

4—Victims, Victimizers, and Those Who Profit from Victimization

Side 1

This retreat and the one before it ultimately, of course, takes its content and its purpose and its meaning and its existence from Jesus and from his gospel. But we're here in Ireland and one of the, or perhaps the major thing that sparked the particular retreat last March for a week and then this weekend here, this follow-up retreat had been the fact that in Ireland there is a particular aberration of the mother of God at Nark. It wasn't just an aberration on August 21, 1879 up of Mary, it was an aberration of Mary and John the Baptist and St. Joseph, but the centerpiece of the aberration, for those few hours done that night when it happened and all those people saw it, the centerpiece, of course, was a cross with a lamb in front of it standing in an altar. Therefore the cross and the lamb are obviously are gospel symbols, central gospel symbols. Of course people have gone there for these hundred and plus years and they have prayed, and they have prayed to Jesus and they have asked Mary and John and Joseph to pray with them to Jesus. But an aberration isn't just given, doesn't just come, the Holy Spirit does not just intervene in history exclusively for the local population of Nark or even the local population of Ireland. The symbols are universal symbols—the cross, lamb, altar. I'd like to talk a little bit about that tonight from the gospel perspective that ultimately moved and created this weekend, the weekend here and the week before at Nark where we gave the retreat in March.

I'd like to approach the meaning of that central symbol—the cross and the lamb—this way. The lamb, in scripture and reality, is a victim and the symbol of a victim. Jesus is explicitly called in scripture, and our liturgy even, a victim. He is also called the lamb. In actual human history where there is a victim there is or are victimizers, and where there is a victim there is always a ??????????, and where there is a victim there are those that profit from victimization. And where there is a victim in victimization, there is always violence, always. Jesus comes to this world, which we hear in the Christmas story the very first words to bring peace on earth. Peace, peace. The way the world brings peace, Jesus tells us explicitly is not the way peace can be brought about. He weeps over Jerusalem and he says; peace, peace, everyone wants peace. If you only knew the things that will bring peace. The way the world makes peace, the way nations make peace is through victimization. The victimization of people is the world's way of making peace. We see that in war where people kill people in order to have peace. We see it in internal struggles in a society, for example, we see it in Rwanda today where people destroy people so they can have peace. The idea being, of course, that if I destroy these people or if I can control these people through hurt and pain, I will have peace. This is the way the world makes peace.

Of course, that's the way the individual makes peace in the world. How many times have you seen, has it happened to you or have you done it—someone offends you, hurts you, tremendous unpeace. They said this, it was a lie, or that, whatever the case may be. So what you do is, you go out and gossip about them. You say something true or untrue and you say it to just the person and just the place where you know it's going to spread and you know it's going to hurt them and oh, you feel peace about it now. The nature of revenge is that it gives peace, that it gives peace. When people victimize us in any way, shape or form, the feeling they are taking our life from us, they are taking being from us, we are losing something of our existence when they treat us unjustly, when they hurt us, when they humiliate us, when they crush us, or in the extreme when

they kill us. They are taking our very being from us and we feel less human, less alive, less what we think we should be. So we get our being back, we get our life back, we get our sense of life back by taking away some being from them, by somehow pulling something out of their life, making them less alive.

Of course, victimization is a personal thing in the sense that everyone has to victimize—to victimize is a personal thing, we have to victimize one by one, but there is a collective reality to it. Did you even notice that in laws, when laws occur, when the law is declared, when the enemy is seen, whoever the enemy is, all of a sudden people become alive and they work together, there is energy in the society, there is purpose, there's life, there's being, the trumpets, the bugles, the enthusiasm, the plans and we join together to victimize, to kill. So we see the same thing, for example, so we have the gossiping with someone about someone—say bad things. All of a sudden the other person comes back in kind and says, oh yeah I heard she did this. All of a sudden there is really life in the group, the two of them. Old, boring a life a few seconds ago, a few minutes ago, now there's a lot of zest and zeal and we're all talking about one person and saying she's this or that and she did this and did you hear this and so forth and so on. Life is through victimization. That's the world's way of making peace and giving life. There is only one problem with it—the one problem is that victimization requires the victim's silence.

