

**THE LIVING LEADER
BETWEEN TENDERNESS AND
FIRMNESS**

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Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, portrays for us the perfect picture of the true leader, balancing between amazing tenderness and discipline. Through the apostles, disciples, and Fathers of the Church, He gives us examples of His followers who followed their Master's steps.

SINCERE FATHERHOOD REVEALED IN TENDERNESS AS IN FIRMNESS

Many times the leader is overwhelmed about an issue, whether he is at home, work or in church, but **St. Augustine** gives us a simplified answer, commenting on Psalm 99:8: "You answered them, O Lord our God; You were to them God Who forgives, though You took vengeance on their deeds." He says, "He is a Father when He shepherds and be compassionate, and a Father when he disciplines."

=The suitable thing is to show the genuine comfort that is coming from His love for mankind. At this time, the world is in desperate need of peace and tranquility that can only come from the work of God working in the heart of a father, mother, priest, or leader of some sort.

- "Moses and Aaron among his priests", whoever gets chosen to become a priest, must resemble Moses even during tough times, in which he must confront hardships in order to save the lives of his congregation. The sacrament of priesthood is one that is given to from above, to a leader with a pious spirit and willing to sacrifice for the flock of the Lord. This way he becomes like Moses in breaking the thorn of death and stopping his forces, then removing them to the farthest points.

* Love is the support that recommends him, and offering himself to death for the sake of those who oppose him.

St. Ambrose

- The priest is comparable to salt. Look so that you don't get angry with your friend, so that those who are outside would not say that salt is bad. You are

the salt of the earth; with you the angry one is in peace with his friend.

The priest clothes himself with the vestment of Jesus Christ. Most importantly, he must show true love and be able to spread it everywhere he goes. In every one of his dealings, people should smell the scent of his love.

The crown of the priesthood is his ability to preach to the people, because this is the love that connects all goodness, of which his people can enter the kingdom of God.

St. Jacob of Serugh

- I know that the controlling man who is ahead of the group, will not agree with him and support him like his showing deep love for his subordinates.

The father is not only a father because he has children, but because of his love to them, and this love must be accompanied by grace. I mean if someone had to love his natural children, until he is called a normal father, how about loving his children with grace, the baptized spiritually so that they wouldn't become punished in hell.

St. John Chrysostom

Love and tenderness without siding

In showing partiality between his children, Father Jacob's actions led him to the bitterness toward Joseph. Joseph's brothers were envious of him because their father favored him and therefore they wanted to get rid of Joseph. Without committing any sin, Joseph suffered from Jacob's bias.

This problem comes up in today's society for priests to choose between the members of his flock, such as favoring the rich, strong or relatives over the "weak." This will never allow a priest to become a shepherd and a father, as he must show equality to all, as his Heavenly father did on earth. For example, a son asks for unconditional love from his father and if the father

sides with his brother instead, the father will have failed his goal of becoming an impartial father figure.

- Love everyone normally, so that you don't hurt yourself and your disciples, as Jacob was when he loved Joseph more than his brothers. **St. John El-Dargy**

St. John Chrysostom's true love

Some might ask: Why did St. John Chrysostom become that famous through all these generations, although he was a man of discipline, often portrayed as being too tough (especially with the empress and Atropios who were like the prime ministers, and Gantias Koti, the General leader of the roman army, and many of the rich and nobles and ladies, even some priests and monks) [I think this is too long] The answer is: While disciplining, he was acting genuinely and earnestly for the salvation of these people.

His words to the priests were: "You priests are the fathers of this world." St. John Chrysostom truly believed that God uses priests to get his message out to the world, and thus they are the fathers for everyone. To succeed, a priest must carry his flock on his shoulders through the depths of this world with the help of the Holy Spirit. With the continued aid of the Holy Spirit, a priest is expected to lead the people to the Heavenly Kingdom.

St. John Chrysostom's actions and words display the characteristics of a true leader.

When doctors forced him to recuperate for a few days in the countryside because of his serious illness, St. John Chrysostom could not bear spending one night away from his people. When he returned, he told the people that he was dreaming of them all night, and so had to return back to them.

1. Concerning the responsibility toward his people, he cried out saying, "Have mercy on me; I am a father, so when someone falls into sin, I feel as if the whippings are falling on my back."

