

Fr. Perozich comments —

The church is the assembly of those called out of darkness into the light of Christ to proclaim the marvelous works Jesus has done through Word, Sacrament, and Charity, infused with and guided by His grace according to His teachings.

Jesus frees us from sin for goodness, from eternal death for eternal life, from isolation and vulnerability to communion with the Trinity and with one another.

This is the message which must be carried on by us clergy.

If we do it well, people will flock to Jesus. If we offer a worldly utopia as a substitute depriving the faithful of Word, Sacrament and virtue signaling Charity, depending on GOVERNMENT for charity, they will run from us as from wolves.

In my last large parish before retirement we culled the rolls each year depending on use of donation envelopes or checks for the last 6 months. We would start the new year with 2,800 families and have 3,500 by the end of the year. People move frequently. The Masses in Spanish were full; in English fairly full.

CCD swelled from 600 in 2008 to 1,500 by 2011 and continued. Baptisms were 450/year, Holy Matrimony 85, Confirmations 250, and First Communions over 600 each year.

The full gospel of Jesus crucified was preached. Guidance was offered at election time for political matters in spite of diocesan persecution against this practice. Charity abounded in multiple ministries. Masses were added to accommodate the faithful, including the Mass of John XXIII for those at the parish who requested it.

I believe that parish still operates this way, and could be the most active parish in the diocese of San Diego.

Many parishes have made comebacks since the 2020 shutdowns; others not so much. I see many clergy wielding authority and enjoying it.

Positivism means to make one's own will the rule or the law. It does not take much vision to see how this is being done in the church.

Rather than be ministers of grace, some consider themselves masters of it.

Rather than do and disappear, some need to be praised and elevated in the world by others and use the office to dominate the flock.

Fr. Scalia offers some good comments for us clergy.

- *Here is the constant temptation of bishops and priests: to rely on human ingenuity and worldly resources rather than on Christ. It's naturalism, the error of thinking that what a diocese or parish really needs can be found in what the world supplies. If only we have more money, the right resources, the best programs, greater social media presence, etc.*

*Christ's Church, born from His pierced side, lives by His grace. We might **use** human means and worldly resources (as our Lord used bread and fish, the help of the Apostles, and baskets for the fragments). But we do not **rely** on them. We **use** worldly means; we **rely on divine grace**.*

- *Our current crisis is not due to a lack of human ingenuity or worldly resources. The Church in Germany is wealthy – and moribund. It is a crisis of faith and the lack of a supernatural outlook, a failure of confidence in His grace and truth.*

- *our Lord incorporates the Apostles into His working of the miracle. He has them tell the people to recline. He has them distribute the loaves and fish. He thus **makes them coworkers in the feeding of His flock, participants in that divine work**.*

- ***Ecclesial authority is ordered to the handing on of what Christ has given.** The twofold temptation for shepherds has always been either to neglect their genuine authority or to abuse it for selfish gain. Or both. As this scene indicates, they are to be ministers, not masters, of Christ's grace and truth. **Theirs is but to do and disappear.***

- *It is an apostolic duty to gather up what Christ has given – so that it can be handed down to others. This is the grave obligation the Shepherds have to Tradition. They have authority precisely so that they can gather up and hand down the Church's liturgical and doctrinal patrimony. Failure to do so detaches their authority from Tradition and thus distorts it. Without the content of the Tradition, without a reference to generations past and future, authority becomes just an exercise of power here and now.*

- ***It leads to a magisterial positivism that values Church authority, not because of its service to what was received and***

should be handed on, but simply because it has the power to compel.

- *Such an **exchange of authority for positivism traps the faithful** in a particular moment of time. It makes them prisoners of the present, temporal orphans with no tradition to receive and, therefore, nothing to hand on to future generations. This dangerous situation makes the faithful prey to whatever new ideas or, more likely, ideologies come along. With no Tradition in which they can stand and by which they can discern, they fall easily into error.*

In defending the Traditional Latin Mass, the leader of the Society of St. Pius X piggy backs on Fr. Scalia's admonition with a blunt opinion about the current state of the Catholic Church:

"It is an authentic expression of a Church that wants to live in harmony with the world and that lends an ear to the world's demands. It represents a Church that, in the final analysis, no longer needs to fight against the world because it no longer has anything to reproach the world. Here is a Church that no longer has anything to teach the world because it listens to the powers of the world. It is a Church that no longer needs the Sacrifice of Our Blessed Lord because, having lost the notion of sin, it no longer has anything for which to atone. Here is a Church that no longer has the mission of restoring the universal kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ, because it wants to make its contribution to the creation on this earth of a better world that is freer, more egalitarian and more eco-responsible - and all this with purely human means."

