



# Challenges to Living a Catholic Life in the 21st Century

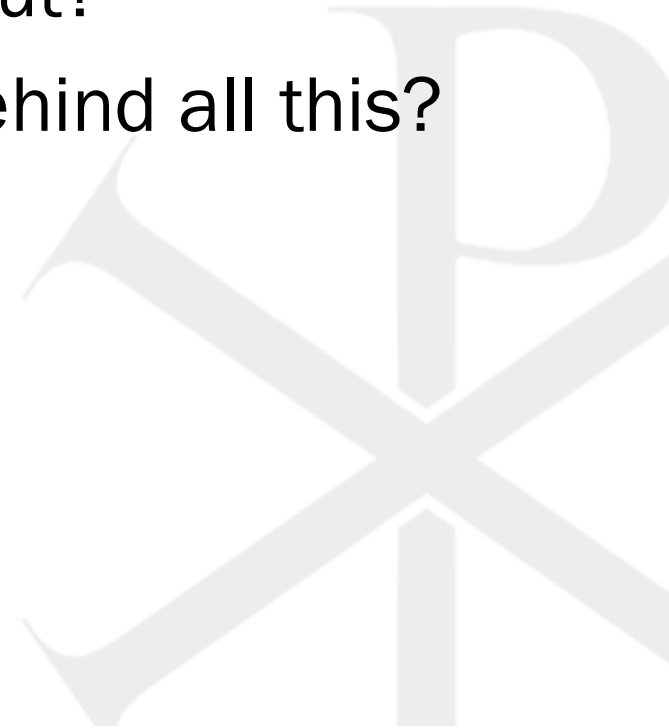
Tony Castellano  
Knights of Columbus Council #12127

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Gaithersburg, MD

# In this Year of Mercy...

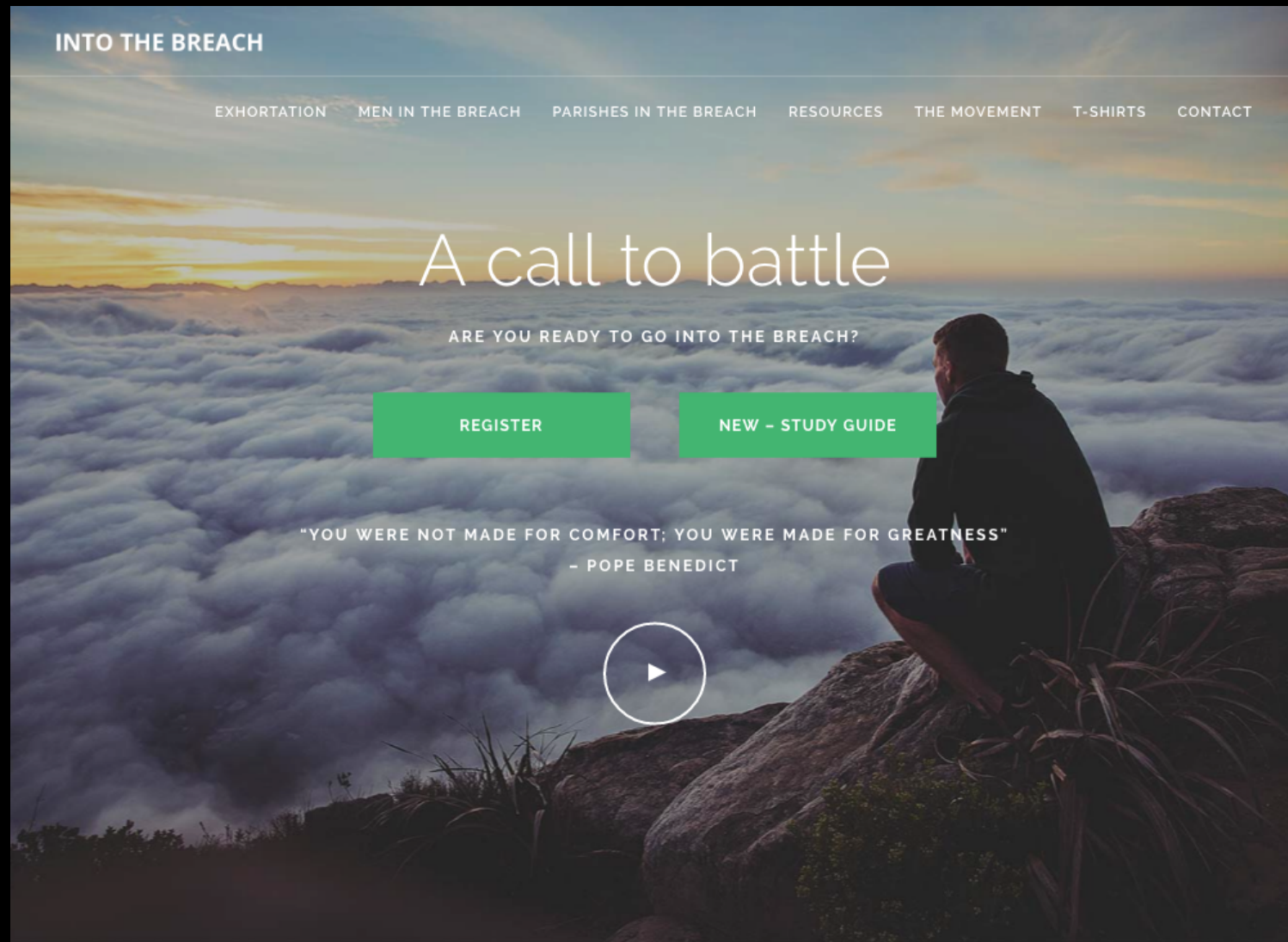
- What are we called to do?
- How do we know what to do?
- How does one balance mercy and judgment?
- Is it indeed not merciful to speak out?
- And...what is the spiritual reality behind all this?  
What is the final answer??

