



AD POPULUM

VETUS ROMANUS APOSTOLATUS



"*Consentire Videtur*"

a pastoral epistle for Pentecost 2024

Carissimi

The Latin phrase "*Qui tacet consentire videtur*" (which translates to "*he who is silent appears to consent*") reminds us that as witnesses to the truth, our silence may be perceived as acquiescence. The power of the Holy Spirit, manifested through the gift of tongues bestowed upon the Apostles during Pentecost, serves as a profound reminder of the transformative change that can be effected through active engagement and proclamation of the Gospel.

"*Qui tacet consentire videtur*" was used by St. Thomas More during his trial¹ for treason against King Henry VIII in 1535. More's refusal to acknowledge Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the Church of England and his rejection of Archbishop Cranmer's annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon led to his prosecution. More argued that his silence should be seen as consent rather than dissent. However, despite his compelling arguments, More was found guilty and executed, solidifying his status as a martyr for the Catholic faith by "*speaking truth to power*"².

At Pentecost the people were amazed to hear the Apostles speaking and sharing the Gospel in their languages³. The reversal of the curse of the Tower of Babel⁴, wherein God disrupted human cooperation by bestowing them with different languages, had occurred. Now people could hear the Gospel in their own tongue from these Judean men from Galilee! Thus the Church was able to grow exponentially from a small group of twelve Apostles to 2.6 billion Christians today⁵. That "*single deposit of the faith once delivered to the saints*"⁶ which is the Word of God delivered by Christ and passed on by Him to the Apostles and subsequently to the world, represents an invaluable and unchanging source of divine truth.

The Apostles and early Christians displayed a remarkable ability to sway individuals through their personal testimonies. This skill was evident not only in

¹ The Trial of Sir Thomas More: An Account [\[url\]](#)

² In classical Greece, "*speaking truth to power*" was known as *parrhesia*. The earliest recorded use of the term *parrhesia* is by Euripides in the fifth century B.C. *παρρησία* *parrhēsia* (πᾶν "all" and ῥῆσις "utterance, speech") means literally "*to speak everything*" and by extension "*to speak freely*", "*to speak boldly*", or "*boldness*".[4]

³ Acts 2:6-8

⁴ Genesis 11:1-9

⁵ *Status of Global Christianity 2024* [\[url\]](#)

⁶ Jude 1:3

legal proceedings, but also in social interactions and personal relationships. In these times of societal changes that challenge our faith and moral teachings, it is imperative that we voice our convictions and stand unwaveringly for what we believe in after the martyrs from whose faith we derive our own. Passive silence carries the perilous risk of appearing to endorse ideologies and actions contrary to the divine law and the teachings of the Church.

The Challenge of Modernity and Silence

Our modern world champions progress, often with little regard for the guiding principles that have anchored civilizations in transcendent truth. Modernists are doomed to repeat the mistakes of history of which they deem ignorance a virtue! In this pursuit, the sanctity of life, the sacramentality of marriage, the dignity of the human person, and the very nature of truth itself are frequently called into question or outright challenged. As these societal changes encroach upon our lives and even infiltrate the teachings and practices within the Church, a response rooted in charity and love is required from us all.

"Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary" is a maxim often misattributed to St. Francis of Assisi, suggesting that it is perhaps more virtuous to embody the Gospel through actions rather than proclaiming it by words. Nevertheless, the bestowal of the ability to speak in different languages to the Apostles at Pentecost serves as a poignant reminder that personal testimony holds significant importance and is indispensable when it comes to spreading the message of God's unwavering love for humanity through Jesus Christ. It is necessary to use *both* words and actions to proclaim the Gospel, *"... being ready always to satisfy everyone that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you."*⁷

Societal pressures may sometimes discourage us from using certain words and making bold statements for fear of being perceived as divisive or exclusionary. However, as the apostle writes to St Timothy, *"preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."*⁸ In the current climate of highly polarised discourse, it is imperative for us to communicate the truth in a clear and compassionate manner, always bearing in mind our ultimate objective of guiding individuals towards the realization of their ultimate fulfillment which lies in their relationship with God. We cannot condone actions that are contrary to God's teachings, neither can we condemn those who are ignorant of His divine wisdom and compassion.

⁷ 1 Peter 3:15

⁸ 2 Timothy 4:2-5

To truly love our neighbour⁹ as Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded¹⁰, requires us to do everything within our power to enable them to attain their supreme good i.e. the true knowledge of God, by His Word, for their salvation. The saying, "*charity begins at home*," serves as a reminder that the household is not solely our initial place of worship and connection with God, but also the primary setting where we should actively pursue the well-being of others. If we genuinely love them, we should not hesitate to openly communicate and convey the truth to those in our immediate vicinity, regardless of the challenging nature of the topic. This principle extends not just to our loved ones but even strangers whom we are called to assist and support¹¹.

The Consequences of Silence

In instances where both the Church and its members choose not to voice their opposition to ideologies and actions that go against God's law and the Church's teachings, there is a potential risk of being seen as endorsing these alterations. Such silence has the capacity to generate uncertainty among the faithful, undermine our ability to exemplify the Gospel message, and ultimately, impair the spiritual welfare of souls. Hence, it is of utmost importance that our silence is not misconstrued as a form of acceptance or apathy.

The COVID pandemic served as a clear example of this phenomenon. The current Catholic hierarchy made the decision to refrain from commenting while both civil and religious liberties were infringed upon by secular authorities worldwide.¹² Despite the presence of scientific data the media and governments utilized fear-based rhetoric to compel and manipulate the public into adhering to lockdown measures and receiving experimental, and in many cases deadly vaccinations¹³. The few statements that were made encouraged the faithful to relinquish their belief in the supernatural power of God, and instead place their trust in the prevailing cultural and societal atmosphere of fear and reliance.

