

THE IMMACULATA



Father speaks on 'Propriety and Ordering All Things'

St Paul touches on a topic in the Gospel that is very much forgotten. 'All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful for me, but all things do not edify.'

The propriety in the way you go about things as Catholics and as parents; I could do this or that and it would be perfectly lawful for me to do, but it would not be proper. Today many people put the cart before the horse, offending God their whole life. They will ask if it is a sin; it often does not matter whether it is a sin or not, the question is if it is right or not to do this? Today we have got to the stage where we have to spell things out for people as there is no longer a sense of whether something is right or not. We have lost sight of what is proper. We no longer look to anything or anyone but ourselves, our own opinion and our own emotions.

Today we often resent all authority, we don't want to ask our husband's permission or ask the priest what he thinks because it will be an obstacle for us getting what we want. God in His goodness may allow you to go through life doing what you want and getting what you want however at the end of the day there is a price to pay.

"The Mill of God's Justice Grinds Slowly, but Exceedingly Fine". Your children will be your judges and not only your physical children. An action itself can be good, in the eyes of God, but is the motive behind what you are doing? You can build a Cathedral and still go to hell. It isn't so much what you do, but the intention that determines whether it is pleasing or not to God. We put our plans, our ideas before the will of God.

For example regarding the question of modesty, the Church has never said if you go beyond this point you commit a mortal sin, but the Church does not have to, you may have a sense that maybe it is not a mortal sin but often it is not fitting or proper. Modesty in a question of propriety, order, structure, decorum. We must be generous in the way we dress, not just wearing the bare minimum, instead of the legalistic minimum, be generous. Lack of mortification of the will and of the tongue are the source of so many vices. If you are not mortified in the will and tongue you are not pure, no matter how much clothing you wear. Modesty has everything to do with the mode of operating, which is where it gets its name. Mode in relation to God, to superiors, to my neighbour.

When it comes to propriety we must seek the will of God in everything that we do. If we are not seeking the will of God we are seeking our own will. When people are dating they often ask what is the minimum they can do before

they sin, but this is not the right idea, the right idea is this is to be the future spouse; what is the right thing to do, this is how a Catholic should think. Instead of asking what is the minimum before I offend God, this is missing the whole point and often a mockery of God.

Many traditional Catholics have a minimalist attitude to daily Mass, is this minimalist attitude going to produce a spiritual life, a holy Catholic family. Parents are often surprised 20 or 30 years later when their children don't go to Mass or don't take their Faith seriously, if we take this minimalist attitude of 'I can get away with it'. Instil in your children that Sunday Mass is something that we take very seriously, something that we prepare for, if possible come early and pray the Rosary as a family. Give the Example that Mass means something. The sacrifice is worth it.

Instead of weighing things by whether it is a sin or not you have to instil in your children what is fitting, what is proper, what is good. A minimalistic attitude will never produce saints in your home, neither in yourself nor in your children. None of the saints were formed by parents who had this attitude. All of us refuse to take ownership with things that should be our priority, if something is not right either in the Church or in your house it is your duty to say I see what is wrong so I have to say something or do something about the situation.

Our attitude must not be what is lawful but what is right, what is proper? **Everything comes down to your attitude, what is your motivation behind what you want to do.** The beautiful spirit we should have is how much we are indebted to God for all He has done for us.

Resignation to the Will of God: Like Our Lord, we must yield ourselves as living sacrifices to God, content, as far as our will goes, to accept health or illness, wealth or poverty, interior peace or the conflict with temptation.

Fear of offending God: "Have a holy fear of consciously doing anything that may grieve the Holy Spirit; a holy fear of going anywhere, entering into any engagements, amusements, societies, friendships, intimacies, which can come between God and your soul." Cardinal Manning.

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The Little Number of Those Who Are Saved *St Leonard of Port Maurice*

Brothers, because of the love I have for you, I wish I were able to reassure you with the prospect of eternal happiness by saying to each of you: You are certain to go to paradise; the greater number of Christians is saved, so you also will be saved. But how can I give you this sweet assurance if you revolt against God's decrees as though you were your own worst enemies? I observe in God a sincere desire to save you, but I find in you a decided inclination to be damned. So what will I be doing today if I speak clearly? I will be displeasing to you. But if I do not speak, I will be displeasing to God.

