

Pastor's Corner

by Father Jon Vander Ploeg



As we continue to examine areas of Faith and life that can be confusing or controversial, I want to focus on an objection that is voiced by society and often infiltrates the thinking of many Catholics. That is, the concept that certain elements of the moral life are not the Church's business or that they are merely political in nature. While this is a pervasive view, it is very flawed.

Everything we do is impacted by what we believe. If our faith is not well formed or developed, Truth will have very little impact on our daily life. When the Church speaks out about an issue (e.g. homosexuality or marriage), it is often met with the opinion that she is overstepping her bounds by meddling in politics. Simply because political figures debate an issue, or we have a vote on something, it does not mean that particular issue is merely political and has nothing to do with our faith. If issues that so importantly impact how we live do not have anything to do with our faith then either the issue is trivial or our faith is trivial enough to not influence the events in our daily life. The topic of sexuality and other moral issues are neither trivial nor unimportant. It calls for reverence and discretion and a clear understanding of what the Church teaches in light of the world's view.

A recent survey concluded that there is no difference between what Americans in general and American Catholics believe with regard to moral issues. This is a huge problem that stems from the very dangerous and false view that faith is a private matter based on our emotions or how we personally and individually think or feel. This is often referred to as moral relativism. The idea that our faith does not impact our lives more deeply than on an emotional level only serves to reduce faith to a sentimental reality that merely helps us feel better about ourselves as we experience situations in life. In reality, our lives should be conformed to what we believe as Catholics.

God is real, and we as humans are both spiritual as well as bodily creatures. Our faith is important to how we live as human beings before God and others. Let us allow the Lord to engage us on every level and to especially transform us in those areas where we are more influenced by our culture than by our Faith. In that way, true growth can take place, and our transformation will be most fruitful.

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