Victimization requires the victim's silence. The voice of the victim, his or her cries in pain and agony, their feelings, their loss of hope or whatever, has to be kept out of view in order for it to work. I cannot, when I gossip, I cannot really feel what is going to happen to the person because this gossip is going to go out and mess up their lives or destroy their lives. I have to close my mind to all of that and do it. Her voice or his voice of pain I cannot allow to enter into my brain.

So also in war, the victim has to be silenced. I cannot allow myself, if I am say a B29 bomber over Dresden? in 1945, I cannot allow myself to hear the cries of the 300,000 people that I'm burning to death—men, women and children. They must be silenced, and so victimization carries with it's logic—the logic of victimization is that the victim must be silenced. Oh, he or she may be screaming in agony, but the sound will never reach the ear. It will never be allowed to enter into the human mind or heart.

Several years ago in the United States, you probably saw it hear, there was a movie produced by the Right to Life People, the anti-abortion people, called Silent Screams. What it was, it was a movie done by special kinds of medical camera work inside the womb, and it showed a child in utero being aborted and what the agony was that the child went through—you know the flailing kind of motions and the terror and so forth and so on as life is being ripped apart. Everything that would happen to a human being outside the womb, happens to the child. The same kinds of movements and feelings when it's hit with pain, the same kind of movements of the facial muscles and so forth and so on. The terrifying—you know, the panicky moving of arms and legs to get free and so forth. The pro-abortion movement, which is basically in total control of the mass media in the United States pooh poohed the film. It's just emotionalism, as if it made no difference what was actually, physically happening that there really was pain going on. So also when we look at war. During a war, we never, unless there is an accident of some kind—we never see the agony of the so-called enemy. The enemy is, for all practical purposes, made sub-human. The pain and the cries and so forth, the misery of their families, the misery of their hearts and so forth are not allowed to enter in, on all sides, not just one, on all sides. Victimization, the

logic of it requires a conspiracy of silence. We will not see the truth of the matter, whether it's gossip, whether it's war, whether it's revolution; and that carries on out into history because the victors write history, not the victims. Those who survive write history. The glories of the country that the children are taught in grammar school and elementary school and high school go from war to war to war, whether they be revolutionary or international. Nothing is ever said of the victims on all sides, their pain and their agony is just lost. Napoleon takes 400,000 troops out of France and goes into Russia, and after a campaign of madness seeking glory and power and wealth, he comes back with 10,000. Over 3000,00 people destroyed in the cold and the agony and the misery of war, goes into Russia, and no one hears of them. Just more and more than Napoleon, then this happens, then that happens. The victors write history and the victims go into history silenced.

Jesus is clearly and unequivocally, in every way but sin, a victim of history. Precisely as all victims have been, he is. He suffers, he's tormented, he's tortured, he's killed, he was slain, he was a victim no different than any other victim. Gallgather, where he was crucified, was called the place of skulls because literally on the 10-year period on each side of Jesus there would have been approximately 10,000 people executed there. Gallgather, there were just skulls lying around all over the place and bones and so forth because they would be left to die on the cross and then the vultures and so forth would come and have their meal off them and that would be the end of them. Jesus was a victim like any other victim. Kaopheus, the Jewish high priest, was a spiritual, political leader like any other spiritual, political leader. Kaopheus is not a bad man by any human standards that we know. Kaopheus is a good politician, his motto is, it is better that or some should die than that the whole nation should perish. He had no problem with that at all. In this particular case, to this day, this hour, this particular moment in his career the one that had to die that had to be victimized was Jesus. And so he killed him, just like kings and emperors and political leaders in the revolutionaries and so forth understand precisely the same thing. They are if you will, savior destroyers. They save by destroying, they bring peace by destruction. Salvation through destruction is the world's way to peace. Once the leader points out what an enemy Jesus is and rouses the people up yelling crucify him, crucify him. There is real energy now and there's real life. That walk between the time Jesus is given his cross and the short maybe quarter mile, half mile, maybe, walk to Gallgather carrying the beam of the cross. That was no joke, that was real life for those who were killing him. We oft times forget in the Inquisition where Jews and heretics were burned at the stake, it wasn't just that someone was found to be a heretic pulled out and burned at the stake. These were festivals. People came by the hundreds and by the thousands to them. They were advertised months in advance. Plenary indulgences were given for coming. There was real life here. They were surrounded by state pageantry and religious liturgy, and people came. They used to stuff, to the point of almost suffocation, the mouth of the particular victim so that he or she could not yell out things that would be, oh, just unpleasant to the ear of the celebrators. But there was life in victimization. Crucify him, crucify him.

