

“Do not accept anything as the truth if it lacks love and do not accept anything as love which lacks truth.” - Sr. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, OCD (Edith Stein)

Another ongoing crisis in today's society, amongst the crisis in the Church and crisis in the home, is this exaggerated emphasis put on emotions. Archbishop Fulton Sheen once wrote, “The most depressed spirits are those who seek God in a false god!” (Sheen, *Three to Get Married*, p. 2). There are many false gods people are seeking nowadays - electronics, money - but the one false god I'd like to focus on in this article is emotions, which people allow to dictate their actions and even their sense of reality.

Many people now, due to their worship of their emotions, allow their feelings to dictate how they think and what they do, in a nutshell: these emotions determine their perception of the real world. We see it all over and it's funny how this thinking, or lack of thinking, works. Animals suddenly have more rights than humans. There are laws protecting the unborn offspring of animals, but our offspring is a nuisance, our children have no rights and in many places around the world (such as Victoria, Australia) aren't regarded as humans until the mother decides she wants them (that's right, not even when they are born and wailing about and breathing the same air into their lungs as we do, but until the woman whose body this child came out of decides she want him/her). And what prompts her to make this decision? She *feels* it is the right thing for her to do. She *feels* it is in her interest. She *feels* this child is not a child.

Nowadays, playing god is completely acceptable. We can now change our gender; we can call sin good; we can choose to die whenever we want through euthanasia; we can take a life and excuse it by saying that life was never there; ultimately we can deny reality and not only deny reality, but make up reality. It is like a dystopian novel somebody could've written about a hundred years ago and probably have never suspected it would actually come to be: a time when the government forces this fake reality onto its citizens with the threat of fines, jail time, and possibly, in the future, death. The governmental education system is no longer teaching the students how to think, but what to think; so no wonder we have all these people spewing out emotionally-driven arguments that have no essence of sound logic to them whatsoever and suddenly fleeting emotion becomes more important than sound reasoning, than truth. Now truth doesn't even exist; it is subjective. That tree in front of us may be a tree to me and an elephant to you and, according to this perverse notion society is pushing on us, both of us are somehow correct.

No wonder then, with true reality no longer existing in the minds of many today, we have suicide rates skyrocketing and severe depression prevalent in our younger generations. When you are not in sync with reality, with truth, mental disorders follow and they do not bring happiness. The people that go against the natural order of things are not really happy.

Now, unfortunately, society is not even bothering to treat many of these mental disorders; instead, they are claiming these mental disorders are normal; sometimes, they even glorify them.

Because emotion has suddenly become more important than reality to the minds of many, lives are at serious risk. When what is felt in the moment overrides truth, then no laws are binding. Many people defend the pro-choicer, but would never dream of defending the Nazis. Who knows why; they both hold the same concept. They are sickened by the Nazis for the extermination of the Jews, who they now deem as people, but then they go and kill these babies because they do not deem them as people, they have been brainwashed not to see them as people, told by many in the public school system, by the doctors that they are just “tissue”; they are no different than the Nazis they claim to hate. But can they see this? No. Their feelings override logic. They feel the Jews are people and these unborn babies are not, therefore it is so based on feeling. They feel they have the right to kill, therefore they have the right to kill. Whether society realizes it or not, it is this absurd mindset which will spur destruction, this which will bring about chaos.

One of the problems with relying so heavily on emotions to help make our decisions, too, is that emotions are very easily altered. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, “the sensitive appetite moves the will, on the part of the object” so that which “seems good to a man when angered...does not seem good when he is calm.” (*Summa*, I-II, Q 9, Art. 2) What we feel at the moment is dependent on a lot of circumstances: the environment, our diet, how much sleep we’ve been getting, overall health, etc. Because of this our feelings over a particular issue will not even stay the same. For instance, a woman may go through with an abortion because she feels it is the right thing at the time due to circumstantial pressure: boyfriend threatening to leave, parents telling her she’s too young, etc. Now, once she’s done the act and circumstances change, how she feels will likely also change and these feelings that she did the right thing will likely turn into feelings of immense guilt. Yet another reason why there are so many depressed people walking through the streets. People are making very important, life-altering decisions based on fleeting emotions that are just that: fleeting.

People make life-altering decisions based on these fleeting emotions; the one major decision many make based on fleeting emotion is who they will marry. Archbishop Fulton Sheen addressed this problem in his book, *Three to Get Married*, by explaining how love is primarily in the will, not the emotions; “the will is like the voice; the emotions are like the echo” and that as soon as the emotion dies off, couples who identified their love by their level of emotion suddenly claim they no longer love. Fulton Sheen argues, “If such is the case, they never loved the other person in the first place...” (Sheen, *Three to Get Married*, p. 1)

Emotions may be the consequence of love, but by no means do they determine love. It is normal for the body to feel something for an object it sees with its will as good, but it is not this feeling which measures or defines its love. Because of the increase of selfishness in today's world, the interest and rights of other individuals carries less of an appeal. As Fulton Sheen says, "All sin is self-centeredness, as love is otherness and relatedness." (Sheen, *Three to Get Married*, p. 1) So how can we rely on our feelings to determine our actions and beliefs when so many of these emotions stem from a selfish nature?

Feelings are certainly not in themselves bad. God often uses our feelings to inspire us toward something good. When we commit a sin, we at times are inspired to repent because of feelings of guilt; He often instills a desire for the religious life for those He calls in that direction. Sometimes we receive consolation in a sensible form during prayer or while performing our duty of state to encourage us to persevere. It is not the emotional state of ours that is problematic; it is when we make this emotional state our god, dismiss logic and God's law, and allow this emotional state to determine what is good and evil.