

A Look at the Church Today

Now, I've been a priest for over fifty years, and over forty-eight of those years were spent in parish work. People often think the priest is lonely with nothing to do all week except waiting for next Sunday to come around when he would have something to do like say a few Masses and hear a few confessions. *Isn't it crazy?* I saw Sunday as the easiest day of the week. And the priest, who is conscientious and answers God's call, as he should, is very busy with the Lord and souls twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

I had classes for non-Catholics interested in the Catholic faith, marriage preparations, weddings, funerals, and parish administration. That last part, administration, took comparatively little time and was easy. When something was difficult or beyond my understanding, I got laity to do it and just took credit for it. (*Ha-ha!*) I found time to conduct youth pilgrimages to Marian sites in Europe and wrote many articles and books. Keeping active in my priestly endeavors in the parish gave me knowledge about what needed to be written. What has happened in the Church in the modern world is nothing like what Vatican II really had in mind.

They say I'm now "retired." But it seems I am as occupied with work of the priesthood and the Church as ever. After all, priesthood and Church go together as does Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders. Here I am an old priest, a reality brought home each time I look in the mirror, but in my mind I don't feel old.

I, looking at this crazy old world and the crazy things that are going on, ask myself, "Does anyone else see what I see, and if they do, do they care?" We have families that think they are excellent Catholics and priests who would consider themselves most loyal to the Church and therefore orthodox, nonetheless look the other way on issues that threaten the very existence of civilization and the Church itself. *Isn't it crazy?*

Oh! I know Jesus promised that His Church would never be destroyed. And I believe that. However, I see emerging a seriously weakened Church. I know from history that the true Church disappeared almost entirely in some areas in past centuries. It's crazy what's happening, but it's up to lay people to get in there and see that Jesus' promise is kept. He's promised to preserve His Church, that's you as well as the clergy. Remember, the lay people make up most of Jesus' Church. There are many more of you than there are priests, who seem to be dwindling in number, a situation that could be classified as crazy.

Matrimony

What has happened to *Holy Matrimony*? When I was a child, we had to recite the seven Sacraments and what I remember included *Holy Orders*, *Holy Eucharist*, *Holy Matrimony*. Today, people just say marriage or matrimony. Maybe the reason is that many marriages are no longer holy.

When I was a young man, I didn't know of any mothers working outside the home. I can't think of one. Now I knew many who worked, but it was always in the home. They took care of their children twenty-four hours a day. Not many girls went to college in those days because you didn't need a college education to be a homemaker and take care of children. The young ladies stayed home and were taught and trained for their future by the best educators in the world, mother and dad. My mother was an excellent seamstress but only in the home. She taught my sisters the same. They never went to college. The only career they were prepared for was *motherhood*, the ultimate dignity of womanhood.

Have you noticed that many high school girls today talk about their career? They plan where they will go to college for their career. Most often their mothers are working and have not taught them their true life's work. *Isn't it crazy?* They won't learn it in college. They will rather risk their eternal salvation there by endangering their faith, as well as their purity. If they make it through the college years they'll probably get married soon after graduation, if not before. Then they will be deep in debt, get a job to pay off college loans, often in a field outside the field they got a degree in. *Isn't it crazy?* They'll have almost no education or training on being good wives and mothers, the vocations for which God placed them in this world.

God made men and women different, both physically and

psychologically. They are different from birth. For some decades now the world has been denying that. I talked to a doctor recently whose first children were girls. Then God gave them a boy. The boy wasn't many months old when he became active and the doctor said to me: "That boy is sure different from his sisters." The way children are educated as boys or girls should differ for they learn differently and have different interests. But what do we see today? Girls and women dressing like boys and men and in many instances even acting masculine.

"Dress affects and reflects attitudes."

