



The Disciple

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SEVERE MERCY AND TOUGH LOVE

By Julianne Wiley

I met somebody who knows only one line of the Bible from memory. "Jesus wept"? No, "Judge not." Unsurprisingly, he knows only one quote from Pope Francis: "Who am I to judge?"

Has anybody noticed that one of the Spiritual Works of Mercy requires Judgment? I'm referring to "Admonish the Sinner." In fact

it demands the most uncomfortable kind of judgment: moral judgment: an evaluation about a person, discerning right and wrong.

This Work of Mercy requires making a determination that a sin has been or is being committed, or is likely to be committed unless there is an attitude change or a course correction. It calls us to notice that something is wrong with someone's thinking or their words, what they have done or what they have failed to do: to notice and to take action .

To admonish means to warn, reprimand, rebuke, chastise or correct. And we're called, in the name of Mercy, to "admonish" that sinful someone.

OK, can I go to my safe space? I'm feeling uncomfortable...

This is because the kind of "mercy" that means "smile, hug, radiate responsive warmth, enable, make excuses, soothe, smooth, and let it slide" is the kind that feels good to me. On the contrary, I don't like the sound of "admonish." I don't like how it feels in my mouth.

"Justice and Judgment are the foundation of His throne," says the Psalmist.

To admonish requires justice and judgment; and to fail to admonish is to fail not just in justice but also in mercy: it is to do a disservice to the sinner, and undermine the foundation of the throne of God.

In his new book, **The Name of God is Mercy**, Pope Francis has this say to say: "The Church *condemns* sin because it has to relay the *truth*, 'This is a sin.' But at the same time it

embraces the sinner who *recognizes* himself as such, it welcomes him, it speaks to him of the infinite mercy of God."

Yet too often, we see "Admonish the sinner" as a stance which is contrary to compassion. We see it as being harsh, vindictive, rigid, legalistic --- all the words associated with "Pharisaic" in your Bad Adjective Thesaurus.

Yet there is hardly a morally miserable person --- a person prone to pride, anger, lust, envy, gluttony, avarice or sloth --- who isn't made worse by a lack of admonition. And there is hardly a damnable situation on this earth --- those dreadful manifestations of slavery, materialistic greed, sodomy, racism, the shedding of innocent blood --- which wasn't created by a compounding, almost a collective incarnation, of all these individual un-admonished sins.

Confession and Admonition

The ordinary source of Mercy and Admonition in the Catholic Church is the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a.k.a. Penance, known best to every one of us as Confession.

Recent reports --- "Jubilee of Mercy, but With the Confessionals Empty," <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1351203?eng=y>--- indicate that Francis' Year has led to a *decline* in Confessions. People somehow have the impression they no longer need a Penitential Pilgrimage: they want a Pride Parade. Pope Francis refutes this idea, saying we need to admit our sins to a priest for absolution, quoting Jesus Himself:

"Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained' (John 20: 19-23). Therefore, the apostles and all their successors -- the bishops and their colleagues the priests -- become instruments of the mercy of God. They act *in persona Christi*. This is very beautiful. It has deep significance because we are social beings. If you are not capable of talking to your brother about your mistakes, you can be sure that you can't talk about them with God, either, and therefore you end up confessing into the mirror to yourself."

Pope Francis, in giving a somber talk to the German Bishops on their annual *ad limina* visit, connected the disastrous decline of the German Church to a decline in Confession:

"Where in the 1960's everywhere just about all the faithful still participated at Holy Mass every Sunday, today there are often less than 10 percent. Ever fewer people seek the sacraments. The Sacrament of Penance has almost disappeared." One of the things Pope Francis promoted was getting people back to the confessional.

"The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, which is about to start, offers the opportunity to bring about the **rediscovery of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation**. Confession is the place where one receives as a gift the forgiveness and the mercy of God. In confession there begins the

transformation of every single member of the faithful and the reform of the Church. **I hope that greater attention will be given to this sacrament**, so important for a spiritual renewal in diocesan and parochial pastoral planning, during the Holy Year and also after."



