

SPEAK UP OR BE SILENT

A Lord's Flock Praise & Worship Topic

By: Fr. Eduardo Mayo, OFM CAP

November 16, 2024

Our fundamental orientation as Christians is to do all things with all our hearts and work only for Jesus Christ, and not for human masters (Colossians 3:23-24). In all aspects, we see ourselves as servants and imitators of our Master. Even as the opinion of others is important, following the Lord wholeheartedly takes precedence. Thus, just as Jesus spoke the truth in love, we ought to speak as instruments of His presence to others. However, Ecclesiastes 3:7 says, "There is time to keep silent and time to speak." Hence, we should be aware of the balance between speaking up and being silent.



1. Virtue and Vice

1.1. **Virtue** is the habitual and firm disposition to do good, perform good acts and give the best of oneself. It shows the excellent qualities of men, and behavior that shows high moral standards. A virtuous person tends towards good with his sensory and spiritual powers, pursues the good and chooses concrete actions. The goal is to become like God; but, it is possible to reach our full potential only with God.

1.2. **Vice** is the corruption of virtue in God's view, not in the view of our peers/colleagues. The theological virtues are faith, hope and charity; the human virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are knowledge, understanding, wisdom, counsel, fortitude, piety, fear of the Lord (1 Cor.12:8-10). We should get rid of all bitterness, anger, so we do not grieve the Holy Spirit. In place of these, we must be kind to one another, compassionate, and forgiving, just as God has forgiven us (Eph. 4:31-32).

2. When should we speak?

We should speak when we know that the good of the other beckons us to intervene, whether by chastising, reminding, correcting, or teaching.

2.1. We witness wrongdoing or injustice.

- 2.2. Righteousness or public welfare is at risk.
- 2.3. We have a chance to share the Gospel or instruct those who do not know God (Mark 16:15-16).
- 2.4. We need to correct a brother or sister in Christ (Matthew 18:15-18).

3. Some Points to Ponder Before We Speak:

- 3.1. **Pray before speaking.** *Ask the Lord to help us choose the right words.*
- 3.2. **Listen attentively.** *Pay close attention to the situation (do we understand where the person is coming from or how he/she feels? do we understand the situation?)*
- 3.3. **Speak from charity.** *When we speak, is it out of concern, trying to do good, or just to prove ourselves right? If the motivation is not right, keep silent; but if we are genuinely concerned and moved by love, speak.*
- 3.4. **Be ready to retreat.** *When we have already said everything and the conversation is going in a circle, retreat. It is time to withdraw when the person has a closed heart or a deaf ear.*
- 3.5. **Review and reflect sincerely.** *When we retreat, let us do an honest self-assessment (was there a better way to talk things out?). When another opportunity comes, we may speak better.*

4. When should we keep silent?

- 3.1 We are personally offended and tempted to be critical.
- 3.2 We need to reflect to avoid words that could hurt others.

Conclusion:

As Christians, we ought to speak and be motivated by kindness, compassion, and love. Let us mimic the kind of love Jesus gave us that is unconditional and selfless ("agape" in Greek). Indeed, the kindest thing we can do for others is to speak the truth because if we don't, they may go astray. The one who truly loves can tell the truth even when it hurts.

Reflection:

1. When do you speak your spiritual truths?
2. What are your difficulties in speaking up? How can you help people with closed hearts and deaf ears?

SCRIBES Ministry

Transcribed by: Cynthia R. Arevalo

Edited by: Jo Advincula

<https://lordsflock.org/teachings/digests>

Tags: #Speaking, #Virtue