



'Legio Sanctae Familiae' The Legion of the Holy Family

Under the Patronage of
The Sacred Heart of Jesus
The Immaculate Heart of Mary
The Most Chaste Heart of St Joseph



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In the last article on *Sapientiae Christianae* Pope Leo XIII spoke of those who hide their cowardice under the guise of a false prudence. He now points out another equally false position to adopt, that of false zeal.

“On the other hand, not a few, impelled by a false zeal, or - what is more blameworthy still - affecting sentiments which their conduct belies, take upon themselves to act a part which does not belong to them. They would fair see the Church’s mode of action influenced by their ideas and their judgment to such an extent that everything done otherwise they take ill or accept with repugnance.

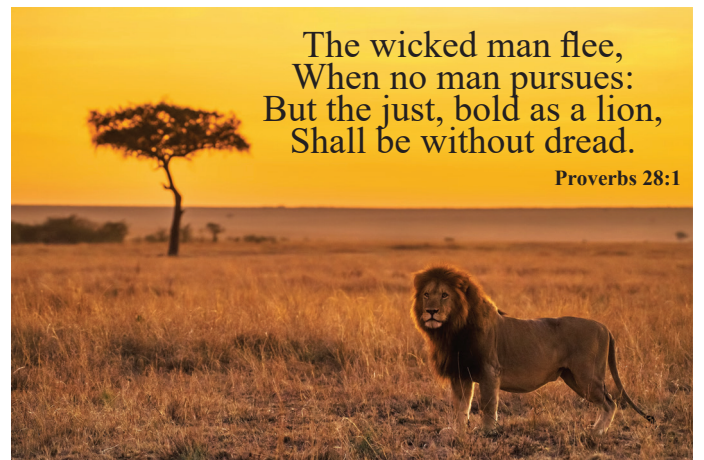
Some, yet again, expend their energies in fruitless contention, being worthy of blame equally with the former. To act in such manner is not to follow lawful authority but to forestall it, and, unauthorized, assume the duties of the spiritual rulers, to the great detriment of the order which God established in His Church to be observed forever, and which He does not permit to be violated with impunity by any one, whoever he may be.” (**Sapientiae Christianae 35**)

Pope Leo XIII is pointing out the dangers of ignoring the order established by God. This order protects the Catholic Church and it also protects civil society. To ignore this order imperils both the Church and civil society. Again, we must keep in mind that Pope Leo XIII is writing at a time when the Catholic Church is under attack from the civil authorities. Rome has been captured and the Catholic Church has been despoiled of the temporal power she once exercised in Italy. The Pope is a prisoner in the Vatican. He now speaks of those who heroically stand up to defend the Catholic Church.

“Honour, then, to those who shrink not from entering the arena as often as need calls, believing and being convinced that the violence of injustice will be brought to an end and finally give way to the sanctity of right and religion! They truly seem invested with the dignity of time honoured virtue, since they are struggling to defend religion, and chiefly against the faction banded together to attack Christianity with extreme daring and without tiring, and to pursue with

The wicked man flee,
When no man pursues:
But the just, bold as a lion,
Shall be without dread.

Proverbs 28:1



incessant hostility the sovereign Pontiff, fallen into their power.

But men of this high character maintain without wavering the love of obedience, nor are they wont to undertake anything upon their own authority. Now, since a like resolve to obey, combined with constancy and sturdy courage, is needful, so that whatever trials the pressure of events may bring about, they may be “deficient in nothing,”(James 1:4)

We greatly desire to fix deep in the minds of each one that which Saint Paul calls the “wisdom of the spirit, (Romans 8:6) for in controlling human actions this wisdom follows the excellent rule of moderation, with the happy result that no one either timidly despairs through lack of courage or presumes over much from want of prudence.

