

16. March 2025

MEDITATIONS FOR LENT

“Concrete repercussions of false doctrines”

Applying ‘discretion’ as it is understood in ecclesiastical terminology, we have first of all turned our attention to the current situation in the Church. Yesterday's meditation concluded with some reflections by the philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand, characterised by his gift for discernment. Without adopting extreme positions, he did observe with great precision the harmful tendencies in the Church, especially after the Second Vatican Council.

Hildebrand and others pointed out that the profusion of negative post-conciliar developments could not be explained simply as isolated errors, but that the enemies of the Church set out to destroy it from within or to transform it into a kind of humanitarian institution. The latter is particularly dangerous, because it may not be immediately noticed, thinking that it is a Christian humanism, as in the case of the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, which is capable of confusing the faithful.

We could ask ourselves why it would be important for the "ordinary faithful" to be informed about negative developments in the Church. Would it not be better to let them go their way and not burden them with problems? Is the unity of the Church not endangered by dealing with their drifts?

If these drifts had no impact on the lives of the faithful, one might think of sparing them the trouble. But this is not the case. Let us take, for example, the statement *Fiducia Supplicans*, which urges priests to bless homosexual couples who come to them. If the hierarchy recommends giving such a blessing, which Cardinal Müller, Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, considers blasphemous, then the consciences of the faithful may be confused.

For example, how should they act when a homosexual couple is present at a family gathering where they usually attend Mass and receive Holy Communion together? Or what should they do if they have relatives living in a second union while their marriage is still valid, and they come to receive Holy Communion by appealing to the openness of *Amoris Laetitia*? Can these people still be adequately warned that they are living in a

disordered relationship and should therefore not approach the Lord's Table? After the publication of *Amoris Laetitia* it will be very difficult. If, in an act of true charity, a Catholic nevertheless makes a correction, he or she is likely to hear in reply that the Pope has allowed it, and will easily be branded as intolerant and alienated from the family.

These are not fictional examples, but real cases that show how doctrinal and pastoral errors obscure the Church's witness and have concrete consequences in the lives of the faithful.

Let us take another example: let us think of a Marian prayer group. Because of its strong attachment to the Virgin Mary, its members are usually very faithful to doctrine and very fervent. They happen to have been praying for many years with great zeal for the conversion of people, especially those of other religions, to meet Jesus and the Holy Church. Perhaps they even devoted themselves to praying particularly for the Jews so that, after so many centuries, they would finally recognise their Messiah. But one day someone comes along and tells them that the Pope has said that all religions correspond to God's will. Perhaps they still listen to him with astonishment. Later, they are told that the Pope has said that all religions are paths to God.

What are they supposed to think now? As faithful Catholics, they usually willingly obey the Pope, so what now? Perhaps they are even exhorted that, following Francis' intentions, they had better pray that Jews will be better Jews, Muslims better Muslims, Hindus better Hindus? What confusion! We can only hope that these faithful will not be deceived and will continue to pray fervently for the conversion of all people, including those who belong to other religions and have not yet come to know Jesus.

And if even for the 'ordinary faithful' it is important to be informed about the errors of the present pontificate, a consequence and condensation of wrong decisions of the past, how much more so for those who are called to pass on the Catholic faith in various ways!

In my numerous meditations and lectures, I have time and again addressed the crisis in the Church. I have also published a series of writings and videos entitled 'The 5 Wounds of the Church', starting with *Amoris Laetitia*, which can be found at the following links:

- Videos:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3VXkqQH5VdUZlG31zviKrSEXhQncGOpH&si=muWdCrfAmp8uMiTXI>

- Texts:

<https://en.elijamission.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/The-5-Wounds-of-the-Church.pdf>

I can only recommend this series, because it shows that these are not isolated errors, but that a 'different spirit' is at work that wants to weaken the Church so that she no longer gives a clear witness of the Saviour to the world.

To conclude today's meditation, let us listen to some reflections of the philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand, who accompanies us these days with his acute discernment of the spirits. On the relationship with the Jews he writes the following:

"Misunderstood ecumenism, a disease which one could call ecumenitis, has led to surprising results. There is a widespread tendency in the Church today to view the religion of Israel as a parallel way to God, one which is perhaps only less complete than the Christian way. We are told that one should no longer seek to convert the Jews; one should, with respect and esteem, let them go their own way."

Hildebrand goes on to point out that this tendency contradicts Holy Scripture and comes to the following conclusion:

"Apart from this contradiction with the words of Christ and Apostles, indeed with the whole teaching of the Church, this notion of leaving the Jews alone shows a very great lack of love for the Jews. For the deepest core of true love of neighbor is the concern for the eternal salvation of the neighbor." (The Devastated Vineyard, chapter 11).