As St. Paul reiterated, "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you. Every mother cries when she is in labor, so do I!"

"I wish you could see the fire in my heart, to know that I burn more than a young woman who is hurting because she became an early widow, as I don't think she is in grief for her husband, or that the father is in grief for his son, like my grief for these people who are here today!

I beg you and hope that you tell me if I asked you for money, wouldn't you give it to me? Wouldn't everyone give me what he can?

If you see me in danger, wouldn't you save me, even if you could, would you remove your organs for me? I am in danger, in great danger! It is like I am in a dark prison, like someone who was sentenced with ten thousand whippings, or someone who is imprisoned in a deep hole, and can't take it anymore. Give me your hands and save me." [Who is the author of this quote?]

Cheating tenderness

- Wrong understanding of caring for others only, is against the salvation of the shepherd and on them.
- I prefer to be a proud human being in your eyes that you can't deal with, than to leave you doing what is against God's will.
- I am committed to give you speeches, and especially using reproach with you, thus when fire melts wax, and fear causes punishments from the hearts of the sinners. -St. John Chrysostom.
- To go along with sinners, is not right, but rather a weakness. It does not show love or humbleness, but demonstrates carelessness to ignore the act of sin.

-St. Augustine

- There should be real measurements for our words and teachings so that they do not show either extreme softness or extreme roughness.

- In that position, the shepherd should not be cruel and rough, nor at ease, since in the first case he was not like someone who has great authority. While in the second case he was there for no reason, making nothing out of the job that he received. St. Imbrosios
- Thus one caring for sheep should not be a lion or a female sheep.

St. John El-Daragy

Discipline with fatherly tenderness

With discipline, the father should take care of the following:

1. Not to quickly reproach
 - As seen with doctors, they do not use the source of a needle right away when attempting to cure the human body diseases, but first they begin using medication and other solutions. If they do not succeed in that first method then they approach the stronger technique of a needle, which then becomes necessary.

Pope Cyril the Great

2. Secretly reproaching, whenever possible
 - A friend secretly reproaches another, just like a wise doctor, but those who want to cure for the sake of doing so in the eyes of many becomes evil. The good friend and wise doctor is like God, he will not rebuke someone for revenge, but to reform him or to make others afraid.

St. Isaac the Syrian

3. Show him love while reproaching
 - Mercy should occur before reproach, and should not be done so in anger.

St. Augustine

- This method is to be used as advice, not solely as a sentence. Medicine is also not a form of revenge, or agony, but it is spiritual treatment for curing the

sinner as well as keeping them distracted from new sins.

St. John Chrysostom

4. Use of dialogue

God says: "Come now and let us reason together saith the lord" Is 1:18, and does not issue an order for reproach without showing the reasons for the sentencing, and shows his patience by the sinner. While we are under pressure with our subordinates, we should not sit like we are on the chair of the throne and issue orders as if they are from judges who are perfect.

The leader should understand that the divine truth comes from under reproach, during the dialogue that that his father does not ask for the curse for himself, but he asks for salvation and his building up eternal happiness.

5. Not to become like God only in front of the subordinates

When a leader is serious with others and then suddenly discovers his mistakes, he becomes at risk. Therefore it is good for the leader not to make his image superior, and to also not appear as if he never makes mistakes, by giving excuses for his wrongdoings.

When a fatherly figure reproaches someone for their mistakes, he should do so with wisdom and humility, so that the person being corrected would feel that his father cares about him and his salvation.

Likewise, it is not surprising that St. John Chrysostom was in many situations confessing that he is a priest that has weaknesses and explaining that God allows these weaknesses to grow spiritually in the long term. However, God first shows his mercy and holy works before his reproach, which is how every father should go about his ways.

Between the two sides, the father still holds the same devout spirit, even though the reproach is seen as being tough. The rebuke must come out of one's heart and is then looked at as advice. Many of the holy fathers like St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine and St Jerome assured that

confession has two complementing sides: Acknowledge the grace of God and his gifts, and acknowledge the personal faults and weaknesses. Concentrating on the second part only gives rise to the spirit of despair because of lost hope without God, and concentrating on the first only, pushes to pride. So, the two must complement each other for this confession to be accurate.