There is, however, a difference between the political prudence that relates to the general good and that which concerns the good of individuals. This latter is shown forth in the case of private persons who obey the prompting of right reason in the direction of their own conduct; while the former is the characteristic of those who are set over others, and chiefly of rulers of the State, whose duty it is to exercise the power of command, so that the political prudence of private individuals would seem to consist wholly in carrying out faithfully the orders issued by lawful authority.” (**Sapientiae Christianae 36**)

Pope Leo XIII is writing as the Pope and he is writing to Catholics. He assumes that his audience understands Catholic Church teaching on lawful authority. In today's world, Catholics in general are not really conversant with the nuances of Catholic moral teaching as they have not been properly catechised due, in many instances, to the failure of Catholic schools to properly transmit the treasure of the Catholic faith. This situation leads to dangers that have not been addressed by Pope Leo XIII in this encyclical. Nonetheless, the points that Pope Leo XIII makes are perfectly valid.

Where a government commands, for example, that doctors must prescribe abortion pills to those who ask for them, there is a duty on Catholics not to obey such laws. Catholics have a moral duty to oppose such laws and to do everything in their power to have these unjust 'laws' abolished. These laws and those who pass them lose their authority because they have contravened the higher moral laws of God. They constitute a contravention of law and therefore they do not form part of that which constitutes lawful authority. Pope Leo XIII is not saying that Catholics are duty bound to obey all the laws of those who rule over them. But he is pointing out that Catholics have a duty to obey lawful authority, otherwise, they could damage the very structure of society by calling into question the very legitimacy of government rule.

This follows on from his warnings to those who refuse to act against some injustice by falsely claiming they are being prudent. It also applies to those who act rashly placing over zealous demands on those in authority without respecting the nature of that authority. Pope Leo XIII then turns his attention to the respect that we must have for those who govern the Catholic Church. This section can present difficulties for us as we are living in a time where many of the attacks on Catholic Church doctrines are coming from senior prelates within the Catholic Church. Let us have a look at what Pope Leo XIII says and then try to make sense of it.

“The like disposition and the same order should prevail in the Christian society by so much the more that the political prudence of the Pontiff embraces diverse and multifarious things, for it is his charge not only to rule the Church, but generally so to regulate the actions of Christian citizens that these may be in apt conformity to their hope of gaining eternal salvation. Whence it is clear that, in addition to the complete accordance of thought and deed, the faithful should follow the practical political wisdom of the ecclesiastical authority.

Now, the administration of Christian affairs immediately under the Roman Pontiff appertains to the bishops, who, although they attain not to the summit of pontifical power, are nevertheless truly princes in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; and as each one of them administers a particular church, they are “as master-workers... in the spiritual edifice,”(Thomas Aquinas Quaest Quodl., 1, G. 7, art. 2, Answer) and they have

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Hospitals providing abortion services

**Irish Hospitals are required by law
To kill innocent human beings
In their mother's wombs.**

members of the clergy to share their duties and carry out their decisions.

Every one has to regulate his mode of conduct according to this constitution of the Church, which it is not in the power of any man to change. Consequently, just as in the exercise of their episcopal authority the bishops ought to be united with the apostolic see so should the members of the clergy and the laity live in close union with their bishops.

Among the prelates, indeed, one or other there may be affording scope to criticism either in regard to personal conduct or in reference to opinions by him entertained about points of doctrine; but no private person may arrogate to himself the office of judge which Christ our Lord has bestowed on that one alone whom He placed in charge of His lambs and of His sheep. Let every one bear in mind that most wise teaching of Gregory the Great: “Subjects should be admonished not rashly to judge their prelates, even if they chance to see them acting in a blameworthy manner, lest, justly reproving what is wrong, they be led by pride into greater wrong.

They are to be warned against the danger of setting themselves up in audacious opposition to the superiors whose shortcomings they may notice. Should, therefore, the superiors really have committed grievous sins, their inferiors, penetrated with the fear of God, ought not to refuse them respectful submission. The actions of superiors should not be smitten by the sword of the word, even when they are rightly judged to have deserved censure.”(Regina pastorales, Part 3, cap. 4 (PL 77, 55)) (**Sapientiae Christianae 37**)

There exists within the Catholic Church today a very strong and powerful movement which seeks to undermine Catholic Church doctrine, especially in the area of sexual morality. These men take great pains to insist that they are not in fact changing any of the doctrines of the Catholic Church, rather, they are simply enacting pastoral practices to reach out to the marginalised within the Catholic Church. There is a particular focus towards those who promote and

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live the Lesbian, Gay, bi-sexual and Transgender life styles. The first three of these are gravely sinful and supporting and affirming those who believe that their gender can be chosen or is different from their sex is a breach of the eight commandment - thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

In discussing this matter with regard to authority, it must never be forgotten that the authority of parents over their children supersedes that of the Catholic bishop. Pope John Paul II put it this way in his encyclical letter '*Familiaris Consortio*'.

