

New Sunday – Judging

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian
St. Sarkis Armenian Church. Carrollton, TX
April 8, 2018
Gospel Reading: John 1:1-17*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Today in the Armenian Church, calendar is known as “Repeat Easter”, because it is a reminder to all the faithful that every Sunday is Easter, that is to say, every Sunday is the resurrection. We do not just celebrate it once a year, but every Sunday. Today is also known as “New Sunday”, because the faithful begin a new life in the light of the resurrection of Christ. Through His resurrection, death has been defeated and destroyed. Of course we all die, but that death is temporary. True death is exile from God’s presence, which is a result of sin.

So, through Christ’s resurrection, we are given the power and opportunity to also destroy sin, but unfortunately, we continue to “kill” ourselves and distance our souls from God by committing sins. There are many types of sin and we tend to rank them from the most harmless to the most grievous. For many, murder would be considered a grave sin, but changing some numbers on our tax forms so we pay less in taxes, well, we may think that is not so bad. But for God, sin is sin. Anything which interrupts our relationship with God and removes us from His presence is a sin. And one of the greatest sins, which we do not realize, but we do all the time, is judging others.

There was once a little girl who had two apples. Her mother came over and, in a sweet and loving voice, asked for one of the apples. The little girl looked at her, picked up one of the apples and took a bite out of it. The mother was stunned but didn’t say anything. Then the little girl picked up the other apple and took a bite out of that one. Now the mother was trying, tenderly, to hide her anger, but her smile left her face and she was turning red. She just could not understand why her daughter was doing what she was doing. Finally, her daughter picked up one of the apples, extended it to her mother and said, “Here mom. Take this one. This one is sweeter and yummiier”.

We must never judge anyone, no matter how mature, experienced or intelligent we may be, we never know what is going on in the hearts and minds of others. We must always give them the opportunity to explain their actions because what we see can be very deceiving. Generally, we only see a picture and do not understand or know what moves someone to do what they do.

When I first read this story, I immediately thought that this girl was an undisciplined pig, because I did not know what she was doing, but it all became clear at the end. How many of us act and live, judging and forming opinions, without knowing the whole story? How many of us do this with friends, family members, bosses, coworkers, politicians, and even presidents?

We are called to follow Christ’s perfect example of how not to judge. In the Gospel of John it is written, “For God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that it might be

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saved” (3:17) and Christ Himself says, “For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world” (12:47). Jesus never judged and never thought to know the whole story, even though He knew and read the hearts of men, His purpose was to save: to bring people back into the presence of God. If we are to be true Christians and followers of Christ, then we too are called to put aside our judgmental attitudes, recognizing we do not know the whole story, and bring people back to God which sin has removed them from.

As we celebrate new Sunday and start a new life in the risen Jesus Christ, let us live a new life void of judgment. Let us strive to help others, giving them the opportunity to explain the situation they are in and give them a hand, helping them rise up from sin and join the risen Lord so they too can worship and glorify the one who was before the ages.

Amen.