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HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

By Father Ted Shipp



Many are aware of who has caused the problems that we are facing in the Church today – Satan and his cohorts. But how many are aware of how he conned us into this crisis?

I believe that the strategy that he used pertains to our prayer life and that he began his devious attacks on the Church by encouraging us to diminish our time in prayer.

I was trained by the Benedictines in high school. I learned the motto of Saint Benedict – namely “Ora et Labora” – that is “Pray and Work”. That is what he taught his followers. Both prayer and work are important practices – however prayer is more important than work.

After World War II, unofficially in France many of our religious men went to work in the factories – to be among their lay brothers and sisters. As a result, they altered by practice what St Benedict had stressed. For them the motto of St Benedict became “Labora et Ora” – that is “Work and Pray”.

In 1961 I was ordained as a priest for the Archdiocese of San Francisco. I was assigned to minister in a parish in San Francisco. In 1962 I was assigned to teach in a Catholic high school. During the early years of my priesthood, the motto of St Benedict was altered a second time – of course unofficially. Now it became “Work is Prayer.” Because of this, many priests, especially at our Catholic high school accepted this teaching. As a result, we diminished our time in prayer. For we believed that since our school work is prayer, we no longer needed to pray as much. Many of us no longer prayed the Divine Office. Many even stopped praying the Rosary. Though we still offered Mass daily.

When Pope Paul VI promulgated “Humanae Vitae” in 1968 and two priests from the Archdiocese in Washington DC proclaimed that the Holy Father was wrong in his proclamation about the immorality of contraception, many priests rejected his teaching of this truth – including the majority of the priest teachers at my high school.

Why? Because – due to our diminished prayer life we had become spiritually blind. We could no longer recognize truth. That was the first effect of our diminished prayer life – the inability to recognize truth.

The second effect was that many no longer had the spiritual strength to resist temptations. Satan tempted us in our weak spots. And this resulted in our giving into sin. At the same time many denied that what we did was sinful.

The third effect of our diminished prayer life was that we saw the darkness within the Church and we were tempted to leave the priesthood. Many did – most of my priest friends did.

I did not. Why? Because a number of my lay brothers and sisters were praying for me. Their prayers spared me. I did not leave the priesthood.

Instead, I was graced to experience the blessings that God offered to the Church through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The majority of the priests who taught with me left the priesthood – as did the majority of my classmates – who were ordained with me. That happened as a result of our diminished prayer life.

What happened next was even worse. For Satan persuaded some other priests to remain in the priesthood – to teach our young people falsehoods – such as 1] one did not need to worship God on Sundays by going to Mass, and 2] it was ok to be sexually active without being married – with those of the opposite sex and/or of the same sex.