



THE TWELVE-STEP REVIEW

Fr. Emmerich Vogt, O.P.



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Summer 2014

Dear friends,

I was late in getting this newsletter to the printer so it will probably be reaching you late summer.

Here are some future retreats and parish missions:

- ✦ Nov. 1/2 - 6, 2014, parish mission, St. Michael, Stillwater, MN.
- ✦ Nov. 8/9 - 13, 2014, parish mission, St. Joan of Arc, Phoenix, AZ.
- ✦ Nov. 15/16 - 20, parish mission, Our Lady of Mercy, Redding, CA.

- ✦ Dec. 6/7 - 11, 2014, parish mission, St. Michael, Woodstock, GA.
- ✦ Dec. 13/14 - 18, 2014, parish mission, St. Anthony, Casa Grande, AZ.
- ✦ January 31/Feb. 1 - 5, 2015, parish mission, St. Mark, Boise, ID.
- ✦ Feb. 13 - 15, retreat for laity, St. Bernard Retreat Center, Cullman, AL.
- ✦ Feb. 21/22 - 26, parish mission, St. Brigid, Johns Creek, GA.
- ✦ Feb. 28/29 - March 5, parish mission, St. Peter Chanel, Atlanta, GA.

- ✦ March 7/8 - 12, parish mission, Cathedral of Christ the King, Atlanta, GA.
- ✦ March 14/15 - 19, parish mission, Presentation of the BVM, Sacramento, CA.
- ✦ March 21/22 - 26, parish mission, Madonna del Sasso, Salinas, CA.
- ✦ March 30 - April 1, conferences at St. Gertrude, Cincinnati, OH.
- ✦ April 3rd, preaching on the Seven Last Words, St. Catherine's, New York, NY.

Please always check with the institution listed for possible schedule changes.

Judging Others

One of the most misunderstood injunctions given by Christ is the command not to judge (Matt. 7:1-6):

Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye.

Many take this to mean that a Christian may never pass judgment on anyone in any case,



which, of course, would mean that a follower of Christ could never serve on a jury, for a juror has to make judgments. This is obviously a false understanding of the text, for Sacred Scripture itself blesses good judgment:

Jesus commended Simon,

"Thou hast rightly judged" (Luke 7:43).

Likewise in the passage:

"But he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man" (1 Cor 2:15).

We also read in Matthew's Gospel: "Do not give to dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to swine. If you do, they may trample them underfoot, and then turn and tear you to pieces" (Matthew 7:6). How is this possible without judging the undesirable behavior of "dogs and swine"?

If we were forbidden to judge at all, then killers and thieves would have to go free. We wouldn't be able to direct our children to right behavior if unable to judge bad behavior. The Church would not be able to judge false doctrine, etc.

Continued on the last page

INSPIRATION FROM THE SAINTS

SAINT EDMUND CAMPION. When in 1566 England's Queen Elizabeth visited Oxford University, she was very impressed by a 26-year-old Protestant scholar chosen to welcome her with a speech. His name was Edmund Campion.



The terrible division among Christians is a continuing scandal to the faith. Jesus' last priestly prayer to the Father concerned His intimate followers and those who would come to faith through their preaching:

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Love is of its very nature unitive. Jesus' prayer stresses the unity to which His followers are called. Unfortunately, from the very early days of the Church there were divisions which can be gleaned from the New Testament texts, for example, St. John cautioning against those Christians who did not believe that Jesus was true man but only true God (see, for example, 1 John 4:2). They believed that Jesus only *appeared* to be human. This belief was not out of any malice on their part but simply comes from the inability to fathom the unchanging God of love as dying on the Cross. This heresy continued past the New Testament period, and the Apostolic Fathers once again, like St. John, preached against it (for example, Ignatius of Antioch, whom St. Peter had appointed head of the Church in the Province of Asia, when he says of Jesus, "He was then truly born, truly grew up, truly ate and drank, was truly crucified, and died, and rose again"). This strain in the Church's unity continued on from the time St. Paul argued with those Jewish Christians who attempted to get the followers of Christ to hold to certain Jewish traditions, like circumcision (see, for example, Paul's letter to the Romans 2:25-29). And all during the Church's march through history she has sought to maintain unity of belief, as St. Paul stresses in Ephesians:

I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

St. Edmund Campion in his study of the early Church began to question his Protestant beliefs. He then realized that the monarch could not be the head of the Church, for Christ's Church extended beyond the realm of King Henry VIII and his daughter, Queen Elizabeth I, and there could be only one Church under the leadership of one primary Apostle, as it was from the first. So Edmund journeyed to Douai, France in 1572. Douai had become the chief center for those who were exiled for the faith. There Edmund converted to the Catholic faith and began studying for the priesthood. A year later he entered the Jesuit Order in Rome. In 1580, three years after his ordination, he returned to England. He preached several times a day, as he traveled on horseback across the English countryside, winning many Christians back to the unity of the faith. In July of 1581, he was captured by the Elizabethan authorities. He suffered torture on a rack before being sentenced to death in November. On December 1, 1581, he was executed by drawing and quartering at Tyburn, London.

