

### 1: Facing Resentments and Careerism Truthfully in our Priesthood, By Gene Hemrick

*We live in a time in which the virtue of forgiveness (conceived as transcending certain resentments) risks becoming distorted and cheapened by various movements that advocate it in a hasty and uncritical way.*

It is something many in the modern world actually resent. The following is based on Dr. Why is virtue resented by many people today? First, living the virtuous life is not easy. It requires a lot of effort, practice, and self-denial. We are constantly battling against our fallen, selfish human nature. This side of the Garden of Eden, it is a lot easier to give in to our emotions and desires than it is to control them. For example, it is easier to indulge our appetite than it is to eat with moderation. It is easier to give in to discouragement and complaining than it is to joyfully endure our trials with courage. The virtues remind us of the higher moral standard that we are called to follow. This reminder should inspire us to give more of ourselves in the pursuit of virtue and live more like Christ, rather than living life enslaved by our passions. However, not everyone wants to be reminded of this. For souls not wanting to give up certain pleasures or comforts souls not wanting to do the work and make the sacrifices that are necessary to grow in virtue any discussion of the virtues can be like a mirror showing them their own moral laziness. Virtue Subverted This is why some people resent the virtues. Instead of being inspired to live a better life, they destroy the moral standard of the virtues and drag it down to their level. In other words, they minimize the significance of the virtues in order to spare themselves the effort and excuse their own moral failures. For example, imagine several women working in an office who gossip and talk about other people behind their backs. One of their Christian colleagues, however, does not use foul language and does not participate in their gossip. Instead of being inspired by her example, her co-workers make fun of her. They ridicule her as being a "holy roller" who is "too good for the rest us. Thus her virtue is not praised. Wojtyla says that many people devalue the virtues in order to excuse themselves from having to live by a higher standard. Resenting Chastity The virtue that is probably resented the most today is chastity. Chastity is no longer seen as something good, something noble, something we should all pursue. Chastity is now often portrayed as something evil something harmful for human persons! Some argue that chastity is harmful to the psychological well-being of young men and women. Sexual desire is natural, it is said. Therefore, it is unnatural to restrict it in any way. Others say chastity is an enemy of love. Chastity might have a role to play in other areas of life, but when two mutually consenting adults are in love, the restrictions of chastity are a tremendous hindrance to the couple who are expressing their love through sex. We witness this resentment of chastity in many college classrooms, in many "sex ed" programs, and especially in the media. When a Hollywood film or prime time sitcom portrays romantic relationships, how often is chastity held up as a moral ideal? How often is chastity presented as something that makes us happy, as something the heroes intentionally make a priority in their lives? Anyone can have feelings and desire for another person. But not everyone has the virtue and commitment to make self-giving love possible. Wojtyla says the main reason modern man views chastity as an obstacle to love is that we associate love primarily with the emotions or the sexual pleasure we receive from the person of the other sex. In other words, we tend to think of love only in its subjective aspect. If we are going to restore the virtue of chastity in our world, "we must first of all eliminate the enormous accretion of subjectivity in our conception of love and of the happiness which it can bring to man and woman" p. These sensual desires and emotional responses are not bad. In fact, they can serve as the "raw material" from which authentic love might develop. However, these responses do not represent love itself. The objective aspect of love is much more than a psychological experience happening inside of me. It is "an interpersonal fact. The objective aspect of love involves a mutual commitment of the will to what is best for the other person and the virtue to be able to help the other person pursue what is best for them. Therefore, the real questions in love are not the subjective ones: Does he or she have strong feelings and sensual desire for me? Sexual Values Now back to the problem of chastity. Wojtyla points out that the subjective aspect of love develops more rapidly and is felt more intensely than the objective aspect. On the objective level, it takes a lot of time and effort to cultivate a virtuous friendship. Such reactions can happen in an instant. Furthermore, these sensual and emotional responses can be so powerful that they dominate how we

