

Before beginning this week's article, I want to mention this past week's Jr-Sr CCD class at Alexandria, where we've been talking about these false beliefs that we've been calling "the isms" for short. The kids worked on a set of review questions. Initially I thought we'd do that for about a half hour and then move on. But it ended up taking the whole class period because they really engaged in it, and even had a few debates as to the meaning of each one, and a good number of questions as well. Some of them were truly offended by the claims of the false beliefs, rejecting them with rigor. I was also pleasantly surprised at how much that had picked up. Why mention this here? Well how about this – why not start having conversations about truly big, truly important, things? Conversations about truth and the false beliefs that are threatening man at every turn. Why not build up *and transmit* true wisdom? Young people, even though it's hard to tell sometimes (!) will listen, even if they're pretending not to! They might even learn to have these conversations amongst themselves. Why be so dour and hopeless by just sticking your head in the mud like some sort of troll and saying: no, we don't lift our heads, we just troll around in the dirt of the here and now only; that's "my god." You are made for greatness, the greatness of being a son or daughter, a prince or princess, in your Father's Kingdom. Lift up your hearts! Lift up your heads and claim what is yours to have! Lift them up and breathe the good clean fresh air of real truth that gives real life. This is what you are meant for. Do you not want to pass this on to your kids? Reject this heresy of "softness" that says everything has to be cheap, easy, and automatic and rise up. Rise up and say: as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. Say it, mean it, and live it out, come what may.

Now we come to what might be Satan's greatest "accomplishment" in regard to the ruination of man, namely humanism. It is truly the spirit of anti-Christ. This will be the final ism we take up. There are others that could be covered, that are important, but maybe those could be ones you study and contemplate on your own. Two big ones are feminism and the philosophy of liberalism. In fact, these are a good segway into what might be the culmination of these false beliefs – humanism.

Think back on all of these false beliefs that have been covered and ask: what do they have in common? There's a number of things, one of which is that they all abide with materialism. Another is that they are a corruption of some truth. Pragmatism, for example. We have to deal with practical things and that's not by any means unimportant. Pragmatism takes that truth and twists it by saying that the only truth there is are the practical consequences (consequences in the here and now) of whatever it is you're talking about. Relativism does this as well. It takes the reality of subjective truth and twists it by saying: subjective reality is all there is; there is no such thing as objective truth or reality – something that is true regardless of the individual subject (e.g., the sun is hot, and that applies to everybody and all things). These false beliefs take something that is true, takes reality, and distorts it; they take what is good and corrupt it. The same is true for feminism and liberalism. If feminism means something like taking our Holy Mother as the model of true femininity, it is something that should be exhorted and taught vigorously; but if it means something like: women should become men, it is a corruption of something good. Same thing with liberalism. If liberalism sticks with the literal meaning of liberality: be generous, even over-generous, expend yourself entirely for God and neighbor with a holy forgetfulness of self, then it should be shouted from the rooftops. But if it means independence from God and thus the law of *true* charity, if it means I do whatever I want, then it is a corruption of something good. The same could be said for "conservatism." If it means something like: preserving true and sacred Tradition (i.e., preserving truth), it is good, but like other things it can be corrupted; if it becomes something like: preserving the status quo for the sake of the status quo, then it can become a blind guide. Stick with the *full truths of the faith*. That is your only true and certain guide. Put your most basic trust in other things at your own peril.

"And the serpent was the most subtle of the creatures the Lord God had made." Notice the subtlety of these corruptions. They are hard to notice. A person might even have a sense that something is wrong but can't quite put their finger on it. We should thank God for His Church which He uses to guide us through these traps. Pope St John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, for example, were great guides for our times; they were good guardians precisely by being expositors of these false beliefs, thus shepherding in the way God intends.

This subtle corruption, then, applies to this thing being called “humanism” as well. If humanism meant: becoming like I am meant to be, like God created me to be, something that makes me like God, not God but *like* God, then “humanism” could be considered even a central message of Revelation. But that’s not what it means in the world today. Today’s **humanism** does not mean become *like* God, it **means: man is god**. This corruption, stated outright, might not seem all that subtle, but the expressions of humanism are subtle.

Fr Vincent Micheli, an “old school” Jesuit, lays out the development of the New Atheism = the New Humanism in his book: *The Gods of Atheism*. It will be worth our while to come to Fr Micheli’s exposition of this topic, as well as the so-called humanist manifestos (which are truly an appalling and *egregious* offense against God). First, though, let us take note of a few more general things about humanism and its relation to the other isms.

Recall the first temptation: you will be like gods. There is a lot of irony as well as subtlety in this claim. First of all, Scripture makes it clear that Adam and Eve were already *like* God. Part of the subtlety of the temptation, then, is to deny this – not outright but implicitly; if you *will* be like gods, it means that you’re currently *not* like God. It also doesn’t mean that you will be like God (as stated in the temptation – they might have rejected that if it was stated too strongly, too outright); what the temptation is really saying is that you will **be** a god unto yourself. And what does that mean? It means there will be entirely independent and autonomous. It means that there will be no power, no authority, no God or loving Father over you. It means you will not be governed by anything except your own will and desires. It means you are the supreme being. It means you – not God – are the supreme decider of what is right and good and true. It means “I will not serve” – the “battle-cry” (or death rattle) of Lucifer himself. This, ladies and gentlemen, is the new humanism. It is the supreme accomplishment of a hardened and sinful pride, of the original and continuous temptation of Satan. The “new” humanism is the Kingdom of Satan here on earth. While it is true that this bag of stinking garbage and death is something the tempter has been trying to sell to man throughout history, and while it’s true that man has fallen for it over and over again, at the same time it has never (at least not since the time of Christ) risen to the levels, become so widespread, entrenched, glorified, and accepted as true as it is today. Today’s humanism is the culmination of this temptation.

To really expose humanism as well as expose and understand all of the other isms and their ultimate effect, it will be helpful to see the relation amongst them and especially their relation to humanism. There are a number of ways to view the relation of humanism to all the other isms, and each one might be helpful, might give us further and further insight and understanding. One way to look at the relation of humanism is to see that humanism is an underlying part of all the other isms. Is humanism something distinct in its own right, distinct from the other isms? I think we have to answer yes to that, but at the same time realizing that to *some* degree we could also view it as just the sum total of all the other isms. Let us try to bring out clearly that each of the isms discussed abides with the humanist claim that man is his own god. Dr Principe explained, and we can see the truth of it for ourselves once we understand it, that the goal of scientism is to make the physical sciences and scientists god, the supreme decider of truth; man is god. Pragmatism and its close relatives of utilitarianism and consequentialism do the same thing. Pragmatism says: there is no being who can say ahead of time or absolutely that something is right or wrong; you can’t say, for example, that abortion is wrong always and everywhere. *You* (man) have to consider the practical consequences of this or that thing that you’re considering and that alone decides whether it is right and good and true; i.e., man is god. Utilitarianism – your own feelings, desire, and appetites are the supreme source of truth; man is a god unto himself. Relativism is obviously an expression of humanism, maybe the most extreme, so much so that we could even view it as the supreme depravity of the isms. In any event – humanism pervades them all.

Another way, *perhaps* the most correct way, to view the relation of humanism to all of the other isms, is as the culmination, the “high” point (or perhaps more precisely, the lowest point), of all the isms. From this viewpoint the other isms build up and lead to humanism. The other isms put us on the path to full-blown humanism, full-blown atheism, a fully hardened pride and separation from God.

We are out of space – we’ll continue this topic next week.

God bless you, Fr Kuhn.