

“Practice fraternal correction”

To practice fraternal correction - which is so deeply rooted in the Gospel - is a proof of supernatural trust and affection. Be thankful for it when you receive it, and don't neglect to practice it with those you live with. (The Forge, 566)

15 January

Be prudent and always act with simplicity, which is a very appropriate virtue for a son of God. Behave naturally in the way you

speak and in what you do. Get to the root of problems; don't stay on the surface. Remember that, if we really want to fulfill our obligations as Christians in a holy and manly way, we must anticipate unpleasant moments for others and for ourselves too.

I won't hide from you the fact that, when I have to correct someone or take a decision that will cause pain, I suffer before, during and after it; and I am not a sentimental person. It consoles me to think that it is only animals that don't cry. We men, children of God, do cry. As I see it, there will be times when you too will have to suffer if you are really serious about doing your duty faithfully. Don't forget that it is more comfortable (though it is a mistake) to avoid suffering at any cost, with the excuse of not wanting to hurt others. This inhibition often hides a shameful escape on our part from

suffering, since it isn't usually pleasant to correct someone in a serious matter. My children, remember that hell is full of closed mouths.

(...)To heal a wound, the first thing to do is to clean it well, including a wide area around it. The surgeon knows that the cleaning hurts, but he also knows that there will be worse pain later if it is not done. A disinfectant is also applied immediately. Naturally it stings (or, as they say where I come from, it *prickles*) and hurts the patient. But it's the only way if the wound is not to become infected.

If it is obvious that such measures must be taken to protect bodily health, although it may only be a relatively minor wound, then when the health of the soul is at stake — the very nerve centre of a man's life — how much more necessary it is to wash, to cut away, to scrape, to

disinfect, to suffer! Prudence demands that we intervene in this way and that we don't flee from duty, because to side-step our obligations here would indicate a great lack of concern for and even a grave offence against the virtues of justice and fortitude. (Friends of God, 160-161)

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