in the eyes of the people”. Yes, it is our task to teach others how to respect our bishops and pastors, through our own humble example. Bear in mind, we’re talking about immoderate devotion. This means giving a place in our hearts to our leaders that God should occupy.

This is a “delicate” subject so I need us to be mature as we read and consider. Do not be confused nor slow-witted. Idolizing our leaders is sometimes displayed as covetousness. It means being covetous when others are mentored and taught by our leaders instead of them spending that time solely with us. Hear me when I tell you this, as a servant, you have no earthly idea how you should be trained, nor the length of time you need in tutelage and mentorship. This path leads to the servant thinking more highly of himself than he ought. It is simply yours to be available and attentive. It is not our leader, per se who teaches but the Holy Spirit which speaks *through* our leader.

When someone begins to idolize and is covetous of their leader, motive must be questioned. This month’s adjutant’s reflection has been a bit more...dour than we’re used to but it is a necessary topic to keep us focused on the Spirit of the Lord and not the man. It is God who we honor as we serve our leaders, not man himself. Maintaining perspective of the spirit of adjutancy and not performing a role or fulfilling a function will assist us in keeping God first. Maintaining God 1st in our hearts is a sure way to maintain spiritual integrity in our service to our leaders.

Love your leader and respect their Office. Show them much loyalty, devotion and excellent Spirit-filled service. Maintain focus on the servant’s heart God has given you and use that gift to glorify Him, not puff up man. Keep your motive for service God-centered and you ‘can’t go wrong’. In other words, serve to please God. That should be your goal.

Grace and Peace be to you all.