view the other person. In our fallen human nature, we can tend to see persons of the opposite sex primarily through the prism of their sexual values the values that give us emotional and sexual pleasure. As a result, we obscure our perception of them as persons, and view them more as opportunities for our own enjoyment cf. Wojtyla points out that our encounters with the opposite sex are often mixed with this kind of emotional or sensual egoism with a desire to use the person for our own emotional pleasure or sexual satisfaction. Because we are fallen, our many complex attractions are often mixed with a selfish attitude of wanting to be with the other person not for the sake of any commitment to his or her well-being, but for the rush of good feelings or sensual pleasure we may receive from being with the other person. In other words, when boy meets girl, they do not automatically fall into authentic, self-giving, committed love for each other. Instead, while feeling attracted to each other, they are tempted to see each other as objects to satisfy their own emotional needs or sexual desires. Again, these reactions to sexual values are certainly not bad in themselves. And as long as this happens, selfless love for the other person will never develop. That is why we need a virtue that helps us integrate our sensual and sentimental attractions with authentic love for the other as a person. Wojtyla continues, "Since sensations and actions springing from sexual reactions and the emotions connected with them tend to deprive love of its crystal clarity a special virtue is necessary to protect its true character and objective profile. This special virtue is chastity" p. The Guardian of Love Now we can see why chastity is so necessary for love. Far from something that hinders our love, chastity is what makes love possible. It protects love from falling into selfish, utilitarian attitudes and enables us to love selflessly irrespective of the powerful emotions or sensual delight we may receive from our beloved. We must see their full value as a person and respond to them in selfless love. Wojtyla says that chastity allows us to do just that. However, the man without chastity sits in a very sad situation: He is not free to love. He may have some good intentions and a sincere desire to care for his beloved, but without chastity, his love will never flourish, for it will not be pure. It will be mixed with a tendency to view his beloved primarily in terms of her sexual values, which make his heart delight in emotional enjoyment or make his body stir in sensual desire. Wojtyla explains that the man without chastity cannot selflessly love his beloved for who she is as a person, because his heart is so preoccupied with the emotional and sensual pleasure he receives from her p. Freed from utilitarian attitudes, the chaste man is thus free to love. For chastity frees their association, including marital intercourse, from that tendency to use a person.

### 2: Resentment's Virtue : Thomas Brudholm :

*Resentment is viewed as a negative state, held by victims who are not "ready" or "capable" of forgiving and healing. Resentment's Virtue offers a new, more nuanced view.*

It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. The book goes on to outline the moral inventory process of Step Four and offers examples of listing and identifying the cause and effects of resentments. Step Ten suggests the ongoing daily practice of this moral inventory and the humility to admit when we are wrong to others. It helps to look at the cause of resentments and the effect upon the ego and its responses. However, we may need some time in order to let feelings subside to a degree before we are able to attempt this process. Working through the above process quite often takes time and determination, and also a willingness to persevere with painful feelings. Instead we can take a compassionate view ourselves and our hurt responses. It will become more and more evident as we go forward that it is pointless to become angry, or to get hurt by people who, like us, are suffering from the pains of growing up. Such a radical change in our outlook will take time, maybe a lot of time. An empathic and accepting attitude, if we are able, is of vital importance in developing forgiveness for harms done towards us. Forgiveness is the process of letting go of hurt and bitter feelings towards another for a perceived injustice, and wishing them well. Depending upon the nature and degree of injustice, this can be a very difficult, if not impossible, process to achieve for some people. Resentment not only affects the holder, but also their relationships with others in their lives. Additionally, being free from resentment is beneficial for our health and well-being, mentally, emotionally and physically. Forgiving someone means making peace with what happened. It means acknowledging your wound, giving yourself permission to feel the pain, and recognizing why that pain no longer serves you. It means letting go of the hurt and resentment so that you can heal and move on. I was rejected and criticised constantly when growing up by my parents, which has resulted in a defensive attitude and sensitivity towards perceived criticism, disapproval and social rejection from others. Childhood developmental difficulties that have resulted in my chronic emotional insecurity and sense of shame are well summarized in the following quote by Abraham Maslow. An insecure person is someone who: In addition, insecurity may contribute to the development of shyness, paranoia, and social withdrawal, or alternatively it may encourage compensatory behaviours such as arrogance, aggression, or bullying, in some cases. There are several levels of it. It nearly always causes some degree of isolation as a typically insecure person withdraws from people to some extent. The greater the insecurity, the higher the degree of isolation becomes. As insecurity can be distressing and feel threatening to the psyche, it can often be accompanied by a controlling personality type or avoidance, as psychological defense mechanisms. In my own case, the self-awareness gained through inventory work suggested in Step Four Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves and Step Ten Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it , taking part in recovery groups, talking to others in recovery, counselling, reading and self-development work in general, are all tools that I have used to help me be aware of, and take responsibility for, my emotional difficulties and how these impact upon my relationships. Awareness of my vulnerability to holding resentments and using the above recovery resources, often enable me not to act negatively upon my feelings of rejection and indignation. However, this is not always the case and sometimes my negative feelings get the better of me, often resulting in conflict and damage to my relations with others. As a result of chronic and damaging emotional insecurity and my sense of shame, I am someone who needs to practice Step Ten of the AA program faithfully, in an effort to resolve my resentments towards others. Freedom from resentment is of vital importance for this alcoholic in recovery.

