

Fr. Perozich comments —

My goal in the posts I send you is meant to be encouragement for you to persevere in your faith in Jesus Christ in His Holy Catholic Church during trying times.

I wish that no one fall away despite scandal, poor teaching, or pressure from parishes or dioceses.

So when I find some good articles that I feel will help you, I share them, such as the one below.

The Benedict option has been promoted over the past few years. It calls a faithful Catholic to promote the Catholic faith and one's personal spiritual growth through a different type of engagement. It calls a person to confront the evils of the day, yet to congregate with other faithful Catholics for protection from the evil and from those who promote ambiguity so as not to be overcome by it when confusion becomes so pervasive that it affects every person in the pew.

Jonathan Coe offers this formula at the end of the article for the laity.

1 The laity must be humble.

2 The laity must be altar-centered and not pulpit-centered.

3 The laity must be mature.

4 The laity must be detached.

Coe views three types of clergy also in today's church.

1 Type A is the Zeitgeist Puppet who move almost lockstep with the modern times and political movements.

2. Type B is the hit-and-miss prelate or priest who seem to proclaim timeless Catholic teaching on occasion, yet at other times, fail in confusion, ambiguity, and waffling.

3. Type C is the robustly orthodox priest or prelate who speak the timeless truths of the church, those in whom we can confide.

When a priest falls under type C these days, he often is silenced, accused, removed, condemned, and so forth when he has a type A or type B bishop. Perhaps this is why those of you who bemoan the fact that you don't hear clear teaching on sexuality, marriage, life issues in fact DON'T hear the full teaching.

You don't know how many phone calls the priest has received from diocesan authorities. You don't get to sit in the interviews the priest has with the bishop and his priests chosen to govern the clergy. You don't know the sanctions or threats.

You *HAVE* seen the results of silencing, accusations, even up to removal from ministry for some. The names that come to mind are Fr. James Haley, Fr. Gene Gomulka, Fr. Jack Harrington, Fr. Frank Phillips, Fr. Mark Goring, Fr. David Nix, Fr. Edwin Dwyer, Fr. Paul Kalchik, just to name a few.

San Diego went from a Type B bishop now to a Type A bishop under Coe's categories. When this happens, even the clergy might have to choose a Benedict option to save their own souls, all the while knowing that each cleric depends entirely on the bishop for his material livelihood while the priest may be trying to protect his immortal soul and yours as well.

Certainly, you laity can choose the Benedict option. While worshiping in your parishes, you may find you need to choose a new parish if you are not cared for in the current one through the timeless teaching of the Church.

*You must promote the faith in financial contributions.
How you do that is up to you.*

It is essential to find and unite with other faithful Catholics with whom you can walk in the Catholic Church, those who profess and live the timeless truths.

Jonathan Coe offers some insight into the Church today. He then offers you concrete steps to stay in the Church, to protect your faith, and to promote the fullness of the truth in our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Becoming Saints In A Time of Scandal and Crisis

JONATHAN B. COE



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<https://www.crisismagazine.com/2019/becoming-saints-in-a-time-of-scandal-and-crisis>

If *The Pilgrim's Progress* was [were] written today, Bunyan could accurately depict our time, by having the allegory's protagonist, Christian, be besieged by a cacophony of voices. These voices would emanate from within him and from without, from the DNA he had received from Adam and Eve, and from external voices from different sources that would echo and encourage the internal voice.

A voice of concupiscence from within would encourage an over attachment or idolatry to one or more of the four substitutes for God that Aquinas wrote about: wealth, pleasure, power, and honor. The external voices of the world and the devil would second the motion as would some in the Church.

An internal voice promoting an autonomy that jettisons Scripture and Tradition—"You shall be as gods!"—would receive much support from a culture shaped by the diabolical trinity of the media, academia, and the entertainment industry. The latter, with its promotion of "following your heart," "embracing *your* truth," and "listening to the god within," receives a Luciferic imprimatur as well as the approval of various priests and prelates.

Bunyan's pilgrim would also need to deal with the less harmful "domestic voices." I knew a husband who told me that "a no-win situation is when your wife tells you that she wants you to simultaneously work longer hours because money is very tight *and* spend more time with the kids because they don't see you enough." The reader will surely be

able to supply many other examples of internal and external voices pulling us here and there.

