

“The sorrow of correcting”

There is a great love of comfort, and at times a great irresponsibility, hidden behind the attitude of those in authority who flee from the sorrow of correcting, making the excuse that they want to avoid the suffering of others. They may perhaps save themselves some discomfort in this life. But they are gambling with eternal happiness - the eternal happiness of others as well as their own - by these omissions of theirs. These omissions are real sins. (The Forge, 577)

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For many people a saint is an "uncomfortable" person to live with. But this doesn't mean that he has to be unbearable. A saint's zeal should never be bitter. When he corrects he should never be wounding. His example should never be an arrogant moral slap in his neighbour's face. (The Forge, 578)

Therefore, when in our own life or in that of others we notice something that isn't going well, something that requires the spiritual and human help which, as children of God, we can and ought to provide, then a clear sign of prudence is to apply the appropriate remedy by going to the root of the trouble, resolutely, lovingly and sincerely. There is no room here for inhibitions, for it is a great mistake to think that problems

can be solved by omissions or procrastination.

Prudence demands that the right medicine be used whenever the situation calls for it. Once the wound has been laid bare, the cure should be applied in full and without palliatives. When you see the slightest symptom that something is wrong, be straightforward and truthful about it, irrespective of whether it involves helping someone else or whether it is your own problem. When such help is needed, we must allow the person who, in the name of God, has the qualifications to carry out the cure, to press in on the infected wound, first from a distance, and then closer and closer until all the pus is squeezed out and the infection eradicated at its source. We must apply these procedures first to ourselves, and then to those whom, for reasons of justice or charity, we are obliged to help: I pray

specially that parents, and everyone whose job it is to train and educate, may do this well. (Friends of God, 157)

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