“The right and duty of parents to give education is essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life; it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children; and it is irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others. (**Familiaris Consortio 36**)

Pope John Paul II also spoke of the parents' role in education in his letter to families '*Gratissimam Sane*'.

“Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children, and they also possess a fundamental competence in this area: they are educators because they are parents. They share their educational mission with other individuals or institutions, such as the Church and the State.

But the mission of education must always be carried out in accordance with a proper application of the principle of subsidiarity. This implies the legitimacy and indeed the need of giving assistance to the parents, but finds its intrinsic and absolute limit in their prevailing right and their actual capabilities. The principle of subsidiarity is thus at the service of parental love, meeting the good of the family unit. For parents by themselves are not capable of satisfying every requirement of the whole process of raising children, especially in matters concerning their schooling and the entire gamut of socialization. Subsidiarity thus complements paternal and maternal love and confirms its fundamental nature, inasmuch as all other participants in the process of education are only able to carry out their responsibilities in the name of the parents, with their consent and, to a certain degree, with their authorization.” (**Gratissimam Sane 16**)

Pope Leo XIII may not have been able to imagine a time when Catholic bishops would seek to promote dangerous materials of a sexual nature to Catholic school children in both primary and secondary schools. This is the reality faced by Catholic parents today. However, we must not ignore Pope Leo XIII's warning about respect for the authority of the Pope and the Bishops. The danger comes from the fact that many, who see what certain bishops are doing and promoting, may, by their actions, undermine the authority structure implemented by Jesus Christ when He founded the Catholic Church. There can be only one legitimate authority structure in the Catholic

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Church and, as Catholics, we are bound to uphold this authoritative structure.

Another danger comes about when men move from judging the actions and policies of certain bishops to judging the men themselves. This latter judgement must be left to Christ.

This does not mean that Catholic parents should not challenge and call out the dangers of bishops promoting education in sexuality in the public setting of the classroom. To refuse to call out these dangers and to refuse to warn other parents of them under a false notion of respecting the authority of the bishops, would be to neglect the grave duties that God imposes on us as parents. Catholic bishops who support this immoral education in sexuality are not acting under the principle of subsidiarity. They are abusing the essential right and duty of parents and they are putting obstacles in the way of the original and primary rights of parents with regard to the education of their children.

That being said, Catholic parents must realise that we need our bishops and it is because of this need that Catholic parents must challenge their bishops and raise strong objections when the salvation of their children is being put in danger by the misguided actions of their bishops, regardless of how well intention those actions may be. As Voice of the Family have pointed out in their Autumn Schools Watch series, which can be downloaded at this link - <https://voiceofthefamily.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/CSW-Autumn-2023.pdf>

“The Relationships and Sexuality Education resources recently published by the Irish Episcopal Conference's Council for Education run contrary to Catholic teaching, as shown by a consideration of their content.

The slides included in the resources, for use in post-primary-school classrooms throughout the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, expose young people — and their teachers — to occasions of sin....” (**Catholic Schools Watch, Autumn 2023, page 1**)

Catholic parents must “justly reprove what is wrong” whilst avoiding the sin of rash judgement and pride in their dealings and comments on the bishops who are endangering the faith and salvation of their children.

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This can be a very difficult as parents become justly angry at those who put their childrens' safety and spiritual well-being in danger, especially if those who do so are members of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. But Pope Leo XIII warns us:

“However, all endeavours will avail but little unless our life be regulated conformably with the discipline of the Christian virtues. Let us call to mind what holy Scripture records concerning the Jewish nation: “As long as they sinned not in the sight of their God, it was well with them: for their God hates iniquity. And even . . . when they had revolted from the way that God had given them to walk therein, they were destroyed in battles by many nations.”(Judith 5:21-22) Now, the nation of the Jews bore an inchoate semblance to the Christian people, and the vicissitudes of their history in olden times have often foreshadowed the truth that was to come, saving that God in His goodness has enriched and loaded us with far greater benefits, and on this account the sins of Christians are much greater, and bear the stamp of more shameful and criminal ingratitude. **(Sapientiae Christianae 38)**

As Catholics we have all the graces of the sacraments available to us and the best way that we can protect and defend our children is by becoming holy ourselves and by striving to live good Catholic lives.

