

A Sermon on Vanity

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for March 6th, 2022 (and beyond)

Vanity is plaguing the world in many ways and you might already be corrupted by it to some extent or know others so corrupted. Products advertised to enhance beauty should be advertised as vanity enhancing products instead. But, the #TaoFu of that is that people take photos of themselves and share that with the world because they are amazed at their own ability to make a public appearance and gain a following. Mental health professionals call “vanity” benign narcissism and/or malignant narcissism. Benign might be likened to wearing your Sunday Best to impress folks at church because Jesus was all about dressing up. And, malignant would be likened to regular professionally assisted makeovers (clothes, hair, and make-up) repeatedly shared with the public for the purposes of admiring the aesthetic alone thereby recognized by intelligent people as totally superficial and lacking in depth.

When impressionable individuals are exposed to commercialized vanity as the example by which to advance socially or economically, it becomes clear (through social media activity alone as a measure) that Corona means “Crown” and sometimes the vain assume monarchical authority they do not have as a matter of natural law and at times manmade law. It is my opinion that the mask mandates are both a violation of individual liberties in full context and a means by which vanity in the form of commercial vanity products such as make-up, high heels, and penis enlarging equipment to name a few, are less in demand. “Beauty Stocks Face New Reality Amid Coronavirus Pandemic Earnings take hit as remote work and masks crimp demand for products like lipstick and blush; Skin care is a bright spot”. Cosmetic company stocks have plummeted by 61% since the pandemic began. Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/beauty-stocks-face-new-reality-amid-coronavirus-pandemic-11598952600>

The plague that is vanity in many ways is being addressed by a viral pandemic. And, the double entendre is employed on “viral pandemic” in that last sentence applying to both vanity enhancing products such as make-up and social media posts. The thing is though, the inferior intellect of many on social media reveals itself with each post thereby leaving less and less reinforcement of the affliction known as vanity at some point revealing the actual limitations on the authority of any one individual in a democracy whether local, state, national, or global. And, as more become aware of what to avoid, a return to socializing in person should be a welcome relief to all with very few exceptions. But, I find censorship toxic so believe everyone should be free to express individuality while understanding that some problems take care of themselves when not addressed by charitable services or law enforcement.

I also believe the pandemic is a cover because the internet poses too great a security risk to everyone and has become its own potential smart bomb impacting individuals, businesses, and governments who have seemingly all decided that the overall benefits of the internet outweigh the overall risks even when repeat stories of breaches of energy/power mainframes, breaches of government security systems, businesses and individuals whose economic and virtual lives are held for ransom, are commonplace. For

more info on that, see <https://hostingtribunal.com/blog/hacking-statistics/#gref>. I believe the US government and the media have been notifying the public about the risks associated with the internet for quite some time while respecting the free market to decide whether or not to assume the risks which have been reasonably disclosed repeatedly and publicly. So, the COVID stuff has pushed many more online arguably creating a pool of potential victims so large that most feel a little safer as a result or just those who felt the internet should be for everyone so there is a virtual human shield attracting or luring criminals away from infrastructure including essential services.

The question for you is “Are you staying online for the sake of your own vanity or because you are honestly that willing to assume the risks associated with internet use after researching the topic in-depth?” If willing to assume the risks of which every reasonable person with reliable information access should have and know by now, is your vanity showing up as a belief in your own online invulnerability? How is that translating in terms of your actual life? I understand that might not be the best question to ask at a time when many of us are forced to do most socializing online as a result of the pandemic.

I’m staying online because I wish to seize every opportunity available to do good works in good faith through as many means as God avails to me. I’m aware of the risks and have been a victim of cybercrimes. And, I’ve upgraded my operating and security systems knowing that there is no foolproof method to avoid being a victim of cybercrimes beyond removing oneself from the internet. And, in real life there is no foolproof way to avoid being a victim of crime whether out in public or in a private setting.

And, criminals are often labeled as malignant narcissists or what people of faith refer to as suffering the vice of vanity. But, they may just be doing their best to emulate those deemed to be leaders by the majority because they want the power and authority that comes with the titles. The titles have very little authority in a bureaucratic democracy though and with the checks and balances, though imperfect, we all still regulate each other by vote, by reporting violations to the proper authorities, and leading by example in showing mutual respect by at least being honest with each other and ourselves about our own shortcomings. People who ignore their own shortcomings should refrain from public comment on the shortcomings of others to avoid a rude awakening.

Does vanity not know itself and hope to be granted authority over everyone else by establishing superficial standards for public presentation? Or, does vanity know itself and assume everyone else is too stupid to recognize it? If vanity does not know itself, then it is ignorance in deimatic disguise seeking acceptance by faking it. If vanity knows itself, then it is a hypocrite promoting inequality by assuming its own exceptionalism while failing to recognize its true potential thereby revealing it doesn’t know itself and self-negates which suggests vanity is just ignorance in disguise.

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

For More About COPE and the HEAL Mission, see:

<https://www.cope.church> and <https://www.heal-online.org>