



Loving Obedience

It has always amazed me to see how we human beings use situations to promote our own agenda. Not that this in anyway is wrong, but it is interesting and, in many instances, humorous. It is something that I would encourage all to notice, especially if you are a parent with a number of children. Being aware of how others use information, as well as how we use it ourselves, is very important if we are to live sound and orderly lives. Words can be used to clarify, and words can be used to confuse. It is up to us to make sure that what we say, as well as what we are being told, is directed to a correct understanding of the truth. What prompted me to write this pamphlet was a letter I received from a friend. It seems as though her bishop decided to make some disciplinary changes and had informed her pastor of these changes. The pastor must have received some negative reaction, for he sent a letter to his parishioners explaining the reasons behind the changes and the legitimization of the changes. The bishop and the pastor were well within their competence, as far as I could see, to make these disciplinary changes. So it is important that the reader understand that this pamphlet is not intended in anyway to suggest that the bishop and his pastor were doing anything wrong as far as Church teachings go. Notice my words, as far as Church teachings go. As I pointed out before, what we need to know is the meaning behind what is being said. We need to know what direction these words are leading us. To fail in this area could cause problems.

The letter concluded with the statement: **"The Bishop is exercising his office of shepherd of the Diocese. What he has asked us to do, as he did with the entire Diocese nearly five years ago, is to put into practice the call from the universal Church. He is not asking us to do anything that the Holy See does not allow. In obedient love, St. John's Church (name of church changed for anonymity) becomes a witness to others that we are who we say we are, loving sons and daughters of the Church universal."**

Everything up to the above words in the last paragraph of the letter was legitimate, it was the obedient love that pushed my button. Now the reader could legitimately ask what is wrong with obedient love. The Church, like the family, functions most perfectly when obedient love is exemplified. Is this little pamphlet trying to discourage obedient love? If it is, this would be terrible. No, worst then that, it would be horrible especially when referring to loving obedience to the Holy Roman Catholic Church, the loving spouse of Christ.

Who is required to have obedient love?

Obedient love is easy to say but quite difficult to practice, especially when required of a person who has strong feelings which differ from those of the one in authority. Since I am a father of eleven children, you can readily see how I support the obedient love that is being encouraged by this bishop and his priest. However consider this example: Suppose I tell my wife and children that I expect loving obedience from them. Suppose I go so far as to try and make them feel guilty if they do not give me this loving obedience. Would it be right for me to demand this of the family God gave me to guide if I in turn disobeyed those God has placed in authority over me? This is some-thing to think about, is it not? And this is exactly what I want the reader to do. Think long and hard about what has been taking place in the Church since the Second Vatican Council.

Here are three glaring examples of what I call demonic deception. Now I know that these are hard words, but this is how I truly see what is happening and I am leaving it up to the reader to decide if what I say has merit.

First Example

The quotes used will come from the book **VATICAN COUNCIL II, THE CONCILIAR AND POST CONCILIAR DOCUMENTS**. Under **SACRED LITURGY**, The document reads. *"The traditional liturgical norms of the Church prohibiting (young girls, married women, religious) from serving the priest at the altar, even in women's chapels, houses, convents, schools and institutes."* Now anyone who has eyes to see knows that for approximately twenty years these norms have been disobeyed. My question: Where was the loving obedience that is called for today?

Second Example

Concerning Communion on the tongue: *"This method of distributing holy Communion must be retained, taking the present situation of the Church in the entire world into account, not merely because it has many centuries of tradition behind it, but especially because it expresses the faithful's reverence for the Eucharist."* It goes on to state that the Holy Father decided that all the bishops should be asked if the existing norms of distributing communion should be retained, the response of the bishops was decisive, **No Change**. *"The Apostolic See therefore emphatically urges bishops, priests and laity to obey carefully the law which is still valid and which has again been confirmed. It urges them to take account of the judgment given by the majority of Catholic bishops, of the rite now in use in the liturgy, of the common good of the Church."*

What happened to the common good of the Church? Where was this loving obedience that we are now asked to prac-

tice by many of those who for twenty or more years had gone directly against these Conciliar Documents, thereby forcing Rome to yield in order to preserve unity?

