

Mercy for the Worldly Church

Day 35 of our [40 Days of Mercy Fast](#)

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Mercy for the Worldly Church

‘O my Jesus, I beg You on behalf of the whole Church, give us holy priests. You Yourself, maintain them in holiness. O Divine and Great High Priest, may the power of Your mercy accompany them everywhere and protect them from the devil’s traps and snares which are continually set for the souls of priests. May the power of Your Mercy, O Lord, shatter and bring to naught all that might tarnish the sanctity of priests, for You can do all things.’
(1052)

St. Faustina is right in prayerfully advocating for our leaders. (I would extend this to all clergy, both Protestant and Catholic.) We must ask the Lord to strengthen leaders daily against demonic powers that deaden their authority and tempt them to infect others with a form of love that could only be described as worldly.

The first form of worldly love is love without discipline. It may be sourced in several things. ‘I am a weak leader who is not free from sin in some areas, so how can I judge you for your sin? We are all saved by grace anyway.’ Or ‘the Church has been so hard on people, I don’t want to be heavy; grace to you in your sin.’

How else do adulterers and pedophiles and others who use and abuse others in their sin get away with murder in the Church? From leaders who have become worldly, and who confuse forgiving offenders with their need for discipline.

What we fail to see is that sin hurts others, often those much less powerful than the one confessing his/her sin. And such sin grieves God badly. It infects His house. Leaders must learn to impose limits on those who risk damaging others with their sin.

Another form of worldly love is love without truth. Here leaders mirror worldly ethics for sexuality and relationships. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the homosexual question. Most 'Christian' higher education on the topic merely parrots secular views on the moral neutrality of homosexuality and how the worst thing you can do is to encourage the struggler onto anything higher or truer.

Why else would I hear reports of Catholic priests urging parents to celebrate the homosexuality of a child or dissuading same-sex strugglers from pursuing a course of healing? Love demands that we uphold truth-in-love regarding sexuality. When love becomes worldly, we bar individuals from their true hope in Christ.

And leaders run the risk of becoming immoral themselves, conceiving their own weaknesses into wickedness. I am appalled at the number of pastors and priests I know who regularly visit porn websites and live on the edge of crossing lines with those they serve, while others consider themselves 'gay.'

Refusing the love that is full of truth and discipline, they succumb to the spirit of the age.

I contend that we need a new and merciful standard for our leaders. That means demanding that leaders are rigorous about submitting their moral weaknesses to mature colleagues, and fully, evidently repentant over wickedness. Until they are, they must be disciplined until they are ready to lead the sheep into holiness by their good example.

Truth and Mercy go hand-in-hand. Priests and pastors alike must repent of any alliance they have made with worldly love, that is, love unrefined by truth and discipline. We need love rich in these two minerals if we are to become a Church that disciplines her own. We will then no longer be under the world's judgment; we will become spotless and pure, the Bride who has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7)

'I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching, she misleads my servants into sexual immorality. I have given her time to repent of her immorality but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her to suffer intensely unless they repent of their ways. I will strike her children dead.' (Rev. 2:20-23)

'Grant us a holy fear, O God, of worldly love that masks as 'holy'. We are sick in our sin, unable to do Your will because we lack truth and discipline. Would you grant us Mercy to repent? And would You raise up repentant leaders who would lead others in genuine holiness and wholeness? Grant us holy leaders, and may each of us do our part to ensure their well-being.'

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Author's note – Each day's entry is based a passage from St Faustina's diary. The passage entry is the number in parentheses at the end of each opening quote or simply a page number in parenthesis. [Diary of St Maria Faustina Kowalska – Divine Mercy in My Soul](#) (Association of Marion Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263) is available through the publisher or [Amazon.com](#).