

October 24, 2020

*This letter is long because I had to make up for several months that I did not write anything.*

It has been a long time since I have written any letter. I had many excuses not to, but probably the main reason is that I felt muzzled. Many things I felt I needed to say, were the things I could not speak of openly. The first thing I want to speak of is about truth.

All the riots, or as they say: “mostly peaceful protests”, reminded me of the beginning of the war in Croatia. I remembered the saying: the first thing destroyed in the war is the truth. I blame most of today's problems of relativism on our inability to recognize the truth, and with that comes our inability to say the truth. Today most important thing is to use politically correct language so we no longer care what is factually correct. Most blatant example is if a man wants to be addressed as a woman, at that moment I have to choose if I want to be politically correct or factually correct.

I think that a long time of political correctness has brought us to the situation that we do not recognize reality (truth). We start to accept as reality only what is presented to us as correct political narrative. Everything else feels as impossible or even offensive. I will give you a few examples.

Once in the homily I mentioned something like “We need to pray for those who were looting and burning buildings during the riots.” Afterwards a man approached me and claimed that these were not riots but peaceful protests. Interestingly enough he did not deny the looting and burning of buildings, he just denied that these should be called riots. Obviously because this is not politically correct. I still remember the screen when the reporter in front of building engulfed in flames was saying that these are “mostly peaceful protests”. Only comment to such reporting can be: “I do not mind that you lie to me, but I mind that you think I am such a fool to believe this”. I do not understand how otherwise intelligent people get in such state of mind that they can see destruction with their own eyes yet believe the reporter who says nothing bad is happening here.

Second example is very personal. I was with the people who I would describe as friends. I was very close with them. I knew them well and I believed they knew me well. The conversations started to reach political themes. I thought we know each other well enough that I can say something which I knew was the truth and may help them to see that truth behind political narrative they followed. (Mind you, my goal as a priest (or friend) is never to change somebody's political opinion but it always pains me when I see that somebody believes in a lie). So, in this case I allowed myself to mention the name of a famous Jewish person in negative context, the response was “I do not allow antisemitism in my house”. I was so baffled by this response of people who I know that think reasonably and people who knew me well. I was teaching them so much about the old testament, they would know all my love for everything Jewish. I was shocked that somebody who knew me so well could even think that I could be anti-Semitic in any way. Second shock at the same time was the lack of logic. What does it mean? Does it mean there are no crooks among Jews, or that we cannot claim any Jew is a crook even if it is true? Or is only anti-Semitic about this particular Jew? I had the same problem when I heard Croats getting angry for blaming any Croatian officer for war crimes. Being Croatian is not a reason to defend them - if there were proofs against them. I apply the same rule to Jews, Serbs, whomever.

Third example is when somebody from the church challenged my resistance to the way how the state and church reacted to this crazy situation and appealed to my scientific background as a

reason that I should agree that this was the most reasonable way. When I pulled a scientific article, which showed several scientific studies showing that current practice is opposed by science, the answer I received even without a glance at the article was "I know there are different opinions." (Implying I know they are so wrong – I will not waste my time on them.) I succeeded to point out that this is not an opinion, it is a clinical study - pointing to just one of 5 researches which I wanted to bring out. There is an enormous number of people who swear that they trust science but in truth they trust science only if it comes from politicians (or their appointees). Same people when they are presented with actual science from scientific journal find it unconvincing. Is it then strange that this same person who first asked me for my scientific opinion but then rejected it when it came from a scientific journal and not from politician? Is it strange that this same person asked me the same question that Pontius Pilate asked Jesus: "What is the Truth?"

So, what shall we do? I feel that as a priest it is my duty to tell you the truth, even if it is politically incorrect. Even if you think that I should not say it or that I should say it in a way which is politically correct or... whatever.

Then if you disagree with me, please enter into an honest discussion. If I mention looting and burning of buildings, point to the facts which are wrong, do not discuss language. If I mention some wrongdoing by some crook, do not call me anti-Semite, racist, sexist, carnivore, vegetarian or whatever label you may use to shut down the discussion. Simply show me where my facts are wrong. If you claim that you believe in science, please at least read the summary of the scientific article instead of dismissing it without having a look at it. Then we can try to have an honest discussion and find what is the truth. It was long time that I wanted to say all these things.