\*All Action Oriented



# “Into the Breach”

An Apostolic  
Exhortation to  
Catholic Men  
of the Diocese  
of Phoenix



promulgated September 29, 2015

[www.IntoTheBreach.org](http://www.IntoTheBreach.org)

“Men, Do Not Hesitate to Engage in the Battle that is Raging Around You.”

“The battle that is wounding our children and families, the battle that is distorting the dignity of both women and men. This battle is often hidden, but the battle is real. It is primarily spiritual, but it is progressively killing the remaining Christian ethos in our society and culture, and even in our own homes.”

- Bishop Thomas Olmsted

# Purpose of the Apostolic Exhortation

- To clarify the nature of the Mission from Christ to all men
  - To provide encouragement
  - To present a challenge
  - And to call forth men to Mission
- Why? Because the battle is occurring in the Church herself, and the devastation is all too evident
- One of the key reasons that the Church is faltering under the **attacks of Satan** is that many **Catholic men** have **not** been willing to “step into the breach” – to fill this gap that lies open and vulnerable to further attack

\*What is the Church? Who is Satan?

## Three Questions in Three Contexts

**CONTEXT #1**

**CONTEXT #2**

**CONTEXT #3**

**QUESTION #1. What does it mean to be a Christian Man?**

**QUESTION #2. How does a Catholic Man Love?**

**QUESTION #3. Why is fatherhood, fully understood, so crucial for every man?**

**A New Apostolic  
Moment – The  
"New Evangelization"**

**A Field Hospital and a  
Battle College**

**Man and Woman are  
Complementary,  
NOT Competitors**

Each question needs to be understood in the contexts of our present societal environment, the life-long purpose of the Church, and the truth and meaning of human sexuality.

# Into the Breach - The New Evangelization in this Year of Mercy

- To 'Witness'
  - *Defn: To make a statement about what he or she knows or has seen, or experienced*
- However, we are often deterred by secular influences and all aspects of society, claiming religion is merely a private matter
  - The message of society: "Say & do what you want inside your church. But that's where it stays."
- Do we knowingly withhold God's message of the Gospel? What kind of benefit does that offer another? Offer us?

