

Men's Authority

May 28, 2011

Two young men, uncertain of getting married, begged me the other day to write a manual on how men should be men. Theirs was a real cry of distress: "When should we be nice with women, and when should we be firm? We just don't know any longer!" Yesteryear the answer to that question was common sense for many a man, but authority today has been so widely undermined by liberal propaganda that the problem of exercising it in marriage may be one reason why now numbers of young folk prefer simply to live together rather than get married. What follows is not a manual, but it may at least point our two musketeers in the right direction.

St. Paul says: "I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. III, 14,15). In other words all fatherhood or authority amongst God's creatures is modelled upon and derives from the fatherhood and authority of God himself. As Dostoevsky has one of his characters say, "If God does not exist, then I have no business being an army officer." So it stands to reason that if men chase God out of their society, as he is being chased today out of the whole wide world, then all authority is radically undermined. In the individual, reason will be unable to govern the passions, in the family the father will be unable to control his household, and in the State democracy will come to seem the only legitimate form of government.

Now within the family, who, observing daily life, can deny that men are stronger than women in the use of reason, while women are stronger than men in intuition and emotion? Watch any sitcom if you doubt it. Now feelings have their rightful place in life and they are scorned, like one's wife, at one's peril, but they come and go, they are unstable and as such they are a guide, but not a reliable guide, to action. On the contrary if reason discerns what is objectively true and just,

it is stabilized by the fact that objective truth and justice are above any individual or his feelings. Therefore reason may listen to feelings, but it must rule them. That is why men have, as men, a natural authority possessed only exceptionally by women, who have as a rule other qualities. That is why the man is naturally the head of the family and home, while the woman is naturally its heart.

But the liberalism which rules the modern world dissolves all sense of objective truth or justice. By so doing it deprives the reason of its object, and of its objective anchor in a reality above and independent of the reasoning subject. Reason being the prerogative of men, liberalism hits the men before it hits the women, whose feminine instincts are not dependent on reason. By the same token liberalism undercuts the authority of men which comes down from conforming to what is above them, ultimately divine Truth and Justice, and it makes all use of authority become arbitrary.

Therefore, young men, in all your dealings with men or women, seek to be true and just, and turn to God for the help necessary to discern truth and justice amidst so much untruth and injustice and arbitrary misuse of authority all around us today. Then act upon what you discern, and you will re-build your manly authority from above, in a world undercutting it from below. In brief, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. VI, 33).

Kyrie eleison.