Third Example

Concerning the reception of the sacrament of first Confession before first Communion we read: *"Having consulted episcopal conferences the Holy See believes that it is proper to continue the Church's custom of placing first Confession before first Communion."* Concerning experiments, where the Eucharist was being given prior to first confession we have this response: *"After mature consideration and having taken account of the views of the bishops, the Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments and for the Clergy declared by this present document, with the approval of the Sovereign Pontiff, Paul VI, that these experiments, which have lasted for two years up to the end of the school year 1972-73, should cease and that everybody everywhere should conform to the decree Quam singulari."* To my knowledge, up to the time of this writing unlike the first two situations, the Church has not changed the practice of administering first Confession before first Communion.

The irony of it all

It is understandable that good people can look at things in different ways. They can earnestly believe that actions can hinder, as well as enhance, the liturgy, and it is reasonable for them to promote that which they believe will bring the faithful closer to the love and understanding of Christ and His holy Church.

The irony that I want to address is the direct disobedience of some bishops and priests in the before mentioned examples. For twenty or more years they pushed and connived to implement practices that were in direct disobedience to Church teachings. Again I ask, where was the loving obedience that we hear coming from many of the same people today?

Why was it that those of us who tried to inform them of this disobedience were criticized severely? We were labeled as rigid, hard, unloving, and uncompassionate. Do you remember those words hurled at those of us who tried to state what Vatican II really taught? Again what about loving obedience?

Let us recall more of the words inflected on those who had the audacity to bring up Church law in the presence of these disobedient priests and bishops. What about pluralism and self-expression? Then there was pharisaical. That was a good one. If you reminded them of the laws that they were breaking you were called a pharisee. Remember when you were accused of following the letter of the law? Again I ask where was this loving obedience that is being championed today? Here are two more labels before we close: judgmental and confrontational. Wow! These two surely put us in our place. So we, being convinced that we were faultfinders, just crawled conveniently into our comfortable nonjudgmental holes and watched as our brother sheep left for more sober pastures. God forgive us for our desire to be non-confrontational!

I ask the reader to reread the quotes from the Conciliar and Post Conciliar documents. Ask yourselves this question. Was I lead to believe that girls on the altar, communion in the hand, and first communion before first confession were things that the Council actually mandated? In other words were you skillfully deceived?

Obedient love is good and noble on the part of those who practice it; not on the part of those who demand it. For one to demand obedient love, when they themselves do not practice it, is downright cruel, and to this writer, the ultimate in hypocrisy. To demand obedience to the things that were allowed due to disobedience is nothing less than demonic. Those bishops and priests, who have done these things, will be held accountable to God for the huge number of faithful they drove out of Holy Mother Church.

In conclusion, I ask the reader, do you think this pamphlet is hard, cruel or maybe sarcastic? If so then consider this. Could it be possible that you are more influenced by the dissenters than you realize? I see it this way. They have called us all kinds of names, some I mentioned earlier, yet many more were hurled at us when we tried to tell them of their disobedience. Why was it all right for them to call us names when it was they breaking the teachings of the Church?

In essence they are saying to those of us who would not go along with their disobedience: "You did not go along with our disobedience because of your obedience. So now that our disobedience has been approved, we will use obedience to force you to conform to the disciplines we attained through our disobedience." I truly believe that an honest person, though he may not agree with me on all things, would understand how people such as myself are disturbed when the words, **obedient love**, are used by those who are not obedient.

Go through the gospels and see who it was that gave our Lord the most difficulties, the sheep or the shepherds? Christ was betrayed by one of His own and it was done with a loving kiss. Things have not changed, have they?