\*What is Holding Your Back?

# Into the Breach - The New Evangelization in this Year of Mercy

- Today a 'business as usual' attitude can no longer be the case. Churches...reconfirm the fact that now is the time for the Church to call upon every Christian community to evaluate their pastoral practice on the basis of the missionary character of their program and activities.”

— 2012 Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of Christian Faith, Lineamenta, #10*



# Into the Breach – the Church as a Field Hospital & Battle College

- In his homilies, Pope Francis has described the Church today as “a field hospital after battle” a constant source of mercy with a key role for the laity
  - Nurses (laity/parishioners) who work up close with patients all day long may be in a position to help patients more than a doctor (clergy/hierarchy) who are wise and educated but are often removed from the daily life of those in their care
- The Church is also the powerful source of Truth to heal and prepare the faithful to battle another day for Christ
- *At the same time, the proclamation of the fullness of truth found in the Catholic Church is essential*

# Into the Breach – the Church as a Field Hospital & Battle College

- Since the analogy of the Church as a “field hospital” after battle is an appropriate, then another complementary image is appropriate for our day - **the Spiritual Battle College**
- The Church is, and has always been, a school that **prepares us for spiritual battle**, where Christians are called to “fight the good fight of faith”<sup>1</sup> to “put on the armor of God” ... “to be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(1 Timothy 6), <sup>2</sup>(Ephesians 6:11)

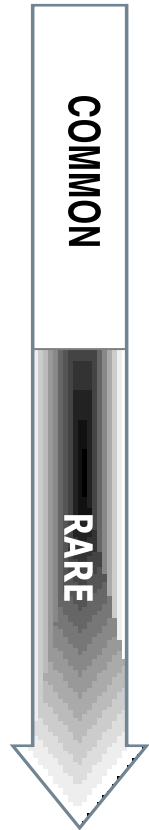
\*Consistent, active learning by all Catholics

# What is “Spiritual Combat?”

- Life in a ‘fallen’ world from original sin
  - Our nature is indifferent to good and inclined to evil
  - “...human misery is the obvious sign of the inherited condition of frailty and need for salvation in which man finds himself as a consequence of original sin.” CCC 2448
  - We are always susceptible to the the attacks and escaping the snares of the devil

