

## **Fraternal Correction**

Friends in Christ,

Today we read of this gruesome death of St. John the Baptist

How did it come down to this?

It is because he had told King Herod that he was wrong to have taken his brother's wife.

John the Baptist ultimately was put to death because he had tried to show Herod the right way of living.

In the Christian life, this is called Fraternal Correction, or 'to admonish the sinner.'

It is one of the Spiritual Works of mercy.

Sometimes, the greatest kindness we can do for someone, is to show them their error.

Everyone can, at times, form bad habits.

They could be habitual faults, such as doing our work badly, not being on time, spreading of gossip, or rudeness -

it could be that someone we know is giving bad example, or is not treating others fairly, or is drinking too much.

It could be that someone is caught up in flirting, and does not notice the risk he is putting his marriage in.

We all have blind spots.

Mentioning the trouble to a person, in charity, can really help.

You could keep a marriage from going off-track -

'You know, I've noticed that you flirt with men; this is unfair to your marriage.'

So, you could help a person remove a fault.

The early Christians did this often, because they knew it is real love.

St. Paul tells us that when Peter was doing wrong, he went and told him face to face about it.

Jesus says, when you see your brother doing wrong, go to him and point out the problem.

Some people however, do exactly the opposite.  
They say all kinds of flattering things to their friends,  
and then criticize their faults behind their back.

Now no one wants to offend the person, this is true,  
but what if a doctor said, 'I don't want to upset the person by telling them they  
need surgery,' and so the doctor just lets the person die, because he wants to be  
really nice.

Well, isn't the soul and eternity more important than bodily health?

When we sincerely and kindly instruct a friend,  
it can actually enrich the friendship.

Now if we ENJOY telling people how they are wrong,  
then we need to stop.

St. Theresa says that it should be difficult to correct someone, because it means  
that we can empathize with how it can hurt to hear of your fault.

Scripture says, whoever brings a sinner back from his errors,  
will cover a multitude of sins, and save his own soul.