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A SERIES ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

The Virtue of Justice

"Justice is the constant and firm will to give to each one what is his due".
(St. Thomas Aquinas)

In this simple definition we find the basis for the practice of this cardinal virtue. Justice is directed, in the first place, to God Himself, for there is nothing more just than to render to Him the worship that corresponds to Him as Creator and Father: adoration, honor, glory, gratitude, trust, faithful fulfillment of His commandments, humble and dedicated service to Him...

On an objective level, the omission of all these things is the greatest injustice, even if we would otherwise try to practice justice towards our neighbor, respecting their rights and fulfilling the various obligations we have towards them.

Any attempt to create a world without giving glory to God and without being governed according to His commandments is doomed to failure, because it lacks a solid foundation. We have had to see this in the horrors of Nazism and in the perversion of Communism: a world without God becomes a desolate and dangerous desert where demons can do their work and enslave people. All systems of thought and ideologies that do not give importance to the true worship of God or disfigure it, will bring disorder both in the relationship with God and in human relationships.

From this perspective, it is evident that those religious orders or individual vocations that are specifically dedicated to the worship of God and sanctification are by no means useless, even if they apparently do nothing for society. This was what was thought, for example, in the wake of the French Revolution. In reality, it is precisely these vocations of total dedication to God that safeguard the "order of the world", justice for God. They help to lay the foundation that is so often lost in the world.

Of course, the practice of justice also applies to our neighbor. A piety that does not respect the foundations of justice would become false. We must strive attentively to

conscientiously fulfill our obligations, both to God and to our neighbor, respecting their respective rights.

In the listed armor for spiritual combat, described in his Letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul expressly tells us: "*Put on righteousness as a breastplate*" (Eph 6:14).

In all combat - and especially in spiritual combat - we need a shield that covers us completely, so that the darts of the enemy cannot penetrate the depths of our being. This armor is justice, because if we fulfill its demands, there will be no place where we could be accused of a lack of kindness before God or our neighbor. Thus, the enemy's attack will not find any "weak point" to exploit. On the contrary, if one acts unjustly, one is left unprotected.

However, the primary motivation for practicing justice should not be to make oneself invulnerable, but the simple fact that it is itself a gift of divine beauty and wisdom, indispensable for building a truly human life.

Therefore it is also right for the Church to promote justice and peace, for, as the psalm says, "*justice and peace kiss each other*" (84:11). Likewise, governments must employ appropriate means to safeguard the observance of just laws. "*All are equal before the law,*" says a noble principle, because one should not judge according to appearances or preferences.

However, it is to be regretted that there are extremely unjust laws, which turn a State - at least partially - into a criminal regime. This is what happens with the tremendous injustice of failing to protect the life of unborn children, or even more with those laws that are directly against this life. This is an injustice that cries out to heaven! With such laws, the foundation for true peace and justice in the world collapses. It is no exaggeration to say that, until this crime is stopped and atoned for, there can be no true peace, for peace is built on justice. The only thing that could be achieved is an "apparent peace," which, at bottom, is unjust. This could be a hallmark of a new anti-Christian dominion, which would claim to create peace without respecting justice, particularly with regard to the rights of God.

While it is right and necessary for the Church to cooperate in protecting and promoting fundamental values in the world, she must always be attentive, in the first place, to witnessing to that which is the foundation of all justice: the glory of God.

This also implies pointing out errors that are opposed to the true image of God, because these are always unjust and harmful to humanity, leading us away from the knowledge of the truth. As for the aforementioned crime of abortion, the Church cannot put it on the same level with other injustices that exist in the world. She must always, in season and out of season, opportunely or inopportunely, raise her voice in favor of the unborn.