We know the same thing is true, not only in every army and every violent revolution, the same thing is also true when two people get together and gossip about someone else. There is life in hurting in victimization. The acceptance of victimization in secular society is universal throughout the world. It is accepted without thinking. We have a right to harm others to bring our own peace. For example, the victimization so we can have a better life is normal can be seen in

no clearer symbol than the pyramids, the first wonder of the world. Hundreds of thousands of human beings for generation were taken and used up their entire life in slave conditions, for all practical purposes, to put these massive stones together to build a tomb for the pharaoh and his wife. So while they lived they could have greater life and know that this is where they were going to go and this is how they were going to be remembered. It's a wonder of architecture engineering, and it is also a clear, unequivocal symbol of systematic and gross victimization of human beings. No one sees the victimization. Everyone marvels at the architecture, the engineering, the mystery of how those massive blocks were ever moved, but no one sees the blood on them, and that shows you have the victors silence the voices of those they use.

Jesus was a victim. Now, we know that objectively speaking the victim's suffer, and they suffer terribly. That's the objective truth. For example, in the second world war 866 German submarines were sunk in the Atlantic ocean—866 between 1941 and 1945—all of them had crews—different in size, different number—what was it like in those last minutes to be under water with the water pouring in, what kind of death was it? What kind of horror was it? You never hear of it. To this day they show the sinking of those submarines on American television and it's all with glory in terms of the people doing the killing. So, also, we've all seen pictures of the planes in the second world war with the bombers and so forth being shot down on one side or another. What does it mean to be in one of those going down to a flaming death. We've all flown in airplanes. Recently there was an airplane that crashed in the United States, a large airplane, a commercial airliner, 162 people aboard, and normally when this happens a week or two or three after the Federal Aviation Commission—there is a black box in the plane that is impervious to being broken and it records everything that's going on from the pilot's cabin and normally when that happens, universally when that happens the tape of the black box is simply given to the press and it's put in the newspapers. The government and the press voluntarily withheld this tape because of the horror of what was going on in the plane, and yet you can look at the television and see these planes going down in the second world war. The victim's voice, the sufferer's voice has to be silenced. Only the victor's voice can be heard. All states, all nations are founded, they are built, founded and built on victims. All states are built on corpses and it's by corpses that they are kept in existence.

The theology of victimization is that we will rid the world of sin by ridding the world of sinners. We will rid the world of sin by shedding the blood of sinners. The center of course, and it doesn't just have to be the center, it can be also anyone that happens to be in the way of us eliminating the center, the President or the ?????????? it makes no difference. And so, the state is founded on a victim system. The reality of the matter is that a great deal of our psyche is also founded on the victim system. How many times has it occurred and how many times have you heard about it or felt it even, you know someone has done something terrible to you, 10, 15, 20 years ago and then one morning you pick up the paper and you see something terrible has happened to them and your immediate reaction is you feel good, you feel justified. It is a universal phenomena. Jesus Christ, the lamb of God, the son of God, the incarnation of God invalidates the victim system as a way to live. Jesus is a victim like all victims except his voice was not silenced. His voice goes out till this very hour. He revealed the evil that is in the peace that the world brings, a peace through the victimization of others, a salvation through destruction. To view the cross is to view a victim. To view the cross is to view a victim of the victimization system of a religion and of the state. To view the cross is to view a victim who is

de-legitimatised in the eyes of God and those who destroyed him were justified in the eyes of God by those living at that time. To view the cross is to see a victim between two victims—is to view someone who stood with the victims of the world and died with them. To view the cross is to see that God stands with the victims, not the victors. God is right next to the victims. The great passage of the last judgment in Matthew 25—I was hungry, you gave me to eat, I was thirsty, you gave me to drink, I was homeless and you, you know, you brought me in, naked and you clothed me, and so it's all about victims. All about victims—those people who through the violence of a few are victimized.