As someone who will celebrate his 15th anniversary of being received into the Catholic Church this coming April, I can both congratulate and empathize with new converts entering the Church this spring. I can congratulate them because you won't find a happier convert than me and I know that they now have access to the vast sacramental, devotional, and intellectual banqueting table of the faith that was handed down to us once for all (Jude 1:3) and the sacred deposit of the faith.

At the same time, I empathize with the new convert and the revert coming back to the faith because this is a time of scandal and crisis, and, if they earnestly desire to become fully-catechized believers, some will need to deal with a cacophony of voices from within the Church. For others, even from the very beginning of their journey, this is not an issue and they have the ability, like Elijah (I Kings 19:9-12), to clearly hear the still, small voice of orthodoxy and act accordingly amidst all the other voices that are sound and fury, signifying nothing.

The Church Is a Mess

Early in his pontificate, when Pope Francis told Latin American youth "to make a mess," he probably had no idea to what degree certain American priests and prelates had been following his advice for the last half-century. If you doubt such an assessment, ask yourself six questions:

How could a depraved prelate like ex-Cardinal McCarrick rise to such ecclesial heights when so many other prelates *must have known* about his evil behavior?

How could a heterodox cardinal like Blase Cupich become the *de facto* leading prelate in America?

How is a priest like Fr. James Martin, whose teachings on homosexuality contravene the Magisterium, given almost *carte blanche* while becoming one of the most sought-after speakers in the Catholic Church in America?

How could the USCCB vote 137-83, with three abstaining, to *not* encourage the Holy See to release all documents concerning allegations of sexual misconduct by McCarrick?

Why are so many parishes being shuttered and why do so many of the parishioners who attend weekly Mass have heterodox beliefs and behaviors?

For the new convert or revert, these parishioners, sitting next to them during Mass, would definitely contribute to the cacophony. In a recent [Pew Research Center study](#), 58 percent who attend Mass weekly believe that divorced and remarried parishioners, who have not been through the annulment process, should be allowed to receive Communion; 42 percent think that co-habiting couples should be able to partake of the Eucharist, and only 46 percent think that pre-marital sex is a sin.

A Basic Taxonomy Of Priests And Prelates

Cacophony in the pews is augmented by cacophony in the clergy. I oversimplify here, but, for the sake of brevity, [three different types](#) of priests and prelates have emerged:

Type A is the *Zeitgeist* Puppet. Cupich and Martin come to mind.

With each passing year he becomes more and more indistinguishable from the dominant culture around him. He seems more concerned about plastic straws in the ocean than the killing of the unborn.

He is the Democratic Party in religious vestments, and an important player in a large social justice agency that happens to also offer religious services. His is a liturgy that guarantees to make everyone feel good about themselves, except for those parishioners who might disagree with him.

With such a departure from Scripture and Tradition, it makes a convert like me ask, “Why did I bother to leave Protestantism when all you seem to want to do is *protestantize* the Pillar and Ground of the Truth?” This plays well at cocktail parties in Manhattan, Georgetown, and San Francisco but reaps the whirlwind with shuttered churches, empty church coffers, and dwindling priestly vocations.

Type B is the hit-and-miss prelate or priest. Cardinal Timothy Dolan comes to mind.

When I came into the Church fifteen years ago, a priest friend let me borrow Dolan’s fine book that came out in 2000: [*Priests For The Third Millennium*](#). I was impressed by both his insights and orthodoxy.

Recently, he rightly opposed the new heinous abortion-on-demand bill in New York driven by faux-Catholic Andrew Cuomo, though I wish his public statement had emerged much earlier. However, this same prelate served as Grand Marshal for Manhattan’s St. Patrick Day’s Parade that allowed an [openly homosexual activist group](#) to march in it.

He appeared at and supported the blasphemous, “Catholic”-themed [fashion show](#) sponsored by New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art: “Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination.” Much more could be written about Dolan, including his 2012 invitation of Barack Obama to the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner and his support of the ministry of James Martin.

Type C is the robustly orthodox priest or prelate.

Some American and foreign-born prelates come to mind: Cardinals Burke, Sarah, Schneider, et al. The reader will be able to name many more and may also call to remembrance Bishop Fulton J. Sheen.

Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas, reflects this spirit in his [tweet](#) following the unspeakably evil New York abortion bill: “The video of the ‘celebration’ of New York legislators as they condemned even full-term unborn children to Death by Choice is a scene from Hell. Woe to those who ignore the sanctity of life; they reap the whirlwind of Hell. Stand against this holocaust in every way you can.”

