

Fr. Perozich comments —

Opinions are like navels. Everybody has one and they all collect lint.

*Dr. Douglas Farrow is a moral theologian whose analysis here disagrees with the vigorously promoted **opinions** (not *ex cathedra magisterium*) of some moral theologians in the Vatican, the episcopacy, theology schools, and even the recommendation of Pope Francis regarding the reception by all of the current vaccines as an “act of charity”.*

He also has had the time to analyze beyond the quick response that was given when virus/vax was first proposed to see its real effectiveness and its side effects on health, freedom, and the spiritual life.

Dr. Farrow uses the style of St. Thomas Aquinas to ask a question, then to present the objections to the question, to provide the refutation which begins “on the contrary”, and then to reply to each objection with distinctions in theology.

After this Thomistic style, Dr. Farrow speaks in modern language answering some of his proposed questions.

This is long and probably better understood by those who studied Thomistic theology. Yet Farrow lays out his arguments interweaving the Thomistic style with the more common analytic style that we 21st century folk are used to reading.

Whether there is a moral obligation to disobey the coercive mandates

December 3, 2021 Dr. Douglas Farrow



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Objection 1. It seems there is no such obligation, and can be none, for governments are charged with oversight of things pertaining to the common good in temporal affairs, and matters of public health, especially in times of plague, pertain to the common good. As the apostle says: “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad” (Rom. 13:1–3).

Objection 2. The State has lawful authority to impose extraordinary measures to protect the population from infectious diseases and other disasters, by deploying emergency powers that override individual or collective liberties. So does the Church, acting in concert with the State in matters of common interest to the earthly and heavenly cities. As St Peter says, “be subject to the elders” (1 Pet. 5:5).

Objection 3. The citizen of either city, though free to examine the claims of governing authorities and to question their judgment, is not free to substitute his or her own judgment for that of the authorities, which substitution is divisive and destructive of the common good, but is morally obligated to preserve order by obedience in all matters of positive law that do not contravene natural or divine law. The citizen of the heavenly city is encouraged, moreover, to add generosity to obedience. “If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two” (Matt. 5:41).

Objection 4. As St Thomas says, “the end of the law is the common good” (ST 1–2.96.1). Hence “all men should be subject to human law” (96.5). Those who disobey, by the very fact of their disobedience, do grave harm to the law and so to the common good. Just so, they are rightly deprived of its benefits and may be punished by all condign punishments. Even those who refuse kindness to their neighbor through cooperation in matters of the common good may justly be excluded from the community of goods.

On the contrary, St. Augustine says that “it is not kindness to cooperate in the loss of a greater good, nor blameless to acquiesce and to permit a slide into greater evil” (*Civ.* 19.16). And Pope Leo XIII says: “If then, by anyone in authority, something be sanctioned out of conformity with the principles of right reason, and consequently hurtful to the commonwealth, such an enactment can have no binding force of law, as being no rule of justice, but certain to lead men away from that good which is the very end of civil society” (*Libertas* 10).

I answer that, one is obligated to resist unjust laws, not only by disputation, but also by civil disobedience, whenever obedience would violate the conscience or direct others away from the common good.

Mandates, civil or ecclesiastical, that require injection of medical products of disputed safety, effectiveness, political purpose, and moral propriety are indeed capable of violating the conscience and of directing others away from the common good, or even from their own good and the good of those in their care. Moreover, mandates that stop short of that but divide society without manifest necessity are always unjust, for they constitute attacks on the common good and on human dignity.

This is true as regards the earthly city and true a fortiori as regards the heavenly, which is one body under one Lord, that through it “the manifold wisdom of God may be made known to the principalities and powers” (Eph. 3:10).

Reply to Objection 1. The premises are true. Matters of public health pertain to the common good and oversight of the common good belongs to duly established governments acting lawfully. From these premises, however, the conclusion that one ought to obey a given mandate cannot be drawn, for the mandate may be ultra vires or otherwise invalid, even morally illicit.

