

St. Gabriel Bulletin

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How Heresy Spreads and the Error of Relativism - Part III

The fact that rich people constantly search for novelties is proof that everything in this life is ephemeral. Here is why it is absurd for me to act only out of self-interest: I know that all things on earth, no matter how many I possess and how much pleasure they may provide, actually give me a fleeting pleasure. After a while, I will no longer like all the things that can please me on earth.

Look at the world's richest people. If they are immoral, they are continually changing husbands or wives while keeping a collection of lovers on the side. They will always be changing cars and traveling all over, looking for novelties. Their televisions are always on as they forever search for what is happening outside. What is the meaning of this unending search if not that their possessions do not satisfy them? This is obvious.

When a rich man does not make good use of his wealth, he will continuously be changing everything. Unfortunately, the great majority of the wealthy in our neo-pagan times

act this way. The rich man likes to move into a new house and change furniture regardless of fashions; continually changing everything is the very rule of pleasure in life.

He is this way because nothing completely satisfies him. He continually lives mired in discontent all the while seeking new satisfactions, which he knows will only lead to further discontent. This is especially true of our age without tradition, in which nothing is preserved; everything is continually sold, squandered and bought back by the same people.

Without an Absolute to Which We Continually Tend, Life Is Not Worth Living

Imagine if earthly things could actually satisfy me. I know a time will come when I will die and have to leave these things behind. I will pass away just as these things will fall apart and cease to exist. Tracing my lineage all the way back to Adam, I ask from how many men and women do I descend? No one knows how many links bind me to the first man. I do know all have died, and so will I.

Thus, I can judge the value of all the world's pleasures by continually reflecting upon the following point: From one moment to the next, all of this can pass and I will die.

I can prove this with a personal example. Seven or eight months ago I was riding in a splendid Mercedes on a highway in the countryside of São Paulo state. Many people watching me pass by would think, "How enjoyable it would be to be that man, the owner of that splendid car." I might have been sleeping in the car at the time, I don't even remember. However, at that time Providence had in store a serious ordeal for me. I had a car accident that almost killed me.

Anyone seeing that demolished Mercedes on the roadside would have thought that its occupant had died there. What would the first delight in seeing that Mercedes be worth? I went from a comfortable car to a bed of pain in which I still lie after seven or eight months of uncomfortable, annoying, painful treatment. This is the reality.

So, what is life all about? Why

should I strive and take care of my temporal affairs if they all break up later? Why seek pleasure if it cannot satisfy me? Either there is an absolute Being for Whom I live and Who is capable of giving me that stability in pleasure and happiness that I seek, or I wonder if it is not better for me to seek annihilation. This reasoning makes sense for anyone who wants to look at things realistically.

A world war might break out tonight, and they might decide to launch a nuclear attack on São Paulo. This would paralyze São Paulo, which is the center of all Brazilian industry. You and I may be comfortably sleeping in our beds and suddenly disintegrate from a nuclear blast. We would then stand before the infinitely majestic presence of God. The time of mercy will be over.

It is time for justice: "Render accounts for your life. What have you done?" From my bed, I can go to the Judgment of God. Where do I go from God's Judgment?

Either I have a conviction that God is the absolute and eternal reason for being of all things and for Whom I live, or life is a crazy senseless string of precarious activities. If we truly keep this in mind, we will understand that those who live running after their own interests in this world have fallen into the error of the devil. They have put their interests in those things that are temporal. Man's real interest lies at the end of his life, which is our eternal God and Lord. The rest is zero.

Someone might say, "If I take this at-

titude I may remain poor."

This might be true. However, what is worse: being poor or becoming a demon in hell? Take the poorest person on earth, covered with leprosy and sores. His affliction will end here, and he could go to Heaven. Who is unhappier, this man or a devil in hell, unhappy for all eternity?

Therefore, our greatest interest is to seek our end. If we were self-seeking, we would not be interested in serving God our Lord. "Serving God" is a vague expression. How do we serve God? We do this by practicing the Commandments of God's Law and fighting for God against His enemies. For this, we have the TFP, and this is our vocation. It gives meaning to our life.