That is what women have told me. A woman wrote me recently that in 1995 she had "a personal sense" that she should resume the practice of the head covering (veil) at church: "I did some research. It led me to recognize that for a woman it reflected her submission to the marriage headship of her husband as well as to the authority of the Church. I liked that beautiful thought. I put it into action." The agenda of the feminist movement has been an attempt to deny their femininity, which makes for good wives and good mothers. *Isn't it crazy?*

Liberation from God's Order Brings Tragedy

You have heard the expression "Women have been liberated." Liberated from what? If a woman considers herself "liberated", then she is not psychologically prepared for a God-intended vocation as wife and/or mother. She cannot be excused from her God-given responsibilities, her duty to be submissive, as Christ was. If so, she will then become a slave to drudgery and be unhappy. There is much talk about equal opportunities; that women in the work-world should be allowed to do everything that men do. With modern technology it is claimed that this is possible. The idea is that women have been liberated to enter and work in a man's world. But what is it doing to her femininity, to her characteristics of gentleness and motherliness? Even more important, what is it doing to her children, if she intends to have any? What is it doing to the security and love children need in the home? Women cannot be liberated from motherhood and submission any more than men from fatherhood and authoritative responsibilities, which he must carry out if we are to have happy families.

Why is there so much juvenile delinquency today? Why do so many youth turn to drugs, crime, and permissive sex? Could it be due to the lack of a warm home environment that offers love, joy, security and encouragement? If they don't find it at home, they seek these elsewhere and often in wrong places. Our youth are angry and don't know why. In many cases their parents have practiced artificial birth control, because they are not generous and sacrificial in spirit, but rather materialistic.

When the man does not exercise his role as head in the home, the home will never be his castle. The home will become a place of tension, and his wife will never find happiness for she has refused to live the role of submission. In many instances, the father has neglected his role as head of the family by refusing to make decisions and exercise authority, not only over his children, but also over his wife. Surely the wife and mother shares her ideas and insights with her husband, but always in a manner that recognizes the ultimate decision is that of her husband. If this God-revealed role for each is not practiced, there can be little happiness in the home. Oftentimes their marriage will end in divorce. Their children will also enter into marriages which are almost doomed from the start. This ongoing cycle is as *crazy* as it is destructive.

God's plan for Happiness

God's own word in the Bible gives mankind the plan, which is required for a successful and happy society, but man chooses (with the free will God gave him) to ignore God's directives. God's plan is built into the very nature of his people. God's plan was for the husband and wife to be fruitful and multiply, to establish a family with the man as head, with primacy in authority, and woman as submissive, but central and possessing primacy in love. The family is the basic unit of society. When a growing majority of families are not following God's plan to increase and multiply (the family), then not only will the family be unhappy, but as it continues and multiplies its sins of disobedience, civilization itself is gravely endangered.

If parents don't live good moral lives, they are not influencing their sons and daughters to have good morals. If parents don't live chastely, they cannot expect their children to live lives of purity, obeying the commandments and to enter holy marriages.

The Stress Factor

When the husband does not carry out his role as head of the family, that is, as one who requires obedience in love, both of his wife and his children, then there will be great stress in the home. Obedience is love in action. Without love, true happiness is replaced with debilitating stress. Where there is constant or frequent stress in the family, there is not happiness. Where happiness is lacking, love and unity are not experienced. When the husband gives up his role as head or permits his wife to act as if she were the chief authority in the family, and the husband assumes a passive role, with the wife being aggressive and authoritative, then the stress factor becomes so great that even the eternal salvation of the members of that family is endangered. Children are not going to develop in their holy Catholic faith and grow in it, and retain it when they do not see positive fruits from it in their own home.

Why have young people been drawn to cults in recent decades? Why, at the same time, have so many developed immoral behavior, even living together without benefit of marriage? Why is there no outcry from the pulpit? *Isn't it crazy?*

Weakness is Not Charity

Many times under the guise of Christian charity the husband will burden his wife with his own responsibilities because he is weak in exercising his authority. This is not charity. It is an escape from responsibility that is fatal to the family. There is a teaching of the Church, which says that with every office

God gives a person in this life, God also gives the necessary grace to live that office (one's vocation) successfully. This does not mean exercising authority will be easy or without a cross. Jesus made no exceptions in saying each one must take up his cross and follow in His footsteps. Whatever the cost, whatever the difficulties, the man was ordained to be the head of the home and first in authority and must exercise it. To let his wife be the one to discipline the children while he (spinelessly) *s-i-t-s* by idly is, in reality, cruelty to both wife and children. The family will falter and fail; it will divide and fall. Then, where there should be love and unity, there will be bitterness and resentment.