Reply to Objection 2. The assertion that both the State and the Church may employ extraordinary powers in extraordinary times is true, but it begs questions by which any appeal to such powers must be tested: *first*, whether special protection of the common good is required in a given instance; *second*, whether the proposed protection really is protection; *third*, whether the attendant impairment of rights and liberties is as

minimal as possible, while warding off still greater evils than the impairment itself; *fourth*, whether the powers are directed to the common good in a manner compatible with that good; *fifth*, whether their exercise is compatible with the moral law; *sixth*, whether the laws so established are just laws; *seventh*, whether they serve their proper end or some foreign end. (These tests will be treated in a supplementum, rather than constituting distinct articles.)

Reply to Objection 3. This objection fails if the condition, “in all matters pertaining to civil law that do not contravene natural or divine law,” is not met. Moreover, what is coerced leaves no room for generosity, which is a counsel not a command, rendered “not as an exaction but as a willing gift” (2 Cor. 9:5).

Reply to Objection 4. This objection is moot where the law in question is not directed to the common good, but to an end that entails grave harm.

Supplementum. We elucidate by applying the seven tests identified in the reply to the second objection. To show that disobedience is not mandated in the present circumstances, each test would need to be passed. But none of them are passed. It therefore becomes manifest that the mandates are unjust and must be opposed, even to disobedience.

Is protection required?

Protection from coronaviruses is required for people whose natural defenses are severely compromised; or, failing protection, early treatment is required when symptoms occur. No protection is required for most people, however, beyond what their natural immune system supplies. This is especially so in the case of children, who (absent co-morbidities) are in no danger from the present virus.

Does the proffered protection protect?

The mandated protection is not narrowly targeted to those in need of it and does not include early treatment, access to which is in some places denied. Instead, it is universal, taking two forms: social restrictions, including full

lockdowns, and “a needle in every arm”; that is, experimental gene therapy for the entire population.

Neither measure prevents viral spread, hence neither protects even the small portion of the population that needs protection. The former has been shown by numerous studies to be damaging to more people, in more serious ways, than is the virus itself. The latter sometimes reduces the severity of symptoms and so eases the burden of illness both for the individual and for the healthcare system. On the other hand, it may produce, and with alarming frequency does produce, severe adverse reactions or even death.

Further, there is grave doubt concerning its short- and long-term effects on the immune system, which it appears to weaken, and on the mutation of the virus, which learns to escape it or even to make use of it. There are dangers also to the circulatory, nervous, and reproductive systems. It therefore cannot be concluded that the injections will have a net benefit either to individual health or to the viability of the healthcare system. There are many reasons to think that the overall effect on both will be negative. In any event, expansion of healthcare readiness would be a much less costly approach than universal mandates, for which there is no warrant.

Is the impairment of rights and freedoms minimal?

As neither protective measure provides anything like maximal protection, either for individuals or for the community, the minimal impairment bar must be set very high. But neither measure comes close to achieving minimal impairment. The first measure, by its very nature, directly assaults basic rights and freedoms, including freedom of movement or mobility rights, freedom of association, freedom to work, and freedom of religion. The second measure, when those rights and liberties are made conditional on the injections or when the injections themselves are universally mandated, violates both bodily autonomy and freedom of conscience (concepts which, despite abuse, have proper philosophical and theological grounds).

Moreover, the impairment is not minimal in duration. Economies recover only slowly. Jobs, incomes, and opportunities for development may be lost permanently. The injection, with its risks, cannot be undone. Psychological

or spiritual damage has lasting effects. Social divisions may deepen rather than resolve.

Meanwhile, the institution, maintenance, and enforcement of these measures requires routine renewal of emergency powers over a period of months or years, though in the law they are specified in periods of days or weeks only. Routine renewal has been taking place unaccountably, by the very people who wield these powers. And the wielding, as courts have begun to notice, violates the proper separation of the branches of government, which is unconstitutional and has dilatory effects on the citizen who is seeking redress for injustices.

Still further, options for meaningful protection exist that have none of these consequences; notably, early treatment with readily available drug, vitamin, and mineral protocols. But these treatments, which infringe no rights and impair no freedoms, have been suppressed in an attempt to justify the putative protections that maximally impair rights and freedoms. This, being at the expense even of the most vulnerable, implies that minimal impairment was never a consideration, that saving lives was not the primary goal, and that protecting the healthcare system was not and is not the goal either. Hence the third test is failed in multiple ways.