We know today, for an example, that perhaps most of the clothes, most of the gadgets, most of the trinkets the first world peoples live off of are produced by child labor, by sweat shop labor in the third world. By victimization. And so, Matthew 25 says explicitly—Lord, where did we see you hungry, thirsty, naked, you know, and Jesus said whatever you did or didn't do to the least, you did or didn't do to me because that's where I am, I'm with the victim. I'm with the victim, I am not with the victor. Part of the terrible upside down turning of the Church at the time of Constantine was God became the God of the victor—the victimizer, the king. Indeed, even the bishops and so forth began to adopt dress similar to the emperor's dress, similar to the king's dress. They became identified, the leadership of the Church became identified with the ruling class, when the founder was identified with the victims, the sufferers.

Jesus is the one who suffers capital punishment, He is not the one who executes it. Jesus is the one who's victimized, He is not the victimizer. In fact, Jesus shows us the way to be victim. He shows us that to be a victim can be a co-redeemer. He shows us that the way to be a victim is to endure evil with love. To return good for evil. To pray for those who are persecuting. To forgive those who are destroying. He not only show us that, He says that this is the way to life in abundance. He doesn't say it's the way to life and affluence. He shows us that the way to be a victim is to unite with Him, and indeed if necessary shed our blood for those who were destroying us, so that they will have a chance to convert and know life eternal. And He explicitly communicates the way is not the way of shedding the other's blood.

There is a story in the Old Testament about Elijah, a famous story—and Elijah goes up to Mount Carmel, and he has a, he's really having a problem with the Jewish people, because the Jewish people massively are turning away from Jawae and they are worship Bahal—the god Bahal. And yet they're coming back to do religious services for Jawae and that—then they're going over the Bahal. And then they come back, and then they go over to Bahal. Now Bahal was a terrible kind of god—in other words, one of the things Bahal was involved in was child sacrifice. So the Jewish people were involved in sacrificing their children to Bahal and then coming over here and worshiping Jawae. Not it was very clear Jawae has nothing to do with child sacrifice, that's the story of Abraham on forward. Killing children to appease a god. And so what takes place is that finally Elijah, in a dramatic scene, says stop hopping from one foot to another. If Jawae is God, follow him—if Bahal is God, follow him. You must stop straddling the fence. Because in straddling the fence, they were actually following Bahal.

The question that we Christians have to ask is this—using the Elijah story—if Jesus is God, if Jesus is Savior, follow Him. If He is not, follow someone else. But it's a nonsensical world to be saying Jesus is Savioyr, and rejecting His way of salvation. Or worse, saying Jesus is Saviour

and turning His way of salvation upside down. His way of salvation is conquering evil with love, returning good for evil, overcoming evil with good, enduring evil with love. Through that will come a peace that is the peace of God—the peace of the world is a phony peace, it's a false peace, it's a pseudo peace, because it's a peace of some based on the victimization of others. Jesus is not a saviour destroyer, Jesus is Saviour—of all. And so, if there is something superior in this world to following Jesus, then that's the task—go to what is superior. But if there's nothing superior, then meaning and purpose requires following Jesus. Not selectively, following Jesus. Jesus is the Lamb of God. Jesus' teachings are the teachings of the Lamb. The teachings of the Lamb are not that the saints are here to kill the sinners. It is rather that as co-redeemers with the Lamb of God, in that same spirit that motivated and moved Jesus, the spirit of love even of enemies, the spirit of compassion, even towards those who were destroying him, we enter into that spirit in union with Christ, we join Christ in the cross, we join Christ there, and then we have purpose to life—for we are participating in the salvation of the world.