In His inspired Word, God gave directives for family life to enable it to be happy and thrive in this world as well as for its members to be happy for all eternity. Man as head; Woman as partner, helpmate in submission. Children to be the fruit of their love whom they train and educate for future families and future eternal life. There is no *faddish* substitute for this design of God. The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. Families are miniature mystical bodies, little individual churches. When the family lives its role as a domestic church, patterned after the total Church which is Christ's Body — with this God-ordained structure and function — it will be happy in this world and lead to everlasting happiness in heaven. We know this is divinely revealed. There is no substitute for what God has done. Yet, many families live otherwise. *Isn't it crazy?*

Wimpy Men Create Feminists

Many times we criticize feminists for wanting to act as men, but feminists are right in a sense in saying they must take over responsibility because many men *don't shoulder their responsibilities*. This is the sad state of many families. In such cases the woman is the one who does all or mostly all of the disciplining while she simultaneously works outside the home. She is tense, overtired when she is home. Children then do not receive tender loving care; bonding becomes impossible when the woman takes on male responsibilities and characteristics. The children often spend days at care-centers away from both parents because the man is not organized in supporting his family and handling his money. The unhappy mother is unable to truly love her husband and the children, as she should. Both parents are materialistic in thinking they needed two incomes to meet all their needs. They neglect the greatest need of all - love at home for their children.

There is an easy acceptance in today's society that both husband and wife must work to make ends meet. *This belief is absolutely false*. I can tell you that I've known many families where the man manages the money in such a way that his wife can stay home to manage and nurture the children. When dad returns from work, he then becomes the disciplinarian and both wife and children respect him. He is seen as the strength of the home. Mother is happy because she experiences fulfillment in her divinely given daily duties to her family. She is not involved in the battles of secular society.

I know young adult men, who while courting their hopeful future wives, make it clear to their female friends that their understanding of God's laws and ways is for the man to be head of the home and the woman submissive as St. Paul teaches. I've known young men who understand their faith well and who inform their lady friends and wives that in going to church to worship she is to wear the veil as a sign of reverence and submission. They point out how their position is in God's word. The women accept and a happy marriage results when the man assumes his rightful role in authority and she in love. If the woman does not know these things, he tells her what is right so she can be a good wife and mother. If she cannot accept these truths from God, he looks elsewhere for a helpmate.

He informs his future wife that *his submission to her* will involve sacrificing for her and the children, meeting his responsibilities, so that she is free of financial worries and worldly concerns. This is the Godly submission for the husband.

God's Word

St. Paul in First Corinthians is concerned with the proper celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy (the Mass and the Real Presence): *"I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ; the head of a woman is her husband; and the head of Christ is the Father . . . Indeed, if a woman will not wear a veil, she ought to cut off her hair. If it is shameful for a woman to have her haircut off or her head shaved, it is clear that she ought to wear a veil. A man, on the other hand, ought not to cover his head, because he is the image of God and the reflection of His glory. Woman, in turn, is the reflection of man's glory. Man was not made from woman but woman from man..."* (1 Cor. 11:3-8).

Such is what the Word of God teaches. Priests as representatives of the Church, ought to teach the same. The sin of omission could be the primary culprit in the destruction of the faith and family.

St. Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said women were to wear veils as signs of reverence and submission. The Church does not have the authority to change the Word of God. Yet, feminist women were able to convince most in the Church to defy Canon Law, Tradition, yes, and even the Bible. ***Isn't it crazy?***

Many priests and Christian marriage counselors are not teaching these truths, but remain silent on them. Still, it is God's own Word. The teaching of the Church cannot be any other way than this: the man is the head of the family. Priests are the only ones who can inspire the people to return to these Godly ways. Pray that they cease going along with the modern day secular way of thinking which has brought disaster to families and society. Priests need to realize that the Holy Spirit is on the side of truth and God will bless them for teaching the truth. The Church is in crisis in this country because authority was not exercised properly when grave abuses arose. Millions have lost the faith due to flawed catecheses and failures in the teaching of God's order for family life. For too long it was considered charitable, even Christ-like, to say nothing. (I choose to call it gutless.) As a result, the moral authority of the Church has lost the respect it should have. This silence by the clergy was understood as acceptance by the laity. ***Isn't it crazy?***

In the Bible St. Paul is crystal clear in saying: "Wives should be submissive to their husbands as to the Lord because the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of His body the Church, as well as its Savior. As the Church submits to Christ, so wives should submit to their husbands in everything." (Ephesians 5:22-32) This is the word of God.

Because Biblical doctrine on the family is not followed or taught, not lived by husbands and wives, the family, as we once knew it, has almost disappeared.

Isn't it crazy?

There are wives who claim they recognize their husbands as head of the home, yet, in fact, they are governing most every matter regarding the home and are the primary disciplinarians in the family. They step ahead of their husbands in all these matters while the husband remains silent. If questioned, most wives behaving this way will tell you, *"If I don't do it, it won't get done."* The feminist movement has affected the thinking and actions of the whole of society. ***Isn't it crazy?***

If wives idolize their husbands then their men will have the motivation and courage to conquer and subdue kingdoms. God created men to exercise dominion and to subdue. (Genesis 1:26-28; Hebrews 2:7-8). The feminists have reversed the word of God and put the woman as the one to subdue and conquer. *Isn't it Crazy?*

Father's Submission

Jesus Christ is head of the universal Church. Jesus practiced His headship by becoming the servant to all, while still sacrificing Himself for all. Jesus Christ proclaimed His headship when He said: "The son of man has not come to be served but to serve and to give Himself as a ransom for many." The Pope, visible head of the Church, calls himself, "the servant of the servants of God." The father and husband in this sense is the servant of the family in service to all while still being the head in authority.

The husband is to imitate Christ's way of being the head. The husband becomes the one who gives, who bows, because he sees his greatness in the dynamic act of being subordinate to all members of his family in the sense that he serves them and sacrifices for them as the head. He is divinely appointed to be the head, to have the chief concern for the spiritual welfare of both his wife and children, to keep all under correct discipline, as well as to support them in their physical needs, however hard he must work to do so. In this way he maintains family order.

The indispensable role of the husband is to be submissive to God, whose fatherhood he represents, whose paternity is patterned on God's own fatherhood. *"That is why I kneel before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name; and I pray that He will bestow on you gifts in keeping with the riches of His glory. May He strengthen you inwardly through the working of His Spirit. May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, and may charity be the root and foundation of your life" (Ephesians 3:1-17).*

Friday is Still a Day of Penance

For centuries Friday, the day Jesus Christ died on the Cross, has been a day of special penance. As a minimum, abstaining from meat was required under serious sin for all over the age of seven. When in 1966 the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a *Pastoral Statement on Penitential Observance for the Liturgical Year*, they spoke of *"the Church's constant recognition that all the faithful are required by divine law to do penance."* No Christian can claim exception because all are sinners, we were told. Below are exact words of the Bishops Pastoral:

"Friday should be in each week something of what Lent is in the entire year. For this reason we urge all to prepare for that weekly Easter that comes with each Sunday by freely making of every Friday a day of self-denial and mortification in prayerful remembrance of the passion of Jesus Christ." The Bishops said "the self-denial they especially commend to our people for the future observance of Friday," was giving "first place to abstinence from flesh meat." They ended their statement saying: "In summary, let it not be said that by this action, implementing the spirit of renewal coming out of the Council, we have abolished Friday, repudiated the holy traditions of our fathers, or diminished the insistence of the Church on the fact of sin and the need for penance."

The final sentence of the Conference of Bishops spoke of their new regulation heralding "a new birth of loving faith and more profound penitential conversion, ..."

