

## Pentecost XIX

“*Salus Populo ego sum, dicit Dominus . . .*”

I am the salvation of the people saith the Lord: in whatever tribulation they shall cry to me, I will hear them. And I will be their Lord forever. Attend, O my people, to my law. Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.” Most beloved in Christ, with these words the introit has opened the ineffable Paschal Mysteries on this, the 19th Sunday after Pentecost.

Judging from the quality of our society, arisen as it has from modern philosophical opinions and driven on by technology – a world become instantaneous, materialistic and superficial – the very *concept* of God seems to be a merely superstitious relic from the past, hanging on from a different time when man had not been enlightened by science, medicine, and feats of technology, when man had not yet realized he was, as it surely seems in our days, the master of his own destiny.

The proponents of change as both necessary and good – which it is automatically neither one or the other – usually point out how we are in the process of creating a better world, a better society, a world in which our children will live deeper and richer lives.

The problem with this vision is that it is not corroborated by reality. A better society is not one that advocates, for example, the legalized barbarism of mothers murdering their children, or the practitioners of medicine exterminating the terminally ill to name but two examples.

In truth, our world which is sinking more deeply into a dark age of moral depravity each day, rejects, ever more and more, the most fundamental law which governs human conduct: the Natural Law. This is not what scientists refer to when speaking of the laws of nature. Rather, it is that universal law which *determines the finality or purpose of all things*. This purpose inheres – or belongs intrinsically – to all things according to the nature of each: gravity pulls, teeth are for chewing, language is for communication. The world-wide ascendancy of the acceptability of artificial birth control which has taken place since the 1950’s is a spectacular example of what I am speaking. It is self-evident that sexual activity has, as its natural purpose – its finality according to the Natural Law – the propagation of the human species – even when and if a specific act does not result in fertilization. I say self-evident because the pharmaceutical industry generates its multi-billion dollar business from devotees of artificial contraception *precisely* because by the use of their products – and *far* from unawareness as to what sexual acts have for their purpose – they recognize the Natural Law perfectly: such people deliberately choose to violate that law in order to obtain the pleasure of sexual acts while ridding themselves of its purpose and responsibility.

The Church’s teaching on this matter is considerably older than Pope Paul VI’s *Humanae Vitae*. It is older than Christianity itself, but found already explicitly taught in the *Didache*, the oldest magisterial document known and dating around 90 AD. This teaching is also found consistently down through the ages.

I cite this as but one example of how our modern society has not come of age, but is sinking ever more deeply into a moral abyss indistinguishable from barbarism. The ultimate cause of all our social ills is traceable, without much effort, to society’s attitude towards God and religion. Our world, quite simply, has rejected God in the

public order, and claims, at best, that God is your opinion or mine, and thus must be kept in the domain of what is called “private.”

The First Vatican Council teaches in Session Three in its dogmatic constitution concerning the Catholic Faith that “...Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certitude from created things by the light of human reason,” and anathematizes those who oppose this teaching willfully. Be assured, my beloved, that the Church has not changed, nor has this teaching changed, nor can it change. And whereas God transcends the order which He has created, and therefore human reason can only know Him analogously and imperfectly from the natural world, His *existence* remains *knowable without an act of faith*. This fact is arrived at quite naturally by young children – the best philosophers since they are not yet old enough nor corrupted enough to have personal interests to protect through falsified opinions. Children quite easily arrive at the knowledge of God’s existence and so they say, “But something had to make everything.” This is the first cause, itself uncaused, and what is known as *God*. In a word this God is the source and purpose for our being.

This superficial world in which we are living is certainly *not* liberated from yesterday’s superstitions: rather it is alienated from the life spring of its own health and salvation. God, knowable by reason and yet Who has splendidly revealed Himself through the Prophets and His Incarnate Son, has been, quite simply, rejected by individuals and entire societies for selfish motives.

