

Reflections

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Difficulties in Searching for the Truth

What is intelligence? It is the ability to open ourselves to reality, to know it, to understand it and to penetrate its depth. **The objective of intelligence is to seek and find the truth.** It allows us to acquire a vision in its entirety, to descend to the concrete reality of life, to guide our steps and our daily conduct. Let us look at some of the difficulties:

1. Lack of discernment or personal conviction.

According to Father Kentenich, founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, this is something typical of modern man: "His reasoning power goes in leaps, without inner relationship, broken down. What comes later does not interest him.... he has become so deformed that he is incapable of taking an interior position when facing what he hears, what he sees or what he reads. All of this does not interest him. Therefore, he does not take it seriously either. He only clings to one thing with all his might: to the economic advantages he might be able to obtain for himself. For that he is awake and has a fine ear. This is what fills his soul...."

Man today has lost the ability to have his own reasoning power. In a comfortable way, he assumes "truths" without having the least critical spirit. He believes blindly what the government, the political party, the representatives of the Church, the boss, the newspaper or television says. He lets others dictate to him what he has to think and what he has to do to not attract attention in the fold.

2. Prejudices. In general, they are formed because of false information which we receive and which we then project toward others without previous analysis. Many of these prejudices are inherited from the family, from the environment, from the newspaper or television. Some examples: "all lawyers are liars;" "all indigenous (natives) are lazy;" "women who drive are dangerous;" etc. These beliefs are prejudices which deform the truth.

3. Disordered feelings. We believe we are very objective, but, in the end, they make us think what they want. Our subjectivity is unconsciously projected in our thinking.

Without realizing it, it is our dislikes and our affections which guide our reflections and shape our judgements. If we do not like someone, we do not listen with openness and kindness to their version of the truth, instead we always find a "but" to contradict them. This "emotional blockage" disturbs and even impedes an objective judgement of reality. We are manipulating the truth.

In general, there are also **fears** which impede our witness to the truth. For example, the fear of being discovered in an inconsistency, the fear of someone not liking us, the fear of having to assume a responsibility or having to reject a request. They are all obstacles which disorder our intellectual ability and make difficult our search for the truth.

4. Mechanistic thinking. It is a sick way of thinking which dominates our times today. It is thinking which does not see the totality, the connectedness of things. Mechanically, it opposes and separates what in reality is united and integrated. Because in an organic world, everything is related with everything, even more so when it deals with living realities and vital processes. Mechanistic thinking is characterized by "or – or," or this or that. It cannot understand that the truth is in "and – and," that one thing or another can be stressed, that one part has one function and another part has another function, without mutually excluding themselves.

For Father Kentenich, the most fatal damage of mechanistic thinking is that it has separated the natural from the supernatural. It has placed God and world in opposition, faith and life in opposition, the love of God and the love of man in opposition. Therefore, modern man is a prisoner to materialism and in his materialism has lost the sense for the supernatural.

Questions for reflection

Let us think about our reaction when someone, perhaps our spouse, criticizes us.

1. Do we sincerely seek the truth which could be hidden in that criticism?
2. Or, do we close ourselves in order to defend ourselves and to act against the other?

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