



S S P X

Letter to Friends and Benefactors #84 - May 2015

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

It is not necessary to go on at length to note the crisis that our Holy Mother the Church is in. Nevertheless, in recent months there have been a number of worrisome signs suggesting that we are being thrust into an even more intense phase of troubles and confusion. The loss of unity in the Church is becoming increasingly evident, with respect both to faith and morals on the one hand, and to liturgy and government on the other, and it is safe to assume that we have a very difficult time ahead of us. Short of a miracle, it is to be feared that now souls will be left on their own even more and will no longer find any support from the hierarchy as a whole, although that guidance is necessary.

One example to illustrate what we mean: a conference was given by Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez Maradiaga, the coordinator of the group of cardinals to whom Pope Francis entrusted the deliberation about the reform of the Roman Curia. This talk, given on January 20, 2015, at the University of Santa Clara in California, is helpful inasmuch as it offers an insight into the vision that guides the closest advisors of the Pope. The first point is that he intends to carry out his reforms—and by this we should understand the whole set of reforms undertaken since Vatican Council II—in such a way that they become irreversible. This intention never to go backward is expressed, incidentally, in other passages of the same conference.

However the reforms already carried out are in danger, the Honduran cardinal acknowledges, because they have caused a serious crisis in the Church. The reason for this is that every reform must be animated by a spirit, which is its soul. Now the conciliar reforms have not respected this principle. On the contrary, they were carried out, he tells us, while leaving the old spirit intact, the traditional spirit, and the result was that some of these reforms were not understood and were hardly ever followed by the effects that the reformers had counted on, to the point of causing a sort of schizophrenia in the Church.

Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga asserts that nevertheless we must not go back. In his opinion, a spirit corresponding to the reforms must still be infused, so as to motivate and energize them. This spirit is mercy. And the Pope has just announced a Holy Year of Mercy...



What exactly is this about? In itself mercy is a word that is dear to the heart of every Catholic, because it designates the most touching manifestation of God's love for us. In past centuries the apparitions of the Sacred Heart were nothing but a more intense revelation of this mercy of God toward mankind. The same must be said about devotion to the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary. Nevertheless true mercy, which implies this initial, extremely touching movement of God toward the sinner and His misery, continues in a moment of the creature's conversion to God: "God desires not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (cf. Ezek 33:11). Hence the Gospels insist on the duty of conversion, renunciation and penance. Our Lord went so far as to say: "Unless you do penance, you shall all perish" (cf. Lk 13:5).

This call to conversion is the heart of the Gospel, which we find in Saint John the Baptist as well as in Saint Peter. When sinners, touched by preaching, ask what they must do, they hear only this recommendation: "be converted and do penance." The Blessed Virgin in her apparitions in recent centuries, both in La Salette and in Lourdes or Fatima, says nothing different: "prayer and penance".

Now the new preachers of a new mercy insist so much on the first step taken by God toward human beings who are lost because of sin, ignorance and misery, that they too often omit this second movement, which must come from the creature: repentance, conversion, the rejection of sin. Ultimately, the new mercy is nothing but complacency about sin. God loves you... no matter what.

The examples of mercy given by Cardinal Maradiaga unfortunately leave no room for doubt. Thus he asserts that Christians who have broken off their marriage and have started a "blended" family are fully entitled to a place in the life of the Church, with no further ado... And he even proclaims that those who left the Church while they were in sinful situations will have a heaven equal to that of the saints. Obviously he reproaches the Church's ministers for having rebuked these poor sinners.... This is the new mercy, the new spirituality that is supposed to set in stone forever the reforms of the Church's institutions and morals, both those that have been carried out since the Council and the new ones now being considered! This is extremely serious. But it may also help us to understand why we are so much opposed to what is called "the spirit of the Council". Indeed, the reforms were introduced in the name of this new spirit, a spirit that is certainly not traditional. We say that this spirit spoiled everything about the Council, even the parts that can be understood in a Catholic way.... This spirit is an adaptation to the ways of the world; it is a complacent view of its falls and temptations, in the name of kindness, mercy and love. Thus, for example, people no longer say that other religions are false—which is however what the Magisterium of all time has declared. They no longer teach about the dangers of the world, and even the devil has almost completely disappeared from the Church's vocabulary during the last fifty years. This spirit explains the present sufferings of Holy Mother Church, whose authority is diminishing despite her overtures to the world; every day she loses more members, more priests, and finds that she has less influence on contemporary society. Ireland, once so Catholic, where "marriage" between persons of the same sex has just been legalized, is a distressing example.

