

“Obedience or Faith?”

What is obedience? It is the obvious mode, suggested by nature, of a creature's conducting himself in God's sight, fearing Him as his Creator and Father. As creatures, we can be sinners. So, we are to fear God, if we do not repent and confess, and correct our life in accordance to the Law of God. To obey the law of Man, when it is against the Divine Law, is not a real obedience.

Under such circumstances we “do what we can do” to please God. We should prove ourselves to Him. We are to rejoice in finding any service, which may stand as a sort of proof that we are looking for Him in spirit of truth. We will find nothing better as an offering than obedience to the Law of God – the Ten Commandments,- which our conscience tells us to follow, not as private or public attitude of Political correctness but as a diligent attitude in doing all our duty to keep the Catholic Tenets of Tradition and Divine Revelation.

What is Faith? It is a humble standing that we are creature of God. It is a practical perception of the Creation, both visible and invisible – this world and the life to come, because there is no beginning in Heaven yet there is Hell created, real in pain and suffering. It is to understand that this world is not good enough for our happiness. It is to look beyond it towards Almighty and His Divine Son – Jesus Christ. It is to believe in Him and His presences; it is to wait upon Him (not with human prudence to agree Man to Man but to stay steadfast in the agreement of the Cross). It is to endeavor and to learn, again and again, the doctrine of eternal salvation portrayed in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and not in the meal of the New Mass. It is to seek the TRUTH, because we might forget It, and forsake It!

Faith is not a mere temporary strong act or feeling of mind, nor an impression of emotions or self-opinion upon Tradition, but it is a habit – a state of mind lasting and consistent, as Archbishop Lefebvre always taught by word and example. To have Faith in God is to surrender one's self to God, humbly to put one's interests, or to wish to be allowed to put them into His hands, Giver of all good. Truly, there is not Charity without Faith, but Charity does not depart from Faith – Tradition and Holy Scripture.

In us Faith and Obedience are two states of mind, which are together one and the same. Does God accept only those who believe? Does God receive only those who obey? To believe is to look beyond this world to God, and to obey is to look beyond this world to God. To believe is to enlighten our mind with Truth and to accept It, and to obey is to act accordingly to Truth and its consequences. To believe is not a solitary-private act but a consistent habit of trust in the Jesus Christ and His Church – to entrust the 2000 years of Tradition and not in the visible stamp of the Post Conciliar Vatican II Church, imposed by theological opinions - not real Teaching and Magisterium. To obey is not a solitary-act but a consistent habit of doing our duty in all things, in particular to work out our eternal salvation.

Hence, Faith and Obedience do not stand for separate ideas in our mind, yet they stand for nothing more: they are not divided one from the other in fact. They are but one thing viewed differently, but never in compromise with each other against Divine Revelation.

Indeed, for obedience is meant obedience, not to the world but to God, and in a habit to obey God is to be constant in looking on to God. To look on to God is to have Faith! So, practicing our Faith is to have a habit of Faith and to be obedient, are one and the same general character of mind.

Some times we misunderstand that by believing is doing our duty. However, from the beginning to the end of the Bible (from Genesis to Apocalypse) there is one voice of inspiration consistently. There is not a uniform contrast between Faith and Obedience, but there is one doctrine - that only way of salvation open to us is the surrender of ourselves to our Divine Redeemer in all things.

For instance, Abraham found favor in God's sight because he gave himself up to Him. Is this Faith or Obedience? Abraham was blessed because his Faith embraced God's promises, or because his obedience cherished God's commands. God's commands are promises, and His promises commands are promises to a heart devoted to Him.

Perhaps it could be said that Faith come first and obedience follows as an inseparable second step, and Faith being the first step, is accepted.

Nonetheless, Faith does not cease with the first act but continues. It works with obedience. In proportion as a man believes, so he obeys. They come together, and grow together, and last together through life; neither both of them are perfect but they are on the same level of imperfection. They keep pace with each other; in proportion to the imperfection of one, so it is the imperfection of the other; therefore as the one advances, so does the other also.

“The just man lives by faith,” Saint Paul quotes three times in his epistles from the Prophet Habacuc. He shows the identity of true religion under all covenants; they do also represent it under these very two aspects – Righteousness and Faith.

Works of obedience witness to God’s just claims upon us, not to His mercy, but Faith comes empty-handed, hides even its own worth, and does but point at that precious message of salvation and redemption, which God’s love has planned for us sinners, through the death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Do we believe in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? Or, do we obey the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass?

Nevertheless, there is in the tenets of the Catholic Faith a certain prerogative of dignity under the Gospel, namely to refer our acceptance to obedience to the Commandments, not to the Faith; and this from a merciful – so to say anxiety- in their teaching, lest in contemplating God’s grace, we should forget our duties.

In this diabolical disorientation we live among others issues, there are very many Christians who would avow with confidence that they put obedience only in the second place in their religious practicing, as if it were rather a necessary consequence of Faith than requiring a direct attention for its own sake. Certainly, numbers do not in any true sense believe that they shall be right...

May we ever remember that the *“fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”* The obedience to the integrity of the deposit of the Faith is the way to know the Truth, and to practice It; it is to preserve It from distortion.

Further, we might practice the virtue of obedience, which is so difficult in these days, but freedom of conscience unrestrained leads to disorder, and rebellion against all lawful authority. Let’s close our ears against all such seductive doctrines, which have an appearance of light and good as the New Evangelization, and/or the New Pastoral Applications concerning family as a partnership.

It might be right that we should make all progress in everything that pertains to our temporal and eternal welfare; but we should never miss the point of that we owe respect and obedience to the Law of God.

It is the Liberalism in religion what runs in the modern atmosphere within and without the Church. Its followers surround their logical conclusions, because comes from Man and comes back to Man. It inevitably leads to dissolution of all genuine core of Divine Revelation.

A Liberal Catholic person glorifies human reason, through one’s opinion in matter of religion, so that it regards one-self a judge of all truth. In such an extent that truth and falsehood in religion are but of opinion. It is common to hear what is your doctrine? Where is your declaration? “I am with Bishop”, or “not I follow the other Bishop”...

As a matter of fact, there is a mistake of subjecting to human judgment those revealed doctrines, which rest for their reception simply on the external authority. Before all things, it is necessary to hold the Catholic Faith. We must thus think in keeping the integrity of the deposit of the Faith. Clergy and laity alike, have the ultimate goal to save our soul. And in this constant battle between Faith and Obedience, it is needed the assistance from God through His grace, Sacraments, and prayer. The Mother of God, more than ever, urges us to pray the fifteen decades of the Holy Rosary.

Lastly, Saint Augustine tells us *“that there is no false teaching without an intermixture of truth. It is by the light of those particular truths, contained respectively in the various religions of men, and by our certitudes about them, which are possible wherever those truths are found, that we pick our way - slowly perhaps but surely - into the ONE Religion which God has given [Catholic], taking our certitudes with us not to lose but to keep them more surely.”*

Viva Cristo Rey!

Father Zendejas