# What is “Spiritual Combat?”

- Four degrees or types of spiritual combat/warfare

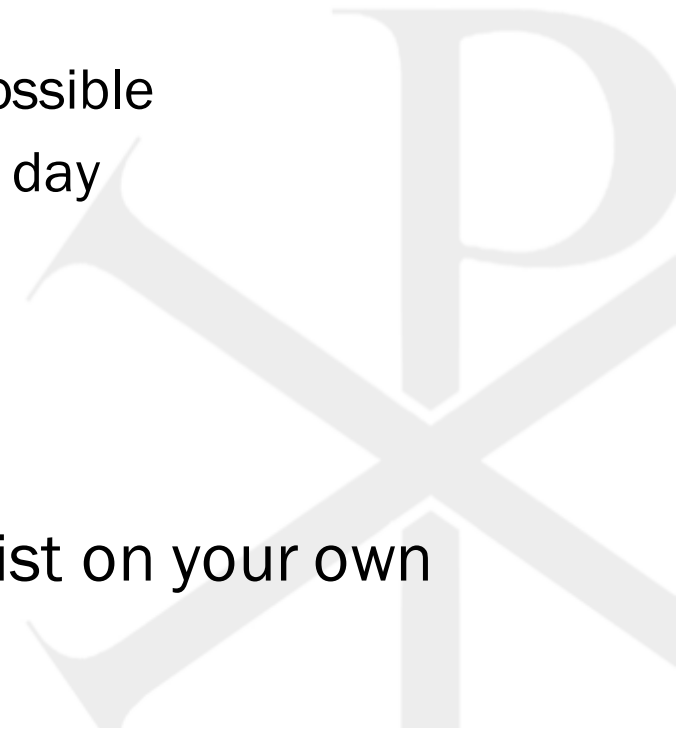


- Temptation
  - Can come from any of three sources: 1) our own sinful nature, 2) the devil or 3) the world
- Oppression
  - Involves a dimension of corporality; the sense of negative or harmful things converging with no obvious root
- Obsession
  - Unnatural preoccupation with evil and/or evil effects with an incorrigible\* aspect, an attack on the person’s psychology
- Possession
  - Most severe (and rare) degree of spiritual warfare, during which the demon literally takes possession of the person

\*incorrigible Defn: (of a person or their tendencies) not able to be corrected, improved, or reformed.

# Examples of How to Fight – Living a Life of Sanctifying Grace

- Frequent reception of the Sacraments
  - Mass - As many times a week as possible
  - Confession - Minimum 1x month
- Prayer
  - Daily a must (and as much as you can: morning, noon, evening, night)
  - Holy Hour of adoration – as many days as possible
  - Examination of conscience at the end of the day
- Reading/Study/Learning
  - Sacred Scripture
  - Spiritual books, Catechesis Materials
- Fellowship – You cannot live a life of Christ on your own



# The Three Lies of Satan – Gen 3:1-5

- **The First Lie: Falsify Reality.** Distorting the truth that God reveals to us and that the Church presents to us is a primary tactic of Satan.
- **The Second Lie: God is not telling you the truth.** Satan presents God's command as a limit to our freedom.
- **The Third Lie: In reality, truth is how you define it.** Each person gets to decide for himself what is good and what is evil. There is no objective truth.

\*Can you think of examples?

# The Spiritual Works of Mercy

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<b>Admonish the Sinner</b>	Proverbs 27:17, Luke 15:7; 17:3, 2 Timothy 4:2
<b>Instruct the Ignorant</b>	Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:14-18, Luke 24:47-49, John 20:21, 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 4:1-5
<b>Counsel the Doubtful</b>	Matthew 13:18-23, Mark 4:13-20; 9:14-29, Luke 8:11-15, John 14:27
<b>Bear Wrongs Patiently</b>	Matthew 5:38-48, Luke 6:27-36, 1 Peter 2:18-19
<b>Forgive Offenses Willingly</b>	Matthew 6:14-15; 18:15-35, Mark 11:25, Luke 11:1-4; 17:1-4
<b>Comfort the Afflicted</b>	Psalms 9:8-11; 22:23-27, Psalms 27:4-5; 30:2-4, Psalms 116;, Jeremiah 29:11-14, Matthew 11:28-30, John 14:15-18, 27; 16:22-23, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Peter 5:5-11, Revelation 21:4
<b>Pray for the Living and the Dead</b>	2 Maccabees 38-46

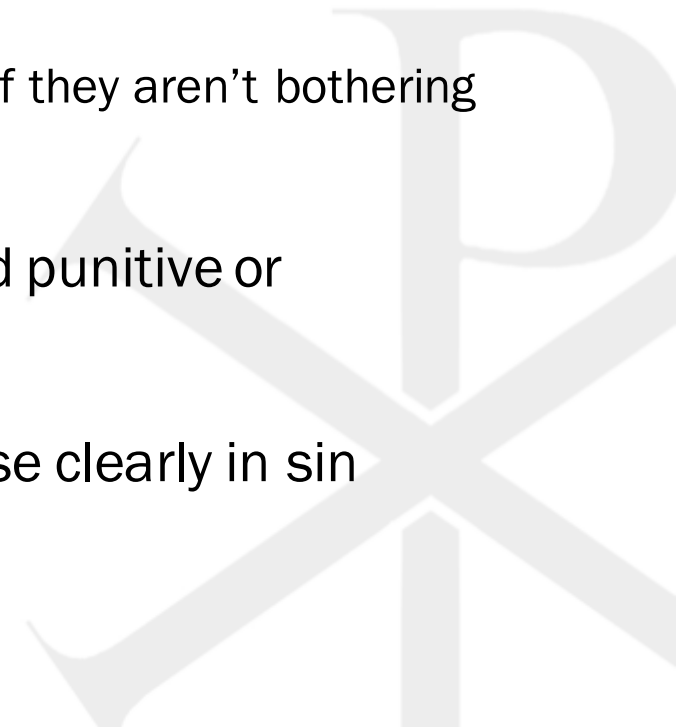
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# The Spiritual Works of Mercy – Admonish the Sinner

