

8 Modern Errors Every Catholic Should Know and Avoid

(Posted by Msgr. Charles Pope on Tuesday Jun 6th, 2017 at <http://m.ncregister.com/blog/msgr-pope/8-modern-errors-eve.//>)

Consider this eightfold list of modern errors that are common even in the Church.

There are many errors in our time that masquerade as wisdom and balance, but they are no such thing. I have written before ([HERE](#) and [HERE](#)) on many errors of our time of a more philosophical nature. The following list that I compile is more phenomenological than philosophical.

To say that something is phenomenological is indicate that it is more descriptive of the thing as experienced, than of the exact philosophical or scientific manner of categorizing it. For example, to say the sun rises and sets is to describe the phenomenon, or what we see and experience. The sun does not actually rise and set. Rather, the earth turns in relation to the sun which remains fixed. But we use the phenomenon (what we experience) to communicate the reality, rather than the more scientific words like apogee, perigee, nadir and periapsis.

And thus in the list that follows I propose certain fundamental errors of our time that are common, but I use language that speaks less to philosophies and logical fallacies, and more the to the errors as experienced.

Further, though the errors are common in the world, I present them here as especially problematic because we all too often find them in the Church as well. They are sadly and commonly expressed by Catholics and represent a kind of infection that has set in which reflects worldly and secular thinking, not Godly and spiritual thinking.

These are only eight. I am just getting started. I hope you will add to the list and define carefully what you identify. But for now, consider this eightfold list of modern errors that are common even in the Church.

1. Mercy without reference to repentance – For too many today, “mercy” has come to mean, “God is fine with what I am doing.” But true mercy does not overlook sin, it presupposes it, sees it as a serious problem, and offers a way out of sin. God’s mercy is his way of extending a hand to draw us out of the mire of sin.

And this is why repentance is the key that unlocks mercy. For, it is by repentance that we reach for and grasp God’s merciful and outstretched hand.

One of the chief errors today is the proclamation of mercy without reference to repentance. Sadly, this is common, even in the Church. It is far too common to hear sermons on mercy with no reference to repentance.

The opening words of Jesus’ ministry were “Repent and believe the Gospel!” The order is important. For

how can we experience the good news of God’s mercy if we do not first repent, come to a new mind and know our need for that mercy. If you don’t know the bad news, the good news is no news. Repentance brings us to our senses, makes us accept our need for change, seeks God and unlocks his mercy.

This error of mercy without reference to repentance is widespread in the Church today and leads to the sin of presumption, a sin against hope.

2. Staurophobia – The term staurophobia comes from Greek roots and refers to a fear of the Cross (*stauros* = cross + *phobia* = fear). Within the Church this error emerges from reticence by Catholics to frankly discuss the demands of discipleship. It reveals a strong hesitation to insist that even hard things are often the best the proper thing to do.

Many Catholics, including priests and bishops, are downright fearful when pointing to the demands of the cross. When the world protests and says, “Are you saying that those with same-sex attraction cannot get married or be sexually intimate but must live a kind of celibacy?!” The honest answer is, “Yes, that is what we are saying.” But since that answer is hard and rooted in the Cross, many Catholics are dreadfully afraid of a straight-forward, honest answer. The same is true for other difficult moral situations such as Euthanasia (in spite of suffering, we are still not free to take our life or that of another), abortion (despite difficulties and even in cases of rape and incest we are still not free to kill a child in the womb), and divorce and remarriage (in spite of unfortunate developments in a marriage, this does not mean that one is free to leave one marriage to enter another).

Staurophobia also makes many hesitant to issue correction within the Church and in families. There is almost a cringing fear of insisting on any demands or requirements or of even issuing the mildest of punishments or corrective measures. Things like this might upset people and that is one of the worst outcomes for a staurophobic who fears any sort of suffering, for themselves or others. They fail to see a redemptive quality in insisting on the demands of the cross.

St. Paul says, *But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.* (Gal 6:14). But for too many Catholics today, the cross and its demands makes them cringe and even feel embarrassment. Instead of boasting in the power of the Cross, the thinking seems more to be “How dare we, or the Church point to it, and actually insist that it is better than the comfort of false compassion.”

St. Paul understood that *Christ crucified is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.* But he goes on to say, *but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God* (see 1 Cor 1:23-24). But try to tell this to a staurophobic, and sadly they are legion in the Church.

3. Universalism – Universalism is the belief that most, if not all people are going to be saved in the end. This is directly contrary to our Lord’s own words wherein he sadly attests that “many” are on the road that leads to destruction and “few” are on the narrow and difficult road that leads to salvation (See [Matthew 7:14](#), [Luke 13:23-30](#)). Dozens of parables and other warnings also come from our Lord in this regard and the straight-forward teaching of the Lord makes it clear that we must soberly accept that many, and not a few are going to be lost unless we, by God’s grace urgently summon them to Christ and to authentic discipleship.

I have written extensively on this elsewhere (e.g. [HERE](#)) and do not intend to rewrite all that now. But universalism is a serious discrepancy that is widely held today.

Countless Catholics seldom if ever hear sermons that warn of judgment or the possibility of hell. Neither do they mention it to others or even consider it as an actual possibility.

Given the pervasiveness of universalism there is very little urgency among Catholics to evangelize or even live the faith themselves. This attitude has to go if there is going to be any serious reform in the Church or evangelical zeal.

