

FAITH AND REASON

The seeds of hope amid death and destruction: “The innocent pay the price of war, the innocent!” The voice of Pope Francis seems to be the one who cries out in the wilderness, six months on from the beginning of the senseless and horrible aggression against Ukraine: destruction, death and the specter of nuclear conflict. “I think of so much cruelty,” said the Pontiff at the end of the General Audience, “of so many innocents who are paying the price of madness, the madness of all sides, because war is madness and no one at war can say: ‘No, I am not mad.’ The madness of war.”

We cannot get used to what is happening, after months of shocking images of death and destruction caused by modern weaponry and the very high price in terms of innocent human lives sacrificed, families annihilated, homes and businesses destroyed, neighborhoods razed to the ground. The voice of Peter has never failed to express solidarity with the aggrieved and all those suffering the consequences of war, but also to urge the leaders of the nations involved to seek a negotiated solution.

The balance sheet of this half-year conflict between two nations in the heart of Europe is tragic. Mass graves, dead and wounded children, Ukrainian and Russian mothers mourning their very young sons who died at the front, millions of displaced persons, the risk of famine and environmental devastation, attest to the impotence of Heads of State and international organizations and the inability to apply — with courage and creativity — what the Pope calls the ‘scheme of peace.’ In fact, many people, too many, continue to reason according to the ‘scheme of war’ and consider as the only viable response the strengthening of the old military alliances and the mad race for rearmament. The world, already scarred by so many wars that make up the ‘pieces’ of that Third World War of which Pope Francis has spoken so often, is plunging back into a new Cold War. Not to mention the serious economic consequences, in terms of energy supply, expected in the short and medium term for many countries.

Is it possible to discern signs of hope in this panorama of devastation? Yes, it is possible. One seed of hope is the generosity with which so many people have opened their doors to Ukrainian refugees, personally brought aid, involved themselves in humanitarian initiatives without allowing themselves to be overcome by the ‘globalization of indifference.’ Another seed of hope is the organizations, associations, and groups that have engaged in actions and initiatives for peace, for dialogue, for negotiation, taking personal risks in visiting war-torn Ukraine. A seed of hope is the growing awareness which is more widespread among the people than among their leaders and political leaders, of the urgent need to stop the slaughter through truce and negotiation. Because if the response to the emergence of new conflicts continues to be on the basis of old patterns instead of daring to attempt to build a new international coexistence, the fate of humanity risks being unfortunately sealed. Finally, there is a seed of hope that for the believer is the first and most important. Those who believe know that wars begin in the human heart, that God intervenes in history, and that prayer, especially that of the humble, the simple, the suffering, can influence and change the destinies of humanity. **Andrea Torielli**

Life in Man is the Glory of God; the Life of Man is the Vision of God: The glory of God gives life; those who see God receive life. For this reason, God, who cannot be grasped, comprehended or seen, allows himself to be seen, comprehended and grasped by men, that he may give life to those who see and receive him. It is impossible to live without life, and the actualization of life comes from participation in God, while participation in God is to see God and enjoy his goodness.

Men will therefore see God if they are to live; through the vision of God, they will become immortal and attain to God himself. As I have said, this was shown in symbols by the prophets: God will be seen by men who bear his Spirit and are always waiting for his coming. As Moses said in the Book of Deuteronomy: On that day we shall see, for God will speak to man, and man will live.

God is the source of all activity throughout creation. He cannot be seen or described in his own nature and in all his greatness by any of his creatures. Yet he is certainly not unknown. Through his Word the whole creation learns that there is one God the Father, who holds all things together and gives them their being. As it is written in the Gospel: No man has ever seen God, except the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; he has revealed him.

From the beginning the Son is the one who teaches us about the Father; he is with the Father from the beginning. He was to reveal to the human race visions of prophecy, the diversity of spiritual gifts, his own ways of ministry, the glorification of the Father, all in due order and harmony, at the appointed time and for our instruction: where there is order, there is also harmony; where there is harmony, there is also correct timing; where there is correct timing, there is also advantage.

