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“Power versus Authority?”

Authority and Power are expected to act in conjunction with each other for the Common Good. However, are viewed in one of two ways: as one and the same thing, or as natural antagonists. The first error spells tyranny, the second calls for revolution. Actually, both errors are the flip sides of the same coin.

Let's apply to a family – Adam and Eve, the first family. In fact, Adam seeking to deny his responsibility for the outcome by blaming his wife, who handed out the forbidden fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, ends blaming God for giving her to him *“to be my companion.”* Indeed, the Bible reminds again and again that on earth the Revolution against God began, so to say, with the battle of the sexes. Which gender holds Tyranny? Or which one calls for Revolution?

Not only for them but also for all of us, the drama played out in EDEN was only the opening in a contest, which had continued throughout History, no matter Culture or religious believing. Any family had always two protagonists, who cannot live with each other but can't live without each other – Husband and Wife. When a family lives a drama, either the one is confused with the other, or they are set in false opposition, meaning they set each other in revenge, perhaps looks each other as enemy. Is it true?

As result of this conflict, their basic interplay, which takes place in every human being as a struggle between the “HEAD” and “HEART,” manifests itself in society at large, as a recurring dysfunction between authority and power, two political forces, which are rarely properly distinguished.

Although as persons man and woman are distinct, both share one and the same human nature. God blessed them equally with fruitfulness, giving them the same primordial command of *“increase and multiply.”* They would *“fill the earth and subdue it,”* for they invested with a common dominion, proper only for them, *“over fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air and all living creatures that move upon the earth.”*

Hence, there is a commitment given to Eve, as a woman, to conceive children; and yet there are many women who do not want to know WHY God had created them through a Mother. Even Our Lord Jesus Christ born through a Mother, as Saint Paul recalls that in the fullness of time He comes *“made of a woman.”* (Gal. 4, 4) In addition, he says that *“Neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord, for as the woman is of the man, so also is the man by the woman: but all things of God.”*

Adam, therefore, had immediately recognized another person equal to him in all respects, *“bone of my bones – he said – and flesh of my flesh,”* indeed two, but *“in one flesh.”* However, if Eve was not always subject to Adam as she is after original sin, what exactly was her relation to him in the beginning?

She was created under Adam's authority, but being under authority is not the same thing as subjection. Although both depend on established order, the first supposes a free act of subordination in accordance with right reason, whereas the second implies painful sort of constraint. It is the same in a society.

As a matter of fact, the serpent deceived Eve because she fixed her will in a proximate good. As it's known, woman's strength drives in her will. So, unless the intellect points out and imposes the truth, the will is at the mercy of feelings, appetites and natural instincts taking its rise from the body. Eve consented the allure of the forbidden fruit, never wavering, her will became obdurate – *“she saw that the tree was good to eat and fair to the eyes and delightful to behold.”* In a woman, then, it is the mind, which vacillates. The will can be “unbudgeable...”

On the other hand, Adam (whose strength hinges in his intellect) was not deceived by the enticing arguments proposed by the serpent. As Saint Paul says, *“Adam was not seduced [as his wife] but the woman being seduced, was in the transgression.”* (1Tim. 2, 14). Like Eve, he was susceptible to the faults of his virtues.

Man's will is weak in comparison with woman's will. It lacks steadfastness and tends to hesitate because it is surpassed by his intellect, a faculty designed to assess all sides of whatever is proposed to it. As any married woman can tell you, man is good at finding excellent reasons for avoiding responsibility. He makes up his mind easily enough, but (like Adam's will) his will tends to give way in the face of constraint.

Now, let's apply somehow to a social society (Church or Civil):

As it was the struggle of authority and power in the first (society) family, it is in today's Church and Civil society. Absolutely, authority itself does not constraint but rather guarantees true freedom to the governed by insuring right order. Thus, to obey **legitimate authority** is to act freely by choosing the good, which is the essential element of freedom. To by-pass authority and choose evil under the aspect of good, as Eve did, is a problem, which enslaves.

Here is a parallel: Adam was vested with authority, but lacked the power to enforce it. Eve had no authority, but used "her power" to go around her husband's. So, Modern human society (family, state, or religious beliefs) employed the same method to overturn Christian teaching coming from traditional Gospel. **They substitute the power of the people for legitimate authority.**

Certainly, power operating apart from authority is a force to be counted with, for it cannot construct, but only overthrown, even with the "stamp" of being within the frame of Modern society, which professes the rights of man, with appearance of being God's society.

Nonetheless, the true principle is that Christianity has come from the reality of the Incarnation of the Son of God – Our Lord Jesus Christ. As true God and true man, He becomes a social individual in the Church, namely the Mystical Body of Christ. Hence, dependence on Christ is reflected in dependence on the Church. This is the principle of authority, which rules the whole theological organism, Church and State. Such principle, the Protestant Reformation abused to call for a Revolution, because they substituted private judgment in religious matters for the rule of authority. The correlative of authority is obedience; in this sense the Church always draws people to cooperate together, through obedience, taking the individual and his acts out of their isolation, which is not subordinate to dependence on God.

However, the political independence of man taught by the Revolution was contained in the religious independence taught by the Protestants, and later by the Modernists. At that level, it is not the private judgment of an individual person, but of an individual church, which is set up as the ultimate authority: a universal authority is replaced by an authority that, although still social, is however individual. They say there is still obedience to the divine Word, but only insofar as that Word is conveyed through the medium of what might be called the private judgment of the diocesan church or sect. So, the Pope would be head of the Church as the bishop of Rome, deriving his authority from it rather than from Our Lord Jesus Christ. Such principle is the corollary of the principle that authority resides in the community (Collegiality), and of all religions and churches (Ecumenism).

The struggle of authority and power, as in a family, got its lawful belligerence in the perverse teaching from the French Revolution. She represented a genuine crisis of Catholic principle because even though it did not succeed in translating the principle of independence into social practice, it did implant that principle, which removes the religious, moral, and social orders from the center, and tends towards the complete dislocation of social organism, as antagonistic towards the Catholic Church. In fact, Vatican II Council is the implementation of the values of more than 200 years of the French Revolution.

A fundamental aspect of the up-to-date conflict between authority and power is the Jesuitism movement before the Vatican II Council and the aftermath led by them, to the point that today's Pope is a Jesuit. In true, until the present decline set in, the Society of Jesus was for centuries regarded by both Catholics and their ENEMIES as one of the most authentic expressions of Catholicism and as the champion of the Roman Church. Evidently, it is not any longer. For instance, the Liberation Theology was, is being installed in many countries by way of tyranny and revolution. By inertia, we can say that the shattering of authority in families and individuals, it is a product mastered by the Jesuit Pope as the Synod of Bishops has struggled with, last week, between power and authority. By the way, they talked about family issues in the modern world, but they forgot to address the issues of the first family of Adam and Eve – Original Sin.

Viva Cristo Rey!

Father Zendejas