

PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH.

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A cardinal out of Rome, whom I knew, once seemed reluctant to make a judgment concerning the material of a pamphlet (published anonymously) I sent him, probably because he did not want to commit one way or the other without knowing whom he would be critiquing. For my part, I am not really concerned with who is doing the writing; my judgment will be based on the accuracy of what is written.

The reader probably has already sensed that one of the problems I see in the Church is a reluctance to tell and stand up for the truth for fear of possible confrontation. So let us start with fear.

FEAR.

The biggest problem with fear is – it tends to have a paralyzing effect on the person it takes over. It can make one doubt himself and cause him to conjure up all sorts of horrible and repulsive possibilities. One may even convince himself that it will not do any good to speak up, or take action; in fact, to do anything could actually create more problems with extensive negative consequences. So we end up with silence, and because of this silence nothing positive gets done. The fear of being looked upon as weird or, even worse, being looked upon as cruel or rigid often causes us to forget these awesome words: If your brother sins and you do not tell him, the sin is yours. Didn't God say this to Ezekiel? (See also Matthew 18:15-17.)

Fearful people are also extremely sensitive to being looked upon as being radical or extreme. They are so obsessed with the fear of such criticism that they will actually criticize people with whom they basically agree when the worldly label them as radicals. The insecurity of the fearful person will cause him to go against his own conscience. Heartache, remorse, and a disgust with self soon follow. The result of all of this is – they must lie to themselves.

Now I ask the reader. Has fear ever done this to you? Have you been keeping silent when questionable things happen in your parish or dioceses, home, or workplace? Do you find yourself criticizing others for standing up to unpleasant situations, yet wishing that you had the courage to do the same? Do you feel less of a man for not being more assertive in defending the truth?

My answer for fear comes from this quotation by Saint Teresa of Avila: “People who do not love much are weak minded and cowardly; they are filled with a thousand fears and scruples arising from human prudence”. One can see that as more and more bishops, priests, and fathers of families lose their capacity for love, such fear and distorted forms of prudence will increase.

One could say, surely our bishops, priests, and fathers of families all love those who God placed under their charge. The fact is that many do not. In fact, they possibly do not even know what it is to love. This may be hard for you to believe, but just ask yourself the question, “What is love?” What does it really mean to love God and to love our spouse, our children, our neighbor? If you would, stop for a minute and jot down on a piece of paper what it means to love. Now don’t go and get a dictionary. If you need a dictionary, it proves my point to a certain degree, for how can one say they love, or that someone else loves, if they have to look the word up in a dictionary. Now I realize that one can love and love deeply without knowing the dictionary definition of love. Nevertheless, it does illustrate that most people never consider what it is that really constitutes the meaning of love, let alone Christian love.

Christian love is that love that drives one to heroic degrees of service. It is possessed by people from all walks of life as well as from all races and cultures. Christian love is shown when one performs his God given duties with zeal and dedication, with little concern for human recognition, be it positive or negative. Though they are sensitive to the feelings of others, their sensitivity never causes them to neglect the truth. The truth must always be told. It should be told boldly, accurately, and as simply as possible. This is the everyday practice of those who truly love.

LOVE.

Let us consider the love aspect of what Saint Teresa had to say. If Saint Teresa is right, then one may assume that those who love much will be stronger and more fearless. They are the ones that stand firm in their beliefs.

Their sincere love of God drives them to a deep desire for the truth. Only sincere love will drive a person to seek knowledge that could show that they themselves are in error.

They may even have to do things that will make them unpopular with friends, family, and parishioners. Protestant ministers who became Catholic can testify to that. This is frightening to the saintly person and impossible for those who do not possess this Christ-like love. The love for souls drives one to sacrifice fame, fortune, and reputation to bring the sinner back to the life of grace that God intends for him to possess. For those who truly love, sin is something with which they can never

compromise; for they know that sin is the essence of all evil, and they can never tolerate it.

The Normalization of Mortal Sin.

As love decreases, so does the horror of sin decrease. Our desire to be accepted and respected by others becomes more and more necessary. To justify our silence in the face of what the Church says is a very serious sin, traditionally called mortal sin, we have to normalize the sin. This is done by being more open to discussing sinful matters in public, with a sympathetic slant to it, which puts us in a seemingly compassionate position toward the sinner's plight. The biggest problem with this is that it is telling everyone who might be aware of the sinful situation that it is okay, God understands, and it is really those who are 'hardhearted' and 'judgmental' who are out of step with God. This makes it almost impossible to get the poor sinner back in conformity to right living.

