

“There is only one way to avoid criticism:
do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing.”

-Aristotle

Criticism is cheap. Anybody can criticize. Let's understand criticism: “Constructive” criticism sees a problem and wants to help. “Destructive” criticism sees a problem, amplifies it, and wants to hurt with malicious intent. People fall prey to false or exaggerated stories all the time and credulous “church scandal” innuendo goes a long way, harmful on many levels. There are people who take advantage of the religious zeal of the faithful, turn it into bigotry, and then exploit it.

Partial information is, misinformation. Like a linguistic Molotov cocktail, damage is done almost immediately. Attempts at answering the many false accusations with “the Truth,” only brings on more conspiracies. And the vindictive cycle continues, *Therefore, rid yourselves of every kind of evil and deception, hypocrisy, jealousy, and every kind of slander* 1 Peter 2:1-2.

Partisan anti-patriarchal rhetoric circulating the social media platforms is recklessly overblown, overheated, and divorced from any ecclesial reality. The heated rhetoric is used to escape the reality. This propaganda often exploits already-existing prejudicial trends, making simple use of half-truths as well as outright falsehoods.

Unfortunately getting lots of tabloid headlines are complacent purveyors such as demagogues Nick Stamatakis, the George trio: Michalopoulos, Lykomitros, Karcazes, and the myriad of quasi-sanctimonious individuals hiding in their righteous anonymity. These self-stimulating scandalmongers feed and distribute each other's demeaning and corrupt articles.

A hateful person disguises himself with his speech and harbors deceit within. When he speaks graciously, don't believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart. Though his hatred is concealed by deception, his evil will be revealed in the assembly.

Proverbs 26:24-26

A basic elementary catechetical schooling would benefit those touting their PhDs and résumés at the end of every essay. Whether you're an author, reader, or financial supporter of OCL, KALAMI, AOIUSA, or other nefarious websites, stop. They survive on pandering in the gutter and life is really beautiful, don't sully it with scandal. When answering the specifics in their many diatribes, one is often accused with additional superfluous slanders. Espousing their ecclesial conspiracies, the critic's verdict is concluded, not open for discussion. Discern.

One must consider what is the motive of the critique? Are these critics trying to build up, or are they attempting to tear down? Their destructive criticism will not become our narrative. I recently found myself on the receiving end of an anonymous blog, ironically named “Authentic Transparency and Accountability” the article: *Archon Elias Damianakis defends Fr Alex Karloutsos*,

a ridiculous attempt, loaded with lies and phony quotes in a failed endeavor to promote a negative narrative of Fr Alex, the Archons, and church leadership. Of course, none of it true, nevertheless what came to my mind in reference to Fr Alex and his critics are the words of Teddy Roosevelt which I learned in elementary school (I was a 'Rough-Rider'):

"It is not the critic who counts;
not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles,
or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.
The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena,
whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood;
who strives valiantly;
who errs, who comes short again and again,
because there is no effort without error and shortcoming;
but who does actually strive to do the deeds;
who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions;
who spends himself in a worthy cause;
who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement,
and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly,
so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls
who neither know victory nor defeat..."

No one is exempt from criticism nor should we be shielded from it when warranted. However, the intentional and reprehensible defamation of individuals is lamentable. Moreover, to instigate division is wicked and should be denounced by everyone at a minimum. Everyone has a part to play in pushing back against these vile assaults.

I invite you with joy, criticize me on my books, articles, sermons, lectures... but do not analyze or judge me based on your prejudicial theories or with malicious intent. *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.* Romans 12:14

"Any fool can criticize, condemn and complain -and most fools do.
But it takes character and self-control to be understanding and forgiving"

Until I hear from you, I remain

In His service,

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