Liberation movements whose ends have now developed into legalization of murdering the most helpless members of human society, sexual depravity on a scale hitherto inconceivable in human history, the development of Amazonian women difficult to comprehend and impossible to control, are *not* indication of better world. Our society’s rupture with its past, its discontinuity with its Christian heritage, the bashing of the Catholic Church and harping on its supposed crimes across the centuries, always judged by the incoherent principles of modernity - are the root causes of underlying today’s massive defection from God and religion. This has permitted the establishment of a new morality predicated on moral license. This is not freedom: it is slavery.

Against this St Paul says in today’s epistle reading, “ Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man.” He is referring to the very real need for the *interior* con-version of men’s *hearts*, the “new man” being none other than the human person who, *fallen* in nature, is regenerated from sin and death by the waters of Baptism and nurtured in the life of God by sanctifying grace. Yet is *this* some dark superstition of past centuries? The unenlightened religion of some bygone day? Something which needs overthrowing in order to create a better world?

Certainly not. Christianity is that bright sword of truth which divides – the sons of light from the sons of darkness. And our God, - Jesus Christ – has told us that the Prince of Darkness – Satan – is the Prince of Lies as well. Being as he is the highest angel God created – and angels are pure spirits of pro-found intellectual prowess – Satan’s hatred for God is total. He has worked for centuries in the heart of human civilization to sow error under the guise of truth to bring men to their ruin. This does not become untrue merely because it is politically incorrect to say as much! No merely human power ingenuity could have affected the evils which are now freely legislated and protected by civil states.

“I am the salvation of the people, says the Lord. In whatever tribulation they shall cry to me, I will hear them.” Beloved, God exists, and He calls us to Himself – for our health and salvation. But it is only those who respond to that call who will be saved.

The parable of the wedding feast in today’s Gospel reading is directly connected to this universal call for our health and salvation. But it depends, as we will see, on two factors: the first is that it is God Who has chosen to save man in the first place; the second is that each man, individually, must accept the offer of salvation by an interior and exterior adherence to God who has done the calling. This adherence must be without compromise: that is, each person must submit 100% to God: the Natural Law which He has imbedded in the nature of His creation, to His revealed Law, and to the authentic teaching of the one Church He has founded.

To the idea that everyone will be saved because God would never cast anyone into perdition the church answers: those who are lost have condemned themselves. Jesus Christ – true God and true man – has revealed in to-day’s parable that those who are found at the wedding feast, that is at the gates of paradise at life’s end, without a wedding garment are to be bound hand and foot and cast into the exterior darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is Hell. Elsewhere Jesus says, “Though many are called few are chosen.” The Church has always understood this as meaning many are Baptized and offered salvation, while it is only those who respond in humility and fidelity to grace who will be saved.

St. Pius X once said the true friends of the people are men of tradition. The Catholic religion is, essentially, the tradition of the revelation of the Son of God. It is a divine, *revealed* Truth coming from Christ, which fits with perfect harmony not the natural world in which we are placed. These truths – nature itself as constituted by God and Divine Revelation as given through Jesus Christ are mediated to us across time through the guardianship of holy Church and her true pastors. If we do not stray to the right or left, if we do not listen to the allurements of this world – which are many and insidious – we will come to win our souls by the true Christian way. This consists of our pursuit of virtue at the expense of vice: that we pray and seek true humility of heart that we may know ourselves as God knows us, and that we practice charity towards God and our neighbor for the love of God in that way which places ourselves, and all our sinful tendencies, in lowest priority.

“I am the salvation of the people, saith the Lord.” Most beloved in Christ, let us truly believe what we pray in our worship. Let us turn to God with renewed acts of gratitude and hope. Let us repent from our sins of self-centeredness and forgetfulness of God. In so doing we work out our salvation by the wedding garments of grace; the more we receive the sacraments of the Church in humility and charity towards our neighbor the more God will hear us when we cry for His help. This is the way of our faith in this life here below, and the gateway to that bliss which is the reward of the just in the world which is to come.