

I am a fan of the two original Terminator movies - lots of explosions and other guy things - now they are rated R and there are some not-so-moral scenes - so kids, don't use me as an excuse to get your parents to let you watch them
However, outside the obvious guy stuff and the sci-fi aspect, the movies harken back to a very basic philosophical question - is humanity basically good or is humanity basically evil? - Can we create a utopia here on earth or are we doomed to destroy ourselves?

I believe it is in the second movie - John Connor says, "The future's not set. There is no fate but what we make for ourselves."

Jesus and the Catholic Church has something to say about all of this

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, tells us that God created everything and saw that it was good - this means we, all of humanity is basically good - at our very core, at our very essence, we are good - however, since Adam and Eve's first sin, evil runs deep in each one of us, some more than others

Even though we are at our core, good, because of the corruption to our souls (due to original sin), we will never be able to create the perfect society on our own - there is no form of government, there is no president, there is no set of laws that will prevent everyone from doing evil, from taking advantage of any one else

In our fallen human nature, we don't have the capacity to create the perfect society - John Connor is wrong - The future is set - the final outcome is not dependent on us - yes, we need to play our part, but it is not up to us

Now this may seem like the wrong thing to say in a society where everyone seems to want to shift blame of any wrong doing onto anyone except themselves - yes, we are and need to take responsibility for the evil we do

God created us good - He created us to be fully human - however, in some ways evil and sin makes us less than fully human - a healthy body is a healthy body - however, disease, infections, and age make it less than healthy - sin and evil infect our soul, our humanity and make us in some ways less than fully human - sin and evil take away from the perfect humanity God gave us at the beginning of creation - no matter how hard we try, no matter what laws we pass, no matter how many weapons we have, no matter how many treaties we sign, no matter what government we pass, no matter what president we elect, no matter what rules we make for the playground, complete restoration of our humanity is just not possible on our own - we are incapable of healing ourselves of sin and evil

However, 2000 years ago, everything changed - 2000 years ago, the Healer, Jesus Christ, came - Jesus came to rid us of our sin and evil and to restore our original goodness - actually He divinized our humanity - I'll explain this some other time - 2000 years ago, the future became set - 2000 years ago, the fate of humanity was revealed - Depending on our yes or no to God, we will spend all of eternity in Heaven or Hell - 2000 years ago, Christ came and changed the course of human history - 2000 years ago, Christ entered the history of the universe and changed the outlook of the future from doom and gloom to one of joy - this is the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

What do we need to do? - do we need to read a self-help book? - do need to read Oprah everyday? - do we need to listen to Dr. Phil?

Today's Gospel outlines three steps

One - repent of our sins and evil - a doctor cannot treat us of an illness unless we first admit we are sick and go to see him - God cannot heal us of our sins and evils unless we first admit we need healing from them - we must prepare our hearts to be healed - we must heed St. John's voice in the desert of our imperfect lives - in hope, we must turn toward the straight path of Jesus Christ

Two - we need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire - now most of us have been baptized - we have received the Holy Spirit - but have we let the fire of the Holy Spirit come alive in our hearts? - Have we allowed God's love to come alive in our hearts?

Love is diffusive of itself - when something good happens to us, we naturally want to share our experience with others - St. Paul in his letter to the Romans says we sing the praises of God's name - if we experience God's love in the Mass, in the Eucharist, in the Sacrament of Confession, in our interactions with each other, we will naturally want to share that good news with others

Three - we must allow Jesus to produce good fruit in us

The world says that power and control are the way to happiness and joy - Christ says that meekness and submission are the way to happiness and joy

Who knows you better? Jesus or the world? - Yes, Jesus knows you better than the world knows you - therefore, when we submit our lives and wills to Jesus, it is not a loss of control and power, but it is actually a gain in control and power

As for our fate - I suppose in one way we do make it - However, our only two choices are to choose our way and be eternally unhappy or choose God's way and be eternally happy - God created us - we have free will to choose what to do, but we do not have free will to choose what will make us truly and ultimately happy

In our fallen humanity, we cannot create a utopia for ourselves here on earth, but Jesus, with His infinite love and mercy, has the power to create a utopia for us in heaven

So, yes, we are basically good - however, in order to restore our complete goodness, we need to submit ourselves and our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ

Our fallen human nature on this side of heaven prevents us from creating an utopian society, a perfect society on earth on our own - now we should still fight to change laws and policies to make our society more just - more importantly we must strive to grow in the virtues through the grace of Jesus Christ - more laws do not make democracy work better - only more virtuous persons make democracy work better

Even if we are doomed to destroy ourselves (which I personally don't think we are), Jesus, through His incarnation, His death, and His resurrection, has won the war between good and evil, between God and Satan

We may lose a battle here and there - we may give into sin here or there - but we get back up, go to Confession, receive His mercy and love, and go back out into the middle of the battle between good and evil that is being fought in our souls and the souls around us every day, every moment - we fight with the hope and knowledge that Jesus has already won the war

Jesus won the war for us because He loves us - He created each one of us good - Our true and fundamental nature is good - the Terminator was wrong - it is not in our nature to destroy ourselves - maybe in our fallen false nature it is, but if we allow Jesus' love for us into our hearts, He can restore us to our true good, holy nature

Allow Jesus' love to restore the goodness you were created for - Allow Jesus to give you the joy that comes from knowing God has loved you, healed you, set you free from your sins, and given you new life - and let that joy set the world on fire