The Word became the steward of the Father’s grace for the advantage of men, for whose benefit he made such wonderful arrangements. He revealed God to men and presented men to God. He safeguarded the invisibility of the Father to prevent man from treating God with contempt and to set before him a constant goal toward which to make progress. On the other hand, he revealed God to men and made him visible in many ways to prevent man from being totally separated from God and so cease to be. Life in man is the glory of God; the life of man is the vision of God. If the revelation of God through creation gives life to all who live upon the earth, much more does the manifestation of the Father through the Word give life to those who see God... **Saint Irenaeus**

Faith: Lord Jesus, I firmly believe that the Blessed Sacrament is Your very Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. Senses cannot grasp this marvel. Faith, however, reaches beyond what the eyes can see and assures us that You are present. Grant, O Lord, that our faith in the Eucharist may also strengthen our ability to recognize the dignity of every human life. We know that the senses can fool us there as well. Some may not be attractive, others may seem too small, some may appear as less than human. But we, who can see You in the Sacred Host, can certainly see you in our brothers and sisters. We can also see You, O Lord, in the children in the womb. In a day when so many have forgotten these children and dismiss them as less valuable than those who are born, grant that we may grow all the more convinced of their dignity and worth. Then grant, O Lord, that we may act accordingly. **Amen.**

Let Me Not Be Afraid: Lord, let me not be afraid of Your will for me. No matter what form it may take. Even though its beyond my understanding of what is taking place My one desire is to do Your will. And the plan You have for my life, You long to fulfill. Let me not be afraid of the deep valleys, or the clouds that hover from above. But wholly shield and protect me in Your sweet love. As The Light appears brighter in the night, though it is still there in the day, so let Your presence always be with me, and let me not be afraid.

A Thought For the Day

Sunday My longing for truth was a single prayer.
Monday A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows.
Tuesday The face is the mirror of the mind, and eyes without speaking confess the secrets of the heart.
Wednesday Since love grows within you, so beauty grows. For love is the beauty of the soul.
Thursday Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful, for beauty is God's handwriting.
Friday If I am not, may God put me there; and if I am, may God so keep me.
Saturday Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. Jesus Christ

"Imagine a single mother who goes to church or parish, and says to the secretary: I WANT TO BAPTIZE MY SON, and the attendant says: 'No, you can't, because she's not married...' "Let us keep in mind that... This mother had the courage to continue a pregnancy and what did she find? With a locked door! So, if we follow this path and attitude, we are not doing God's people, good.

Jesus created the seven sacraments and with this kind of attitude we create an eighth: the sacrament of pastoral customs!

"WHOEVER APPROACHES THE CHURCH MUST FIND OPEN DOORS AND NOT FEAR OF FAITH".

"We need saints without veil, without toner. We need saints in jeans and sneakers. We need saints who will go to the movies, listen to music, and stroll with their friends. We need saints who put God first and excel in University. We need saints who find time to pray every day and know how to fall in love with purity and chastity or consecrate their chastity. We need modern saints, twenty-first century saints with a spirituality embedded in our time. We need saints committed to the poor and necessary social change.

We need saints who live in the world, who get holy in the world, and who are not afraid to live in the world. We need saints who drink coke and eat hot dogs, who are netizens, who listen to iPod. We need saints who love the Eucharist and are not ashamed to drink a beer or eat pizza on the weekend with friends. We need saints who like cinema, theatre, music, dance, sports. We need social saints, open, normal, friends, cheerful, companions. We need saints who are in the world and who can taste the pure and good things of the world, but without being worldly." This is supposed to be us!!! **Pope Francis**

To enter many hearts: Like Mary, we must allow the Holy Spirit to help us become intimate friends of Christ. Like Mary, we must put aside any fear in order to take Christ into the world in whatever we do - in marriage, as single people in the world, as students, as workers, as professional people. Through us, Christ wants to go to many places in the world and to enter many hearts.... **St John Paul II**

The Little Things: Be faithful in little things, for in them our strength lies. To the good God, nothing is little, because he is so great. But we are so small, that is why God stoops down and takes the trouble to make little things for us to do - to give us a chance to prove our love for him. Because he makes them, they are very great.....**Mother Teresa of Calcutta**

In His Will is Our Peace

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