Many times Jesus showed the good sides even with who we think are sinners. For example, when he said to the Samaritan "In that sadist thou truly", and to Simon the Pharisee, "Though hast rightly judged", and and to the Kanaan, "O woman, great is thy faith". Also, to the leader of the Romans who came to Jesus asking to cure his son: "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith no, not in Israel" (Matthew 8:10).

6. Opening the door of hope

St. John Chrysostom noticed that in Matthew, Christ referred to the Kingdom of Heaven in many ways. In the beatitudes, He promised the poor in spirit with the Kingdom of Heaven, as well as the hungry and thirsty for righteousness to the heavenly saturation and the humble to inherit the new land. He did not mention hell in the speech on the mountain, except for once, and that was to express his yearning for all humans to stay away from it.

Our Master Jesus Christ has prepared His Heavenly Kingdom for all humans, but hell is only for the devil and his angels.

In our everyday lives, our one focus must be on Heaven, and everything we do must get us closer to inheriting the Kingdom.

When he defended the adulterer, he said to her: "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more" Jo 8:11 [I do not think this verse is needed]

8 Not to talk bad about the sinner

In the Bible, Jesus dealt with the Pharisees on many occasions. Although He did not agree with many of their actions, never once did he talk bad about them personally.

Also, He did not condemn the adulterer, while everyone wanted to stone her. Instead, Jesus explained that each one has his own sins that may be hidden from others, and that everyone must look inward. Lastly, Jesus did not even stop Judas when he went to betray Him, and only He knew what he was going to (Jo 13:28-29).

9 Reproach only to build

Among the church's vital roles is to build the sinner and correct his ways for the future. In 2 Corinthians, we see how St. Paul disciplined the young man who wanted to marry his father's wife. He was obedient, but if he fell under extreme grief, he would be exempted from the punishment so that he would not get destroyed (2 Co 2:7).

- Here we learn that punishment should be given to an extent and not according to the nature of the sin, but to the circumstances of the sinner. Through the grace of God, we can destroy the devil by deep grief in repentance, and ultimately stopping the sin. The devil may then give us more wounds using our medicine, and this is why Paul the Apostle said: "We are not ignorant of his devices" 9 Co 2:11.

St. John Chrysostom

10. Do not leave those who were reproached in emptiness

A reproached person must occupy his time with a spiritual deed, so that he does not fall into the same snare as before, when he had more free time.

11. Be upset so that we would not accuse the person that is sad, even with a single word

It is strange that St. John Chrysostom, while he was showing the love of God and his care to the humanity, he still able to give us a part of Joshua where God is looking at a decision with the believers. For example, like a lover who takes caution of his talks with his beloved, so that he would not make her heart sad with a bad word.

- As the human in his love, crazily looks at his words, for fear that he sad something that would hurt the

feelings of his beloved, also the Lord says "I will not execute the fierceness of my anger" Ho 11:8-9. God will not use this fierce picture to declare his love to his beloved.

The divine nature is more than the sun, as he mentioned in the example of the father and mother and groom. He made himself like the gardener who works hard for what he is doing and like the lover who gets upset when making his beloved sad by a single word. There he is assuring us that his love is different from all kinds of love just like difference between good and evil. St. John Chrysostom

12. Sharing in the reproach when possible

When leaders punish someone for a certain mistake, they become committed to share this reproach, as if they were the ones that committed the sin. There are people who when they repent, see their fathers and they also had to fall under reproach too! History provides us with examples about successful leaders who practiced this type of training like St. Makarios the great.

13. God's words: "My zeal has consumed me, because my enemies have forgotten their words", Ps 119:136.

According to St. Paul: "By the space of three years, I cease not to warn every one night and day with tears." Ac 20:31

- The Savior cried for Jerusalem because its people did not repent (Luke 19:41) and Jeremiah also cursed his people who did not repent and said: "O that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." (Jeremiah 9:1). He went on to give reason for his sorrow by saying: "Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him, but weep sore for him, that goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country" (Jeremiah 22:10).

We then must cry for those who isolated themselves from the church because of their crimes and sins. These

people tend to go back to the same sin after being rebuked because they do not have their Master and His body, the church, to advise them.

St. Erenaeus.