- Fraternal Correction “... is directed to the amendment of the sinner. Now to do away with anyone’s evil is the same as to procure his good: and to procure a person’s good is an act of charity.” (Summa Theologica II, Ilae, 33.1)
- The world and the Devil have largely succeeded in **shaming** Christians from doing this essential work
  - How often do we hear: “Who am I to judge?” or “If they aren’t bothering me or anyone else...??”
- To “judge” means being unnecessarily harsh and punitive or condemning
- It **DOES NOT** mean we should say nothing to those clearly in sin
  - To say nothing, is itself uncharitable



# The Spiritual Works of Mercy – Admonish the Sinner

- Fraternal correction is prescribed and commanded by Scripture
- To not do so is the sin of omission
- The world tries to inflict on us by saying that we are “judging” people
- Yet correction of the sinner is both charitable and virtuous
- It is possible to correct a sinner poorly or even sinfully, but many have severely failed in the catholic duty to correct
- Because of our failure in this regard, the world is much more sinful, coarse, and undisciplined
- To fail to correct is to fail in charity and mercy; it is to fail to be virtuous and to fail in calling others to virtue

*Fraternal Correction - the Neglected Virtue*  
*Msgr. Charles Pope, September 5, 2016*

# Fraternal Correction

- Not a rash decision to speak out
- The explanation of why they should not be doing “it” must be:
  - Out of charity, not emotion
  - For the love of God and for that person’s spiritual well being
  - From a position of prayerful knowledge about the issue
- **NOTE:** You need to be reasonably certain that the person is willing to listen to the correction, or may make the situation worse

# Two Challenges to the Complementary Nature of Man and Woman

- Same-sex 'marriage'
- Gender theory

“This may seem obvious, but in our world, there are **many distorted images** and much **evidence of confusion** regarding what is true masculinity.”

“We can say that for the **first time in history**, people have become **either so confused or so arrogant** as to attempt to **dictate their masculinity or femininity** according to **their own definitions**.”

- *Bishop Olmsted*

## Into the Breach -

# The Complementarity of Men and Women, Not the Competition of Men and Women

- With Jesus Christ as our role model -
  - “Herein lies the fullness of masculinity;
    - each Catholic man must be prepared to give himself completely,
    - to charge into the breach,
    - to engage in spiritual combat,
    - to defend women, children, and others against the wickedness and snares of the devil!”

\*How do we follow, imitate, and know Jesus?

# A Prominent Catholic Politician Recently Said:

- "My support for marriage equality now — my full, complete, unconditional support for marriage equality — is at odds with the current doctrine of the church that I still attend."
- "But I think that's going to change, too ... And I think it's going to change because my church also teaches me about a creator in the first chapter of Genesis who surveys the entire world including mankind and said it is very good, it is very good."
- "Pope Francis famously said, 'who am I to judge?' And to that I want to add: Who am I to challenge God for the beautiful diversity of the human family?" ... "I think we're supposed to celebrate it, not challenge it."