Pope Francis hearing confessions at World Youth Day, Rio de Janeiro, 2013

We Ourselves Must Admonish

The admonition and admitting of sin --- which happens in every good Confession --- is what leads to forgiveness. But every one of us has the duty to admonish the sinner and thus in our own way open the doors of mercy.

Whom do we have a duty to admonish? Mainly, those over whom we have some degree of responsibility: parents for their children, teachers for their students, supervisors over subordinates, officers over the rank-and-file.

What are the consequences when we *fail* to admonish when we have a duty to do so? The consequence for the individual offender is that he or she will sink deeper into the quicksand of their sin; the consequence for society is that millions of individual sins snowball into intractable structures of social injustice; the consequence for us, is that we have joined wrongdoers as accessories and will share their fate.

12 ways of being accessory

by counsel
by command
by consent
by provocation
by praise or flattery
by concealment
by partaking
by silence
by reward for the sin
by penalizing one who turns away from sin
by calling evil good, and good evil
by the defense of the ill done



to another's sin:

Obviously, being an "accessory by silence" can't be applied across the board: there are millions of evils in the world, and we have no obligation to live our lives in non-stop denunciation. But a parent who fails to correct a wayward child, a teacher who tolerates wrongdoing by students, or a political leader who allows subordinates to falsify records or take bribes, surely owns a piece of the evils that result.

Why do we fail to admonish the sinner when we ought to?

I'll answer that in terms of what's true for me: and by "me" I mean my own self, personally:

Moral cowardice

I don't admonish because I fear what can follow: the uncomfortable moment, the stress of conflict, the possibility of becoming the object of someone's resentment or anger.

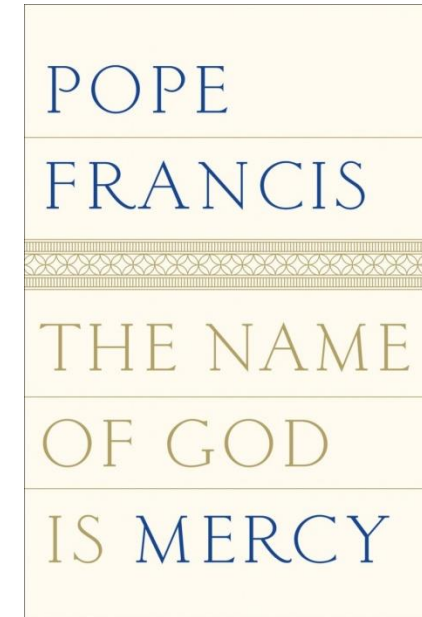
Emotional self-indulgence. I don't admonish because it feels nice to be nice, and it feels tough to be tough. I am stroking my own emotional feel-good-ism rather than loving my neighbor.

A wrong definition of compassion. I wrongly cling to the idea that blowing happy-gas into any situation will make things better. True, being patient and construing things as positively as one can, is often a wise path.. However, sometimes it's just a corrupt compassion, the sort that can *kill* people with kindness. In 1 Samuel, all of the High Priest Eli's family dies by the sword because he did not *prevent* his sons from doing wrong, and *require* them to do right.

Corrupt compassion starts out smiling and ends up snarling, because the festering wound of sin is never cut out and sterilized with the stinging, saving remedy. True judgment and admonition start out feeling stern and end up in sweetness itself: the patient is healed, the plague at an end.

Thus says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another. [Zechariah 7:9](#)

Severe mercy and tough love are the muscles, sinews and bones of tenderness and loving-kindness. Without the hard scaffolding, love can perhaps say "Peace" but it cannot brace the trembling knees. It can say to the paralytic "Relax," but it cannot say "Arise and walk." ●



streets, she gathers them in, she embraces them."

In "The Name of God Is Mercy," a Q&A between Pope Francis and Italian journalist Andrea Torielli, published on January 12, Francis the Homilist shares lots of personal story-telling to say that the Church "does not wait for the wounded to knock on her doors, she looks for them on the

Note the word "wounded." He says sin not as a stain on the soul — "going to confession is not like taking your clothes to the dry-cleaner" — but as a wound that "needs to be treated, healed."

