

The Pathetic 12-Months of Mercy!

I was stunned some years ago when reading Pope Francis's declaration concerning his then-upcoming 'Year of Mercy'. Accordingly, during that period Pope Francis promised to give priests a special dispensation of power to forgive those who have committed the sin of abortion.

A line from W.C. Fields instantly sprang to my mind, "Hour of mischief, what kind of skulduggery is this?" However, I was enormously busy and didn't make any written comment on the Pope's declaration. It is, although I am still busy, now time to write down just what I thought.

In his statement, Francis expressed compassion for those who had aborted their babies. Furthermore, during the Holy Year of Mercy, he promised to permit priests to absolve penitent women of the sin of having had their pregnancies terminated.

How sweet of him, but who in the name of thunder did he think he was to permit anyone to forgive sins? Only God can forgive sins...and He doesn't limit His forgiveness to a 12-month window of opportunity.

This entire Papal proposal reeked of arrogance from start to finish. It is another example of how Francis, mild-mannered as he is, assumes the position of God Almighty! How does he take it upon himself to allow his priests to forgive a particular sin for a particular period? All sin is sin against God (Psalm 51:4). It is not against Pope Francis. Thus, only God, not Francis or any other Pope can forgive (Mark 2:7). Yet the Pope presumes to give power to his priests to do just that. But then again, there should be no surprise here for every Pope claims to be the "Vicar of Christ." That implies he has the same power and authority that Christ has over the church. Why, in light of this, do evangelicals in their droves now embrace the Pope as a Christian leader instead of declaring him to be an Antichrist? Nary a whimper is to be heard from the pens and sermons of many Bible Believers as the Pope perpetrates, perpetuates, and promulgates his falsehoods and deceptions upon the gullible and the credulous.

There is only one priest who can deal with sin and his name is not Francis, John Paul, or Benedict. His name is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the God-Man. He saves to the uttermost all who come to God by Him (Hebrews 7:25). In contrast to Rome's 12-month period of mercy, the Bible speaks of unlimited mercy found in God. We read in Ephesians 2:4-5, for example, that God is rich in Mercy... literally, He's 'plush' with mercy. And, what is more, mercy for those who have aborted their babies is not limited to the time frame of one year.

The throne of Grace is open to everyone who approaches by faith, at any time, for any sin regardless of the Pope's sell-by date. Hebrews 4:16 urges us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." There is mercy for those who, by faith, come to Christ. He is the faithful High Priest; no other priest is required.

As I read the Pope's statement, I was also reminded of how some years ago an old lady was lying on her deathbed. A local Roman priest came to see her and announced that he was there to absolve her of her sins. "Let me see your hands," she demanded. "My hands?" "Yes, your hands." Reluctantly, the priest proffered his hands for examination. After a minute or so the old lady said, "Sir, I perceive that you are an imposter. The only one who can absolve me has got nail scars in his hands. Scars that were received at the cross of Calvary."

Perhaps someone who has had an abortion is reading this. It has deeply troubled your conscience. The guilt pierces you. You believe you are beyond forgiveness. I implore you, therefore, to look to Christ Jesus, plead guilty and throw yourself on His mercy. Your sins and iniquities He will remember no more. May the Lord grant that you see the mercy and grace that is available to you in Christ Jesus. He is the only priest who can and will forgive sin for He alone is the God/Man!

And that's the Gospel Truth!