Really? When is the last time you heard a priest preach that all Fridays are days of special penance? Or, if one eats meat on Fridays outside of Lent he must do some other penance? Did you know this? Is there any wonder practically no one does penance today? Have you ever heard the saying: "Penance preserves purity"? And wouldn't you say the purity went out with the penance? *Crazy isn't it?*

In the approved Marian apparitions, such as Lourdes and Fatima, the Mother of Jesus Christ calls us back to the Gospel and to intensify our lives of prayer and penance, yet it seems on the practical level penance has been abolished. *Isn't it crazy?*

Reverence before the Most Blessed Sacrament

What about that *crazy* clapping that goes on in many churches, especially at weddings and confirmations? What does this do to the reverence we are supposed to have for the Real Presence of our Lord, God and Savior in the Blessed Sacrament? And they wonder why people are leaving the Church. *Isn't it crazy?* Couldn't the clapping be reserved until the reception? And at Confirmations, it is even crazier. We are asked to applaud, like in an auditorium, for people who often know little about their faith and in many cases don't attend Mass on a regular basis. Why would you congratulate people for not knowing or practicing their faith? *Isn't it crazy?*

Have you heard homilies at funerals, which put the recently departed in heaven? Even for the saintly Pope John Paul II, detailed study and confirmed miracles are necessary before beatification or canonization. Yet, we hear funeral homilies of ordinary people who are spoken of as already gone to heaven without a word to pray for the repose of their souls. It might make the living feel good, but what *an eternal disservice* to the dead! *Isn't it crazy* to deny Purgatory in this manner? I ask readers; when you hear of my death, please pray for me. A priest who strongly believes in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament and that the Sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated at the offering of Holy Mass will hardly tolerate the visiting of people in church before Mass. They should be preparing themselves spiritually for the greatest act on earth. The same should be true after Mass when thanksgiving is in order.

The priest should notice how wearing one's "Sunday best" has disappeared in many parishes. People come in slovenly dress and even immodest dress in summer time. Yet, they are rarely instructed in the benefit of dressing with dignity. *Isn't it crazy?* Priests have a responsibility to educate in this area also.

What about "Youth Masses" where guitars play loudly and popular music predominates which carries no note of reverence or sense of worship? It is crazy how out of harmony it all is with the reality of what is offered in the Divine Liturgy of the Catholic Church. Should we be bringing secular culture into our churches? When those who direct youth have watered down liturgies for them with pop music, and those same youth quickly pass out of the teens; they then find no home at so-called "adult Masses."

The teen years are a brief span of a normal life. It is sad when they do not feel at home in Church in young adulthood. Isn't it crazy that teachers of youth lack such vision? I remember over forty years ago attending a national liturgical conference when such folk or guitar Masses were beginning in our country. A speaker from another country got up and spoke saying: "Please don't do this in the USA. We were way ahead of you in my country. We thought we had a great thing going. Youth crowded these Masses and were

entertained. But after their teens they stopped going to Mass altogether." The speaker was right, but ignored. *Isn't it crazy?*

What about pastors in churches where there is a small gathering area or none at all? Yet the priest thinks he must attempt to shake as many hands at the door as possible as the people leave after Mass. The people are backed up in church, waiting to get out as the line moves slowly. Why? Because Father must shake the hands of the people and so they visit aloud within the church and before the Most Blessed Sacrament. What happens to the reverence the Church teaches we should have before our infinite divine Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament? What effect does this have on children and youth being formed in such parishes? It's crazy and the result is the loss of belief in Christ's true presence.

How are the abuses described in this pamphlet going to change? It depends on people like you who read this pamphlet. Years ago, Archbishop Sheen looked ahead as there were beginnings of abuses and misrepresentations of faith already in his day and while predicting greater dangers to the faith to come, said,

"It is the laity who will save the Church."

It will be up to informed Catholics who practice their faith rightly to inform other Catholics less informed of the truth regarding these matters. Also, ask your priest to teach what is true and correct on these matters.