

Fr. Perozich comments —

When I met with Bishop Frank DeWane of the diocese of Venice to receive faculties for ministry here, I told him that I do not shill for virus/vax, lgbtq rights, DEI (diversity equity inclusion), ESG (environment social, governance), immigration rights, women clergy and on. These and other buzz words of the world have made their way into the synod.

I told him I preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified 1 Cor 1:23, .1 Cor 2:23,

Priests receive so much joy and pain from the hearts of men and women. I can bear the pain for the moment in compassion, but must come to the cross and hand it over to Jesus. Their sufferings are too much for me as a simple human being.

If I were to hold onto the pain, I would have to numb the it with the pleasures of the world to the point of sin. Jesus has taken them to the cross, and only Jesus can bear the suffering of human hearts.

When Pope Francis was sent prophets in the persons of the cardinals and slapped a bit with the dubia, he did not respond to answer their doubts as is the holy father's responsibility.

Was he unmoved by the appeal to God's law, as are so many powerful people in the church and in the world today, so that now we find ourselves in a synod with proposals that are novelties and challenge the deposit of faith?

My imperfections and previous sins frequently are exposed to me in prayer by the gift of **compunction** wherein the pain of those sins committed, confessed, and forgiven, once again is felt in order that I do not become puffed up. This is my personal interpretation of 2 Cor 12:7 "Therefore, that I might not become too elated,* a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated."

The only remedy for the renewed pain and sorrow of sin is to go to Jesus crucified where "**from Golgotha's gibbet flows the full and steady stream of graces, of strength and courage, that alone enable man to walk that path with firm and unerring step**"

Here are some highlighted quotes from the article below:

- **As Pope Francis once put it: "May the Lord grant us the grace of always sending us a prophet – it can be a neighbor, a son or daughter, our mother or father – to slap us a bit**

when we've slid into an atmosphere where everything seems legitimate.

- an appeal to law (God's law, nature's law, the Church's law, or even man's law), the authority of which he does not already acknowledge, is unlikely to move him to repentance.
- Even within the Church, among the baptized, it is not always efficacious to appeal to the authority of doctrine or Divine Revelation. We may well wish it were otherwise, but there it is.
- the remedy was to be found in the Crucified Christ. In Him, the reality of sin is thrown into starkest contrast to that love against which all sin offends.
- from Golgotha's gibbet flows the full and steady stream of graces, of strength and courage, that alone enable man to walk that path with firm and unerring step

Behold the Man

Stephen P. White

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

It's sometimes said, though perhaps not often enough, **that one of the evils of our day is the loss of a sense of sin.** Pope Pius XII famously said as much in a radio address to catechists in 1946. **Pope Francis has echoed this same thought more than once, comparing the hypocrisy of some Christians to King David, who was blind to his own sin until the prophet Nathan brought it before his eyes: "You are the man!"**

We all need, from time to time, to be shaken from our own blindness and complacency. **As Pope Francis once put it: "May the Lord grant us the grace of always sending us a prophet – it can be a neighbor, a son or daughter, our mother or father**



– to slap us a bit when we’ve slid into an atmosphere where everything seems legitimate.”
Indeed.

Perhaps we can extend the point beyond recognition of mere blindness to our own faults and failings and the wisdom to pray for correction. It’s one thing to be blinded to, and blinded by, our own sins like David. **It’s another thing entirely to have lost any sense at all that our actions might be judged by some standard – or by someone – beyond**

ourselves.

Fraternal correction presupposes *fraternity*. Such correction requires some sense of mutual responsibility and trust between parties (as one would hope to find between brothers). But on a more basic (almost pedantic) level, fraternal correction presupposes a shared sense of the nature and source of *brotherhood*: brothers are brothers because they share a common *father*.

So a Christian might be convinced of his need for repentance by being shown the ways in which he has strayed from God’s law or the law of the Church. But **this depends on a preexisting recognition on the part of the sinner that such laws exist and a desire, however imperfect, to live in accord with those laws.**

What of the person who does not acknowledge such laws or the authority behind them? What of the person who holds what is evil to be actually good? What of the person who does not know the Father or denies the teachings of our Mother, the Church? Such a person is not beyond hope of mercy and repentance, of course. But **an appeal to law (God's law, nature's law, the Church's law, or even man's law), the authority of which he does not already acknowledge, is unlikely to move him to repentance.**

In such a case, a loss of the sense of sin is not merely "blindness to my own particular sins," but a loss of the very possibility of recognizing sin as such. If we have lost sight of God, if we have lost sight of the good from which sin is a departure or negation, then the category of sin itself (to say nothing of fraternity) ceases to be meaningful.

It's interesting to note how we have arrived at the very precipice of what Nietzsche understood when he observed that if "nothing is true, everything is permitted," and why he saw his philosophical project – indeed, described himself – as "Dionysus versus the Crucified."

And this is, it seems, much closer to what Pope Pius XII had in mind when he spoke of the loss of a sense of sin in the months immediately following the horrors of the Second World War. The remedy Pope Pius proposed was not, at least not in the first instance, to remind the world of the moral law which it had forgotten or denied. Rather, **the remedy was to be found in the Crucified Christ. In Him, the reality of sin is thrown into starkest contrast to that love against which all sin offends.**

It's worth returning to Pope Pius XII's address from 1946, where he sets his lament for the loss of a sense of sin in precisely this context:

To know Jesus crucified is to know God's horror of sin; its guilt could be washed away only in the precious blood of God's only begotten Son become man.

Perhaps the greatest sin in the world today is that men have begun to lose the sense of sin. Smother that, deaden it – it can hardly be wholly cut out from the heart of man – let it not be awakened by any glimpse

of the God-man dying on Golgotha's cross to pay the penalty of sin, and what is there to hold back the hordes of God's enemy from over-running the selfishness, the pride, the sensuality and unlawful ambitions of sinful man? Will mere human legislation suffice? Or compacts and treaties?

We do not live in a world in which the hearts and consciences of men can be easily touched by appeals to authority, even God's authority. Even within the Church, among the baptized, it is not always efficacious to appeal to the authority of doctrine or Divine Revelation. We may well wish it were otherwise, but there it is.

What is left to us, then, is to proclaim the Good News in a way the world can still understand. If appeals to authority fail to gain traction, there is one path which remains compelling in every age. Pope Pius XII again:

In the Sermon on the Mount the divine Redeemer has illumined the path that leads to the Father's will and eternal life; but from Golgotha's gibbet flows the full and steady stream of graces, of strength and courage, that alone enable man to walk that path with firm and unerring step.

The way up that path is shown to us by the one who went before us— though he needed no Nathan to correct him – the one of whom Pilate spoke when cried: “Behold the Man.” **Nothing is more convicting of the sinner than God's immeasurable love. Nothing cuts to the heart of man's conscience more than God's own mercy. And the strength and courage to walk that way streams down to us from above.**

***Image:** *Ecce Homo* by Caravaggio, 1605 [Palazzo Bianco, Genova, Italy]