

Antonin Scalia's Death: A Summons to Mercy

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Mark Twain wrote that Christianity took all the peace out of death. Strictly construed the statement is erroneous.

Nevertheless, Jesus in the Gospels and in some forms of Christianity keep before the mind what, perhaps, a person would prefer to suppress from explicit consciousness, namely, that time and its choices are tethered to eternity. For Christians and others, human existence as lived on earth is not just a meaningless conglomeration of choices in an eternally insignificant game in a sandbox. A human being is not merely "*a poor player that struts and frets its hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more.*" Jesus reveals that the conceivable connection between life on earth and in eternity is a fact of human existence (see MT 25:36ff, "*When the Son of Man comes in all His glory...*"). It is called judgment. He also makes clear what the standard of judgment will be when the Book of Conscience for each life is read: "*For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you again*" (MT 7:2, 6:13; MK 4:24; LK 6:37), "*Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy*" (MT 5:7), "*Whatever you do unto the least, you do unto me*" (MT 25: 40, 45).

The funeral liturgy for Antonin Scalia at the Immaculate Conception Basilica was imperial. It was the social-political event for this year in D.C., so far. The glitterati of politics, the media, finance and the military were there in all their glory. Of course, the one person not in the pews or in the sanctuary was Antonin Scalia. He was with the community of the dead. He was face to face with Ricky Ray Rector, Lionel Herrera, Willie Brown, Karla Faye Tucker, Warren McCleskey, Lynda Block, Willie Darden, Amos King and newly arrived on February 17, 2016, Travis Hittson, as well as 1272 others in whose homicide he participated. In almost all of the 1282 death penalty cases during his time on the Supreme Court, he was positioned to mercifully stop the destruction of each of these human beings. But he publicly, and vigorously or silently, refused to be merciful. A large percentage of the victims of his mercilessness were afforded a funeral far removed from the garishness of his funeral. They were simply thrown into a pauper's grave with the rest of "*the least.*"

On the several nationally televised live broadcasts of Antonin's funeral—and on the days before and after his funeral—the U.S. public was inundated with non-stop laudatory commentaries about him via U.S. corporate media. So be it. People can say what they want, or what they are paid to say as they wish. But let us not be infantile. All praise of any kind originates in some value system, which holds "this or that" is worthwhile in reality. In the MAFIA, the road to praise and glory is being an obedient enforcer for the godfather. In Jesus' understanding of reality, and hence of what is worthwhile, such activity would not be praiseworthy. It would be spurned as evil. What good does it do a person to be a highly praised and honored MAFIA enforcer and lose his immortal soul, would be the view from Jesus' understanding of reality.

Supreme Court Justice Harold Blackmun, a Jew, could easily have supported the death penalty by following the *lex talionis* found in the Mosaic Law and other codes of law:

“The rest will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such an evil thing among you. Thus you shall not show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot” (DT 19:20-21; LEV 24:19-21; EX 21:23).

But, Blackmun did not. When he announced his intention to no longer support the death penalty in any case, he said, *“When I sit on a Court that reviews and affirms capital convictions, I am part of the machinery of death.”* Antonin Scalia a Catholic Christian believed that Jesus was Lord, God, Messiah, the Word of God Incarnate and Savior. He knew that according to His Church’s doctrine, *“The commandments of Jesus, preeminently the Sermon on the Mount, are the standard of Christian conduct, not the Mosaic law, except where some of the Mosaic commandments have now been invested with the authority of Jesus.”* He also knew Jesus did not *“invested with His authority”* the *lex talionis*, but rather totally rejected it: *“You have heard it said of old, ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’ but I say to you...”* (MT 5:38-42). But, he chose to live a significant segment of his life by the letter and spirit of *lex talionis*.

Yet, Antonin Scalia was lionized in the official Catholic press and among the Catholic hierarchy for his Catholicism, even though by a premeditated decision he chose to be only a part-time disciple of Jesus—something Jesus called no one to be. By his own admission, he parted company with Jesus at the doorway to his job. In other words, he followed not the Way of Jesus but the Way of MAFIA Catholicism—family values, excessive tithing, tenacious patriotism, reception of all the Sacraments, a pedestal-like respect for nuns and an appetite for liturgical theatre. But when it came to the organization’s business, Jesus and His teachings were left on the doorstep and locked-out.

What concerns me is the eternal and temporal lethal frivolousness of Mr. Scalia’s Christian witness, indeed his false witness, to others of the Jesus of the Gospels and His teaching. What is equally disquieting are the leaders of the institutional Churches exuberantly aggrandizing his part-time, *les talionis* Christianity. But, what is spiritually alarming in the extreme is his perception of God and reality that would lead him and like-minded Christians to continuously and heedlessly pray, *“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”*

Again, time and its choices of thoughts, words and deeds are tethered to eternity.