Jesus was clear that His Church would consist, as He put it, of wheat and weeds (Matthew 13:24-30) and that this would last until the time when God would send His angels to separate them. St. Augustine (354-430), who himself had to deal with Christians (called Donatists) separating from the unity of the Church in North Africa, reminds Christians that the good and the bad will always exist together in Christ's Church: When Christ beckoned "come," the invitation was to a house that was not so narrow as to exclude any. In a mysterious way, St. Augustine says, this passage about the weeds and the wheat indicated plainly what other texts in the sacred books express, "that there are within the church both good and bad, as I often express it, wheat and chaff." He exhorts Christians:

No one should separate from the unity of the church, for that would be to leave the [threshing] floor before the time of final bodily separation in God's barn of harvested grain. In heart be always separated from the bad, but in body be united with them for a time, only with caution.

To put it in recovery terms, the temptation among Christians is to amputate instead of detaching with love wherever evil rears its ugly head in the Church, to amputate and go off to found a community without weeds. But before long that community, too, will manifest weeds. The founders of AA recognized their compulsion not only to drink but also to be right. It is this compulsion that we must guard against, not only in the Church, but also in our marriages and in our families. ❀

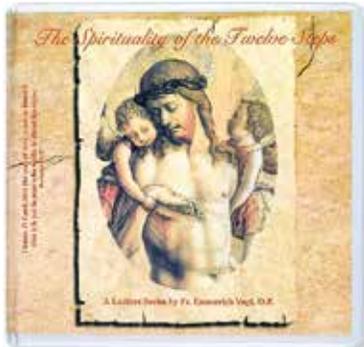
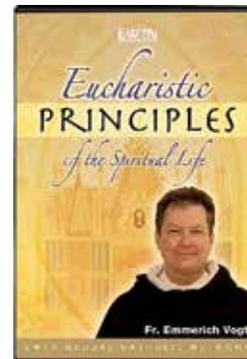
SAINT EDMUND CAMPION, PRAY FOR US

RECOMMENDATIONS:



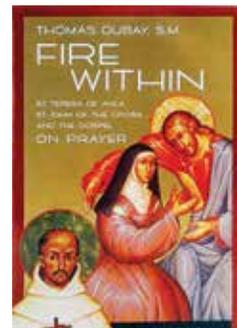
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PRAYER CARDS AVAILABLE. Father Emmerich has a new set of eight recovery prayer cards. A free set is sent with each order. In addition, if you would like any of them as a series or individually, please give us a call. All we ask is a donation to cover the shipping and packaging costs.

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A false understanding of the passage leads people to criticize churchgoers for making judgments about immoral behavior. Some use it to try to shame the churchgoer for discerning immoral behavior. And it can be naively understood even by churchgoers themselves when others tell them that they have a critical spirit and shouldn't judge. Yet, in doing that are they not themselves making a judgment? No, something else must be intended by the Lord.

How are we to judge?

The Lord Himself gives us the answer when He commands His disciples, "Stop judging by appearances, but judge justly" (John 7:24). And herein lies the problem: judging justly. Because of the blindness that comes from the Original Wound we inherited, we don't see rightly. We are the "man born blind" that Jesus speaks of in John's Gospel (John 9:1-12).

I once met a man who discovered his mother's diary after her death. In it she had recorded how she had been sexually abused as a child by an uncle. No one ever knew. She apparently never shared it with anyone. This example makes evident that we do not know what hurts others are carrying. The AA Big Book notes, "Hurt people hurt people. Happy people are not likely to harm others." Take the bully, for example. Bullies are full of shame and mete out their shame on others. Something's wrong inside the bully. We can judge someone a bully, but we do not know why the person is a bully. And as Christians we certainly do not return evil for evil. We judge rightly that someone is a bully, but we judge wrongly to condemn the person. Rather, we long for the person's conversion and salvation and will do whatever is in our means to bring that about, if possible. As a saint would say, "But for the grace of God, there go I."

Take the alcoholic. He, too, is blind. The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker. It is an obsessive/compulsive disorder that needs the help of an outside Power, a grace to enlighten his understanding about his condition along with the grace to live the Steps to recovery. People married to addicts are also blind and do not recognize themselves as codependents. It often comes as a great surprise to nurses that having married and divorced an alcoholic, they go and marry another alcoholic, never perceiving their own weakness in confusing

Hurt people

hurt people.

Healed people

heal people.

being needed with being loved. How blind we wounded children of Eve are and thus unable to judge justly. We judge by appearances. We are unable to judge justly for three reasons:

1. Like the guy who discovered in his mother's diary that she had been sexually abused as a child, we never know all the facts or the whole person.

2. Because of our own blindness—the log in our eye, as Jesus puts it—it is almost impossible for any person

to be strictly impartial. Our judgments often come, not from judgment, but from reaction, acting out of our own blindness.

3. Ultimately, no one is good enough to judge another. Only the faultless has a right to look for faults in others. This Jesus manifests to those wanting to stone the adulterous woman: "Let him who is without sin be the first to cast a stone at her" (John 8:7).

And so Saint Paul explains:

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God (1 Corinthians 4:1-21).

Judgment cannot be pronounced on a man until he has run his course.

Saint Thomas Aquinas

Amen.

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