Can you truncate mercy, cut it off from necessary repentance, as Cardinal Maradiaga does, for the stated purpose of giving a new spirit to the conciliar reforms and breaking with the traditional spirit? Certainly not! Is he the interpreter of Pope Francis' thought in this conference that was presented three months before the Bull of Indiction of the Holy Year? It is very difficult to tell, since for two years the messages coming from Rome have been so contradictory, as some cardinals acknowledge privately and several Vatican watchers openly admit. Necessity to discern between one-sided mercy and true mercy

Must we then deprive ourselves of the graces of a Holy Year? Quite the contrary. When the floodgates of grace are opened wide, we must receive abundantly! A Holy Year is a great grace for all the members of the Church. We live, after all, by true mercy, as all the pages of the Gospel and of the traditional liturgy teach us. In keeping with the "preliminary discernment"¹ on which Archbishop Lefebvre based the conduct of the Society of Saint Pius X, in these times of confusion, we reject a one-sided mercy and live by mercy in all its aspects.

¹ "In practice our attitude should be based on a previous discernment (...): when the Pope says something that is consistent with tradition, we follow him; when he says something that goes contrary to our faith, or he encourages or lets something be done that harms our faith, then we cannot follow him! The fundamental reason for this is that the Church, the Pope, and the hierarchy are at the service of the faith. It is not they who make the faith; they must serve it. The faith is not being created, it is unchangeable, it is transmitted." They Have Uncrowned Him, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, Angelus Press, 1988: Chapter XXXI, p. 229.



A Latin word that we encounter so often and that obviously must be on our lips is miserere. This word indicates, for our part, the acknowledgment of our misery, and then our appeal to God's mercy. The awareness of our misery makes us ask for forgiveness, fills us with contrition and is accompanied by the intention not to sin again. The true love that inspires this movement causes us to understand the necessity of making reparation for our sins. Hence the expiatory sacrifice is satisfactory. These various movements are necessary for the conversion that obtains the forgiveness of the God of mercy, who—in truth—does not want the death of the sinner but that he be converted and live. The claim to eternal happiness is completely illusory in someone who is unwilling to break with his sinful habits and does not seriously want to flee the occasions of sin or to make a resolution not to start sinning again.

Preaching a sort of mercy without the necessary conversion of poor sinners would be a message devoid of meaning for heaven, a diabolical trap that would tranquilize the world in its folly and its increasingly open rebellion against God, whereas heaven is quite positive about it: "God is not mocked" (Gal 6:7). The lives of human beings in the world today are calling down the wrath of God on every side. The massacre of innocent children in their mother's wombs, by the millions, the legalization of unnatural unions, and euthanasia are crimes that cry out to heaven, not to mention all sorts of injustices....

Let us take this appeal to mercy seriously, as the inhabitants of Nineveh did! Let us go in search of the lost sheep, let us pray for the conversion of souls, let us perform as much as we can all the works of mercy, both material and especially the spiritual works, for there is a serious shortage of the latter. If Our Lady could say, more than a century ago, that it was all she could do to hold back the avenging arm of her Son... what would she say today?

As for us, dear brothers and sisters in the faith, we must take advantage of this Holy Year to ask the God of mercy for an ever deeper conversion to holiness and implore the graces and pardons of His infinite mercy. We will prepare for the centennial of the apparitions of Our Lady in Fatima by practicing devotion to her Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart and propagating it with all our strength, as she demanded. We will keep begging that her requests, particularly the consecration of Russia, will at last be properly carried out. There is no opposition between these thoughts turned toward Mary and the Year of Mercy, on the contrary! Let us not separate what God wants to see joined: the Two Hearts of Jesus and Mary, as Our Lord explained to Sister Lucy of Fatima. Every district of the Society will inform you of the particular works to be performed in order to benefit from all the graces that Divine Mercy will grant us during this Holy Year.

And in this way we will offer as well as possible our collaboration with the merciful will of God to save all people of good will.

May Our Lord bless you for your generosity and, on this Pentecost Sunday, grant to you abundantly His graces of faith and charity.

+ Bernard Fellay

Pentecost Sunday, May 24, 2015





