

Serving Berlin's English-speaking Catholic Community since 1957



Catholic Community

Member of the English-Speaking Mission

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Our Mission Statement: The All Saints Catholic Community is a fully integrated, multicultural community with English as its unifying language. It is an open, warm, welcoming, inclusive community that prays together and celebrates its unity in diversity.

August 2, 2015 Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings (*Missalette* p 37 et seqq.): Ex 16:2-4, 12-15 • Ps 78:3-4, 23-25, 54 • Eph 4:17, 20-24 • Jn 6:24-35

Celebrant: Fr Herbert Gillessen

THEY WANTED TO MAKE HIM KING, BUT HE WENT AWAY...

When you walk into a classroom of ten-year-old kids and ask who thinks himself capable of becoming the next president many fingers would go up. If you or I would be asked to step into the shoes of Frau Merkel or Mr. Obama, we would politely decline knowing only too well that we would not manage to run the government even for a single day.

In last week's Gospel, Jesus is aware that after feeding the multitude, the people intend to make him king. He runs away and hides in the hills, but not because he doubts his capacities as a leader nor because he is aware that the Roman army would very quickly annihilate him and his followers. No, Jesus refused to become a pawn in a political power game that utterly contradicted his own vision of leadership, kingship and authority. The people's expectations of a Messiah-King were totally different from his. His kingdom is not of this world. He came to serve, not to be served, and to give his life for the many.

Jesus lived in tough times. A brutal Roman occupation army oppressed the land. The puppet kings exploited the people by imposing endless taxes. Their religious leaders behaved more like politicians than spiritual leaders.

How to overcome this depressing situation? There were four very different answers given in Israel at the time. The community of Qumran went into the desert to live in a purely spiritual world, comparable to some esoteric movements today. The Zealots, like Islamist terrorists, wanted to create a just world by killing the Romans, but in the end brought about the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish people. The Pharisees, a bit like today's religious fundamentalists, believed that taking the Scriptures, especially the law, literally would save the world. Finally, the Sadducees compromised with the system to their own advantage.

Jesus did not join any of these groups. He knew that neither a political revolution nor an escape into spiritual worlds nor an enforced morality could bring about real change. Only a change of mind and heart could achieve that, a change brought about not by force or coercion, but by kind invitation, authentic living example and loving care for each person. In this way he won over the Roman officer, Nicodemus the Pharisee and even Simon the Zealot who joined his team of twelve apostles.

That is the way Jesus invites us to change our chaotic world. Jesus' revolution is a long, patient process to be started anew in every generation, beginning in each of our own minds and hearts.

Wolfgang Schonecke MAfr

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Directions to All Saints: **Subway:** U 3, Oskar-Helene-Heim (10-min. walk) or S 1, Zehlendorf, then bus. • **Bus:** Bus 285: stop Am Waldfriedhof (last stop, 2-min. walk); bus 110 or 623: stop Oskar-Helene-Heim (10-min. walk) or bus 115: stop Hüttenweg (5-min. walk). • **Car:** A115 Avus highway, Hüttenweg exit or Clayallee (<http://berlinonline.de/citymap>)