Francis wants to rehabilitate this sacrament, on both sides of the screen. "Confessing to a priest is a way of putting my life into the hands and heart of someone else, someone who in that moment acts in the name of Jesus," the pope answers when Torielli asks if simply repenting to God in private is enough. "It's a way to be real and authentic, we face the facts by looking at another person and not in the mirror."

Of course, to confess your sins, you must perceive yourself as fallen, as failing to uphold the standards or virtues someone else has laid out. If someone doesn't feel like a

sinner, Francis says simply, "I would advise him to ask for the grace of feeling like one!"

Aside from the 47-page appendix with Pope Francis's official call for a Holy Year of Mercy, it's a fairly short book, just over 100 pages. Available for under \$10 in Amazon used books <http://tinyurl.com/francismercy-amazon> ●

The Labyrinth Ministry: A Plan for the Year of Mercy

by Roz Seymour

The Labyrinth Ministry will be planning several guided and non-guided walks for the parish as another way to implement our parish mission and the Year of Mercy.

What a gift we were given in the Labyrinth!

There is no right way to walk a labyrinth. You only have to enter and follow the path. You may feel joyous or somber. It might be thoughtful or prayerful. You may use the path as a walking meditation. Adults are often serious in the labyrinth. Children most often run in and out as fast as they can in a playful manner. Both are right.

When you walk a labyrinth choose your attitude. Make it serious, prayerful, or playful. Play music or sing. Pray out loud. Walk alone and with a crowd. Notice the sky. Listen to the sounds. Most of all pay attention to your experience. It is important to de-brief your walks so walk alone and then journal your experience.

1. Focus or Intent

Journal your experience. Walk with a group or with a guide and then share your experiences. The Labyrinth Ministry will design guided Non-Parish and Parish walks. A Parish Walk is a scheduled (see Bulletin) , guided, group labyrinth walk. Pause and wait at the entrance. Become quiet. Give acknowledgment through a bow, nod, or other gesture and then enter.

2. Experience

Walk purposefully. Observe the process. When you reach the center, stay there and focus several moments. Walk the Petals of the Rosette. Leave when it seems right. Be attentive on the way out.

3. Exit:

Turn and face the entrance. Give an acknowledgement of ending, such as "Amen."

4. Reflect

After walking the labyrinth reflect back on your experience. Use journaling or drawing to capture your experience.

5. Walk often! ●

Lent is early this year

By Judy Holt

It seems as though it was only yesterday that we celebrated the birth of the infant Jesus and the beginning of our salvation through the New Year celebration. For many, Ash Wednesday can be a little like New Year's Day. We make resolutions, specifically with regard to the spiritual exercises of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Like New Year's resolutions, our success in fulfilling our Lenten resolutions in large part depends on the efforts we put into them.

This year, let us resolve to focus on the gifts of this holy season and approach Lent with an openness to God and His will for us. Let our actions be specific to God, ourselves and each other and truly plan to bear witness to the miracles of this time. We can do this many ways. Whatever we decide to do, what's important is that we have a plan in our Lenten. We will have a Labyrinth Walk Flyer prepared for your assistance and made available to you in the white container near the Labyrinth entrance.: General Guidelines for Walking a Labyrinth are:

resolutions. I say this because goals without plans are just wishes.