Consequently, the sinner is in the position of possibly never knowing that they are living in mortal sin and never realizing that the suffering that they are encountering is just the natural result of one living in the state of mortal sin. This, in my opinion, is a leading problem in the Church and if you think about it, a truly disastrous one. For how are we to change a sinful society if those in the position of authority have allowed sin, the, supposedly, most horrible thing possible for a Christian, to become an acceptable way of life? We are now to the point, it seems, that even our faithful leaders are afraid of condemnation if they tried to correct what has taken place. This has all taken place under the not so watchful eyes of those who are supposed to see to it that the purity of the Faith is preserved and passed on to the faithful. Sad to say, most of the faithful are no longer faithful, for they have, for the most part, abandoned Holy Mother Church. Many no longer obey its moral teaching; others thought that they had to leave the Church to find the guidance that our leaders were too fearful to give them.

It is truly disheartening to see conservative leaders actually justifying liberal and destructive practices, and at the same time being very critical of those trying to uphold the truth and sound family practices. They do this because of their fear of worldly criticism.

These poor people must suffer tremendously with their conscience. They are fearful because they did not love their people enough. Saint Teresa's words tell the story well. "People who do not love much are weak minded and cowardly; they are filled with a thousand fears and scruples arising from human prudence."

NO MORE TEARS.

No, this is not about a baby shampoo that is so gentle that it will not make your baby cry when its little head is being washed. Quite the contrary, it is hoped that this little

pamphlet will cause many in the Church, parents as well as clergy, to shed tears of sorrow for the horrible state into which so many of our Catholic families have descended. Unfortunately, another problem we have in the Church is the absence of tears for the sins of our children.

We as a society have accepted sin, and for the most part, will defy anyone who tries to bring it to the forefront for correction. It is as if we think that by defending the sinner, we are promoting the Christian virtue of compassion.

We can always use both Old Testament and New Testament quotes concerning hypocrites like the Pharisees and their attack on the poor sinners of that time as credible references to bolster our stance. We can also quote Christ's many condemnations of these Pharisees who used the law to burden the poor sinners. By doing this, we are fraudulently placing ourselves on the side of Christ. If anyone disagrees with our acceptance of these sins, we automatically put these people on the side of those hardhearted, unloving, judgmental Pharisees. We can make ourselves feel and even appear truly Christ-like to this nonjudgmental society that we have helped to create. We have become a society that can honestly boast that we are definitely not a pharisaical society. We have become a people that have accepted the sins of the society and, as a whole, seem to fight for the right to sin and sin bravely. For this acceptance of our neighbor's sins, we truly expect to be hailed as loving and compassionate Catholic Christians.

Have you ever heard a priest say, "Don't let anyone shut the doors of heaven in your face"? They make such a statement in response to someone advising a sinner that if they die in mortal sin they will not go to heaven. So, what the priest is saying is that the person doing the informing is closing the door of heaven in the face of the poor sinner who is receiving the information.

Now, I would like to analyze this situation and show that it is really the priest and not the person giving the information who is the one who is possibly closing the door of heaven in the face of the sinner.

We must remember and never forget that Christ also said, "Go out and teach all men what I have commanded you." And Ezekiel the prophet was effectively told – If your brother sins and you tell him, the sin is his, but if you don't tell him, the sin is yours." Now, I would imagine, my priest friend believes that the best way to save souls is to keep the Good News away from them. For Scripture does say, if you tell your brother that he is sinning, the sin is his, so now the sin is his and you have shut the door of heaven in his face. Shame on you for doing that, he'll say.

Well, it would take more than a pamphlet to clarify such a warped view of Scripture, but I can offer a short and modest explanation.

What Christ and His Bible is saying is that we should love our brothers so much that

we would risk offending them and even severing our friendly relationship with them in an effort to bring them the Good News. Nowhere in Scripture will you find Christ even slightly insinuating that the truth should be withheld from the sinner. On the contrary, Christ says, "it is the truth that will set you free," not the withholding of the truth. Yet that is exactly what has been happening in the Church for the past half century, since the cultural revolution of the sixties, the deliberate withholding of the truths (the Good News) of Holy Mother Church.

At this time, I want to put aside the salvation dilemma, for only God and God alone will decide who does and who does not enter the kingdom of heaven.

I want to focus on something that even a blind man can see. That is, since the subject of sin has been almost completely eliminated from the Catholic vocabulary, the practice of sin has astronomically increased!

Fornication has produced countless unwed mothers. Adultery has produced countless divorces. Diseases have claimed the lives of countless sinners who were denied the Good News that could have given them the courage to resist sin and its horrible consequences. Remember, Christ warned us of the blind that would lead the blind to their own destruction. Before we move on, I would like to make this statement and hope it will make a mental impression on you: Not only will most of our shepherds, it often seems, refuse to tell the sinner what sin is and why it is a sin, they are hell-bent on stopping anyone else from doing so. It is as though they want everyone to adopt a life of sin so no one will feel guilty, and God would have to either send everyone to hell or exempt everyone. We truly have big problems in our Church.

The Compassionate Mother.

