

Factory Life

January 9, 2016

Here is another good letter from a reader of these "Comments." He takes a sane view of an insane scene. Readers may be discouraged by what he describes, or they may be encouraged by how he describes it. A number of readers must recognize what they are up against every day when they go to work, and this letter may help them to see why and how their place of work is eroding their Catholic faith. He writes:—

I have worked in a factory building cars for over two years now and while it does pay well the environment is a sort of microcosm of the world at large. Let me explain . . .

1) *Mixing up of the sexes* – men and women work together in close proximity. Such work completely destroys a woman's femininity. Of course, there are certain jobs which women cannot do, but because of this false sense of equality, the company needs to allow women to work there. The stories that I have heard about the transgressions against the 6th and 9th commandments are truly disturbing. I need not elaborate. But what else did anybody expect? Why would a woman even want to work in such a place?

2) *Men's minds are incapable of making moral judgments* – I generalize of course, but most of the men I have talked to do not think in terms of morality (i.e. good and evil) but in terms of what pleasures can keep them entertained. I have talked to several co-workers and have tried to bring up questions of morality in a way that they might understand, but it seems to go over their heads. When a man has steeped himself in the things of the flesh, he is incapable of thinking of the soul. Worse, some of these co-workers have absolutely no shame in boasting of their sins. Once upon a time men had shame. No longer, it would seem.

3) ***I am my own god*** – False liberty is exalted as the guiding principle in men's lives. I have had a few discussions with some of my co-workers and what I get every single time is that truth and morality are purely a subjective affair. What you believe to be truth is fine for you, but you cannot impose your way of thinking on anyone else. I told a supervisor of mine that such thinking is nonsense. I said, what if someone thinks that having more than one wife is fine? He said, belief is up to the individual. If a man denies such a basic principle as that truth is not subjective, then there is no point in talking to him. In essence, every individual becomes his own god because HE has constructed his own reality instead of submitting to something outside of him.

The environment of a modern factory breeds a sort of godlessness. I don't expect factory workers to be examples of stellar virtue but I would say that modern factories are exponentially worse than what Charles Dickens wrote about in his times. I can go on and on, but the point I am trying to make is this: how can grace operate in lives which are destroyed through sin and a life of seeking pleasure? How does one reach out to men who cannot even grasp the most elementary norms of morality? It is frustrating to say the least. Please pray for us in the trenches.

Woman freeing herself from femininity and family, man freeing himself from objective morality and objective truth – how indeed can one reach out to, or even talk with, such a "faithless and perverse generation" (Lk. IX, 41)? By example, charity and prayer. I advised the writer to take a finger rosary to work to be able to pray discreetly decade after decade to pray for his fellow-workers and to protect himself spiritually from his work environment. But he will need to be discreet.

Kyrie eleison.