### 3: Resenting Chastity

*Arguing beyond hasty dichotomies and unexamined moral assumptions, Resentment's Virtue offers a more nuanced approach to an understanding of the reasons why survivors of mass atrocities sometimes harbour resentment and refuse to forgive.*

Truthfully in our Priesthood By Gene Hemrick If our priesthood is to be guided by the principles of truth, it needs to honestly face its two major enemies: Why center on these two vices and not others? The reason for singling out resentment comes from my experience of giving retreats, and days of recollection. Whenever it is mentioned, it touches raw nerves. Most people with whom I have worked agree that once a grudge gets hold of them, it takes forever to overcome. Resentment has also been chosen because the opposite of resentment is kindness. It is the one virtue that parishioners most desire of their priests. It also plays very strongly to the male mystic. Because no one escapes its tentacles. The bible contains one story after another of resentments. Joseph is resented by his brothers. The story of the hired laborer in the Gospel contains one of the most informative lessons on how resentment can suddenly turn a cheerful, bright moment into darkness. Early in the morning an unemployed laborer is hired by the owner of a vineyard. What a wonderful way to start the day! Around noon, another unemployed man is hired, and later in the day yet another is employed. At the end of the day all are paid the same. Even though the man hired first receives a just wage, he becomes indignant for not being paid more. He should have been happy at having any work at all. Most of all, he has a paycheck. Resentment transforms him into an unhappy person whose mind has darkened. Turn the record over, and let life begin anew! Instead they keep playing the same side by avoiding diocesan meetings, divorcing themselves from the presbyterate, and knit-picking. In the Spanish version of the Benedictus, we have the phrase *sombra de muerte*, the cloud of death Christ the Light of the World came to dispel. The war within us destroys our ability to smile, joke and be our true self. There is no way to hate another that does not cost the hater, no way to remain unforgiving without maiming yourself, because undissolved anger shutters through the body of the person who cannot forgive. Resentment is an occupational hazard especially because we are men of high ideals and often have a false expectation that everything is supposed to be like the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. We forget that perfection is preceded by imperfection. To be a real priest is to practice the exercise of identifying and squarely facing resentments that create *sombra de muerte* in our ministry. The major resentments that can infest the priesthood are many. When they coalesce, they can literally smother our spirit. Take, for example, resentments over: Would that it was true that resentments like the above were the only ones badgering our priesthood. Unfortunately, resentment has several levels, and the higher the level, the more difficult it is to overcome. At the moment, the level of resentment over the handling of sexual abuse cases is very high. It was much more in line with the priesthood. And yet they seemed to be better balanced. Take, for example, the response made by Fr. The CMSM statement not only reflects mercy, but it also contains a quality of love that is seldom referred to as "fraternal correction, i. If so, it is to be corrected immediately! By no means did CMSM look the other way. Like the bishops, it disciplined its priests severely. Sad to say, I have met too many priests whose rage reflects the rage of the bishops above. Anything as deep seeded as it is will require a lengthy effort to uproot. Once resentment stings us, its venom tends to infect our entire being. Even the saints had their resentments and found them very difficult to resolve. Why is it so difficult to overcome? One reason is that resentments penetrate deeply into our entire being, and once in it, they tend to recycle themselves, mutate and get stronger. During my ministry, I have counseled many women whose marriages were annulled. In the course of our conversations, they would often speak openly about their ex-husbands. When I listened between the lines, I could see they still loved them. When we are deeply touched by another, whether it is through love or a love betrayed, the heart is pierced. This is but one reason why resentments are so difficult to resolve. What might be one way to treat this affliction? Karl Rahner would counsel us to remember we are less than perfect. One of the major blocks to curing resentments is self-righteousness: Or we may feel life should be this or that way, and no other way; that life is meant to be perfect. In these cases, Rahner counsels us to remind ourselves we are sinners. He further reminds us that as we have been injured by