During these weeks of Lent, I pray that among the many ways we use this grace filled time, we spend some time to grow in our spiritual lives. To some, growing in our spiritual lives may mean simply being more aware of God's presence in our lives, being "present" to the presence is simple and so spiritually uplifting. To others, it may mean adding to our prayer life; a conversation with our Lord is truly rewarding. It can be as varied, as each individual is different. I pray that we all become more aware of and grateful for the beauty of God's creation. Let's not stop there. Take some time to reflect on your relationship with our Lord, His house, His people. The Church is more than a building – it is a "temple of living stones" and His people include our family, friends, strangers and enemies. When was the last time you reached out? ●



Our Lady of Chiquinquirá Also known as La Chinita

#8 in a series by Carol Faniola

In the mid-16th century, Spanish painter Alonso de Narvaez created a portrait of the Virgin of the Rosary. He painted in pigments from the soil, herbs and flowers of the region of modern Colombia, and his canvas was a rough 44 inch x 49 inch cloth woven by local Indians. The image of Mary is about a meter high, and she stands on top a half moon. She has a small, sweet smile. Both her face and the Child's are light colored, and she looks like she's about to take a step. She wears a white toque, a rose-coloured robe, and a sky blue cape. A rosary hangs from the little finger of her left hand, and she holds a sceptre in her right. She holds the Christ Child cradled in her left arm and looks toward him. Christ has a little bird tied to his thumb, and a small rosary hangs from his left hand. To either side of Mary stand Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Andrew the Apostle, the personal patrons of the colonist, Don Antonio de Santana, and monk, Andrés Jadrake, who commissioned the work.

In 1562, the portrait was placed in a rustic chapel. It was exposed to the air, the roof leaked, and soon the damage caused by the humidity and sun completely obscured the image. In 1577, the damaged painting was moved to Chiquinquirá, Colombia, and stored in an unused room. In 1585, Maria Ramos, a pious woman from Sevilla, Spain, cleaned up the little chapel and hung the faded canvas in it. Though the image was in terrible shape, she loved to sit and contemplate it. On Friday, December 26, 1586, the faded, damaged image was suddenly restored. Its colors were bright, the canvas cleaner, the image clear and seemingly brand new. The healing of the image continued as small holes and tears in the canvas self-sealed. Interestingly, the figures seem brighter and clearer from a distance than up close. For 300 years the painting hung unprotected, and because thousands of objects were touched against the frail cotton cloth by pilgrims, it has traces of its former damage. This rough treatment should have destroyed it, but it survives.

A closely related apparition happened one day in November, 1709 (or 1749 according to other versions of the story). A woman washing her clothes by the shore of Lake Maracaibo saw a small wooden tablet floating towards her. She picked it up thinking it might be of some use and took it home with

her, along with the clothes. The following morning, while preparing coffee, she heard knocks as if somebody was calling her. She went to see what had happened and was astonished to see the tablet shining, with the image of Our Lady of Chiquinquirá now upon it. In a variant of the traditional tale, the woman first saw no more than the outline of the Virgin on the tablet, and for this reason hung it on a wall of her house; later, on November 18, she heard knocking and strange noises coming from inside her house. Upon investigation, she found the tablet dazzlingly bright, illuminated by lights which shone like a rainbow. Surprised and filled with a strong emotion, she ran out of her house, shouting "Milagro! Milagro!" Hence the name "El Milagro" (which means miracle in Spanish) was given to the avenue where this woman's house stood. From that day on, the inhabitants of the state of Zulia in Venezuela, where Maracaibo is situated, found their Queen in what they call the "Chinita" since "She is the way that leads to Jesus". To this day, the tablet, still bearing the image on it, can be seen in the Basilica of Maracaibo. Legend has it that the government decided that the wood with the image belonged in the capital city, Caracas, so they ordered it moved. As the soldiers following the order carried the image away from Maracaibo, it got heavier and heavier until finally no one could lift it. They returned it to the Basilica of Maracaibo where it has remained since.

In 1829, Pope Pius VII declared Our Lady of Chiquinquirá patroness of Colombia and granted a special liturgy. In 1897, a thick glass plate was placed over it to shield the painting from the weather and the excess zeal of the faithful. The image was canonically crowned in 1919, and in 1927 her sanctuary was declared a basilica.

Sources:

www.catholicsaints.info

www.miraclehunter.com

www.patersondiocese.org

www.romancatholicsaints.com ●

Every year, at the anniversary of Roe vs Wade...

by Murvin Perry

... it becomes important to review the facts surrounding the decision which ranks with Dred Scott as the worst the Court has ever made. Abortion is a moral issue. At the outset a new

human life is created at the moment of conception and every abortion ends the life of a child.