These men represent the still, small voice of orthodoxy competing against a chorus of heterodoxy. Deep down all earnest orthodox Catholics know something has gone terribly wrong in the Church in the last half-century, and we hope that such men, as sons of Athanasius, can lead the Church back to the faith handed down once for all.

Becoming Saints In A Time of Crisis and Scandal

In the meantime, the laity has their work cut out for them if they wish to stay on the straight and narrow and thrive in a time of crisis and scandal. *Put simply, we must become saints.*

Here are four directives that can serve as pillars in building a spiritual house that will weather the coming storms:

The laity must be humble. Rather than use the metaphor of a cacophony of voices, St. Anthony of the Desert talked about snares.

He came out of his hermitage in the Egyptian desert and looked about and saw the many snares of the devil spread out

over the entire world. He cried out to heaven: “My God! How can anyone be saved?” A voice responded from heaven: “Humility.”

The Novena of the Divine Mercy on Day 6 tells us that Christ himself said that the humble, the meek, and children most resemble his heart because of their humility. He can pour out his grace on them because of their humility but he opposes the proud.

The humble live in a radical, moment-by-moment dependence on the grace of God and know that apart from Christ they can do nothing (John 15:5). They know that it is unwise to make themselves the arbiters of truth and morality and that they must look to the Magisterium for guidance.

The laity must be altar-centered and not pulpit-centered. As someone from an evangelical-charismatic background, I once attended a “mega-church” several years ago in the Upper Midwest.

A study revealed that 75 percent of the people attended that church because of the excellent, expository teaching and preaching of the senior pastor. Another 15 percent were there because of the dynamic worship team while the remaining 10 percent were drawn by specific programs.

What I saw in other megachurches was the alarming number of people who fell away from the faith when their senior pastor or some other leader on church staff fell from grace. The perseverance of their faith was inextricably linked to the perseverance of the church leader.

This is one reason I favor—along with Cardinal Sarah—a world-wide return to *Ad Orientem* worship. It points us all to the altar and reminds us where our loyalties should be in an age where many priests and prelates are dancing around the Golden Calf.

The laity must be mature. One definition of this quality comes to us from the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews: “But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil” (5:14).

The truth is, especially if you’re in a diocese full of the latter kind of priests and prelates, you may need to do this “distinguishing” more than you would like. In recent years, I’ve heard many practicing Catholics complain about parish priests who reach into their groovy grab bag of social justice bromides and feel-good theology when delivering their Sunday morning homily.

I must admit disappointment with Fr. Barron in his [recent interview](#) with Ben Shapiro. I know prelates must sometimes speak in a more measured way than laity, but the interview came off as significantly downplaying the problems of the Holy See, the ecclesial corruption, and depravity in America.

It was a moment when I had to exercise my faculties to discern right from wrong. For one: Francis’s dictatorial tendencies are obvious and a matter of public record, and are cited in a [recent essay](#) I wrote for this magazine as well as in a compelling book by [Henry Sire](#).

The laity must be detached. All of existence can be divided into two categories: (1) the Created and (2) the Uncreated (i.e., Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

We’re supposed to be detached from the first and profoundly attached to the second as well as the realities of heaven (e.g., The Queen of Heaven, angels, saints, and the Beatific Vision).

In responding to the present crisis and scandal in the Church, I believe it is possible to experience both righteous

anger and godly sorrow and yet maintain a healthy detachment. We move away from healthy detachment when we embrace an emotional or spiritual state that depletes our inner resources and prohibits us from becoming saints.

Exhibit A: “The USCCB has disappointed me for the last time. I’m leaving the Church.” Or “Why should I stay on the straight and narrow when my bishop is so corrupt?”

In becoming humble, altar-centered, discerning, and detached, the laity becomes Mary’s Heel in a landscape—to borrow a title from a [Michael O’Brien book](#)—that has dragons. May those dragons soon be crushed under her feet!

Editor’s note: Pictured above is “The Temptation of St. Anthony” painted by David Teniers the Younger in 1645.

Tagged as [Church scandal / corruption](#), [Clergy Sexual Abuse](#), [crisis of faith / unbelief](#), [Sainthood](#), [spiritual formation](#)



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