4. Deformed Dialogue – The term “dialogue” has come to mean an almost endless conversation. As such it lacks a clear goal to convince the other. It usually just means “talk.” In our culture merely talking is given a lot of credit.

While talking is not bad per se, it can substitute mere action for a true goal. Originally “dialogue” had a more vigorous meaning. It comes from the Greek and is used in Scripture. *διὰλέγομαι (dialégomai)* where we get the word “dialogue” comes from the Greek roots *diá*, (through, from one side across to the other) + *légō*, (“speaking to a conclusion”). *Dia* intensifies *lego* so it is properly, “getting a *conclusion across*” by exchanging thoughts, words or reasons.

And thus we see “dialogue” was originally a far more vigorous word than it would seem most people mean by the word today. In the New Testament is it used more often in the context of giving testimony and of trying to convince others the Gospel (e.g. Acts 17:2, 17 and 18:4).

But, as noted, in our times dialogue can actually stall conversion and given the impression that all sides have valid stances and that merely “understanding” the position of the other is praise-worthy. Understanding may have value, but mostly is of value to lay a foundation for conversion to the truth of the Gospel.

It is unclear today that conversion is actually a goal when many Catholics speak of dialogue with the world or with unbelievers. Dialogue is a tool, not a goal, it is a method, not a destination. (To be continued next week.)

Mass Intentions

Sunday, July 9th

6:00 am Juliana Kim †
8:00 am Edward Miller Jr. †
9:30 am Jose and Irene Cortina †
11:00 am For the people of the parish
5:30 pm Honoring St. Joseph for prayers answered

Monday, July 10th

6:30 am Charlie Lopez †
12:10 pm Villar Family

Tuesday, July 11th

6:30 am Ellis Milam †
12:10 pm Nolan Isler

Wednesday, July 12th

6:30 am Michael Alexander
12:10 pm Deceased Members of the Unsel and Goedicke Families †

Thursday, July 13th

6:30 am Anne Purcell White †
12:10 pm Vincent Nguyen and Maria Phan †

Friday, July 14th

6:30 am Margaret Simpson †
12:10 pm For the protection of the unborn and an end to the abortion slaughter

Saturday, July 15th

8:00 am Paul Camerlengo †
5:30pm Deceased Members of the Milam and Steely Families †

Sunday, July 16th

6:00 am Peter Kim †
8:00 am Judith Miller. †
9:30 am Sam and Josephine Covernale †
11:00 am For the people of the parish
5:30 pm Carmen Ponte †

† Deceased

8am Sunday Mass (Extraordinary Form) Propers

INTROIT (Ps. 26:7,9,1): Hear, O Lord, my voice with which I have cried to Thee: be Thou my helper, forsake me not, nor do Thou despise me, O God my Savior. *Ps.* The Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear? Glory be to the Father. Hear, O Lord...

COLLECT: O God, who hast prepared for those who love Thee such good things as eye hath not seen; pour into our hearts such love towards Thee, that loving Thee above all things, we may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (1 Pet. 3:8-15): Dearly beloved: Be ye all of one mind (in prayer), having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble; not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing: for unto this are you called, that you may inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him decline from evil and do good; let him seek after peace, and pursue it; because the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears unto their prayers, but the countenance of the Lord is against them that do evil things. And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good? But if also you suffer anything for justice's sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their fear, and be not troubled; but sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts.

GRADUAL (Ps. 83:10,9): Behold, O God our protector, and look on Thy servants. V. O Lord God of hosts, give ear to the prayers of Thy servants.

ALLELUIA (Ps. 20:1): Alleluia, alleluia. V. In Thy strength, O Lord, the king shall joy; and in Thy salvation he shall rejoice exceedingly. Alleluia

GOSPEL (Matt. 5:20-24): At that time, Jesus said to His disciples: Except your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother: Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say: Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.

OFFERTORY (Ps. 15:7,8): I will bless the Lord, who hath given me understanding; I set God always in my sight; for He is at my right hand, that I be not moved.

SECRET: Be appeased, we beseech Thee, O Lord, by our supplications: and in Thy loving kindness, accept the offerings Thy servants and handmaidens lay before Thee, that the offerings of each to the glory of Thy name may profit all alike unto salvation. Through our Lord.

PREFACE of the Most Holy Trinity—please see red missalette.

COMMUNION (Ps. 26:4): One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

POSTCOMMUNION: Thou hast filled us with thy heavenly gifts, O Lord: vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, to cleanse us from our hidden faults, and deliver us from the snares of our enemies. Through our Lord.

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Ordinary Time**

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Weekday Masses

6:30 a.m. and 12:10 p.m., Mon.—Fri.

12:10 p.m. Tues. & Thurs.—Extraordinary Form

Weekend Mass:

8:00 a.m. Saturday—English Ordinary Form

Sunday Masses:

5:30 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass—English Ordinary Form

6:00 a.m. Sunday—English Ordinary Form

8:00 a.m. Sunday—Latin Extraordinary Form

9:30 a.m. Sunday—English Ordinary Form

11:00 a.m. Sunday—Latin Ordinary Form

5:30 p.m. Sunday—English Ordinary Form

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament follows 11am Mass and concludes with Benediction at 4:30pm. The **Novena to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal** follows the Sun. 5:30pm Mass.