# Same-Sex 'Marriage'

- So...that prominent Catholic politician would probably agree that same-sex 'marriage' is OK as long as the two people "love one another"
- But that is not how God structured the foundation of marriage:
  - Marriage is founded on the natural law of creation of male and female
  - Where male and female model the of spousal love between Jesus and His church on earth
  - The fruit of which is the ability to procreate completely new souls to be with God forever
  - Love and commitment is a component to human marriage but not the primary



\*The Marriage Debate can be Volatile



# The Damaging Impact of “Gender Ideology”

- What is “*Gender Theory*?”
  - Rather than acknowledging that God created people male and female, the theory contends that these are societal constructs, and we now may decide for ourselves whether we are male, female, or something in between.
- What is “*Binary*?”
  - Used as an adjective to describe the genders female/male or woman/man. Since the binary genders are the only ones recognized by general society as being legitimate, they enjoy an unfair privileged status.

\*Now Normative for many Public Schools

# The Damaging Impact of “Gender Ideology”

- “I exhort you, my sons and brothers in Jesus Christ, to embrace more deeply the beauty and richness of the sexual difference and to defend it against false ideologies.”

- *Bishop Olmsted*

\*Facebook allows users to choose from 71 different gender identities

# Facebook's 71 Gender Choices

Asexual	Two* person	Female to Male	Trans Man
Female to male trans man	Two-spirit person	FTM	Trans Person
Female to male transgender man	Woman	Gender Fluid	Trans*Female
Female to male transsexual man	Agender	Gender Nonconforming	Trans*Male
F2M	Androgyne	Gender Questioning	Trans*Man
Gender neutral	Androgynes	Gender Variant	Trans*Person
Hermaphrodite	Androgynous	Genderqueer	Trans*Woman
Intersex man	Bigender	Intersex	Transexual
Intersex person	Cis	Male to Female	Transexual Female
Intersex woman	Cis Female	MTF	Transexual Male
Male to female trans woman	Cis Male	Neither	Transexual Man
Male to female transgender woman	Cis Man	Neutrois	Transexual Person
Male to female transsexual woman	Cis Woman	Non-binary	Transexual Woman
Man	Cisgender	Other	Transgender Female
M2F	Cisgender Female	Pangender	Transgender Person
Polygender	Cisgender Male	Trans	Transmasculine
T* man	Cisgender Man	Trans Female	Two-spirit
T* woman	Cisgender Woman	Trans Male	