Think about it—on the assumption that the people who are attacking us, whoever they may be, by word or by deed or whatever the case may be, on assumption that the people who are attacking us are evil or wrong doers, is the Christ-like thing to do to return evil for evil? Of course not—it can't be the Christ-like thing, because that's not what Jesus did. Would it have been better—do you think the world really would have been better, do you think that the gospel would have been proclaimed, do you think there would be any Christianity if what Jesus did in Gethsemane and Calvary was to return evil for evil, rather than to become dominated by evil people? Rather than to respond to evil with love—what, there'd be no Christianity, there'd be nothing. He would just be another revengeful warrior. Would it have been better for Jesus to go out and raise an army, or get a gang together to kill those who were trying to kill him? What kind of gospel, what kind of Christianity would there be? But you say, we can't let evil men dominate us—we can't let evil people rule us. There is a difference, isn't there, between our being, being subject to, or evil things doing, being done to us, and our becoming evil. We do not have to become evil, because evil things are done to us. Whether it be the insult, the punch or the gun. We can respond in a Christ-like way. In that strange mystery of the cross, it is precisely at the moment when it's hardest to love that love makes the most difference and will have the most effect in history. That's Calvary.

Think about it—someone does something wrong to you, whether it's in word or in deed or stealing your money or upsetting your good name or whatever the case may be—and then you return it in kind, you know. And you get deep into the whole thing of talking about them this way, and doing this sort of thing and so forth and so on. And then what do you become? You become a mirror image of what he was, of what he was doing—that's all—a mirror image. Two people doing the same thing. But I will not allow myself to be dominated by injustice and evil and oppression and etcetera, etcetera. I'll fight back, or else I'll be a doormat—in the process the victimized becomes just like the one who's victimizing them—the spirit becomes the same. It is indistinguishable. But consider the other way, consider this—James Nyler, James Nyler, back in 1660, was, refused to go into the, in the British military - because it was inconsistent with teachings of Jesus. And so they put him in prison, and after he finished his prison term in London, he was, that very day he was going home to Wakefield. And on his way back, whether it was done by the prison officials or whether it was just an accident, on the way back he was attacked, beaten, robbed, had all his money and all his clothes stolen and left to die. He was

found by some people, and they, they brought him to the house where he did die a few hours later. But in the two hours or so that he had that he lived, he asked to, for a piece of paper and he wrote out his final thoughts—and I'd like to read them to you. Just one paragraph. Remember he's a Christian who's trying to live in the spirit of the non-violent Jesus, returning good for evil, enduring evil with love, and not retaliating. Living in the holy spirit of Jesus, in other words. This is what he wrote after what happened to him, and the destruction of him, just a short while before he died. He said, "There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, and the hope of enjoying it's own in the end. It's hope is to outlive all wrath and all contention, to weary out all exaltation and cruelty of whatever is the nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations, as it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in the thoughts to any other. And if it be betrayed it bears it, for it's ground and spring are the mercies and forgiveness of God. The crown of this spirit is meekness. It's life is everlasting love unfeigned. It takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and it keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though no one else regard it." Now that's the mind and the heart of a person trying to live in the spirit of Jesus Christ after being torn apart by evil. Evil attacked him, evil didn't conquer him. He did not become evil to respond to evil, and that little paragraph he wrote has gone across the world for 300 years, and people have gotten a deep insight into the Holy Spirit through it.

