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A Tainted Libation

"I am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure is at hand.
I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith."
2 Timothy 4:6-7

Have we been *poured out as a libation* for Christ Jesus?

Probably not.

In fact, the point of our being Catholic at all very likely has had little in the way of any adverse consequences in our lives.

In other words, if we have not *suffered for the sake of Christ* —

- shame
- humiliation
- disdain
- ridicule
- rejection
- contempt

If we have not been marginalized as —

- fanatic
- behind the times
- holier-than-thou
- traditionalist
- extremist
- pre-Vatican II
- patriarchal
- anti-feminist

If we have not been —

- castigated
- ridiculed
- excluded
- shunned

If no epithet has been hurled at us to make us look like fools before "modern" and "progressive" Catholics, to say nothing of the world at large — then we have not been poured out.

We have cherished the world over Christ; and have even been applauded for it. We use "the Name" even as we repudiate the "Person". We lustily sing that "We are the sheep of His fold" ... even after we have torn down the fence and strayed, with no clear direction from our priests and bishops, into other pastures. We are told, in an age of mindless and unbridled ecumenism, that there really are no fences any longer and that one fold is really no different from another, however much the sheep somehow look like wolves. And behave like wolves. And howl like wolves.

Why, then, is Saint Paul's fate so different from our own? Following Christ literally cost him his head in Rome.

The answer is found in the previous verses omitted from today's readings:

"For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths." (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

"... People will not tolerate sound doctrine."

Let us put Saint Paul's words in a more contemporary setting:

"Following our own desires and insatiable curiosity, we have accumulated teachers (bishops, priests, theologians, CCD teachers, RCIA instructors) who **will** satisfy our desires", in other words, who will teach us *what we want to hear*, and not what we **must** hear; who will teach us that sin and corruption, properly understood, are acceptable to God after all, and that this whole "Roman thing" doesn't apply to Catholicism in America, Europe, or, for that matter, to any "enlightened" culture any more. It is hopelessly archaic, unenlightened, "patriarchal", stultifying, and terribly dissonant with everything that is now socially correct, legislated, mandated and rigorously enforced by a ruthlessly secular State which is intolerant of intolerance ... and that, by policy, refuses to acknowledge this contradiction.

This attitude explains why we have kept our own heads (in a manner of speaking), while Saint Paul lost his.

We *have* no libation to pour out – because no one has filled our cups since the Second Vatican Council ... or if they have, the substance is profoundly diluted, and often tainted. Instead of sound doctrine, our cups have been, by and large, filled with quite nearly anything to calculated to satisfy *our* desires ... which are not the same as God's. And this really is the root of the problem.

We *still* want God's "stamp of approval", and since Rome will not give it to us, we seek out bishops, priests, theologians, clerics, ecclesiastical functionaries of every sort more perverse than ourselves who *will* give us both: our own corrupt desires and a counterfeit stamp of God's approval.

This is what the Roman State wanted from Saint Paul.

And it is precisely what Saint Paul would not give them.

But ... unlike St. Paul, for Heaven's sake ... we must not lose our heads over it. Mustn't we ...?

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