

He didn't have to put it there. Clearly, God endorses choice. He wants us to make up our own minds, to come freely.

Still, we can learn something from our canine companions. A good dog pays attention. He's not about assigning blame. He wants to please. He follows the rules. He comes when he's called. He stays with the pack. He loves unconditionally. He is ready to go anywhere, anytime, following the voice of the one he loves.

Not a bad example to consider during Lent. —LHF

Third Sunday in Lent

That it may please thee so to rule the hearts of thy servants, the President of the United States, and all others in authority, that they may do justice, and love mercy, and walk in the ways of truth,

We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

The phrase *Gott Mit Uns*, God with Us, was said to have graced the belt buckles of German soldiers in World Wars I and II. *Gott Mit Uns*. God with *us*. But what about God with *them*?

In *The Last Battle*, the final book of C.S. Lewis's Narnia stories, there are two great foes. The one, the

Narnians, are said to follow Aslan, the great lion Christ figure. Their opponents, the Telmarines, serve Tash, a heinous bird-like, devouring, destructive lord of war. At the tale's end, not all Narnians get to heaven, and not all Telmarines go down to destruction. Because, it turns out, what matters is who you *really* serve.

Those who followed the good—doing works of compassion and truth, love, kindness, and courage—were really serving Aslan, no matter what name was on their banner. And those who followed evil—selfishness, cowardice, betrayal, destruction—were actually followers of Tash, even if they wore the name of Aslan on their armor.

It matters who rules our hearts, which is what we pray for the President of the United States and for all in authority. We don't pray that God will be on their (and our) side, but that God will rule their (and our) hearts. The direction makes all the difference. In the end we will be known by our fruits.

We pray that we may “do justice, and love mercy, and walk in the ways of truth.” That's a good test for our politicians as well as ourselves. —LWF