And so, why is it that we today, who follow Jesus Christ, can think differently today on how to respond to evil than Jesus thought—and why do we think our thinking on how to respond to evil, whether it's the insult, whether it's the stealing from us, whether it's, whether it's the, the fist or the gun or the war, whatever the case may be, whatever the form of evil that hits us—why do we think that, thinking that we have today that we say we can respond to evil with evil—why do we think that has any spiritual validity at all—since it's precisely what Jesus rejected? Let's be clear—the option for the Christian and the non-Christian today is precisely the same option that confronted the Jews 2000 years ago. There is no difference in what's being offered. What we have to choose is exactly what the Jews had to choose 2000 years ago. Joseph Klausner was a major Jewish scholar in this century. Klausner wrote a seminal work on the structure of the, of Jesus' Jewish life as Jesus—it's called Jesus of Nazareth. Because Jesus was a Jew and He only lived in the Jewish world—He wasn't Greek or American or Irish or any—He was Jewish. And Klausner wrote this wonderful book back in the late 20's called Jesus of Nazareth that placed Jesus in a Jewish context. He was not, he was not hostile to Jesus. For example, he says in the book—what is the secret of Jesus' astonishing influence? He is a force and an influence for which history has never yet afforded a parallel. He's searching, he is not a hostile person. But he says, he says this—there is yet another element in Jesus' idea of God which Judaism could not accept. Jesus tells His disciples to love their enemies as well as their friends, since their father in Heaven makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sins rain on the righteous and the ungodly together. With Jesus, with Jesus, with this, Jesus introduces something new into the idea of God—but His teaching has not proved possible. Therefore, He left the course of ordinary life untouched, wicked, cruel, pagan, and his exalted ethical ideal has been relegated to a book, and at most becomes the possession of monastics and recluses. Far away from the path of ordinary life. As a soul insufficient guide to the national code of Judaism, Judaism could not accept this. It was an impossible teaching for Judaism, and such has also been the case for Christianity since the time of Constantine. For all practical purposes, the 1700 years since Constantine, the Church has bracketed out love your enemies by telling people in all kinds of rational ways with logic,

they don't have to do it. Klausner goes on—he says, “Pharasaic Judaism was too mature in its purpose to, it, Pharasaic Judaism was too mature, its purpose too fixed to change. Its leaders were fighting for national existence, and grappling with foreign oppressors and with semi-foreigners that sought to crush it, and with the decadent idolatry that sought to absorb it. In such days of stress and affliction they were themselves far removed, and would remove also their fellow Jews from the dangerous fantasies of Jesus, and extremism which most of the race could not endure. They saw at the outset what the end would be of following Jesus—how could Judaism accede to such an ethical ideal.”

And that's where the Church is today, or at least 95% of it. Exactly where the Jews were 2000 years ago. They have relegated Jesus' teachings on love of enemies, the non-violent love of friends and enemies, responding to evil with good and with love, absolutely and universally under all circumstances, and if not doing it saying I should have done it and getting back to doing it, not justifying it—they have re-, relegated to the bin of history. No single sociologically identifiable unit of people has slaughtered more people in war in the last 1700 years than that group that can be identified as Christian. We are the great victimizers on the face of the earth. We are proceletized, we have catechized, we have missionized—but we have not taught what Jesus taught, about how to overcome evil with love. And so the world is what it is today, and I conclude with this. This is from America magazine, which is a Jesuit magazine in the United States. Rwanda is a predominately Catholic country, predominately Catholic. Tremendous missionary efforts have gone into it. America says, “An estimated half million persons were killed in little over a week's time. These men and women and children were murdered, not by bombs or anti-personnel weapons, but by hand, but by hand-held clubs and knives. It is incomprehensible, the brutal devastation that occurred. We were forced to move and to kill and, and to kill in order not to be killed, the teacher said. We, we risked being killed if we didn't kill. Perhaps the depth of our Christian faith makes too terrible demand on us, perhaps it did for the Christians of Rwanda. A Lutheran minister said, a Lutheran minister admitted to a, prove that he was not one, that he was not on the side of the victims, he had to walk around with a club in his hand and beat people. If he didn't, they would have killed him. When he told them he was a minister, they said, you can have your religion after it's over. And so he did.”

What I'm raising here is this—is that we have a tremendous task in front of us, and it is the same task that Christianity had in front of us to, to ex, in front of itself to extricate itself from the inquisition and from slavery and from the other evils that it slipped into. You are part of that task, and you don't know how important part of that task is. But as a Christian, you are called to be co-redeemers with the Lamb of God, with the victim—and that means to be co-redeemers by enduring evil with love, by accepting to be a victim with love, and never, never, never to be a victimizer or to participate in victimization. You are called to be co-redeemers with the Lamb of God—that's what the Knoch apparition is all about. It can be about nothing else, for the cross and the Lamb are a victimless, are symbols of a victim that responded to evil with love, even unto death.