

Holy Family Radio

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St. Frumentius, 380 A.D.

My Dear Fellow Catholic:

Living in this culture these days is rather confusing. A few years back we considered the old (Jewish/Chinese/Something-or-other) curse, "May you live in interesting times!" Well, there is no doubt that we live in very interesting times.

Of the many things that we have to deal with as Catholics in the world, one of the most challenging are the things Pope Francis has said and done in this current papacy. It is pretty difficult to wrap one's head around the Holy Father. It seems that we are torn between a simplified view of compassion and a seeming rejection of reasonableness or order.

For example, is setting limits on immigration reasonable? One would think so. Cardinal Sarah said so. The Twitter messages would make you think that anyone supporting limits on immigration is a bigot. It is a very challenging situation for most of us to even discuss.

Another recent dust-up is over liturgy. Is the liturgy supposed to be focused on God or adapted to the nuances of each of today's cultural movements? Do we face the east (ad orientum), or the people (ad populum)? Do we sing, "Happy Birthday," or "Panis Angelicus?" Pope Francis has demanded that there be "no doubt" he is decentralizing control of liturgy. Local variations in liturgy will increase. Is this compassion or reason?

Meanwhile confusion continues surrounding the meaning of Amoris Laetitia's -- can the divorced and remarried folks take Holy Communion even if they are not living as brother and sister? The moral question remains in lingering doubt. Again, is this compassion or reason?

Generation after generation there is a sorting that takes place. In every age, Our Lord sorts the sheep and the goats. As the years, decades and centuries roll by, the sheep and goats in each generation are segregated. It is not for us to sort the sheep from the goats. That is up to Our Lord, but we can and do work for good and against evil in every age.

We generally think of people as good and bad acts as evil, but there are many ways to look at people's behavior. In Pope Francis' old stomping ground, the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, at the Cathedral in Mar del Plata, some feminists, including some "Catholic" women, for the fourth year in a row have exploded into rage, exposing themselves, screaming about sexual freedom and throwing feces at the Cathedral. Does such behavior warrant compassion or the imposition of order? The police did little. The Holy Father has not commented. Some time ago, some women in Louisville marched down Bardstown road, exposing themselves. It's a trend.

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Are we to accommodate those whose passions move them into evil or is it evil not to resist their unreasonable behavior? Perhaps the sorting of the sheep and goats in every age means that there is not a solution, but only movements and trends with a constant stream of opportunities for people to do good including being in the awkward position of working to impose reasonableness and order? Prudence is one of the virtues, right?

Certainly we are called to be attentive and listen to others, even if emotions are strong. In doing that some very tender moments and very strong relationships are possible. On the other hand, can mercy and indulgence go too far? Can the structure of the family or the structure of society be put at risk because we give too much credence to feelings and emotions?

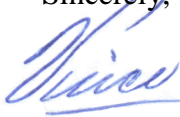
To paraphrase Rudyard Kipling, if you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you, then you can move society in the right direction. Maintaining order sometimes requires "push back" in the face of unreasonable emotionalism. Older readers may recall that young people got outraged and out of control in the late 1960's. Some of them even got killed (recall Kent State) in the government's effort to keep order. Many thought that American society was falling apart. America survived, but over-reaction resulted in unnecessary deaths. We can do better. Acting steadfastly in facing problems early can prevent a later crisis.

Most Catholics these days are absorbed in television, sports and themselves and are often unaware of how much confusion there is in the Church and in the world these days. While it is good not to get too caught up in passing battles, opportunities for good works abound. A steadfast effort to keep doing good, helping the poor in true solidarity through parishes and local action, ending the false "charity" of government redistribution of private goods, pressuring those who aid in killing the unborn are the right responses and many in the archdiocese are doing it.

What is the call to action? It is that everyone can do something. If you know of a couch potato for whom opportunities are passing by unnoticed, bring up the possibility of doing some good works. Bring up the possibility of storing up treasure in heaven by the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Work on keeping prayer in mind all day long. Volunteer at some group or agency. (Most of those reading this already do so, but it warrants repeating!) Tons of opportunities exist -- from stuffing envelopes at your favorite little charity, to sidewalk counseling at the abortion clinic, to serving food to homeless people at the various soup kitchens. As Mother Angelica used to say, "We are all called to be saints. Don't miss the opportunity!"

With all that said, please join with Holy Family Radio in promoting the good activities we can find in our community! Let us inspire each other to keep working and praying for good in our community! Your gifts get spread across many ministries and work! Don't get discouraged! There is plenty to do!

Sincerely,


for Holy Family Radio