# The Damaging Impact of “Gender Ideology”

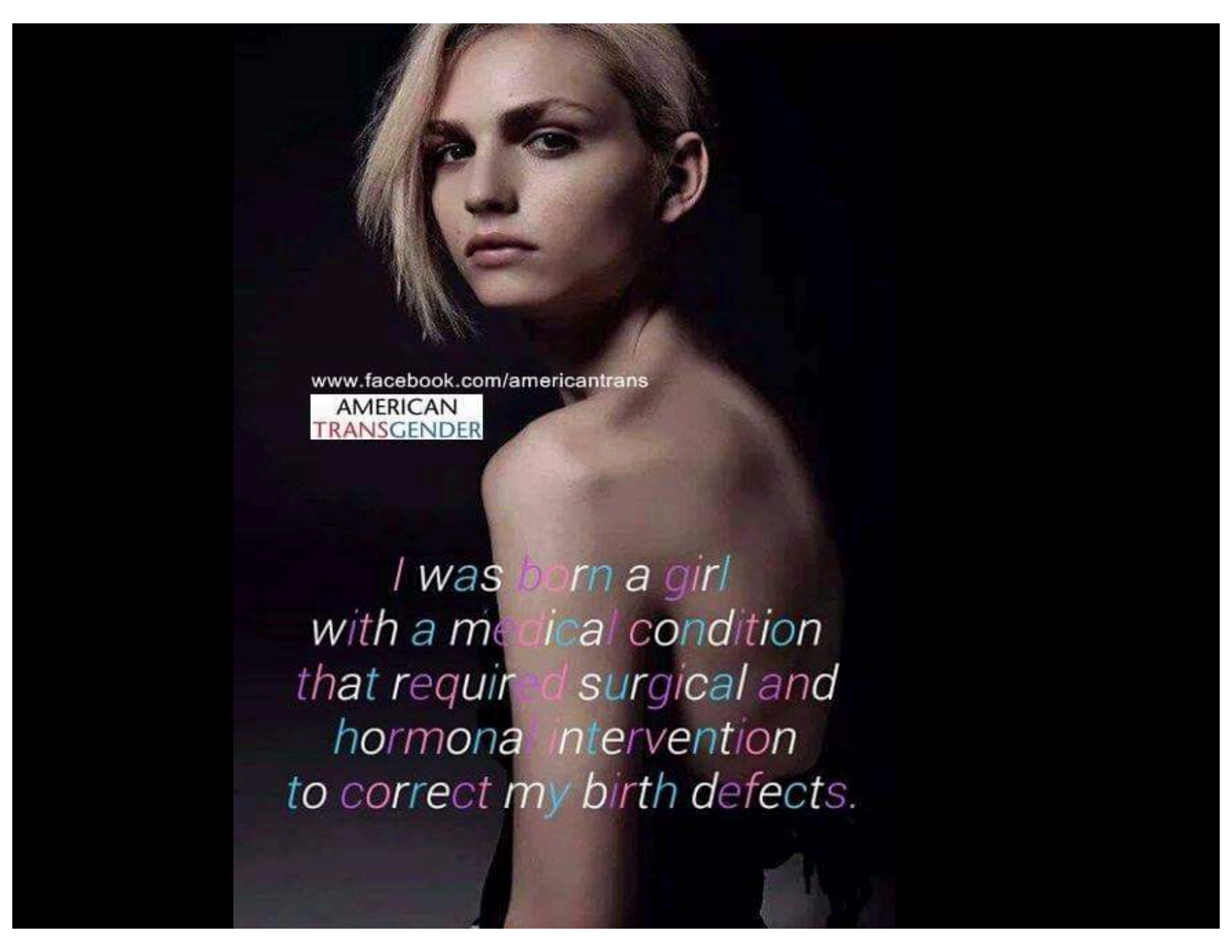
- “I ask myself, if the so-called gender theory is not... an expression of frustration and resignation, which seeks to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it. Yes, we risk taking a step backwards. The removal of difference in fact creates a problem, not a solution.”
- “Gender theory is an error of the human mind that leads to so much confusion” ... “So the family is under attack.”

– *Pope Francis*

# The Damaging Impact of “Gender Ideology”

- “The profound falsehood of this theory and of the anthropological revolution contained within it is obvious. People dispute the idea that they have a nature, given by their bodily identity, that serves as a defining element of the human being.”
- “They deny their nature and decide that it is not something previously given to them, but that they make it for themselves.”

*- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, December 2012*



[www.facebook.com/americantrans](http://www.facebook.com/americantrans)

AMERICAN  
TRANSGENDER

*I was born a girl  
with a medical condition  
that required surgical and  
hormonal intervention  
to correct my birth defects.*

# The Damaging Impact of “Gender Ideology”

- “The rapid advance of a “gender ideology” has **infected** societies around the world. This ideology seeks to set aside the sexual **difference created by God**, to remove male and female as the normative way of understanding the human person, and in its place, to add various other “categories” of sexuality. This ideology is destructive for individuals and society, and **it is a lie.**”
- “It is harmful to the human person, and therefore, a false concept that we must oppose as Christians. At the same time, however, we are called to **show compassion** and **provide help** for those who experience confusion about their sexual identity.”

- *Bishop Olmsted*

# WHY?

*What is the resultant root cause of all this?*

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# Fatherhood is Essential – Thus the Attack on Fatherhood in Society

- “This is truly the key for interpreting reality ... **original sin attempts to abolish fatherhood.**” *Pope St. John Paul II*
- Through Adam and Eve’s original act of disobedience, we find a **primordial rebellion against God’s fatherhood**. It is a desire to remove fatherhood itself.
- This is our **enemy’s** underlying **plan**: to **remove** our **reliance on God**, the benevolent Father.
- To do this, ***Satan’s primary strategy is to damage and abolish human fatherhood***, in the man and relationship where each of us first glimpses what God’s fatherhood might be like.

