

Pastor's Note September 12-13, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the interest of helping parishioners to navigate the blizzard of political yammering and yada-yada, I am suspending the discussion on the Creed for the next few weeks. Instead, I want to explore some ways you can be a faithful Catholic who thinks clearly and argues logically.

Have you ever listened to some pundit, news channel talking head, or politician speak and found yourself enthralled? Have you later tried to formulate some reason for adopting positions that at one time sounded good, but found yourself confused? It happens all the time. I have watched CNN, Fox, CBS, Reuters, BBC, and MSNBC and heard them saying things that don't occur on all the channels. How can people think that they are telling the truth when there are so many opinions?

It used to be that we Catholics were united by a thing called "objective truth." Objective is something the mind perceives in the world. Subjective is something from inside the mind. Objective truth was something that could be verified outside of ourselves. We would accept those things as a nation and would agree to the propositions despite being people of various backgrounds. There used to be words in our language that stood for agreed upon concepts. These concepts could be translated into other cultures. Thus, communication, even between cultures was possible. In any language, the meaning of a word was said to be *univocal*, literally meaning of one voice. Generally, all people in any country would call a thing by the same name in their language. Cars are not trucks, and trucks are not cars. But when we started using the same word to mean two different things, the word became *equivocal*, which means "having two (or more) voices."

Now let's look at the currently *equivocated* term: "Black Lives Matter." There is the justice concept which is a simple and good idea; Black Lives Matter means that we should end police brutality and racist shootings. There is also the political organization and movement called "Black Lives Matter." The goals of the political movement as articulated on their website have some things in common with the justice concept "Black Lives Matter." But they have also added some "Marxist" and anarchist ideas to the term. Because of this *equivocation*, if someone allied himself to the political organization BLM because he thought he was only joining himself to a group that shared only the justice concept, he may unwittingly have joined a Marxist movement he doesn't fully support. This *equivocation* is no more evident than in the daily "mostly peaceful protests" and the nightly riots. To be sure, some of the BLM people in the daily "mostly" peaceful protests are also members of the nightly rioting and violent BLM people. This latter group may have the intention to confuse the rest of us through *equivocation*.

The way to not be fooled is to define and agree upon terms in our discussions. This is what the ancient philosophers taught. Learn what words actually mean. Read the dictionary. Define your terms. See if what you are hearing is using the fallacy of *equivocation*.