

The term elite though it is closely connected to the notion of serving. The question at stake is: are elites those that are supposed to serve in a special way or those who best know how to serve themselves?

The gospel gives a clear answer to that question: "...whosoever would become greatest among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister..." (Mt 20:26f).

Have we forgotten this attitude in spite of a rapidly growing service sector? Did the parting from God also shed a negative light on the term service? This is tragic, especially because of those who wanted to "abolish God".

The main characters of the French Revolution, considered themselves a "serving avant-garde". This avant-garde believed to have a "truly priestly duty", that is, to "exercise a positive authority on society", so Claude Henry de Saint Simon (1760-1825). He congratulated the citizens to their new elites who "will serve you as an avant-garde". To be elite therefore includes being an example, an example in serving.

Reading newspapers or watching TV about daily bribery scandals and corruption involving 'those up there' makes it easy to understand why so many connect with 'elite' those who know how to skim off the top and leave the left-overs to the rest. But what is really troubling about this is the fact that 'those up there' are actually envied in spite of this. The attitude: 'after all, they made it' makes them even role models.

No wonder that in the so-called 'serving jobs' young people are missing, at least statistically. But looking at the next-door mother who cares for her sick child, the doctor who is available also at 3 a.m., the master craftsman or entrepreneur who cannot sleep because of problems to keep all his employees, all those who toil without attracting attention to satisfy clients or employers – above all being friendly and happy – and those numerous married couples and parents who remain faithful in good and bad times, whoever sees and realizes this is touched by so much silent heroism of serving. And this is, in the end, what really counts.

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