

ON HOLY ANGER

The following article was precipitated by a discussion of the proper use of the human emotion of anger. I suggest reading it in its entirety before drawing any conclusions of your own.

It would seem that there are two basic types of anger: *holy*, and *unholy*. These may be described in other secular terms – but scripturally and theologically – for the baptized Christian person, *holy* and *unholy* is what he need concern himself with.

Unholy anger is to be avoided as soon as it becomes evident that it exists in the person: it is self-centered, self-oriented, and self-pleasing; *holy anger* needs to be **welcomed as a gift of passion and energy from God in order to defend God, others, or a principle**. This passion and energy ought never to be used to defend oneself. And at the outset I emphasize that the expression of *holy anger* needs to be used as a last resort and as restrained as possible in the situation in which it is used.

Holy anger is that divine passion and energy given through the Holy Spirit, coupled with the gifts of *courage* and *fortitude* to a human being in order to become instrumental in the will of God in a particularly confrontational situation.

God himself demonstrated *Holy Anger* many times in the Old Testament. Recall the story of *Noah and the Flood*, and the early stages of the formation of his chosen people. *It was not for his own benefit* that he did these things, but it was to get the attention of his wayward creatures whom he loved very much, that he did what he did. How many of the Prophets likewise intervened to spare God's people by negotiating with him who was in a state of Holy Anger (i.e. Sodom and Gomorrah, Nineveh). Yes, God, the Loving and Merciful Father acted as a True *Father of the Family* by also administering discipline (with love) *whenever necessary*. Yes, **discipline with love**. It was probably something that he agonized over very much because it was necessary for him to have to do: after all he is Creator, and *everything was very good, at the beginning*. But when things went very wrong, he could only act as a genuine, authentic and loving Father could act:

with firmness and as much verbal and physical force as was warranted in each situation.

With the arrival of Jesus – the very *Word of God made flesh* – God had an even clearer way to speak words of truth, comfort, peace, joy – but also challenge and yes, discipline to those who needed it. He began in a sense by speaking with force to his parents (Mary and Joseph) when they did not understand why *he left the entourage and was found by them three days later in the Temple teaching the Elders*. These were not just self-defensive words, these were passionate, energized words of instruction even to those closest to him. His public life is filled with examples of his grand proclamation of the Kingdom of Love, which included being a Kingdom of Justice and Truth at the price that he would pay for them with his own life on Calvary. How many times was he frustrated with the Apostles who *just did not get the message he was trying to impart to them*. Some of his words to them were very sarcastic and stern – but *emanating from the love in His Truthful Sacred Heart* and a profound desire to teach them the beauty and the joy and the peace that lies therein. Did he not *rebuke Peter sharply in front of the others – call him a Satan, a tell him to get behind him – “get out of here”* (not permanently, but just so he would have time to think about what was going on in the situation). Peter was trying at the time to convince Jesus not to go to the Cross! Jesus – *not in selfish self-defense* – but to make a crystal clear principled statement for his very purpose in life (to “go to the Cross), strongly disciplines the very one whom he would later name as head of the entire church he was to found.

And of course, Jesus was always rebuking the scribes and Pharisees publically – telling them that their shortsightedness and narrow-mindedness were causing them to be incapable of seeing reality as it was: **THE MESSIAH IS STANDING RIGHT THERE BEFORE THEM!** And it is quite apparent by his literal casting out of the moneychangers from the temple that Jesus’ passion and righteous energy was at fever-pitch because his Father’s Temple was being profaned, which was to be a **HOUSE OF PRAYER!**

Finally on the very day of his Crucifixion on Calvary – which is quite literally RE-PRESENTED at each and every Mass that is celebrated anywhere on earth – Jesus emits one last cry of frustration and Holy Anger: he must have done this very loudly – full of passion and divine energy: **MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME!!**: which again, Jesus *did not say for his own benefit*: he said it FOR us! For all the frustrations and betrayals and misunderstandings and sins; for all of the pain and the suffering and unexplained catastrophes that humans are subject to; for each and every person who ever lived from the time of Adam to the very last person who would ever be born on earth! And then he died; and with his death and subsequent Resurrection came the possibility of the transformation of all sin, faults and failures, into something glorious, life-giving and free!

Holy anger always leads to holy joy sooner or later, or it is not holy anger at all.

A way to conclude this article is to repeat what was said at the beginning of it: *Unholy anger* is to be avoided as soon as it becomes evident that it exists within us; *holy anger* needs to be welcomed as a gift of passion and energy from God in order to defend God, others, or a Christian principle (found primarily in the Sermon on the Mount). This passion and energy ought never to be used to defend oneself; or used in a vindictive sort of way. A very good way to learn how to do both: avoid *unholy anger*, and channel *holy anger* is by the teachings of the Church found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* specifically on the topic; and of related Scriptures, and the writings of some of the Fathers on the church.

In order to understand this paper – as all documents of Catholic teaching – **faith is an absolute requirement**, the kind of faith that *is a gift from God to raise our intellects and wills to the supernatural level*. The entire content of this paper relates to the supernatural level – and this must be kept in mind – or the contents will lose their focus, intent and meaning. An increasing number of people in the world today deal with anger issues and we all need to look to the **Cross of Christ**, *with and in faith*, to find a solution: it is there...**it is THERE!**

July 22, 2011 – I found this on the internet just the day after writing the above article: it has a lot to do with it:

Father, Comforter, Disciplinarian

Melissa Taylor

"...but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)

Have you ever opened a book and read a passage and been amazed because it was exactly what you needed to hear? And you felt like it was written and sent just to you on that day at that moment? Some may call it a coincidence, but I call it a gift from God!

Last night I did not sleep. I recently had surgery on my left foot. Yesterday the doctor gave me the green light to put full weight on that foot again. For the first time in three weeks, I walked using that foot. I was so happy not to use crutches or limp around that I got a little carried away. Last night I awoke in such great pain, I cried. Finally I took some pain medication, but I never could go back to sleep.

This morning I am absolutely exhausted! I'm tired physically, mentally, and emotionally. I'm tired from no sleep. I'm tired of trying so hard to function. I'm ready to run and I can't. I'm frustrated. I'm weak. I'm what Isaiah calls "weary."

This morning I opened my devotion book for a healthy dose of God's Word. I was overjoyed when I read the words from Isaiah. It was exactly what I needed to hear: *"My strength will be renewed because I have hope in the Lord."*

I have hope in the Lord because He is my Father. I can trust Him and count on Him to keep His Word. My heavenly Father is always with me, something my earthly parents can't be.

I have hope in the Lord because He is my Comforter. My foot may hurt and my emotions are unbalanced. I don't feel very comfortable at the moment, but I am comforted. My Comforter supplies me with the love, peace, and hope I need to know I'm going to be okay.

I have hope in the Lord because He is my Disciplinarian. I have to admit, this isn't my favorite characteristic of Him. But I know without it, I'd be out of control! I need a strong hand to guide me and keep me in line. I actually feel safe and secure because my Father disciplines me. I know it is through that discipline that I am strengthened. I also know He disciplines me because He loves me.

I may be weak today, but what a great place to be. It draws me closer to the One I need most. My Father, my Comforter, my Disciplinarian.

Dear Lord, I have found my hope in You! Thank You for being there to provide for me as my Father, Comforter, and Disciplinarian. In Jesus' Name, Amen.