

In the book, *Animal Farm*, after animals take over the farm, pigs quickly put themselves in charge. The leader of all animals, Napoleon, later tells other animals that all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal. George Orwell hit the nail on the head, when he described that principle that shapes everyone who puts himself in power, or finds himself in the privileged position.

That is one principle that guided the movers and shakers of the human history, and it is universally present in every culture and every person, consciously or unconsciously: some people are special, while the rest is not. The royalty, nobility, all depends on that principle. Even the plebeians, serfs, and commoners share it: we human beings believe that we are more special than the others.

The democracy is one attempt to correct that age-old practice; it gives an alternative system of government to the mass. The democracy basically runs on this

principle: every one is created *equal*. But democracy seems to run counter to the human instinct. The human instinct drives a human being to behave as if he or she is more special than the others, and causes the person to behave accordingly.

For example, a man may tell himself, "I deserve a bigger income, a beautiful wife, the beach front property, and a mountain chalet, because I am more special than the others; I deserve a VIP treatment, swift loan approvals for the business ventures, and the generous tax breaks, because I am more special than the others."

In the democracy, everyone is viewed as equal. But the practice of democracy is not so. The wealthy are the new nobility. The poor are the new serfs. If you have money and if you know well-connected people, you have a good chance of getting away, literally, with murder. If you are poor, you have a very good chance to be convicted. If you are wealthy, you have the

immediate access to the highest quality medical care; if you are poor, you would probably not receive the timely, quality care. If you are the children of the wealthy or the powerful, you have the easy access to the highest education; if you are poor, you will have to be either exceptionally bright, or must depend on grants and scholarships. Education largely determines one's future income and the ability to lead an enjoyable and satisfying life. There are other factors that determine one's own life, but as far as the way the society functions, these are some of the examples that show how money and clout make some people more "equal" than others.

The bottom line is that, in any given system, the "me special" human instinct overrides any well-conceived idea of the just and righteous society. It is even present in the religious area of life. I am more special than you, because, my denomination is more special than yours; I am more special than you, because I

am a Christian, and you are not; I am more special than you, because my beliefs are based on the biblical passages, and your views are based on the secular human opinions. I am more special than you, because I saved, and you are not.

Such a mentality is not limited to the politics, economics, or religion. I am more special than you, because I am male. I am more special than you, because I am not homosexual. I am more special than you, because my skin is fairer, tighter, and younger than yours. I am more special than you, because I am a citizen, and you are not. I am more special than you, because, I graduated from an Ivy League school. I am more special than you, because you are not from around here. I am more special than you, because I belong to a nobler class than you. And people are convinced that the democracy allows them to practice such beliefs of theirs, and continue to lead their religious and moral lives,

attending churches and praising God.

The "me special" instinct pervades every aspect of life and culture, from the early age. Don't the teachers tell the kids in the schools that they are special? I do not know if the schools teach the children that they are *equally* special, no more, no less than others. If so, what is the point, and it would confuse the kids massively. Who is *special*, when every one is? So your child comes home and asks you: "Mom, am I special?" Did any one here ever intimate to his or her child, "You are more special than others!"? "Ah!" Now the child understands what being special means.

We all know the story about Jesus getting baptized by John the Baptist. Have you wondered why Jesus was baptized? One commonly asked question is: "Was he baptized, because he was sinful?" A Messiah is supposed to be sinless. As the thinking goes, if the Messiah is not able to handle one's own sin,

how can he help with other people's sin? If you are drowning, because you could not swim, how can you rescue other non-swimmers, right?

Personally, I do not see that the above question really helps us understand Jesus. Jesus might have been sinful, or might not have been sinful. It is besides the matter to me. What matters is that Jesus submitted to the baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins, *along* with other sinners. He did so, even though, he is the Son of God. The voice from heaven affirmed: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

As far as being a special person is concerned, in my opinion, nothing beats the direct affirmation from God. Yet Jesus identified himself with other sinners. The sinners were at the lowest in the nobility chart for the Hebrews. He could have claimed certain status privileges, but Jesus did not. What Jesus willed to express by being baptized is this: I am as special

as any sinner here, no more, no less. It could also mean this: any sinner is as special to God as I am. If any sinner is special, then, *every* one is equally special to God.

I believe that the divine affirmation came, not because Jesus was born the Son of God, but because Jesus *willfully* chose to identify with the sinners for whom he was to give his life. Think about it: God does not need to defend the parentage of His Son to any one, even if some important kings question Jesus' parentage. Does any one here feel obliged to defend his or her child's parentage, because the household dog growls at your new-born baby, and the parrot flutters about in panic at the sight of the new member of the family? I thought not.

The divine affirmation came *after* Jesus walked out of the water, *after* he had completed his action of identifying himself with the rest of the sinners. The divine affirmation came, because Jesus willfully gave up any clout

or privilege of being the Son of God, and demonstrated spiritually and physically that he is with the sinners, that other sinners are as equally special to God as he is. That sort of spirituality, that sort of mental attitude pleases God.

The "me special" human instinct may be good for the survival of the human species, but it is not really a good principle for the welfare of the human community. The Christian teaching advocates, instead, to move beyond that "me special" mentality, and to embrace the "others-are-as-special-as-I-am" mentality.

That is the kingdom of God mentality, and having that mentality is having the mind of Jesus Christ. Jesus committed himself to that principle from the outset of his ministry. And for that humility and compassion, God the Father recognized Jesus as His own beloved Son. When we embrace that principle as our own, we become the authentic disciple of Jesus, and we are affirmed as the children of God.