

Orthos and isms

[This particular piece is heavily influenced by G.K. Chesterton. Some of his own ideas may clearly come through in this small writing. I have taken at least one of his ideas and rewritten it here in different language, so as to make it easier to comprehend to those with a lesser degree of understanding on the matter.]

Television shows are becoming increasingly violent, making death a daily and commonplace thing. Movies depict the dares and devices of death with ever increasing detail, with movies focused on the most gruesome manners in which one can die, now in 3D. The newspapers and mainline news media latches on to those gripping stories of death, destruction, and death defying affairs with great voracity, often overshadowing the positive glimmers of light in an ever darkening world. People are often more entertained or intrigued by the stories of those who died in multiple car accidents on the high way, then the stories of those who survived. We as a people follow, and pay money to see our favorite fighters beat each other to a bloody pulp on pay per view. I imagine it will not be long before we wander into the Roman-esque realm of gladiatorial sports, watching men fight each other to the death.

Why is this?

People have become "comfortable" with death. People are more comfortable with the certainties of death and dying, than they are with the uncertainties of this life. When I say uncertainties, don't mistake me to mean the mysteries of life, for it is the mystery of life that often keeps many going. It is the uncertainties of life, what is, and what could be, that keeps the poets within us well fed by the cultivation of our imagination. If we cannot hold hope or belief in the things we cannot see, and we likewise cannot find anything of value in the things we can see, then we have boxed ourselves into a realm of insanity, and the inside of that box is painted with the sterile and false images and words of this demystified world.

"Logicians destroy mystery, and in so doing, create morbidity."G.K. Chesterton

We have lost our sense of mystery about life. Logicians and scientists have done away with all the mystery of creation, and this life, with their theorems, hypotheses, and educated guesses about those things we cannot see, while sterilizing all the things of the world we can see with measurements, experiments, and allusions to fact. Perhaps there is no wonder

that we have latched onto the premise of death in all its forms, for it is one of the only true mysteries left in the world today. No one with any certainty can say what actually happens after death, what it looks like, what it feels like, or the color of God's eyes, if you will. Only in the hearts and minds of those who have faith, those with hope in what they believe in, and confidence in what they cannot see, seem to have any real confidence in death. "True" Christians, ones who actually live by the word of their namesake, that is Christ, live life with a fullness and joy that is hard to encounter, or compare to elsewhere. This is because instead of attempting to make sense of all the mysteries in the world, and in so doing make all things incomprehensible, they have allowed themselves the joy of lucidity in only one mystery, that of Christ, and in so doing all other things have been made clear to them.

The Church Catholic, and her orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and orthopathy is vastly important for this reason. It maintains the mysticism of the sacrament of Holy Communion, the mysticism in the power of prayer and the prayers of the heart, but makes clear what lies beyond the boundaries of death, a life everlasting in the perpetual joy of the Lord. It is in our understanding of this single mystery, that those who remain in the mystery of such, are made clear all the other aspects of the life leading to it.

Orthodoxy lends itself to authenticity. Orthodoxy, in a sense, serves as the vine of church theology, growing from soil cultivated by the body and blood of the crucified Christ. And there are many branches on this vine, yet not all the branches on this vine bare the fruits of authenticity. Perhaps this is why so many people have turned away from the church, and also why death seems to be so prevalent. Death is authentic. Death does not lie, for in a physical sense it is the same outcome for everyone. Yet, beyond the physical sense, it is not the same for everyone. Some people come to church to find meaning in life, and meaning in life after death, but the facade that many churches put on to make themselves "relevant," destroys any sense of authenticity they may have had. Many are changing the spirit of their church to keep pace with the spirit of the age, instead of cultivating the same spirit to match the growth of, and to compete against the social and spiritual decay of, the world around them. It is the mystery of the church that gives church life, and if we destroy that mystery with the weeds of relativism and modernism, and various other "isms" that exist out there today, then we risk poisoning the vine from which all truth stems.

"Mysticism keeps men sane. As long as you have mystery, you have health; if you destroy mystery, you create morbidity." G.K. Chesterton.

The mystery found in Orthodoxy is important to the health and well being of the church. If we destroy the mystery of faith, then we destroy the life and well being of the church, and the underlying theology that holds it up.

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We can know God in the stillness of our hearts. We can also know that God is working, but we don't necessarily know how, or why God is working.

"The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how." Mark 4:26-27

The logicians are explaining away the mystery that is God's, by attempting to set boundaries, and demarcate the how and why. There is no way that we can know this. God is infinite, and we are so finite.

"The poet only asks to get his head into the heavens. A logician tries to get the heavens into his head. And it is his head that splits." G.K. Chesterton.