

The Epidemic and the Cure

Pope John Paul II often reminded us of the loss of a sense of sin and the need for a return to the practice of frequent confessions. The moral relativism that is causing much of this loss of a sense of sin in our world has also been characterized by our current Pope, Benedict XVI as the major evil facing the Catholic Church today.

The word “epidemic” is described by Webster’s as “affecting or tending to affect a disproportionately large number of individuals within a population, community, or region at the same time and excessively prevalent”. The word “epidemic” would seem to be the very best way to describe the crisis in the Catholic Church today. There are most likely at least 75% of Catholics in the state of mortal (deadly) sin.

How do we come up with this figure? We know that only about 25% of Catholics attend Sunday Mass every week. The Catholic Church teaches that it is a mortal sin to miss mass on Sundays without a good reason. With the introduction of the Saturday vigil masses, there is hardly any good reason to miss Sunday mass at all. This crisis is unprecedented in Catholic history and we need an immediate cure.

Most epidemics usually leave behind many dead bodies. This epidemic is much worse because it leaves behind a death, not of the body, but of the soul, which will suffer the eternal consequences of the unending and most terrible flames of Hell.

If you think that 75% is a high figure, then consider how many of the Catholics who regularly attend Sunday Mass, have not confessed mortal sins and are still receiving Jesus in Holy Communion every week too. A survey done in a parish in Florida revealed that only about 10% of regular church goers actually confess their serious sins every year as required by one of the precepts of the Catholic Church.

So what we have is an epidemic of incredible size and consequence. The worst type of epidemic, and most assuredly, the worst in our history. Have we all fallen asleep? Think about Jesus. He is looking down on us, His Church, and seeing so little in the form of evangelization or even any care at all for His lost sheep. How can we just sit back and not do anything? What in the heck is wrong with us?

This “apathy” has led to the closing of parishes. Here again lets look at Webster’s for the meaning of “apathy”: “lack of enthusiasm or energy; lack of interest in anything, or the absence of any wish to do anything” and “emotional emptiness: inability to feel normal or passionate human feelings or to respond emotionally”.

Don’t we care about our fellow man any more? Have we forgotten that Hell is real and that the flames are everlasting? Are we using all of our God given talents?

The greatest love that we can give to our fellow man is to help them get home to Heaven. Jesus told us the parable of the talents. This parable illustrates our God given talents and how we are to use them. Will God be judging us like the servant who buried his talent? Will God be referring to us as the wicked and lazy servant, sending us to into the darkness where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth?"

Bishops and Priests have great responsibilities for shepherding God's people. It would be unfortunate for them if they would not use every means possible to save souls from the terrible epidemic, especially when they have been given the cure.

The Cure?

Given the cure? Yes. Surprised? Not me. St. Paul told us that where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more! The Church has been right on top of the situation from day one. The Holy See has been guiding the Church through the Holy Spirit quite well, but we haven't been listening quite so well. Have you ever heard of Divine Mercy Sunday? Has your parish been faithfully celebrating it each and every year?

If your parish hasn't been celebrating it, then something is wrong! This new Feast of Mercy is God's gift to us to completely renew and revitalize our Church. If you think that this Feast of Mercy is a party for devotees, you have it all wrong. Jesus clearly indicated that the Feast of Mercy is a refuge and shelter especially for poor sinners. If your parish is just having special devotions, you are missing the point.

Jesus made a special promise for the total forgiveness of sins and punishment on that day for any soul that would go to Confession and receive Holy Communion. Pope John Paul II indicated that he had fulfilled the will of Christ by instituting this feast, placing it at the exact location on the liturgical calendar where Jesus wanted it, on the Sunday after Easter. Why would Jesus want it right after Easter?

It must be to get all the Easter-only and Luke-warm Catholics back to the practice of their faith. Just think about it. The promise for the complete forgiveness of sins and punishment is just the enticement these luke-warm souls need to get to them to go to confession. We know that on Easter most churches are full to overflowing with souls that are in the state of mortal sin and they need a lot of encouragement.

This promise is exactly what they need as an added enticement to start coming back to church every Sunday. In 2002 Pope John Paul II issued a special plenary indulgence for Divine Mercy Sunday with explicit duties for priests that they must tell everyone about it. This was a clear indication that the epidemic needed a good shot in the arm. The Bishops and Priests are our doctors, and we need the remedy.

Bishops and Priests

It was disobedience that has caused the epidemic and it is only through obedience that we will experience the cure. Bishops and Priests have to offset the defiance of the many with super-obedience to quickly expedite the treatment. The Vatican has put all the rules in place and the Bishops and Priests have to humble themselves and follow exactly what they have been instructed to do for Divine Mercy Sunday.

One of the most important things is the proclamation of the plenary indulgence. The Vatican has asked that this be done “in the most suitable manner”. What could possibly be more suitable, then on Easter when the churches are full of people who are in mortal sin? Canon Law indicates that it is the duty of priests to catechize the ignorant during homilies, and there could be no greater need than on Easter itself.

Bishops and Priests should be doing everything in their power to evangelize and they should be motivating others to evangelize too. They have been given a great responsibility to save souls. If they are super-obedient to the Holy See, they will foster a great renewal. Jesus promised to always be there for us, and He is most especially guiding His Church with this incredible new Feast of Divine Mercy.

The epidemic is rampant mortal sin, the cure is confession. The enticement is the promise of the total forgiveness of sins and punishment. If Divine Mercy Sunday immediately follows Easter then why not invite everyone to the feast, especially all those Easter-only Catholics while they are sitting there in the pews? What an awesome God we have to give us exactly what we need to restore His Church.

Proclaim the Good News, tell everyone about Divine Mercy Sunday. Let the world know. Put it in the newspapers, radio, and TV. Make every possible effort to reach everyone. Don't bury your talents. Make Jesus happy and take away some of His pain. Jesus told Saint Faustina that the loss of each soul plunges Him into mortal sadness. If we really love him, we will do everything that we possibly can to help.

For more information go to www.DivineMercySunday.com

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Bio: 57 years old, Fallen-away Catholic for 25 years until 1993. Started Apostles of Divine Mercy in 1997 to help parishes to celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday. In 2002 started www.DivineMercySunday.com website. Written for magazines and newspapers. Appeared at conferences, and on TV including EWTN.