Are emergency powers directed to the common good in a manner compatible with that good?

A person's inalienable rights, bestowed by the Creator, include the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—happiness being that which all want and for which all are made. The social nature of the human person, however, requires consideration of the common good, for which governance is required.

Now the common good, as the Catechism says, consists of three essential elements: respect for the person, such that their fundamental rights are kept inviolate and there is sufficient freedom for them to follow their own consciences and fulfill their own vocations (1907); the “social well-being and development of the group itself,” which requires arbitration between particular interests (1908); and peace within a just order, which “presupposes that authority should ensure by morally acceptable means the security of society and its members” (1909).

The order of these elements is important. In civilizations shaped by Christianity, the person is known to be more, not less, substantial than the nation, and the polis is known to exist for the sake of the person, not the person for the sake of the polis. Thus a heavy burden of justification falls on any law that seeks the common good at the expense of the person. Measures concerned with the development of the group as a whole or with the maintenance of its peace and security must still begin and end with respect for the person, adopting means in conformity with that respect. Otherwise they cannot hope to serve the common good. “The order of things must be subordinate to the order of persons and not the other way around” (1912).

Both measures or sets of measures fail in this regard. The lockdown—a measure drawn from the penal system—is designed to prevent social interaction and development, whether of the individual or of the group. Mandatory injection, or proof of injection as a condition of social engagement, overrides either the right to engage or the right to privacy and bodily autonomy, or both. While it does not follow that the latter requirement—as proof of immunity, not proof of injection—can never be justly established, the threshold at which it is warranted is only rarely reached. When reached, it necessitates provision of a just alternative for dissenters. Their dehumanization and domination is unacceptable.

In brief, the measures of which we are speaking remove “the conditions for the exercise of the natural freedoms indispensable for the development of the human vocation, such as ‘the right to act according to a sound norm of conscience and to safeguard ... privacy, and rightful freedom also in matters of religion’” (1907). Hence they are incompatible with the common good, which “is always oriented towards the progress of persons.”

But can they be saved by appeal to a state of exception? The short answer is “no,” for in moral matters there is no such thing as a state of exception. It is never licit to do evil, even that good may come. “Regimes whose nature is contrary to the natural law, to the public order, and to the fundamental rights of persons *cannot achieve the common good of the nations on which they have been imposed*” (1901, emphasis added). A longer answer follows.

Are the measures compatible with the moral law?

Consideration of the common good, as of the underlying good of the person, points us to the moral law, which is summed up in the two great commandments. Those who argue for voluntary subjection to the measures in question often do so through appeal to the second of these, the command to love the neighbor as oneself. This argument is badly flawed, as already **observed**. Prima facie, it is also incompatible with support for coercive mandates, for love does not coerce and cannot be coerced, nor does one coerce oneself.

When engaging in coercion one may still be acting for the good of the person or of the community, of course, as when a parent physically restrains a child from running into the road or one nation justly restrains another. Moreover, just laws and condign penalties are rightly regarded as forms of love, for the law of God on which they ultimately depend—witness the preamble to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which still **acknowledges** that dependence “—is itself a form of love. Yet it remains the case that obedience to the law of God, insofar as it is meritorious, is always voluntary. It is love responding to love. As Irenaeus says, “the greater the operation of liberty, the more ingrained in us has become subjection and affection toward our liberator” (*Haer.* 4.13.3). And this holds, mutatis mutandis, even in the secular sphere, for citizens who love their country and admire its laws obey much more gladly than citizens who do not or cannot.

Now, the moral standard is far less demanding in the secular sphere than in the ecclesial. In the latter, the grace of the Holy Spirit enables us to abide in the law of love. “Those laws that are natural, and liberal, and common to all, He has enlarged and expanded, generously and ungrudgingly granting to men, through adoption, to know God as Father, and to love him wholeheartedly, and to follow his word unswervingly, abstaining not only from evil deeds but even from the desire of them” (*Haer.* 4.16.5). In the former, by contrast, it suffices, through some lesser grace, merely to conform to those laws that use morally acceptable means to pursue a reasonable approximation of the common good, with the proviso that the “good” in view must always be compatible with the love of God and neighbor.

