

THE VISITATION

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It Is Time to Use the "S" Word - By Fr. Robert J. Carr

I write and speak often about priests and even bishops using Twitter and other social media when they really should not. I use social media for the reason I say is best. I just link to other articles or programs. I do not get into arguments because it does no one any good.

However, still we see bishops, priests, deacons and of course lay people arguing online many in the name of traditional values. The latest is some are spouting antisemitism too. Remember, you cannot write anything of value about Catholic doctrine in 228 characters.

I just finished reading the Catechism of the Council of Trent and found that numerous traditional positions people hold today are neither traditional nor Catholic. However, still many feel they are being both. Why does this continue? because scores of us do not consider their actions online a sin. It is time to recognize these social media battles are in fact sin.

Anytime someone spreads a false statement, an insult, a form of cyber-bullying all in the name of orthodoxy, it is neither orthodox nor innocent. All of it is a sin. Using social media is not sinful, using it to attack another is.

Let me give you an example.

St. John Vianney taught that one of the worst sins is detraction. This is saying something negative about another person even if it is true. Look how common detraction is on social media. It is really the engine that drives the platforms. One can say something bad about another person in the name of "orthodoxy" and the person may defend themselves saying something bad about the original writer and you have this war of words going. It soon falls into a virtual gang war. However, none of it is orthodox or virtuous.

I know the bishops label some people on social media uncharitable. To be uncharitable in the truest sense of the term is to commit sin. So why don't those who cite another's lack of charity call it what it is "sin".

One problem may be that the bishops are focused on changing the country's mind on abortion. The collateral damage they do not seem to see is that makes people feel that the only sin is abortion and everything else is up for grabs. This is just plain wrong.

Let me give you an example. Recently, the pope, who is a regular target of many Catholics online especially those who are most traditional, called for theologians to reach out to those who are not

Catholic and also hear their points of view. The Catholic social media warriors went wild claiming this was further proof that the pope is a heretic. He is not.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen recommended to priests the Barclay Bible Commentary for preparing their homilies and warned against rejecting it just because Barclay was not Catholic. So the social media warriors don't realize that some of their greatest heroes did the same thing. Despite that, they label the pope a heretic.

I remember reading of a saint maybe Saint Augustine who had trepidations of what he called "one book people". These were people who read one book and considered themselves experts in theology. Our social media is loaded with them and they may not realize much of what they say online is incorrect because it is in the name of "orthodoxy". Nevertheless, it is often sinful. It is not just uncharitable, it is blatantly sinful. It is time we call it out as such.

My homily for the first Sunday of Advent was to focus on a new attitude for the new liturgical year and cycle. It is a time to call people to repent. One thing we can call people to repent from is detraction. My theme was to consider whether we can defend our actions in front

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One of the objectives for the Fraternity of Priests is to inform our donors about the ongoing financial health and details of the organization. We thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

Fraternity Financial Report

Monthly Budget:
\$4,750.00
Actual Donations:
\$1,543.00
Budget Deficit:
\$3,207.00

*Current as of
October 31, 2022.*

This past November, I went to the Theology of the Body Institute's course "Theology of the Body and the Interior Life." The bulk of the course was about the Ignatian Rules of Discernment of Spirit, but also included classes connecting the dots between Ignatian Spirituality and St. John Paul's Theology of the Body, Meditation and Contemplation, and the Examen Prayer. If you have the opportunity, I strongly suggest you attend this class! Throughout the week, not only did I delve deeper into this spirituality, I also experienced such healing from the Lord, and built new friendships.

During the course of the week, I learned many lessons on prayer... well, it's not so much that I learned them with my head – as I "knew" much of the information – but I actually started implementing them and now am learning them in my heart. I want to share some of the insights I received.

First, I want to go back a few weeks. We had our continuing education overnight in our Diocese in October. The speaker was a relatively young priest (younger than me, anyway), but a national speaker. The first day, he told us that as priests, we needed to spend more time with the Scriptures. Yes, spiritual reading is good, but the Scripture is the word of God. (Yes, I know, I know, we are called to do this as part of the disciplines in the Fraternity, but – and maybe I'm alone in this – over time, the practice of immersing myself in Scripture has waned, and much of my exposure to Scripture is the Lectionary and homily preparation. Suitably chastised, I made the effort to enter more fully into the Scriptures.) He went on to say that it used to be (in the times of Venerable Fulton Sheen) that it could be said that no priest would leave his vocation if he prayed his Holy Hour each day. Times have changed, though. He lamented priests leaving, even those who prayed the Breviary and Holy Hour every day. He said that we must have our prayer be relationship with God, allowing the Scriptures to draw us closer

to Him.

Fast forward to the TOB class. They showed Ignatius' emphasis on beginning allowing ourselves to see how God see us: knowing that I am loved – grounding ourselves in that most important

relationship. We pray through the Scriptures only in the context of relationship (again, something I knew with my head, but wasn't practicing it so well). Shortly after this week, the reading at daily Mass was from Revelation 2:4: "I hold this against you: you have lost the love you had at first" (NABRE). Oh! How easy it is to lose our first love of God!

After experiencing some real fruit in Ignatian Meditation on Scripture and the Examen, I started to think about how I was going to be able to have these enter my daily prayer routine. The Lord made it clear that I had to reexamine my prayer life and get rid of some of the prayers that I had held on to. They had served me well, but now I had to let go in order to grow.

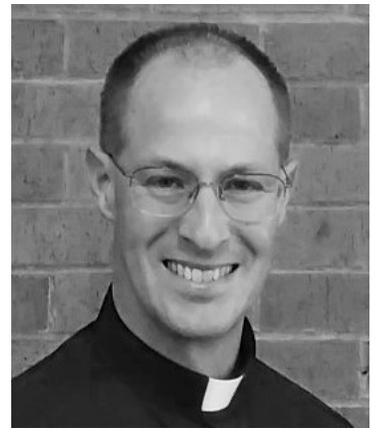
That was hard.