How Dr. Plinio Put a Stop to His Desire to Live in Function of the Ocean

As you know, because of the phenomenon of refraction, something placed in the water gives the impression of being broken. Imagine a child puts his father's cane into the water and has the impression that it is broken. He pulls the cane out to examine the disaster and sees that the cane is actually straight. How curious! The child puts the cane back into the water, and again, it appears broken. He then reaches into the water to check the cane. Feeling with his hand, he has a sense of continuity while his eyes convey a sense of discontinuity. The child is invited to make a judgment about this phenomenon: Is the cane broken or not? He comes to the conclusion that it is

not. This is an intellectually ordered child.

This type of episode is repeated thousands of times during our lives. We continually have impressions contrary to reason. We must educate our bad impressions when they arise by detesting them as fruits of our weakness, original sin and acquired defects. We must energetically adopt opposing convictions.

Then, what is called a 'vivencia' vanishes. (A vivencia is a strong impression in a person's life that leaves an indelible mark on the soul and can form part of one's character. While a vivencia can be good or bad, in this case, it is a foolish impression that can have a harmful effect upon a person. Trans.)

For example, when I was young and still had not started my Catholic apostolate, I began to swim in the ocean, which was something I should not have done since it had a bad effect upon me. I had such a satisfaction, joy and connaturality with the ocean that it gave me an enormous contentment. It was so intense that I never wanted to leave the ocean.

I would say, "I am going to stay here. My happiness is to stay at the ocean as long as I can. When I can no longer stay in the water, I will go to the beach and eat seafood and after a brief nap, I would go back into the water. This whole business of going to college, becoming a lawyer, developing relationships is worthless. What is this in comparison to the next wave? This is what amuses and pleases me. Everything else is a fig-

ment of the mind that these fools around me do. My obsession is the wave. I prefer waves that don't break, but carry me like on a soft floating mattress custom-made for people with a calm temperament like mine."

One clear sunny day, a wave came and sent me to the ocean floor upright. It was so beautiful that I didn't even feel out of breath. Even to this day, I cannot explain how this happened especially since I am very sensitive to shortness of breath. I had the impression that I was living inside a precious stone. Then this idea came to me: "Do you know what? I am not going to surface, I will just going to stay down here."

I don't know what foolishness I would have done at that time were it not for the idea that this could be suicide, which is against Catholic morals. I did not want to sin under any circumstance.

Thus, I corrected this foolish impression in two ways. First, after coming home, I would review what happened: "Look what a stupid delight I had, and how it distanced me from reality. How foolish it was and this cannot continue. I cannot allow myself to be persuaded by my sensation that tells me that living underwater in the ocean would be entirely delightful." Later, when I returned to the ocean and wave would come, I would say: "See how shameful and stupid my sensations are." This is what I did that until I re-adjusted the attitude of my soul in relation to the ocean.

I did the same thing with countless

revolutionary things, and that is what we should all do. Then those foolish impressions (*vivencias*) will subside. I believe this is one point of our spiritual life that needs to be put in order by the grace of Our Lady. We must take this attitude to rectify the effects of our *vivencias*.

You might say, "This isn't easy." I would agree, it is not easy at all. It is extremely difficult. A dogma of faith says that no one can practice all the Commandments of God's law simultaneously and for a long time without considerable effort and enormous amounts of grace. A man who practices the Law of God is a miracle. Let us ask for this miracle and practice the Law of God all the way to this point.

A Man Without Faith Repays Good with Evil

One example of mistaken impressions is the policy of *détente* (or getting along) with communist governments. This attitude is seriously flawed from the standpoint of Catholic doctrine because it supposes that the real cause of the malice of communists is that they are fighting us. People think that if we treat them kindly, they will be grateful and change their minds. Thus, communists are good but mistaken individuals who will change if treated well. This is the erroneous substratum of *détente*.

This attitude led the United States to send priceless riches to the communists that Paul VI facilitated in every way with his own rapprochement. All these efforts were based on the idea that we can somehow change

the position of the communists by treating them kindly. That is a blatant error.