others, so too, have we injured others. Admitting our imperfectness is the truth that levels us. The opposite of resentment is the virtue of kindness. It means being well disposed toward oneself and life. In one of Fr. Good homilies or being an excellent administrator is admirable, as are being a champion of social justice, good fund raiser or builder. Kindness, however, leads the list. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe sums up this extraordinary power of kindness in telling us: The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast; all clashing of opinion, or collision of feelings, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make everyone at their ease and at home. He has eyes on all his company; he is tender toward the bashful, gentle toward the distant, and merciful toward the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unseasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favors while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort, he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. From a long sighted prudence, he observes the maxim of the ancient sage, that we should ever conduct ourselves toward our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend. Even though Pope Benedict XVI could have chosen other topics that would seem more apropos for the occasion, his homily to the first priests he ordained as pope began with a reflection on careerism. Oh Lord, my heart is not proud nor haughty. I have not gone after things too great nor marvels beyond me. Truly, I have set my soul in silence and peace. O Israel, hope in the Lord both now and for ever. This psalm teaches us that an inordinate desire for self-advancement is undesirable, and those who successfully avoid the temptation are blessed with a peaceful soul. The opposite of careerism, Benedict points out, is being a shepherd who knows his or her sheep, cares for them, and who is willing to give his or her life for them. In it, he points us to one of the hallmarks of Christianity: They are more interested in themselves than being for others. The admonition to avoid careerism in the priesthood reminds me of an ironic story I heard while working at the conference of bishops. Immediately after the installation of a new bishop of a large archdiocese, two powerful monsignors, who were known for running the archdiocese, lost their positions in the chancery office and were given parishes. Within a year both died of heart attacks. Only God knows why they were taken. The news of their deaths, however, left many of us wondering whether they envisioned their careers over, and died as a consequence. This is one of our biggest problems in the corps. Too many men and women are entering it with the idea of making it a personal career. In doing this, they are losing sight of our motto, *semper fidelis*. In pledging faithfulness to the corps, a marine dedicates himself or herself to others, not to personal gain. Marine, such as knowing that you are only as strong and as safe as the person on your right and on your left; that a well-trained and motivated human being can accomplish almost anything; that being pushed to do your very best is a godsend; that an order is an order, a duty is a duty, that responsibility goes down the chain of command, as well as up, as do loyalty and respect; that leadership can be taught, so can bearing, discipline and honor; that "follow me" really does mean "follow me"; and that that *Semper Fidelis* really does mean "always faithful"; and that the Marines hymn is so much more than just a song. In order to avoid becoming too self righteous in condemning the aspiration of moving ahead, truth would remind us of the virtue of magnanimity that encourages us to utilize our gifts to the fullest? As the director of research for the bishops, I truly believed I was on the noble mission of employing research for the good of the church. Success was based on four principles: Relishing glory is easy to justify on the pretense of pursuing a noble purpose. When we get on the glory trail, it has an insidious way of smiting us with blind ambition. First and foremost, truth would encourage us to be critical thinkers. We must forever be raising soul-searching questions. Never stop growing in self-knowledge, especially self-motives! To be truthful to our self, we need to be forever asking tough questions.

#### 4: Resentment's Virtue: Jean Améry and the Refusal to Forgive by Thomas Brudholm

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