

CREED OF CRUELTY

One of the things that struck me most when I was a Catholic was how I tended to frown on happiness because of my Catholic faith. The only thing I didn't have a sense of guilt about was suffering. It is as if I instinctually knew that if my religion was true then I should inflict all the methods of torture employed by the Inquisition on myself. If instinct it was then it was right. Nowadays, the Church does not openly advocate severe and savage penance. It will not encourage you to wear a hair shirt or sleep on boards but it will encourage you to do good works that are painful for you instead. The cruelty is hidden under kindness. The main motive for such good works is still to hurt yourself to placate the anger of God but that is not easily seen and that is why the Church advocates them in craftiness done to win esteem in the world. The logical consequences of Catholic doctrine imply that extreme penance is a duty.

The Church likes to say the body is sacred and a Temple of the Holy Spirit. This does not stop the Church from arguing that you should make the body suffer. The trouble with penance is that it soon stops making you suffer when you get used to it so you need to find new ways to torment yourself. Yet you will go to Hell forever if you deliberately enjoy sexual pleasure say in masturbation out of marriage even for a second! The body is so sacred in Christianity that you must torment it with guilt and fear about masturbation and Hell over its natural inclinations rather than give it a second of illicit and harmless sexual pleasure!

It is well known that many of the canonised Catholic "saints" battered and abused their feeble bodies to please the Devil God of Rome. The stigmatic Carmelite nun, whose emaciated body seems to be still "miraculously" incorrupt, St Mary Maddalena de Pazzi (1566-1607), did horrific things to herself the least of which was rolling in thorns.

The Catholic God thought that several holy people weren't suffering enough so being the thoughtful soul that he was he was decided to grant them the white hot agonies of the stigmata. What an appetite he has for cruelty!

Roman Catholicism teaches that it is perfectly right and fair for one person to take the suffering that another person deserves in order that that person be free. Jesus is supposed to have taken the rap for the sins of humanity at the hands of his wonderful Father. According to Catholic dogma we should hurt ourselves for others. This suffering is called penance. Our sufferings will help them in a vicarious sense and lessen their temporal punishment (Read Me or Rue It, Chapter V, and the encyclical, Miserentissimus Redemptor, Pius XI). The Church says that any unlove you show deadens the graces others get in a supernatural and invisible way so penance being love is necessary to make God help others properly.

Rome claims that Jesus made an expiation for our sins that was infinite in value and more than enough to atone for sins. It says he lets us pay a bit for our sins to teach us a lesson and because he cannot reward sin by neglecting to punish it. It does not really believe this when it offers ways to get off paying it. Also, if John buys you a meal and pays in full, you cannot do any paying yourself even if you give money over the counter for that is an extra not a payment.

To rejoice while undergoing sufferings takes the value out of them. You might as well be doing something you like instead. God is the best and deserves only the best. If God wants us to do penance for others and out of love for them and himself then the greater the penance the greater the love we have for them and for him. The lesser the penance the lesser the love. Little penances are an insult. They are mean and ungenerous to God who deserves better. There can be no merit in them. The true catholic is devoted to the principle: the nastier the better.

To enjoy yourself at all is a sin that endangers others. You should be making loving sacrifices for them instead. Penance cannot really have any merit when it is undertaken by sinners. It is an insult rather than an act of love then. By commanding sinners to do it Rome is commanding masochism. To teach that pain atones but not fun is plainly to look at fun with suspicion.

It must be a sin not to do penance for it is an act of generosity and we need to be generous for God has been most magnanimous towards us. It must be a sin for it is love not to do it.

Penance is unbiblical. The Bible says that our good works have no merit so they cannot earn God's favour. Jesus said that even if you keep all God's commands your works are still unprofitable for God (Luke 17:10). Rome says that Jesus means that they are useless in the sense that even our best does only a little good. But that would not be unprofitable. Another Catholic answer is to allege that since we did the good not by ourselves alone but by God's grace we are useless for God did most of the work. But we are still profitable for we consented with the help of grace.

At this point, some Catholics would wave the verse, Colossians 1:24 where Paul says that he suffers for the Church to make

up for what is lacking in the suffering of Christ in front of us to support the penance doctrine. He just meant that he had to suffer in his missionary work to spread the faith which Christ's sufferings did only to a certain extent. Colossians 2:13, 14 says that Jesus paid all our debt not most of it which crosses out Rome's explanation.

The Bible wisely repudiates the deadly doctrine of vicarious punishment albeit regrettably except in the case of Christ and the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament where sinners had to offer the blood of sheep and goats to pay for their sins.

Protestants believe that since Jesus takes the blame for their sins and frees them from what they really deserve for them there is no sense in them turning away from pleasures and emotions for God does not see them as sinners though that is what they are. Catholics may object that if sinners should not have pleasure it is a mistake to approve of Protestant sinners having offensive enjoyment. Protestants would reply that it would be a bigger offence to belittle the blood of Christ by punishing themselves so it is not sinful for them to refrain.

The anti-happiness doctrines inferred by the Vatican are confuted by the apostolic command to enjoy doing good and be pleased when we have to suffer for others (2 Corinthians 6:10; 1 Peter 1:8). This proves that the apostles taught that we can die in sin and still go to Heaven because Jesus is treated as the guilty party.

How can a religion that advocates searching for suffering deter people from cruel and violent acts? It would make religious people boil with fury upon seeing people who won't live in torment.

It is unfair that Christians are praised by the Church for self-abuse while others are treated badly and scornfully for less today.

In medieval times some opponents of the Church thought that if there is a Devil he may be using the Roman Catholic Church as a tool through which Hell in all its horror will reign on earth. If you can't see pain as bad and evil the how can you deeply oppose cruelty to others or expect them to listen to you?

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