

Confusion vs. Uncertainty

A lot for what passes as
confusion
is at bottom actually
uncertainty.

Some consider both
undesirable
and go to great lengths to
eliminate them.

Yet, without both
we run the risk
of smugness
in our convictions
and intolerance
in our relationships.

Confusion resides in the
second of our cognitional
operations: *understanding*.
Uncertainty's domain is
in the fourth: *decision*.

In other words,
confusion arises
when ideas are
cloudy;
uncertainty reigns
when choices are divergent.

Proposing an alternative,
therefore,
does not generate confusion
but does create
uncertainty:
namely, there is another—
and maybe better—
way

So, for example,
proposals about
the priestly ordination
of women or married men
do not promote
confusion,
but they do cause
uncertainty.

Also, there is nothing
confusing
about allowing

in specific cases
the divorced and remarried
to receive Communion.
There is, however,
a great deal of uncertainty.

Confusion does arise,
however,
when legitimate and
responsible voices are
quelled under the banner
of avoiding confusion.

Whence comes the certainty
that such voices are
disloyal,
when they are seeking
dialogue,
or contributing to confusion,
when they are articulating
alternatives?

Confusion does arise
when matters of
discipline
are construed as articles of
faith;
or when all issues—
great and small—
are treated with the same
gravity;
or when some teachings
are excluded from further
development.

The Church is the depository
of the mysteries of God.
Why are we reluctant to
admit that we limited mortals
do not see
clearly and fully
the depth of these mysteries
(= confusion)
or know exactly the path
to follow
(= uncertainty).

A mystery is not a
conundrum
to be solved
intellectually,

but an invitation
to be embraced
passionately.

Entering the mystery,
therefore,
is not merely a matter
of memorizing formulae and
following clear rules
(= avoiding confusion),
but an adventure
to take halting steps
in exploring new territory
(= living with uncertainty).

Have I with
certainty
cleared up the
confusion?
I doubt it !

© *Msgr. Walter Niebrzydowski*
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Fr-Walter@nyc.rr.com
www.fatherwaltersparish.org