

AP English
Oct 27, 2004

Quiz 10 was given today.

We saw the Fourth Tempter today, and saw that this was the greatest temptation: "To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

Becket foreshadows that he will never present another sermon to the Canterbury audience. When he left France, he also foreshadowed he would never see Henry II again in this life.

Henry II had elevated Becket to the post of the Archbishop, which falls only second in the echelon to the Pope. Becket taking his position very responsibly refuses to cede to the King's whims at gaining political leverage thus bringing about the weakening of the chain of friendship.

Appropriating the true mode of a morality play, Eliot introduces the element of temptation to which Becket quite admirably refuses to succumb.

The four tempters offer the temptations right from a luxurious lifestyle to the alluring position of the Chancellor to that of a martyr. Martyrdom a much-espoused cause at the time ironically carries the message of doom if desired. It in essence was seen as a sacrificial act to be surrendered to bearing in mind the benefit of the larger good without the ulterior aim to gain a supreme position in the other world.

"Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain: Temptation shall not come in this kind again," citing this quotation one might get an impression that Becket is too conscious of his role in the scheme of things as a superior being who alone can alleviate the dire condition that seem to debilitate the physical and mental strain of his people. All said and done, he does eventually come across as someone who is too eager to confer upon himself the mantle of a martyr.

The chorus in the play adds to the dramatic value and profoundly brings about the sense of existent misery to which the common man was a frequent prey. In addition, there is also a shift in the use of language. The interaction between Becket and his people follows a rather pastoral range in tone whereas in his confrontations with the Knights the use of language is slightly heavy handed.

We saw the combination of opposites in the prose of the Christmas Mass presented by Becket.

Life/Death

Birth/Death

Winter/Spring

Savior/Enemy

Good/Evil

Innocence/Corruption

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