The Court in rendering Roe v. Wade violated the separation of powers of the U.S. Constitution usurping the power to make policy delegated to the legislature.

The public attitude that influenced the Court to take up the issue was based on lies. Founders of the National Abortion Rights League have admitted they made up the statistics about the number of women killed by illegal back alley abortions.

False evidence was presented to the Court in Roe v. Wade. Plaintiff's attorneys claimed Roe was pregnant because she had been raped. Norma McCorvey (roe) has admitted she was only seeking relief from an abusive husband and has asked the Court to reverse the decision.

Planned Parenthood pretends its service to women is related to health. The CEO was seen on television claiming that if the half billion dollars of taxpayer money it receives was cut off, poor women would not be able to have mammograms and cancer screening although Planned Parenthood has no facilities nor personnel to provide mammograms. Undercover videos have exposed Planned Parenthood officials haggling over prices for aborted fetus parts and admitting they recommend abortion procedures that won't damage parts they plan to sell.

Seven current and previous Supreme Court Justices have said Roe v. Wade should be reconsidered or abolished. Chief Justice William Rehnquist, Justices Byron White, Anton Scalia, and Clarence Thomas say that Roe vs Wade violates the constitution and should be overturned. Chief Justice Warren Burger Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sandra Day O'Connor agree it should be re-examined.

The abortion issue contributes to the great division in politics. Pro-life and pro-abortion forces want to control the appointment of federal justices to protect their position if the decision is reviewed.

Back in the early seventies when the Akron Ordinance which required informed consent and a waiting period, I worked with the committee drafting and promoting it. During a break in the public hearing on the ordinance, I encountered one of the physicians who opposed the ordinance in the mom's room. I asked him, "Suppose a woman brought you a four or five year old boy and said, 'This kid's no good. He's too much trouble. I don't want him anymore. Would you kill him for me?'"

"What do you take me for?" he demanded.

I replied, "I know what you are. I simply asked you to explain the difference between what you are doing and the case I described to you.." We nearly came to fisticuffs, but it's true. ●

Funny Doritos Commercial Shows Unborn Baby Bonding With Dad on Ultrasound



It's always an encouraging sign when pop culture recognizes the humanity of a baby in the womb.

This year, a comical new Doritos commercial shows an unborn baby reacting to his father on an ultrasound screen. The 30-second commercial shows a father and mother in a doctor's office watching the ultrasound of their unborn baby boy. As the father snacks on a bag of chips, he notices that his unborn son is reaching out in the womb, grabbing for the snack. As the father moves the chip near his wife's stomach, the baby reaches out again.

The commercial is one of three finalists in a contest that the chip company is running in advance of the Super Bowl. The winning commercial will air during the big game on Feb. 7, according to the company website..

You can view the ad here:

<http://tinyurl.com/unborn-doritos>

St. Mary's Youth Group is sponsoring a semi-formal

Father-Daughter Dinner and Dance

on Saturday, February 6, 2016 from 6 to 9:30 PM. Dinner will include lasagna, salad, garlic bread, and dessert.

There will also be a professional photographer on hand who will do mini sessions for only \$15.

Photos will be emailed to customers for printing.

Finally, guests will be treated to a variety of music to dance the night away.

Tickets for the event are \$15 each and will be available after all Masses during the last two weekends in January.



We urge parishioners and students at our school to invite their friends to this special evening.

Also, if there are young ladies whose fathers are not available, we encourage dads to invite them as part of their family.

All proceeds help our youth raise money to attend the Steubenville Conference in July.

While this event is taking place, there will also be a

Mother-Son Movie/Pizza Night

in the school gym. Cost is \$7 per couple.

If you have any questions, please email Tricia Klug at klug7@embarqmail.com•

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St. Mary's Ladies' Ministry - - <http://tinyurl.com/St-Marys-Ladies>

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