So we return, perforce, to the question of morally acceptable means. Here it may be conceded immediately that vaccination is a morally acceptable means for the promotion of public health, where the vaccine is safe and

effective and produced in a morally acceptable way. But these are the very points in contention. Genetic therapies are not vaccines in the traditional sense, and calling them vaccines has required a redefinition of the term so generous as to include any agent that stimulates the immune system with a view to better health. (The new definition, as some have been quick to observe, is capable of embracing vitamins, or beer, or even the pathogens themselves; which perhaps is a positive development, at least where the beer is concerned.) Moreover, these therapies are neither effective, as even their commercial **architect** and primary profiteer, Bill Gates, has admitted, nor safe, as is easily demonstrated through EudraVigilance, VAERS, and other systems for reporting adverse effects.

Because they are not safe, their use is immoral except under strictly controlled experimental conditions involving free and fully informed consent—which children cannot give—and where serious injury or death is not an acceptable outcome. Their use is immoral for the additional reason that they still depend upon fetal material and remain implicated in the ongoing crimes of abortion and fetal experimentation. And for the further reason that they belong to an aggressive program of genetic experimentation, a program including DNA and germline modifications (with the backing of Mr. Gates, Gavi, and the World Health Organization) that proposes to redesign the immune system and other natural features of the human animal.

This is not merely a profit-seeking program, euphemistically referred to as precision medicine. It is, in its way, an extension of the contraceptive mentality, which seeks to dismantle and reconstruct nature so that it may be put to quite different ends than those divinely intended. This can only exacerbate, to a hitherto unimaginable degree, the tendency of that mentality “to give into the hands of public authorities the power to intervene in the most personal and intimate” features of human existence (*Humanae vitae* 17, 23) and indeed to redefine what it means to be human, as some now openly advocate; which, being a rejection of natural and divine law and of the Creator himself, is at once profoundly immoral and antipathetic to morality.

As for forcible confinement of the healthy or their exclusion from public spaces, which differs fundamentally from quarantine both in nature and in duration, this can never be a morally acceptable means to any end but

punishment. And since punishing the innocent is thoroughly unjust, even more more unjust than failing to punish the guilty, it must be established that those so treated are guilty. (This point stands, even if a genuine emergency is conceded, which in the case of a coronavirus, not per se lethal, it cannot be.) But of what are they guilty? Nothing at all, unless perchance they are guilty of standing in the way of a political or economic venture decided upon by pharmaceutical companies and their **well-funded** friends in high places.

Are the decrees and mandates just?

Here we must attend closely to the distinction made by Aquinas between just and unjust laws. Granting that law in general “denotes a kind of plan directing acts towards an end” (ST 1–2.93.3), he posits that “a human law has the character of law to the extent that it accords with right reason, and thus derives from the eternal law. Insofar as it falls short of right reason it is said to be an unjust law, and thus has not so much the nature of law as of a kind of violence” (ad 2; cf. 95.2). He elucidates as follows (96.4):

Laws are said to be just by reference to their end, that is, when they are ordained to the common good; and to their author, that is, when the law that is made does not exceed the power of the lawgiver; and to their form, that is, when burdens are laid on the subjects according to an equality of proportion and with a view to the common good. For, since one man is a part of the community, each man in all that he is and has belongs to the community, just as a part, in all that it is, belongs to the whole; wherefore nature inflicts a loss on the part, in order to save the whole: so that on this account, such laws as these, which impose proportionate burdens, are just and binding in conscience, and are legal laws.

Now, this appears to be the very reasoning on which people lean in support of coercive mandates, as if they indeed imposed proportionate burdens. (The unqualified qualifier, “all that he is and has,” lends itself to that error.) But let us attend to what Thomas says next:

On the other hand, laws may be unjust in two ways: first, by being contrary to human good ... either in respect of the end, as when an

authority imposes on his subjects burdensome laws, conducive not to the common good but rather to his own cupidity or vainglory; or in respect of the author, as when a man makes a law that goes beyond the power committed to him; or in respect of the form, as when burdens are imposed unequally on the community, although with a view to the common good. The like are acts of violence rather than laws, because, as Augustine says (*De Lib. Arb.* i, 5), a law that is not just seems to be no law at all. Wherefore such laws do not bind in conscience, except perhaps in order to avoid scandal or disturbance, for which cause a man should even yield his right... Second, laws may be unjust through being opposed to the Divine good: such are the laws of tyrants inducing to idolatry, or to anything else contrary to the Divine law. And laws of this kind must nowise be observed, because, as stated in Acts 5:29, *we ought to obey God rather than man.*