Now let us consult the Latin Fathers. You will hear Saint Gregory saying clearly, "Many attain to faith, but few to the heavenly kingdom." Saint Anselm declares, "*There are few who are saved.*" Saint Augustine states even more clearly, "*Therefore, few are saved in comparison to those who are damned.*" The most terrifying, however, is Saint Jerome. At the end of his life, in the presence of his disciples, he spoke these dreadful words: "*Out of one hundred thousand people whose lives have always been bad, you will find barely one who is worthy of indulgence.*"

Saint Vincent Ferrer will show you what you may think about it. He relates that an archdeacon in Lyons gave up his charge and retreated into a desert place to do penance, and that he died the same day and hour as Saint Bernard. After his death, he appeared to his bishop and said to him, "*Know, Monsignor, that at the very hour I passed away, thirty-three thousand people also died. Out of this number, Bernard and myself went up to heaven without delay, three went to purgatory, and all the others fell into Hell.*"

See this sermon in full on www.olrl.org/snt_docs/fewness.shtml

Our Lady of Fatima

In 1917, Our Lady appeared to three shepherd children, Jacinta (age 7), Francisco (age 9) and Lucia (age 10), at Fatima in Portugal. The lives of the three children of Fatima were entirely transformed by the heavenly apparitions.

While fulfilling the duties of their state with the greatest fidelity, those children seemed now to live only for prayer and sacrifice, which they offered in a spirit of reparation to obtain peace and the conversion of sinners. They deprived themselves of water during the periods of great heat; they gave their lunch to poor children; they wore around their waists thick cords that even drew blood; they abstained from innocent pleasures and urged one another to the practice of prayer and penance with an ardour comparable to that of the great saints.

In each of the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima, she insisted on praying the Rosary. **"Pray the Rosary every day to obtain peace for the world."** Lucia often repeated what Our Lady had first recommended to her: **"Yes, she wishes people to recite the Rosary; people must recite the Rosary."** Our Lady asked them to add after each decade the short prayer: "Oh my Jesus forgive us our sins; save us from the fires of Hell. Lead all souls to heaven especially those most in need of Thy mercy." In the final apparition on October 13, 1917, Our Lady silently held out the scapular (the brown scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel). Lucia had said that the Blessed Mother wants everyone to wear it: "The Scapular and the Rosary are inseparable."



In this month of the Rosary let us pray the Rosary everyday, as Our Lady asked in Fatima.

Rearing Children by the Dominican Teaching Sisters Part 1

This is an extract of a talk given by the Dominican Teaching Sisters. The entire talk is available on the website: www.sspcx.com.au/samg.html

Dear Parents of Our Students:

We have chosen to speak to you today about the education of your children. **Everything which happens in the sight of a child, everything he hears, everything he receives will lead him either to virtue or to vice, either to grandeur or to meanness, either to the awareness of his duty or to cowardice.**

'Everything which happens in the sight of a child, everything he hears, will lead him either to virtue or to vice'

Thus, what will this child become? **Everything depends upon the education he receives. Everything depends on what is taught and demanded by those (parents and teachers) who have received the sacred mission of educating him, the mission of making an adult of him, a true adult, that is to say, someone capable of always choosing what is Good, someone who is always ready to act in accordance with what he knows to be right.**

In permitting them to govern us, instead of our being firm enough to govern them, we make of them monsters of selfishness, of laziness and of sensuality.

By letting them make up their own minds, instead of our having the courage to command them, we bind them more and more to the slavery of their passions. And instead of helping them to conquer their freedom, instead of teaching them to choose the Good, thinking we are satisfying their lusts, in reality we develop them, for our flesh is made in such a way that the more it has, the more it wants.

You, parents, have received from God the mission of educating your children. Before God, you will answer for the exercise, of the lack of exercise, of the authority He has given you to be the guides, the fathers, the teachers, of your children.

'Before God, you, parents will answer for the exercise, of the lack of exercise, of the authority He has given you'

It seems to us there are six aspects to point out.

First. The unbelievable **greed** of almost all our children. If the food prepared for them does not please them, they make critical remarks about it, they refuse to eat it, sometimes by lying, claiming they are not hungry. But the next day they return triumphant: *"Mom won't give me any more of that."* On one hand they are impolite and ungrateful towards their parents or towards us to complain of what they have been given; and on the other hand, they are gluttonous, capricious, whimsical, and rebellious to desire to eat only what they like. If they feel like having candy or cookies, they have only to ask for them, to receive them. But we must not satisfy their animal instinct!