A mother, troubled with her daughter's unconventional lifestyle, came to my home seeking counsel. She related to me that her daughter was living with her boyfriend, and she did not know what to do about it.

I said to the lady, "Your daughter is living like an animal."

She was quite taken aback and exclaimed, "Don't you think that is being harsh?"

"No," I responded, "You see, Ma'am, your daughter is having lots of fun, and she is not about to give up all that fun for just a slight wrong. She has to be convinced that what she is doing is extremely wrong. She needs a mother to love her enough to do what the worldly will not do, that is, make her understand that what she is doing is degrading to a child of God and could put her in hell for eternity. She needs a mother who will explain to her that animals respond spontaneously to the sexual drive and there is no wrong in this. She, however, is a child of God, endowed with an immortal soul, a conscience, and a will."

If our young people are expected to live a life in Christ, their conscience must be correctly formed, which means understanding the evil in the different sins they

encounter throughout life. If young people do not know and understand the evil in the abuse of their sexuality, we must conclude that the parents, as well as the Catholic community, have failed to pass on these moral Christian principles, principles that are absolutely necessary for a truly successful life in this world as well as in the next.

Young people judge the gravity of mortal sin by the responses of the respected adults in their life. When they see their parents' acceptance of their sinful practices, even though the parents may show some kind of displeasure, they assume that what they are doing is not really all that bad.

For what loving parent would accept a child living a life style that they believe (and the Church teaches) will send them to hell for eternity? These children reason like this – “With all the supposed changes since Vatican II, which, in the minds of the vast majority of Catholics, has abolished practically all the old taboos of the past, one might rightly reason, why bother with the few remaining rules, for they will surely be abolished in the near future. It is all just a matter of time. The Church is finally moving into the twenty-first century.”

It is this sort of reasoning that has brought about the rot that has destroyed countless families and destroyed the credibility of the Church's teachings. The sad fact of the matter is, even if these poor unfortunate souls are saved by their ignorance, they will still reap the disastrous consequences of a disordered life. Take a look at what error has spawned: sixty percent divorce rate, astronomical child neglect and abuse, unwed teen mothers in increasing numbers, rampaging abortion and increasing 'shack-ups' (the nice name given to this is “cohabitation”. Now doesn't that sound a lot better than shack-up? For me I want to stick with the term shack-up, the word sounds almost as crude as the act it defines; an act that you might not be proud of and might even want to flee from.)

Saint Monica.

If only we had mothers today like Saint Monica. Her whole life was spent struggling for her Catholic faith within her own family. Her husband Patritius, who was a pagan, caused her great pain, especially in his refusal to allow her to baptize their children. Yet her sweetness and patience paid off. Patritius became a Christian and Augustine, her wayward son, not only became a Christian, but a great bishop, saint and Doctor of the Church. She was told by a holy bishop the now famous words, “The child of so many tears shall never perish.” It is true that Saint Monica shed many tears for her husband and son. It is also true that she prayed unceasingly for them. Moreover, we must never forget her constant effort to get Saint Augustine to accept the faith of Christ, going so far as following him to other countries. Saint Monica's tears were the tears of a true Christian mother who, like her master, knew the value of her son's soul.

There are no more tears today, it seems. Unlike Saint Monica, today's mothers are non-judgmental. They lovingly accept the sins of their children with little fear of the eternal consequences. They seem to have lost the sense of sin. No longer is sin something the modern mother fears for herself or her wayward children. Bishops, priests, and parents must truly believe that sin is something awful if our youth are ever to believe it is something awful. Once they truly believe, they must act accordingly. It is psychologically impossible for our actions to contradict our beliefs. Today, however, it is the rare mother who truly shows remorse by both her words and actions. When parents can casually excuse the sins of their children, they are casually saying that sin is not all that bad, and their children respond accordingly. This kind of attitude opens the way for everyone in the family to be 'opened-minded' and 'non-judgmental'. Sin is then lovingly accepted by the whole family.

The Results.

The results of the lack of tears of the parents, especially the mother, is the destruction of generations of young people. Young people, who through no fault of their own, were not loved enough to be told the truth. Teaching the truth, just as doing a good deed, requires love, especially love of God. Yes, at the heart of it all is a diminished love of God.

Parents who truly love God will desperately try to pass this love on to their children. Many have even started home schooling their children in spite of ridicule from family and friends who seem to resent their efforts.

It is difficult for these home schooling families to succeed because their children have to be different and many parents cannot convince their children that this difference is necessary for success. The lack of support from the Church, the weaknesses of the parents, as well as their lack of skills in communication are the primary causes of their children wanting to be like the world. We have to be good salesmen if we are to sell a moral lifestyle to our children in a materialistic and sexually permissive society. And, sadly, my experience has been that I am forced to say – do not expect help from the local church. It seems that it is too busy shielding parents from their parental responsibilities, which if known, could give them a guilty feeling. It might even cause some parents to cry over the sins of their children.

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