

Christ's Pastoral Action — General Strategies

CHRIST CALLS SINNERS TO BECOME SAINTS

The Church is never content to leave sinners in sin, nor to redefine sin to suit unrepentant sinners, nor to surrender to the politically-correct spirit of the age. Rather, she calls sinners to repentance, grace, virtue and holiness. Like Christ, priests visits homes, befriends sinners, rejects sin:-

God our Saviour... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:3-4; cf. 1 Peter 1:9

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5:48; cf. VCII LG ch. 5;

Introduction to the Devout Life by St Francis de Sales.

Good priests never despise sinners but build on what is good in them — as do good psychologists, who never knock the supports from under neurotics, but build on their strengths.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

The spiritual life is an interior life with God indwelling in the soul by sanctifying grace. It depends on prayer; catechetical tuition; living the Liturgical Year of seasons and the saints; and fidelity to the adoration of God at Sunday Mass and a sacramental life of Confession and Communion.

Family prayers, and private bedside prayers (“pyjama prayers” every morning and night), are the minimum. They are not alternatives! Also, it is spiritual starvation not to pray. Never to pray is grave matter for the Confessional. “He who prays will save his soul,” said St Teresa of Avila.

Many Catholics and Catholic families recite a daily Rosary, and/or parts of the Liturgical Hours.

The Gospel is proclaimed and explained in **family catechetics** (*Handouts* n. 120, p. 1) and in **parish lay apostolate gatherings** as well as in “Convert classes”, often combined with RCIA; “Come Back” programs; renewals; parish or family based sacramental preparation for children, adult education; parent nights at Catholic schools. All these are an invitation to non-Christians, non-Catholics, lapsed Catholics, “ordinary” Catholics, towards spiritual advancement, sanctification, salvation and the glorification of God.

Private Bible reading and that vast expanse of other “spiritual reading” are strongly recommended.

Lay apostolate groups, sodalities and pious associations are active witness and mutual support.

Holy Communion — never indiscriminate
“Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb”

There are three conditions for the baptized faithful to receive Holy Communion:

- absence of grave sin (CCC n. 1385); cf. sins listed in Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:4-5.
- fasting (see next page and CCC n. 1387)
- the required dispositions (CCC n. 1388), i.e. a right intention. Note how the CCC quotes St Paul:-

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,

you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we should not be judged.

1 Corinthians 11:26-31

Or else make a spiritual Holy Communion (communion of desire) like catechumens and non-Catholics.

RESTORE KNEELING AT ALTAR RAILS

“Let us kneel before the Lord Who made us”

Esteem for God-incarnate is discouraged by casual demeanour such as receiving on the hand, not even a genuflection before receiving standing, and usually self-communicating “on the move”. These practices have weakened faith and piety in the ministers distributing, the recipients and the bystanders.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM for Australia), for receiving Holy Communion standing up, **prescribes a bow in n. 160, which contradicts n. 274 on genuflections:**

A genuflection, made by bending the right knee to the ground, signifies adoration, and therefore is reserved for the Most Blessed Sacrament, as well as for the Holy Cross from the solemn adoration during the liturgical celebration on Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.

GIRM 274; contrast n. 275 on bowing.

How is it that Anglicans kneel for Communion, *without intending any adoration* to their consecrated bread, but Catholics at Communion (often distributed in unbecoming haste) are content to stand, while *claiming to adore Jesus Christ*, claiming to believe He is really present in His Body & Blood, soul & divinity, beneath appearances of bread & wine? *Lex credendi, lex orandi*, ‘law of faith is law of prayer’.

It does not ring true. Why not act in tune with the faith? Kneeling is actually faster and with less bustle, far more reverent, and obviates bows and genuflections.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE — “but only say the word and my soul shall be healed”

General Absolutions and pseudo Second Rites have virtually abolished Confession in many parishes, and widespread contraception and abortion have encouraged its present neglect and our spiritual flabbiness.

Yet proper preparation for Holy Communion requires regular confession of sins to a priest:

The faithful must confess to the priest each and every **grave sin**... Moreover, frequent and careful celebration of this sacrament is also very useful as a remedy for **venial sins**.

Rite of Penance n. 7; cf. CCL n. 916

The next best thing to innocence is sincere repentance.

The Antiquary by Sir Walter Scott

Those contracepting nowadays unashamedly receive Communion on Sundays. At Nuptial and Requiem Masses, the unrepentant, non-Catholics and non-believers, all communicate indiscriminately. You see the happy children playing in the yard of a Catholic school: you do not see them at Sunday Mass, yet all communicate at school Masses: have they a right intention, have they sanctifying grace? When this school situation is foreseen, it would be better to have Benediction than school Masses:

It [the liturgy] must be permeated by the spirit of reverence, adoration and the glory of God.

1985 Extraordinary Synod II B (b) 1.

Just as catechumens and prospective converts must defer their reception of Holy Communion and meanwhile make acts of Spiritual Communion, a "communion of desire", so too must those whose repentance is gradual, for God's patience and kindness to sinners is reciprocated. No doubt some are praying like St Augustine before his conversion, "Lord, make me pure, but not yet".