They eat much too much sugar, and it is bad for their health. If they had two or three cookies a day, we could let it go, but how many do some of them eat every day? If you yourselves do not wisely govern your children's eating habits, never will your children learn to eat correctly. If they are thirsty, they find it normal to drink immediately, even during classes. What do they do at home? We do not know. But our children are not animals. We must teach them to control, to master their hunger and thirst. We must not permit them to eat between meals, each time a cookie or a piece of candy tempts them.

Second. Their astonishing **capriciousness**. If one or another does not want to come to school, she refuses, or has a temper tantrum until Mom gives in: *"All right, get back in the car and we'll go home."* A stomach ache or a headache or a little cold is not a reason to miss school. There are too many absences for insufficient causes, and it is easy to see that many illnesses have a direct relation to tests or quizzes.

Third. Customary **selfishness**. It is difficult to awaken their generosity. The small amount of household help that we ask of them. They try to avoid it or come dragging their feet, and they do not see anything wrong in this attitude.

It seems that they are not used to thinking of others or to helping out. They would have initiative or ideas of ways to help if they were more charitable and generous.

And amongst themselves, there is a lack of Christian charity. They do not forget themselves to think of others. They want what they want for themselves. If another girl pleases them, they are friendly with her, but if she does not please them, they reject her, they treat her like dirt, seemingly without feeling any guilt.

Fourth. An **insufficient understanding of their duty of state**. They do not feel obliged to do their work seriously. Often their school work is poorly done, their lessons are only half-learned, and their writing is sloppy. They are lethargic, lacking energy and will, before the efforts demanded. On Monday mornings, it seems as if they have just had a month's vacation. Some of them are exhausted instead of being rested and ready to work. They need time to sleep, to study, to read; they need to walk or ride bicycles, and to help around the house.

Fifth. Their **lack of the spirit of making efforts, of the spirit of sacrifice, of renunciation**. Our children are too often the slaves of their selfishness, of their sensibility, of their sensuality, we must call it by its name, for their greed is nothing else.

Therefore, when we try to encourage them to make efforts, to make sacrifices in order to save souls, they stare wide-eyed, as if we were speaking a new language. But it is the language of their Baptism, of our Baptism. A Catholic cannot save himself without helping others, by his daily prayers and his daily sacrifices, for the conversion of sinners. All Catholics must be missionaries by their prayers and mortification for the salvation of souls.

Sixth. The undeniable presence of the **spirit of vanity**. Many are the examples. For instance, there is no need for our children to change skirts every day, other than to exhibit their wardrobe. They grow their nails as witches, then polish them. They wear make-up, when they are only eleven years old. And what is that if it is not worship of the body, worship of the flesh? The consequences are weighty: *"If you live according to the flesh, you will die,"* writes St. Paul.

If we do not react, you and we, you with us, you before us, if we let our children give into the instinct of their capricious passions, we are preparing catastrophes.

When we always give our children what food they desire or prefer, we develop their sensuality. And later, in adolescence, they will not be able to defend themselves in temptations against purity. Their selfish, greedy, sensual

flesh will demand to be satisfied in its lower instincts; and, having never learned to fight against these bodily appetites, the adolescents will be defeated during the strong attacks of the flesh.

If we obey our children, if we let them do what they want, if we satisfy their desires, we encourage their selfishness. By demanding of them no efforts and no sacrifices, we are preparing great falls. We are lying to children when we give them the illusion that life is easy, and that pleasure is the goal of life. And we do not develop in them the good qualities of energy, of perseverance in effort, of forgetting themselves to think of others. These qualities are indispensable to a Christian life. How will today's selfish girls be tomorrow's heroic family mothers? For mothers and fathers must be heroic in order to remain faithful to God amidst the paganism in which we live. The Sacrament of Marriage can never make up for education that has been a failure. **Future spouses must learn, from their earliest age, to practice these humble domestic virtues in which consists the sanctity of the woman: self-renunciation, sacrifice, dedication, submission, obedience, purity and unremitting work.**

And how could vocations flourish in our families, if the children do not see the virtues of Our Lord shining at home, in a very concrete way; if we do not teach them to imitate Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the renunciation of their desires, of their self-love, and of their own will?

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Our prayers are worth nothing if they do not lead us to imitate Our Lord, His virtues, His absolute dedication to the Glory of the Father and the salvation of His brothers!

Through the weakness of giving into our children, we work toward the destruction of their personality. And we can never make up for this harm done, or only at the price of great heroism, so great that only a few succeed. But most of these destroyed personalities became indecisive people, victims of their contradictory passions; they have nervous breakdowns, or complexes; they are incapable of making decisions. An education that is too weak has shut the door to grandeur, nobleness, magnanimity, holiness.