An atheist is unable to properly reciprocate for benefits received. Only a Catholic can achieve this task, but only if one is a very good Catholic and assisted by the grace of God. By his fallen nature, man is very prone to evil, and when he departs from God and adheres to atheism, small acts of kindnesses will not make him turn back to God. What can and must make him turn back is our conviction and thus even our willingness to fight against him. Naturally this must be done by observing the law to prevent him from harming others; otherwise, it is madness.

Just consider the ten lepers of the Gospel. Only one went back to thank Our Lord. Yet from the material standpoint, no favor is greater than healing someone's leprosy. How do you explain that nine were so bad? Because man conceived in Original Sin is bad. If a man does not have Faith and practice it properly, he repays good with evil.

Thinking that you can change the attitude of communists with small acts of kindness is nothing but a stupid fantasy. It is a relativistic way of applying Catholic doctrine to Original Sin. People may believe it, but when applying it, they go astray.

How should we preserve the doctrine of this meeting from relativism? One must study, reduce things to principles and then practice them. Man's memory is like dust: The wind blows, and it is gone.

One might ask: What good is doctrine if we forget it so easily? The only way out is to study the doctrine and apply it. Then practice it by doing exercises. For example, once a day I will notice an instance of relativism around me. It can then expand this to twice a day, then thrice daily until it becomes second nature. After training myself to notice relativism, I can then train myself to detest it by considering why it is bad. I then gradually become a complete anti-relativist.

Dr. Plinio, could you tell us where relativism penetrates the most within the TFP?

Relativism penetrates the most when a TFP member imagines that deep down people who are relativists have the same mentality he does. He should accustom himself to note that although convictions can be the same in their formulation between them and us, in a relativist they have a nuance that changes them substantially. In the mind of a relativist, certainty is only a hypothesis. In our mind, certainty is certainty. How is relativism most opposed to God?

In everything, because God defined Himself to Moses as, "I am Who am." He is perfect and absolute in everything. Meanwhile, the relativist bases all of his interior and exterior attitudes according to his own ideas. Thus, he shows himself very dissimilar to God. Actually, all things should tend toward the service of God and those absolute values. A relativist declares, "There is no absolute," therefore deep down, "There is no God."

As the novena to Our Lady of Fatima begins, let us petition her to send the regenerating punishment she promised.

If you look at the international situation, you see perfectly well that the punishment Our Lady foresaw at Fatima can fall upon the world from one moment to the next. In other words, many nations will be annihilated, and finally "My Immaculate Heart will triumph!"

Therefore, Our Lady justifies one of the titles the Church gives in her in the litany to her, Regina Profetarum. She is the Queen of prophets. With the revealed science she received from God, she predicted the future making a prophecy. She communicated this prophecy to mankind through the three little shepherds.

What should we ask Our Lady today? We see a world situation in which it becomes increasingly painful and difficult to do good. On the other hand, evil is growing ever more appealing and attractive. As a result, an increasing number of good souls are lost.

The good and the elect are the axis of history. I believe it can be said that there has never been such a difficult time for the good as this present era. This is perhaps why the devil is indefinitely delaying the outbreak of the Great Chastisement. By taking longer, he wants to completely ruin all good souls on earth to establish his empire.

If this is what the devil wants, we must ask the Blessed Mother for the opposite. We must ask her in her wis-

dom to deliver those she wants so much to save from extremely serious spiritual dangers and to unleash the fulfillment of the prophecies of Fatima.

As you know, Saint Peter said that many people were saved by the Great Flood. Many who would have died in bed and gone to hell were saved because of that punishment. Considering the Flood in its most profound aspects, it was evidently a punishment, but it also turned out to be a great act of mercy to a number of souls known only to God.

Therefore we are not asking God to deny the world His mercy but rather to show mercy even to the wicked. If there is no other way, let Him punish them so they convert and are spared the eternal unhappiness of damnation.

We should ask Our Lady: "Let thy Reign come to us by destroying the conspiracy of all thy enemies and eventually scattering and crushing those enemies bound to be destroyed in the plans of Divine Providence so that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven and the Reign of Mary be established as soon as possible."

I urge you to pray for that intention, and since the novena starts today, I propose that we say the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be three times as a tribute to Our Lady of Fatima, asking for these graces.

Plinio Correa de Oliveira
Saint of the Day,
October 4, 1975