PARTICULAR EXAMINE

"You, therefore, must be perfect" (Matthew 5:48; 19:21)

A good confessor can advise on Particular Examination of conscience, to target specific sins and imperfections, and to grow in the opposite virtues. Some of the totally independent Catholic schools teach it very successfully:-

custody of the eyes to avoid idle curiosity and occasions of sin;

custody of the ears to avoid false prophets, profanity, obscene speech: turn off addictive electronic sound...

custody of the tongue: truthful, kind and tactful, or else "hold your tongue" in silence;

custody of the mind, memory and imagination: "feed" them with spiritual reading and wholesome fiction;

custody of the body in dress: clothes are for modesty and dignity, to honour others and suit the weather.

custody of gesture and deportment, and engage in healthy physical exertion.

PRAYING about ONE'S VOCATION in LIFE

Youths: 1. *manliness* (*vir* is Latin for man and means virtue): ideals of the noble and sense of honour; 2. manners — never rude, crude or lewd; 3. *modesty*, neither boasting nor showing off one's body; 4. treating females with the utmost respect. 5. resisting temptations at once. cf. *Bush Boys on the Move* p. 57.

Maidens: 1. "women who want to be women" and not mimic men in speech, dress (not flaunting bosoms), deeds, and avoiding paid work that weakens complementarity; 2. courting when serious, not casual dating; 3. recognizing male weakness towards lust; 4. refining and ennobling men and boys.

All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour.

1 Corinthians 10:23-24; cf. CFCDE pp. 110-111

MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN

... there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples. John 2:1-2; Ephesians 5:21-33; cf. courtesy in marriage, *Handouts* 120 p. 1 on courtesy

... no longer two but one flesh. What God has joined together, let not man put asunder. Matthew 19:6

THREE HOUR FAST for HOLY COMMUNION?

The present discipline of the Eucharistic Fast is for "at least one hour":

Whoever is to receive the Blessed Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before Holy Communion from all food and drink with the sole exception of water and medicine. CCL c. 919 §1 (emphasis added)

This is trifling. And it makes it much harder for strugglers to avoid unworthy reception out of human respect. A longer fast could abate indiscriminate and sacrilegious Communion. A three hour fast could be reintroduced, at first as a strong recommendation, based on the "at least" in the canon above.

OTHER WEAKNESSES IN THE LITURGY

- **Trivialization of Friday penance** using CCL n. 1253 is no longer a public witness to Christ's Cross. However, the Bishops of England and Wales have already restored Friday abstinence from meat from September, 2011.
- **The former ICEL Mass translation** did incalculable damage to priests and laity: it blunted faith, piety and the sense of the sacred yet there are some priests who reject the new careful translation!
- **The present translation of the Liturgy of the Hours**, especially the Grail Psalms, has weakened the text; e.g. flattening out "mercy" into "love". All the Latin hymns in the typical edition should be translated, albeit in prose (and still permitting alternatives), including the option of the *Dies Irae* for major hours on ferial days in the 34th week.
- **Talking in Church** is stealing from God by stopping people praying. CFCDE n. 492; cf. GIRM n. 45

FURTHER PROBLEMS WITH SATAN

supplementing *Handouts* n. 120 p. 2 on Satan

"Love is not irritable or resentful" 1 Corinthians 13:5

Satan would lead us to look upon **bad temper** as a harmless weakness, a mere infirmity of nature, a family failing, a matter of temperament, not a thing to take into serious account in estimating a man's character...

Yet ill temper is the vice of the virtuous.

It is often the one blot on an otherwise noble character, otherwise perfect but for an easily ruffled, quick-tempered, or "touchy" disposition. This compatibility of ill temper with high moral character is a puzzling problem.

Evil temper does much to un-Christianize society:

- it embitters life and breaks up communities;
- it weakens sacred relationships and can devastate homes;
- it withers-up parents and takes joy from childhood;
- it is a misery-producing power.

Look at the Elder Brother [in the parable]; moral, hard working, patient, dutiful... yet acting like a baby sulking outside his own father's door... Jealousy, anger, pride, uncharity, cruelty, self-righteousness, touchiness, sullen...

The above was prompted by *The Greatest Thing in the World* (i.e. love) by Henry Drummond, an evangelist to a Scottish University, late 19th century, where he saved many students from the prevailing agnosticism.

He concludes that **Jesus Christ is the only possible cure** for bad temper and any underlying weaknesses in lack of patience, kindness, generosity, courtesy, unselfishness.

Drummond got his inspiration from Scripture, whereas Catholics have it too plus extra spiritual help from frequent Confession of venial sins and reading the saints.

For further inspiration, see *Handouts* nn. 59 on *Disciplining Self* and the old *Cardinal Newman Catechist Centre Newsletter* n. 153 pp. 2-4 of 21-11-1997, which is copied from the *Liturgy of the Hours* vol. III, pp. 140, 143.

See also notes on **Particular Examine** above.