Globally, the repercussions of this state of silence and complicity led to profound consequences, ranging from the disruption of children's education to a substantial rise in mental health issues and loss of faith. Attendance at Mass has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, even after three years have passed. However, amidst the political world's disengagement from responsibility, preoccupied with gender ideology and conflicts, the Church maintains a state of silence even on

⁹ St Matthew 22:37-39

¹⁰ St John 13:34

¹¹ St Luke 10:25-37

¹² *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Catholic Church* [[url](#)]

¹³ European Parliamentary question - E-001201/2023 [[url](#)]

these pressing issues and the threats they pose to society and effects on future generations. What pronouncements have been given in the name of the Church, have served only to confuse rather than strengthen the faithful, e.g. *Fiducia Supplicans*¹⁴ on the "pastoral blessing" of irregular unions.

The Call to Faithful Witness

In light of "*qui tacet consentire videtur*," we are reminded of our baptismal call to be witnesses to the truth. This witness requires courage to speak out, rooted in charity, against movements within society and the Church that compromise our faith and moral teachings. Our response should not be one of judgment or condemnation, but rather a loving affirmation of the truth that has been revealed to us through Sacred Scripture and Tradition.

This entails engaging with our governments regarding their misuse of authority and manipulation tactics throughout the pandemic, as well as their persistent insistence on vaccinating the elderly for no proveable medical benefit¹⁵. This entails confronting the propagation of gender ideology within our educational institutions and the adverse psychological and physical effects it is inflicting upon our youth¹⁶. Raising concerns about the decisions to uphold relaxed abortion regulations that pose potential risks to maternal health, that have already led to unfortunate fatalities¹⁷. The sterilization and termination of future generations pose a significant threat to the preservation of our foundational Christian culture, particularly in light of the increasing influence of Islamism¹⁸ and the issue of illegal immigration¹⁹.

To remain silent on these issues is to permit them, and permitting them goes against the teachings of the Gospel and our Catholic faith. It is to deny our neighbour their supreme good! It is crucial that we speak up and take action in order to address these matters. By staying silent, we inadvertently allow these issues to persist and continue to infect and affect individuals and communities. Our Catholic faith calls us to be advocates for justice and to stand up for what is right. Let us not be afraid to speak out and take a stand, for it is in doing so that we can truly make a difference in the world around us.

¹⁴ Declaration *Fiducia Supplicans* On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings 18 December 2023 [\[url\]](#)

¹⁵ National Institute for Health & Care Research: *Frail older people and those living in deprived areas remain at risk from COVID-19, even after vaccination* [\[url\]](#)

¹⁶ The Cass Report [\[url\]](#)

¹⁷ Written evidence submitted by Right To Life UK (MSE0104) [\[url\]](#)

¹⁸ *The rise of global Islamism*, The New Indian Express [\[url\]](#)

¹⁹ Pew Charitable Trust: *Global Migration's Rapid Rise* [\[url\]](#)

Speaking the Truth to others

*"Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves."*²⁰ If we hope to effectively confront both governmental and Church authorities, it is absolutely crucial that we boldly proclaim the Gospel and fearlessly speak the truth about the imminent threat to our societies to everyone we know. In order to accomplish this, it is imperative that we actively seek to acquire knowledge and understanding of the pertinent issues at hand, rather than choosing to bury our heads in our hands or shy away from engaging in difficult discussions. By arming ourselves with a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, we can effectively counter opposing ideologies with irrefutable facts, compelling evidence, and logical reasoning. It is through this informed approach that we can make a significant impact and bring about positive change in our communities.

"Be ye therefore wise as serpents..." Within these debates, we may encounter numerous unexpected supporters who are inadvertently aligned with our cause, possessing knowledge and connections that extend beyond our immediate grasp. These individuals span across various fields, including science, feminism, and social activism. While their ultimate objectives and interests may differ from ours, they still share our concerns and are willing to collaborate for a common purpose. By exercising diligence, discernment, and critical thinking, one can effectively leverage these allies to access valuable information, evidence, knowledge, and expertise without compromising the integrity of the Gospel.

"... and gentle as doves." It is of utmost importance that we approach the presentation and discussion of these issues with a genuine sense of concern and sincere compassion. It is vital to recognize that these matters have a direct impact on individuals in their everyday lives, as well as on their loved ones, friends, and colleagues. They pose a significant threat to both their overall well-being and their eternal destiny. While many people may have emotional reactions when confronted with criticism on these matters, the significance of such criticism cannot be understated. The well-being and survival of individuals are at stake. Our primary objective is to accurately convey the truth - the unbiased truth regarding the detrimental impact certain ideologies have on those who are susceptible, vulnerable and innocent, as well as the truth derived from God's teachings about ourselves and our destiny.

²⁰ St Matthew 10:16

Conclusion

Dear brothers and sisters, let us take to heart the maxim "*qui tacet consentire videtur*" as a call to active engagement with the world and the Church. May we never be silent in the face of error, but rather, let us lovingly and courageously bear witness to the truth. May the Holy Spirit guide us in wisdom and fortitude, and may the Blessed Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom, intercede for us as we strive to be faithful disciples in these challenging times.

J. B.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joseph B. Brichtel", with a long, sweeping underline.

Brichtelmestunensis

Dominica Pentecostes MMXXIV A.D.