With God's grace, I have found peace in that little death, while continuing to grow in my relationship with Jesus through the Scriptures.

I pray that you will be able to grow in your first love and discover (or rediscover) how loved you are by Almighty God!

Please note that the 2023 Fraternity of Priest Conference – celebrating 40 years – will take place where we began at Franciscan University at the Priest, Deacon, Seminarian Conference. More information about registration will be forth-coming, but the dates are June 11-16, 2023.

Grace and Peace,
Fr. Von DeRosia



Editor's Note: Please send articles, comments, and photos to the our editor, Fr. Bob Carr, via e-mail to editor@fraternityofpriests.org. Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted.

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of the throne of God. This can be the criteria for the next year in judging our actions and intentions. If we cannot, then we can call it sin and address it appropriately including in the confessional.

Most actions we do not have to worry about. Most of what we do is neither good nor bad, it just is. It is the human actions those unique to us that we need to address. Can we defend them in front of the throne of God? This is a theme we need to teach the people because too many of them, especially those in the traditional circles, believe that as long as they embrace correct Catholic teaching they are right with God. This despite being completely cruel otherwise. So, they can use detraction against anyone from politicians to the pope and even other members of their parish in the name of standing up against abortion. This is the deception of the devil. Today, I am sure C.S. Lewis would include it in a new edition of the Screwtape letters.

One of the tactics used by community organizers is to keep people angry. When you do then you can manipulate them easily to get them to do what you want. You want to teach people to hate a political party then they will go out and use the tactics to destroy your opponents as long as you keep them angry. This will help you win elections. It is a common tactic most commonly associated with Saul Alinsky and his successors today.

Look how often you see this in Catholic circles? Many know nothing of Saul Alinsky and do not

know they are using his techniques. Many of the faithful express anger constantly to encourage people to one side or another of an issue. However, none of that is proper to what we truly believe. There is catechesis and formation but keeping people angry at those who disagree with us is neither.

One thing I teach people about the media is to keep a close eye on the use of adjectives and adverbs. If you want to look for media bias you will find it there. Obviously, the red truck has no bias but the terms “the far right” or “far left” express bias. One question to ask when you hear those terms is who says these people are of that label.

The same is true in Catholic circles, be aware of adjectives and adverbs. One such person who even appears on some Catholic radio programs describes Pope Francis as “the evil pope” which is a blatantly sinful description. It is not just uncharitable, it is sinful.

Notice also how often you never hear of prayer in these circles. Both the Catechisms of the Council of Trent and the current Catechism of the Catholic Church (Vatican II) make it clear you cannot live the Catholic faith if you are not a person of prayer. However, you hear people talk about being orthodox but not mention the need for regular daily prayer. I encourage people to make sure they schedule it into their day. If they cannot make the scheduled time on a day then reschedule it for another time during that day.

We as Catholics have to take the lead away from promoting the detraction and promoting division on social media, if we cannot

then we must get off social media altogether.

St. Paul says in Ephesians chapter four that we need to remove from us all of this kind of speech. This is a command he is giving. His message is clear—it must never be a part of our lives. Granted we can fall into it easily but when we do we have to call it what it is—sin.

The New Testament writers also had a label for certain behaviors. They encouraged people to leave them to the unbelievers. Christians had to have a new way of being based on their hope and their belief. We also know from our history that there were plenty of what we would call heretics today because Church leaders were still defining doctrine. The Council of Nicaea would not meet until around 300 years after the martyrdom of St. Paul.

St. Paul even states in Romans twelve how we must be kind to all and leave vengeance to the Lord. There is no place in Catholic circles for us to be nasty to each other. If we cannot be kind to others even when we disagree with them, then we need to see that our actions in this arena are endangering our souls and we have to leave.

In the Navy, we had an expression: “Do not win the battle and lose the war.” There are many battles people win online and they lose the war for the message of the Gospel and maybe their own souls in the process. We must lead the way away from this way of being.

It is time for Catholics to call ourselves to account for our actions online. It has no place if we are using it to attack in the name of orthodoxy or any other reason.

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

January 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. 1 Christopher Gaffrey OFM <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 2 Patrick Gilbert <i>Boston, MA</i>	Dcn. 3 Chuck Hall <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 4 Elson Kattookkaran <i>Boston, MA</i>	5 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	6 For prayer requests received	7 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. 8 Richard Kelley <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 9 John Kiley <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 10 Maurice Larochelle <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 11 Jurgen Liias <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 12 Paul McManus <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 13 Thomas Reilly <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 14 Roarke Traynor <i>Boston, MA</i>
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Rev. 22 Barnabas Page <i>Cardiff, Wales</i>	Rev. 23 Ryan Cubera <i>Cleveland, OH</i>	Rev. 24 Kevin Elbert <i>Cleveland, OH</i>	Rev. 25 Robert Franco <i>Cleveland, OH</i>	Rev. 26 James Mazanec <i>Cleveland, OH</i>	Rev. 27 Homer Blubaugh <i>Columbus, OH</i>	Rev. 28 Peter Gregor <i>Comayagua</i>
Rev. 29 Robert Shaldone SOLT <i>Corpus Christi, TX</i>	Most Rev. 30 Sam Jacobs D.D. <i>Episcopal Adv.</i>	Rev. 31 Duaine Cote <i>Fargo, ND</i>				

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

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O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name of priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own disposition and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul, take over his entire personality and life. Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always.

O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.

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