

The beginning sentence of today's First Reading from the prophet Amos and the last sentence of today's Gospel from Luke would at first reading seem Un-American!

"Hear this you who trample upon the needy and destroy the poor of the land...Never will I forget a thing you have done

Amos 8:4 and 7

"You cannot serve both God and money." LK 16:13

YES....BUT DON'T THESE WORDS BETRAY "THE AMERICAN DREAM?"

Perhaps the most influential thinker of our time who motivates and inspires many of the movers and shakers of our time is Ayn Rand. Paul Ryan who recently ran for Vice President and who goes to mass every Sunday is more influenced by her than by the Jesus message in Luke or Amos the prophet. He did not give Luke or Amos to his staff as required reading. He gave Ayn Rand. And he claims Ayn Rand has had the most influence on his thinking.

And how does the agnostic Ayn Rand differ from the Jesus we find in Luke and the prophet Amos? Let her tell it:

"The proudest distinction of Americans is that they created the phrase: **"to make money."**

"Run for your life from any man who tells you that money is evil. That sentence is the leper's bell

of an approachng looter."

"If any civilization is to survive, it is the **morality of altrusim that men have to reject.**"

"Don't fool yourself, my dear. You're much worse than a bitch. You're a saint. Which shows why **saints are dangerous and undesirable.**" in *The Fountainhead*

"No matter what corruption they are taught about the virtue of selflessness, sex is the most profoundly selfish of all acts."

...Man's mind say the mystics...must be subordinated to the will of God...The purpose of man's life is to become an abject zombie who serves a purpose he does not know, for what reasons he does not question."

So Ayn Rand is the intellectual whose books and beliefs are taking the place of Scripture and Judeo Christian traidition in the minds of many leaders including Paul Ryan, a very influential congressman and potential presidential candidate.

SO DO THE WORDS OF JESUS BETRAY THE AMERICAN DREAM?

Yes they do, IF Ayn Rand's dream IS the American Dream.

But is it? Is "making money" our proudest distinction?" What about abolishing slavery? creating child labor laws? Social Security for the weakest and poorest? Civil Rights for the marginalized? Defeating both Facism and Communism?

At the moment I write this, our House of Representatives with leaders like Paul Ryan and John Boehmer are debating on cutting 40 billion dollars from the food stamp program. 54 percent of

food stamp recipients have children under the age of three who depend on these food stamps. Catholics In Alliance For the Common Good wrote today:

"On the same day when Pope Francis gave a groundbreaking interview on the need for Catholics to reach out to persons on the margins, the Catholic Speaker of the House of Representatives is bringinng to the floor a vote that will dramatically cut food stamps for millions of struggling Americans. We need your help to stop this atrocity. We need Catholics to send this simple message to Speaker Boehner: uphold the teachings of your faith; defend the poor and fight for the dignity of our brothers and sisters."

Breakfast Question: How did YOUR representative vote? Do you know? Do you care?

Personal Reflection: How can a Catholic reconcile the beliefs of Ayn Rand with today's Scripture Readings?

Recommended Viewing, Available on YOU TUBE or Netflix:

Park Avenue