“The Church, it is certain, at no time and in no particular is deserted by God; hence, there is no reason why she should be alarmed at the wickedness of men; but in the case of nations falling away from Christian virtue there is not a like ground of assurance, “for sin makes nations miserable.”(Proverbs 14:34 39)

If every bygone age has experienced the force of this truth, wherefore should not our own? There are, in truth, very many signs which proclaim that just punishments are already menacing, and the condition of modern States tends to confirm this belief, since we perceive many of them in sad plight from intestine disorders, and not one entirely exempt. But, should those leagued together in wickedness hurry onward in the road they have boldly chosen, should they increase in influence and power in proportion as they make headway in their evil purposes and crafty schemes, there will be ground to fear lest the very foundations nature has laid for States to rest upon be utterly destroyed.

Nor can such misgivings be removed by any mere human effort, especially as a vast number of men, having rejected the Christian faith, are on that account justly incurring the penalty of their pride, since blinded by their passions they search in vain for truth, laying hold on the false for the true, and thinking themselves wise when they call “evil good, and good evil,” and “put darkness in the place of light, and light in the place of darkness.”(Isaiah 5:20) It is therefore necessary that God come to the rescue, and that, mindful of His mercy, He turn an eye of compassion on human society.” **(Sapientiae Christianae 39)**

It is hard to imagine what Pope Leo XIII would make of the Synod on Synodality or of the answers to the

recent set of Dubia submitted by Cardinals Burke, Sarah, Brandmüller, Zen, and Iñiguezto.

The second of the dubia deals with the blessing of same-sex unions.

“**2. Dubium** - regarding the assertion that the widespread practice of blessing same-sex unions is in accordance with Revelation and the Magisterium (CCC 2357).

According to the Divine Revelation, attested in Sacred Scripture, which the Church teaches, “listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully in accord with a divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit” (Dei Verbum, 10), “In the beginning,” God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them, and blessed them to be fruitful (cf. Genesis 1:27-28) and hence, the Apostle Paul teaches that denying sexual difference is the consequence of denying the Creator (Romans 1:24-32). We ask: can the Church deviate from this “principle,” considering it, in contrast to what was taught in Veritatis splendor, 103, as a mere ideal, and accept as a “possible good” objectively sinful situations, such as unions with persons of the same sex, without departing from the revealed doctrine?”

Pope Francis’ response speaks about the Catholic Church’s clear understanding of marriage which cannot change nor can there be confusion between marriage and other forms of union between persons. It then goes on to say the following.

“Therefore, pastoral prudence must adequately discern whether there are forms of blessing, requested by one or more persons, that do not convey a mistaken concept of marriage. For when a blessing is requested, it is expressing a plea to God for help, a supplication to live better, a trust in a Father who can help us live better.”

Those who request blessings on their homosexual unions generally do not have any intention of giving up that union. What they are looking for is acceptance of their union by the Catholic Church in the form of a blessing. The response given by Pope Francis suggests that there might be a possibility of blessing those in such unions provided these unions are not equated with sacramental marriage. Those who actively support homosexual unions and their blessing by the Catholic Church have been very quick to publicise that this is how they interpret the response of Pope Francis. The Pope’s response is leading to confusion rather than affirming Catholic doctrine. The response pays lip service to Catholic doctrine whilst affirming public homosexual sinners in the hope that the Catholic Church is about to allow blessings for their objectively mortally sinful unions.

Pope Francis is failing in his solemn duty to affirm Catholic teaching on the sinfulness of homosexual unions. He is thereby causing harm to the Catholic Church. We must pray ardently for Pope Francis that he will correct the errors that are proliferating throughout the Church and the world during his pontificate. We must not reject his legitimate authority to govern the Catholic Church as Christ intended. These are dark times.