The second way—direct contradiction of divine law—leaves no need or room for discussion. Disobedience is always required. This would appear to be the case as regards mandates that divide the Church, for “there is one body and one Spirit” (Eph. 4:4). What God has joined together, let not man put asunder! Is it not because of long-standing divisions among the faithful that the Church is today so weak and sickly that it even takes orders from the State as to whether it may meet, who may meet, and how they may meet?

But the first and broader way—being contrary to human good—does leave room for discussion, a discussion of whether the law is defective in its author, its form, or its end. A serious defect in any of these would render it unjust and incapable of binding the conscience, though for the sake of avoiding “scandal or disturbance” it might nonetheless be obeyed, if (i) the defects were not themselves scandalous, (ii) disobedience would do more harm than good and (iii) obedience were possible without doing evil that good may come. Where these conditions are not met, and the law concerns grave matter, the conscience is again bound, not to obedience, but to disobedience.

In the matter at hand, which is indeed grave, there are scandalous defects in all three. There are defects as regards the author, whether because unelected public health officials are issuing orders beyond their jurisdiction

and competence; or because elected officials are issuing decrees in defiance of the constitution through the perpetual use of emergency powers; or because foreign agents, including Pharma executives and “global stakeholders” of various descriptions, are interfering with national sovereignty and local law-making; or because some or all of the above are trespassing on the pre-political rights of the Church or of the family (ordering alterations to liturgies, say, or the inoculation of children without parental consent); or because bishops are issuing commands lacking any foundation in canon law, such as making “proof of vaccination” a condition for dispensing or receiving sacraments.

There are defects also as regards form, as when children, who are at no risk from the virus, are made to bear the risks of novel genetic treatments that may permanently damage their hearts or brains or eventual fertility, in the vain hope of reducing transmission to their elders; or when people with natural immunity are asked to undergo injection with a substance they do not need and which may even induce sudden death; or when “the unvaccinated” are **punished** for sins of transmission that belong equally to “the vaccinated,” who are not so punished; or when legislation that denies fundamental rights is introduced with preambles full of false claims about the situation that allegedly requires it; or when lockdowns are ordered that disproportionately disadvantage children and parents, the poor and the working class, or the owners of small businesses. Even without the inequities in such measures, there is often a more fundamental defect of form that corresponds to the ultra vires action of their authors; which is to say, the measures are **inapt** and **ineffective**. They do not resolve, and **cannot** resolve, the problem they are purportedly trying to address. They may even make it worse, at the expense of young lives, including young priestly lives.

There are defects also as regards ends, which is the concern of the final test.

Do they serve their declared purpose?

The stated goal of the mandates is to prevent or control the transmission of a virus and to maintain or restore a pre-existing equilibrium in healthcare or in social and economic life. Why instruments so manifestly unfit for purpose are being deployed with such determination is a fair question. While the right answer is sometimes “incompetence” or even “psychosis,”

insincerity (ulterior motives) also suggests itself. Otherwise put, the problem may lie, not in the fact that the chosen instruments are unfit for their stated purpose, but rather in the fact that they are quite fit for their unstated purpose.

And what is that? We do not have to speculate much, for there are venues in which the unstated purpose *is* stated, viz., to effect systemic change otherwise unpalatable to the people. That change is in the direction of what the World Economic Forum calls stakeholder capitalism, backed by biodigital convergence, universal surveillance, and technological control of a wide range of human activities, from reproduction to religion. Information exchange, like monetary exchange, is to be monitored and controlled. A social credit system is being devised in which conformity will be rewarded by inclusion and lack of conformity punished by exclusion.

