

No! Not another phobia: I'm afraid of phobias!

It may seem insane to come up with yet another phobia in our already phobic society. Yet, I am a word lover (lexiphile?) and I am tired of hearing words smithed either in literature or in a newly-smithed word precisely to distort our Catholic identity, or to attempt to silence our ability to speak to modern culture.

We have a long tradition of word-smithing from Greek to English. From the Bible itself we have the name of one such word-smithed-individual thanks to St. Luke: Theophilus. No, I am not questioning whether Theophilus was a real individual. I am simply reminding you of the meaning of his name: "Lover of God".

If someone can be a theophile, does it not stand to reason there can also be a theophobe? And why stop at only a reference to God? Can there not be mariophobes as there are also mariophiles regarding our Blessed Lady? What about regarding Christianity itself: christophobe and christophile? No, I am still not done attempting to add to our English lexicon. To my sensibilities, the best is yet to come.

There have been plenty of crazy attempts to usurp the word-smithing process in recent years. Many of those have been benign attempts at incorporating technology into our modern world. The whole code of short-cut "words" used in the instant messaging system is a good example of more-or-less neutral word-smithing. But there have also been word-smithing attempts that have insinuated on our English language a clear bias. One of the worst is the modern "phobia" seemingly generated to silence especially Christians: homophobia.

Another area where modern culture tries to tell us that we are phobic is in relation to science. How many times in recent years have some scientist-as-philosopher tried to tell us we have inhibited science by our neanderthalic reliance on faith, when science reveals (or supposedly will reveal) every answer we need.

And we can hardly forget the ludicrous fictional machinations of recent years: "DaVinci Code", "Angels and Demons", "Star Wars" series and "the force"... the list here is too long. Yet, in these fictional presentations – when one knows they are fiction – the imagination can be stimulated; and that can be valuable, if guided to truth.

"Truth" allows me to turn to the main new pair of words for today: alithinophobe and alithinophile. Our society today seems to be alithinophobic. Alithinos is Greek for truth. Too many people try to relativise truth: "yours is yours... mine is mine"; "there is no such thing as absolute truth" (do people actually realize what they are saying there?); "you can't impose your truth on others"... Yet truth is truth. John Paul the Great wrote marvelously about this so many times. Pope Benedict has continued the clarion call for truth. And we must become alithinophiles ourselves. All truths ultimately reveal God. So to be a lover of truth means we are being true to God.

We need to regain the intellectual high-ground that is our Catholic heritage. It is time to call alithinophobic people to the line. They have been taking the lead in shaping our culture for too long. Pope Benedict coined the marvelous phrase "dictatorship of relativism" a few years ago. Now, more than ever, we need that clarity of truth to overcome the darkensses of lies dressed up as pseudo-phobias when the reality is there is a fear of truth – or should I say Truth.

Alithinophiles unite!