

The Jesus of Nazareth

Perhaps you are glued to the TV, soaking up the historical details and the trivia associated with the life and times of our newly deceased Pope. I am not.

Why am I so alienated, I wonder? I look at these Internet pictures of the pomp and circumstance – scarlet red capes, white and black floor-length robes, medieval headdress, bejeweled crucifixes hanging from gold chains – and all I see are Men/Princes/Lords/Dukes/Kings/Noblemen/ Privilege!

I do not see the Jesus of Nazareth.

There was a time in my life when I looked at these exact same images much differently. And while I cannot say I saw the Jesus of Nazareth, I thought I saw those who stood in his stead.

Who was I? What has happened to me that I no longer see these men in such a light? Have I changed, or have they? But why?

Why do I now view the Vatican and St. Peter's Basilica as opulent, extravagant, sumptuous, and irrelevant? Why do I judge these vast edifices as scandalous and antithetical to the Jesus of Nazareth? What has happened to me?

Is it because these robed men paid vast sums of money to cover up sexual child abuse in order to preserve their status as High Priests? Is it because these celibate men seek to regulate – thereby condemning – the sexuality of women? Is it because these interpreters of the Gospel message cannot come to the public defense of thousands of innocent people blown to pieces by all manner of armament? Is it because these men feast and drink sumptuously in the midst of government-sponsored starvation schemes?

Perhaps it is none of these things, but only my old age laced with an overdose of cynicism and bitterness, I cannot be sure.

Why should my conflicted views about these Internet papal images matter? Either to me or anyone else? And why was there a Jesus of Nazareth?