What is already operative in China, in other words, is advancing very rapidly in the West. It is even gaining ground in religious circles, where it is actively promoted by the Council for Inclusive Capitalism that is **lobbying** the Vatican and by a host of other ventures encouraged by the World Economic Forum. Private bodies with official-sounding titles like the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board or the Commission on Information Disorder are proliferating like flies, buzzing round the carcass of the old normal with announcements about the new normal. These announcements, let it be noted, began **before** the advent of “the Covid crisis.”

The generation of a new-normal pandemic—one based on spread not severity, though unconscionable and even murderous attempts are made to amplify its severity—advanced the cause, not only of mRNA treatments but of digital health passports; that is, of vaccines falsely so-called and of universal track-and-trace mechanisms. It made possible a systematic invasion of privacy and a permanent state of exception that **nullifies** constitutional protections. In such a context, law is no longer responsible to reason, to justice, or to what actually makes for the common good. It is no longer beholden to the principle of subsidiarity. It is merely the means for a transference of power from local to global governance, where “global” means whatever the most wealthy wish it to mean and “local” means that petty bureaucrats inform us that we have no choice but to obey.

At the moment, this entails “a needle in every arm.” What it will entail in the future, apart from many more needles, remains to be seen, but there appears to be no significant sphere of life in which autonomous decision-making will be tolerated. Those who suppose the mandates to be a pandemic exit strategy are sorely mistaken. There is no “Covid crisis,” though there is a religious and constitutional crisis of unprecedented proportions. We are not dealing with an exit strategy at all, but rather with an *entrance* strategy for the new Lords of the World.

The Catechism insists that “fraud and other subterfuges, by which some people evade the constraints of the law and the prescriptions of societal obligation, must be firmly condemned because they are incompatible with the requirements of justice” (1916). The evidence of fraud and subterfuge is overwhelming. If there is any purity of purpose in the mandates to which we are now being subjected by the **hydra-headed** beast known as the Global Public-Private Partnership, that purity lies in devotion to the Great Reset, which (as Michael Rectenwald has shown with real cogency) is a true **devil’s bargain**.

This bargain cannot be broken merely by reaffirmation of bodily autonomy or personal privacy or the principle of subsidiarity, by reason of which we used to insist that prudential judgments in medical matters belong to families and individuals, in consultation with their own physicians, not to civil or ecclesiastical bureaucrats. Nor will **legal action**, however appropriate and indeed necessary—for, as Thomas says in *De Regno*, tyranny must be opposed by public, constitutional means, lest one tyrannical regime be succeeded by another—suffice to break it. Even the requisite civil disobedience, which we are recommending, cannot break it. Ultimately it can be broken only by prayer and the example of holy people like Daniel or Eleazar, who courageously insisted on the old normal when coercively confronted by the new.

Monitio Eleazari

(Example of Eleazar from the Book of Macabees)

Make no mistake: Tyranny, on a global scale, is arising. Precisely because it is globalist in inspiration and coordination, it can and should be resisted by nation-states through appeal to international law, their own laws, and, if necessary, by force of arms. One of the primary problems, however, with

tyranny of this kind—a peculiarly modern kind, foreseen by Tocqueville and others, but only in shadowy form—is that it very successfully co-opts many of those who ought to be organizing the resistance on behalf of their nations. That is where civil disobedience comes in. Those who are failing in their civic duty must be confronted with the weapons of non-cooperation, peaceful protest, and very public disobedience. The only other possibility is acquiescence to totalitarianism and the **dehumanization** on which it depends.

But this in turn is where prayer and repentance come in. Aquinas, as he wrestles with the right response to unjust law, advises prayer and repentance especially. Professor Budziszewski astutely **remarks** that he thinks this, not impractical, but highly practical:

[For] tyranny is unlikely to arise among a virtuous people; if it does arise, they have probably been softened and prepared for it by a long period of moral decay. Until things get very bad indeed, they may even like tyranny, either because the regime has given certain constituencies private benefits, or because most citizens have not yet been personally hurt, or because the desires of the people are so disordered that they do not clearly see their own condition. God does not often protect people from the natural consequences of their corruption; He more often allows these consequences to ensue in order to bring corrupt nations to their senses. If at last the people repent and mend their ways, then God will hear their prayers, but St. Thomas warns that “to deserve to secure this benefit from God, the people must desist from sin, for it is by divine permission that wicked men receive power to rule as a punishment for sin” (197f.).

