

27A SML 2020  
MT 21:28-32

Our country has been living off its moral fat for the last few decades, and has reached a moral and spiritual low. The tension in our country as of late, due to lawlessness and political confusion, proves this to be true. Our country is at the crossroads as to how it may acquire the strength to remake itself and ourselves. It has attempted to seek a way that will not hurt and demand a radical revision of its errors. It would prefer to find the answer by human remedy, rather than the more heroic methods of Divine remedy.

Human remedy can be reduced to four:

1. education,
2. ethics,
3. reason and
4. stronger resolutions.

Let's take a quick look at each.

Education once seemed to be the gateway to heaven on earth. Now that we are educated, we know schooling alone cannot save society. Never before has there been so much education, and so little arriving at the truth.

A second solution offered by human remedy is offering a new standard of morals to suit unmoral ways of living. It's like changing the definition of health to fit the prevalent disease, as if doctors should say, "Cardiovascular disease affects so many modern men and women that hardening of the arteries and heart disease are now the standard of a healthy person." Without an objective moral truth on which to rely, ethical reform quickly loses its force.

If neither education nor ethical reform will save society, there might be a chance reason could prove to be a possible means. Right reason could save the day, but reason has degenerated in recent times and people today expect reason to solve what's unreasonable.

The purpose of reason is primarily to discover goals, aims and destinies. This is what is known as teleological reason.

However, the mind has been demoted. Thinkers have taken their eyes off goals and purposes, as being either unworthy, unattainable or unknowable, and concentrate more on means detached from goals. This is called technical reason.

However, reason without a goal is chaotic, and cries for order. Reason without a goal rots philosophy. Reason without a goal is like a dull knife that can no longer cut through the

problems of life. Therefore, something more than reason is required to rescue humanity.

Lastly, some think reason might be saved if it were backed by a stronger will. But will cannot wish itself well. If man, under his own power, could will be to saintly and heroic instead of sinful and cowardly, everyone would have made this change decades ago. The difference between a weak will and a strong one is a strong, deeply loved master purpose or ideal to direct the will. This deeply loved master purpose is the love of God, and, in Whom is this love of God most evidently found but in Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, or for the purposes of this homily, the way, to the goal of truth, by the means of life? And where do we find the truth but in the teachings of the Church.

The gospels these last few weeks have been about vineyards. The vineyard represents God's people and the country of Israel. God's people and the country of Israel were at a moral crossroads 2000 years ago, much like the United States is today. Since Jesus' words and deeds are meant to extend beyond the space of Palestine and the span of 33 years to all times and all men, the vineyard in the parables can very well be the United States.

There is an election coming up. And it does not take much to realize that politics is a web of:

- ✓ unanswered questions,
- ✓ untruths,
- ✓ half truths,
- ✓ and few truths.

Politics can be explained by what I just presented, seeking to remake our country by the human remedies of:

- ✓ education,
  - ✓ ethics,
  - ✓ reason
  - ✓ and stronger resolutions
- which both parties put forth.

Nonetheless, there are many people who are at a loss as to how to vote. They are at the “neither candidate” stalemate. So it is my prayer this homily will help. Homilists have often been told (I certainly have), “Father, it was if your homily was speaking to me.” So while homilies have the appearance of being a pamphlet or mass email, meant for everyone, they may also have personal applications. I also have a moral obligation to speak on the issue. My Breviary or My Office recently had a series of sermons by St. Augustine who warns pastors not to

be silent shepherds. “Do you see how dangerous it is to keep silent? Augustine writes . . . the one appointed for this task, the watchman, did not warn . . . therefore it is our task not to keep silent.”

When I was selling my home in Virginia, the realtor told me to make sure every light in the house was on at night so if a potential buyer did a drive by, it would be inviting. She said to bake cookies before the open house so the house would smell like a home, because people buy on emotion, which can be detrimental if the foundation or the plumbing or the roof is shot. Deciding which home to buy based solely on emotion is not wise.

In the same way, voters should not vote on emotion, and this election is emotionally charged. To help Catholics remove emotion, and form their conscience according to the Truth, and regarding voting in any presidential election (I repeat, in any presidential election, in other words, I could give this exact same homily every four years), there are certain non-negotiable moral values in any election. EWTN’s presentation on voting as a Catholic was clear and concise. The Catholic Church teaches the following non-negotiables moral values<sup>1</sup>:

1. Dignity of Human Life, which excludes, abortion, euthanasia, human embryonic research and manipulation, and any other intentional killing of the innocent in peace or war. The taking of innocent human life is an intrinsic evil which may never be justified.

The elderly, the terminally ill, the severely emotional distressed, and the person in a so-called "vegetative state," increasingly are finding that governments, courts, and caretakers believe they have the authority to decide the life and death of the innocent. The dignity of human life is non-negotiable. Do you know which ticket better defends the dignity of human life? You need to know before you vote.

2. The Dignity of Marriage and Family: The family founded upon marriage is the basic cell of human society. The role, responsibilities, and needs of families should be central to national priorities. Marriage must be defined, recognized, and protected as a lifelong exclusive commitment between a man and a woman, and as the source of the next generation and the protective haven for children. Parents—the first and most important educators—have a fundamental right to choose the education best suited to

the needs of their children, including public, private, and religious schools. The dignity of marriage and family is non-negotiable. Do you know which party better defends the dignity of marriage and family life? You need to know before you vote.

3. The Dignity of Religious Freedom: the importance of respect for religious freedom, viewed as a fundamental human right. Included here is opposition to contraceptive and abortion mandates in public programs and health plans, which endanger rights of conscience. Employers, including religious groups and family-owned businesses, should be able to provide health care without compromising their moral or religious convictions, and individuals should be able to purchase health care that agrees with their faith. The dignity of Religious Freedom is non-negotiable. Do you know which party better defends the dignity of religious freedom? You need know before you vote.

The question Catholic voters need to ask themselves is which presidential candidate more closely aligns with protecting the dignity of these non-negotiable moral values? If you take your Catholic faith seriously, then upholding the

dignity of these non-negotiable moral values in the upcoming election, and how you vote will speak volumes on whether or not you take your Catholic faith seriously.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.ewtn.com/vote/human-life.asp>