Loaves, Fish, and Shepherds

By [Fr. Paul D. Scalia](#) SUNDAY, JULY 25, 2021

Our Lord's multiplication of the loaves and fish occupies a privileged place in the list of miracles. It is the only one recorded by all four Evangelists and the only one that prompts such a strong response

from the crowd: they want to make him king. It points us to the Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith. Thus, in this scene our Lord announces the inestimable gift of the Eucharist. In his treatment of the Apostles, He also outlines how the Church's Shepherds are to continue nourishing us.

Perhaps most significantly, He tests them first: "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?" He asks this question not because He needs the answer but because Philip and the others need to think about it. The temptation for the Apostles is to rely on human means. As Philip observes, "Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little." Andrew chimes in with the same natural way of thinking: "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?" These are voices of discouragement because they are voices of worldly thinking.

Here is the constant temptation of bishops and priests: to rely on human ingenuity and worldly resources rather than on Christ. It's naturalism, the error of thinking that what a diocese or parish *really* needs can be found in what the world supplies. If only we have more money, the right resources, the best programs, greater social media presence, etc.

Christ's Church, born from His pierced side, lives by His grace. We might use human means and worldly resources (as our Lord used bread and fish, the help of the Apostles, and baskets for the fragments). But we do not rely on them. We *use* worldly means; we *rely* on divine grace.

Our current crisis is not due to a lack of human ingenuity or worldly resources. The Church in Germany is wealthy – and moribund. It is a crisis of faith and the lack of a supernatural outlook, a failure of confidence in His grace and truth. This scene indicates that such has always been the temptation of the shepherds, and that only by way of such confidence can shepherds feed the flock.



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In Saint Mark's account, when the Apostles voice their concerns about the hungry crowd, Jesus responds, "Give them some food yourselves." This response has the same purpose as His question about buying enough bread: to bring the Apostles face to face with their – and the world's – inadequacy. It also leads us to a second pastoral lesson: our Lord incorporates the Apostles into His working of the miracle. He has them tell the people to recline. He has them distribute the loaves and fish. He thus makes them coworkers in the feeding of His flock, participants in that divine work.

Consider the situation of the Apostles. They had to possess both the authority to accomplish what He asked and the humility to do it as ministers. Yes, He had entrusted this task to them, not others. Still, it was *His* miracle, not theirs. If they don't exercise that authority, the miracle is impeded. If they don't do so humbly, it becomes about them and is, again, impeded.

Ecclesial authority is ordered to the handing on of what Christ has given. The twofold temptation for shepherds has always been either to neglect their genuine authority or to abuse it for selfish gain. Or both. As this scene indicates, they are to be *ministers*, not masters, of Christ's grace and truth. Theirs is but to do and disappear.

Then comes the final, somewhat curious, command: "Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted." It seems superfluous. Surely, the One Who multiplies loaves and fish need not concern Himself with leftovers. Of course, He gives the command not for His own benefit but for theirs – and ours.

It is an apostolic duty to gather up what Christ has given – so that it can be handed down to others. This is the grave obligation the Shepherds have to Tradition. They have authority precisely so that they can gather up and hand down the Church’s liturgical and doctrinal patrimony. Failure to do so detaches their authority from Tradition and thus distorts it. Without the content of the Tradition, without a reference to generations past and future, authority becomes just an exercise of power here and now. It leads to a magisterial positivism that values Church authority, not because of its service to what was received and should be handed on, but simply because it has the power to compel.

Such an exchange of authority for positivism traps the faithful in a particular moment of time. It makes them prisoners of the present, temporal orphans with no tradition to receive and, therefore, nothing to hand on to future generations. This dangerous situation makes the faithful prey to whatever new ideas or, more likely, ideologies come along. With no Tradition in which they can stand and by which they can discern, they fall easily into error.

Like the crowds that followed our Lord into the deserted place, the faithful need true shepherds – who rely on Christ’s grace and truth, who exercise genuine authority humbly, and who faithfully preserve and hand on the Church’s Tradition.

***Image:** *The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes* by Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti), c. 1445-50 [The MET, New York]

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