To repent properly and thus to pray to good effect and, just so, to gather the inner resources for costly action in the world, we must reflect both on the truth about the God who *is* God and on the example of holy men and women who follow and obey God. This will disclose to us how we have come to follow instead the false gods erected by lawless men, and what we must do by way of repentance.

The first thing to do, surely, is to see to it that among us “there is no sacrifice but to Him alone,” and that this sacrifice is a true thanksgiving,

rendered with full face and voice and without any hint of division such as Covid-worshippers urge upon us. Was it not at their behest that we immediately **ceased** worshipping corporately at all, and so failed justice at its very foundations (*Civ.* 19.23f.)? Are we not failing again now, even more dramatically, where we practice liturgical Apartheid or ban from Mass altogether those who will not demonstrate allegiance to both God and Covid?

The psalmist tells us that the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever, and that the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul. That is because, with the Lord, love and justice are one. The present turn to coercive measures, even in the Church—is this love? Is the division of the body of Christ justice? On the contrary, it is a clear sign that another kind of fear, not proper to love, and another kind of law, a lawless law that destroys the soul, are at work. Mandates that divide the faithful on the basis of injections or prudential judgments about injections attack the Church at its sacramental and evangelical core.

This makes the question of authority a very pressing one, in the Church as in the State. To appeal once more to the Catechism, “authority does not derive its moral legitimacy from itself” and “must not behave in a despotic manner, but must act for the common good as a ‘moral force based on freedom and a sense of responsibility’” (1902). “Authority is exercised legitimately only when it seeks the common good of the group concerned and if it employs morally licit means to attain it. If rulers were to enact unjust laws or take measures contrary to the moral order, such arrangements would not be binding in conscience. In such a case, ‘authority breaks down completely and results in shameful abuse’” (1903).

That is precisely what happened in the days of that holy elder, Eleazar, when civil and religious authorities in Jerusalem were cooperating with the Syrian tyrant, Antiochus. We are told in 2 Maccabees 6 that he was invited by his colleagues, for his own protection from the new normal, to enter the temple and there simulate the eating of swine flesh. His reply? “Such pretense is not worthy of our time of life, lest many of the young should suppose that I have gone over to an alien religion, and through my pretense, for the sake of living a brief moment longer, they should be led astray because of me, while I defile and disgrace my old age.”

Substitute masks, exclusionary Masses, and bowing down to Covid “for the sake of living a brief moment longer” (the average age of those dying in Covid’s company is over eighty) and a similar scene appears. The parallel may be inexact, but it is not insignificant. What *are* we teaching the youth? We are also told, of course, that the words Eleazar had uttered “were in their opinion sheer madness,” that his response precipitated a violent assault on him, and that by his martyrial death he left “an example of nobility and a memorial of courage, not only to the young but to the great body of his nation.”

Such are the madmen we need today. I don’t mean the likes of Antiochus Epiphanes, whose own servants quietly referred to him as Epimanes. I mean the likes of Eleazar, who feared God rather than man. For many among us seem to have gone over to an alien religion, a shameful **religion of fear**, in which unjust laws must be obeyed and just laws disobeyed; in which ethical codes are abandoned and children made the subjects of reckless experiments; in which we say, with those philanthropic enemies of Love, “in **vaccines** we trust,” not “in God we trust.”

The official badge of this alien religion is a new kind of baptismal certificate: proof of injection rather than of immersion. This is now our passport to life—a life of bondage through fear of death. The sacrifices of this religion are not song and thanksgiving and holy communion from holy vessels, but plastic masks and antisocial distancing and injections with coded genetic instructions dispensed from abortion-tainted vials. All under the watchful eye on the Dark Tower, and of its inspectors and enforcers.

Do we have a moral obligation to disobey? Nothing could be plainer. Whether there is courage to disobey, or whether we will pray for that courage, is the real question.

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Douglas Farrow is Professor of Theology and Ethics at McGill University, and the author of several books including *Theological Negotiations: Proposals in Soteriology and Anthropology* (Baker Academic, 2018) and [a new commentary on Thessalonians](#) (Brazos, 2020).