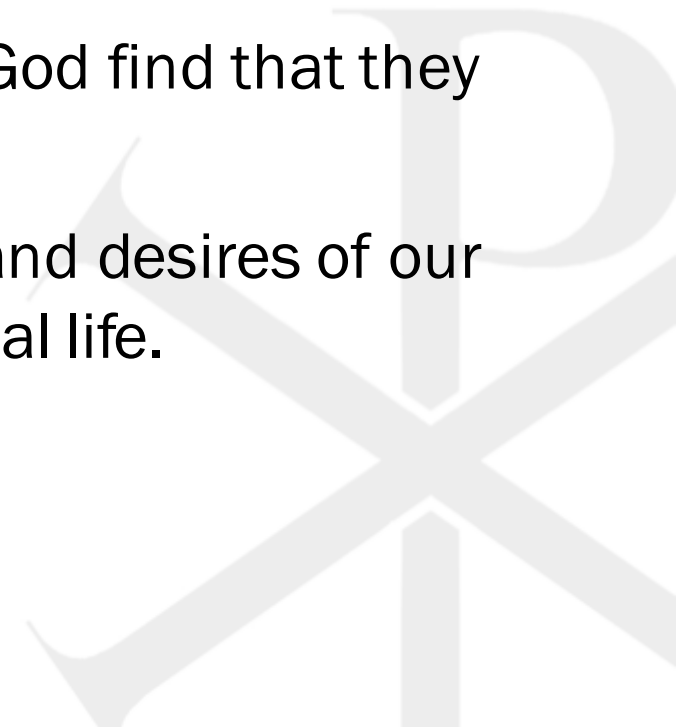
# “what must I to do to inherit eternal life?” Mark 10-17-21

*And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”... **“You know the commandments”**... “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, **“You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”** (ESV)*

- Jesus speaks about money & possessions (the young man’s ‘treasure’), but what is happening in his heart?
- What was keeping the young man from giving himself completely to God?

# “what must I to do to inherit eternal life?”

- Treasure has a special connection to the heart, the place of desire and longing, the place of will and focus
- The thing we most set our heart on is our highest treasure
- Giving up all the self-will in our heart is not sorrowful, but the greatest joy
- Those who yield control of their hearts to God find that they cannot out give God in generosity
- He alone can satisfy the deepest longing and desires of our heart, and doing His will brings forth eternal life.



# “Comfort Catholicism” has to Go

- Decades of a soft, warm, ‘fitting in’ attitude
  - No or little challenges about the reality of the spiritual battle
  - Emphasis was on blending in, speaking to things that made people comfortable, and affirming rather than challenging
- The light of the world preferred to hide under a bushel basket and lay low

\*A Change is Required

# The Parable of the Talents

## Matthew 25:14-30

- What do we do with the gifts/talents God gives us?
- Keep it to ourselves? Or spread it to make more?

*“Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.” Luke 12:51 (ESV)*

*“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” John 15:18-19 (ESV)*

# The 5 Stages of Religious Persecution

- Persecutions do not come out of nowhere, they build in a culture over time until they boil over into often-horrific acts wherein those who inflict them actually feel justified in what they do
  - Stage 1. Stereotype the targeted group
  - Stage 2. Vilify the targeted group for alleged crimes or misconduct
  - Stage 3. Marginalize the targeted group's role in society
  - Stage 4. Criminalize the targeted group or its works
  - Stage 5. Persecute the targeted group outright
- Never forget: Those who suffer for proclaiming the faith, and for living it boldly, are of highest honor in the Kingdom of God.

- Msgr. Charles Pope 09/07/2016

Brothers and Sisters

>> Be BOLD! Be CONFIDENT! <<



...and may Chi-Rho **Lead** your way!