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Last Sunday, the Gospel was about Pharisees uniting with their enemy Herodian's, to confront their common enemy Jesus (we can also say that their common enemy is the Truth because Jesus is the Truth). In the homily I did spend some time showing how their attack originates from the devil. They prepared a perfect trap for Jesus (or so they thought). They asked him a question which can have only two possible answers. If he answered: "you should not pay the taxes" he would be arrested as soon as Herodian's could report him. If he says "yes, you should pay the taxes" Pharisees would immediately start to act drama which they practiced – "you see he does not care for the people, for the country, for God..." they would really make it dramatic.

Jesus' answer was brilliant. He found an answer they could never see. They were looking only horizontally - so for that reasons they did not see any other possibility, but Christ looked up and involved third dimension which includes God. His final answer was: "Give to Cesar what belongs to Cesar and to God what belongs to God".

I would say God was responsible for this coincidence that such a reading comes just before election. How did Christ determine what belongs to Cesar? Simple, this coin belongs to Cesar because it was made by Cesar, it has his image imprinted on it. So, I ask you what is made by God that has his image imprinted on it. It is every man, every woman, every child - even unborn, that is made in the image and likeness of God. So, it seems to me that this is one of the important things to consider before election. Then people start to say crazy things like "I would never kill a baby" (sorry I know that politically correct term is: "to remove product of conception"), but I will vote for those who will kill the babies. I do not see that this makes you free from responsibility of those murders.

There is an attempt to make things unclear - to give people the idea that it is possible, with a clean conscience, to vote for those who will promote murder of the innocent children. One theory goes like this: you cannot be one issue voter - we have to consider many other issues, economics, health care, immigration, marriage... To make it seem as something theological, they even invented the name "Seamless garment". What is not made clear when we mention such theory is an important spiritual principle which goes "Avoid evil and do good." Let me try to explain this with a joke.

One priest was walking on the dark street, suddenly behind him he heard the voice: "Hands up! This is robbery! Give me your wallet!" As the priest turned to hand over his wallet, the robber noticed the collar and said: "Father sorry, I did not mean it. Put down your hands." Priest was very nervous and as robber was still holding the gun, he asked: "Can I light a cigarette?" Robber hurriedly removed the gun and assured the father that he can light cigarette without a problem. With trembling hands, the priest took a cigarette and offered one to the robber, who refused it saying almost with pride "No, thank you - I gave up cigarettes for Lent." Do you see what is meant by saying avoid evil and do good? All the sacrifices for Lent: all the prayers, masses, even confessions of this robber are useless if he does not give up sin. Can you now see that the same apply to abortion? All the good you can do in fighting for equal pay, healthcare, protecting the planet, protecting dolphins, feeding the kittens, hugging the trees - all this will never undo the evil of murdering an innocent child.

One extreme example of such distorted thinking is Peter Singer. He holds a chair of Bioethics on Princeton University. His ethics is based on utilitarianism. My summary of utilitarianism is: "Do whatever you want and then explain it as moral." So in his teaching he argued that it should be legal to allow parents to kill the baby even after is born (up to 3 months). I always wondered why he stopped at 3 months. I guess if he had annoying teenager, he would say that there should be provision to eliminate teenagers too. Interestingly enough, the same professor wrote books about rights of the animals and is persistent in fighting for animals. Purpose of this example is to show: if it becomes normal to kill baby before is born, soon comes idea to kill it after the birth, whose killing will be next to justify? Euthanasia is already approved in many countries. Nazi Concentration Camps started as a place to eliminate those who were "unfit to live", at first it was the mentally ill. If we start to decide who can live and who can be killed, the only ones who would be safe are those who make decision about the life of others - only as long as they are in this position.

You are created in the image of God who is love. So if you want to make the right decision, then love has to guide you to this decision. Have to remind you that love always implies self-sacrifice not sacrifice of others.

God Bless you,

Fr Z