

THE POPE'S EASTER MESSAGE— AN EXERCISE IN INEPTITUDE

The Pope is not the head of some humanitarian institution such as the United Nations or one or other of its member States; not like some Masonic Grand Master or the head of some quasi-Masonic organization such as Rotary or Lions. He is the head of that institution, unique on earth, established by Almighty God for man's eternal salvation.

He is the Servant of the servants of God, the Vicar of Christ on earth. His duty is to labour like St Peter for men's salvation; that is, for their eternal wellbeing. Any concerns he may have about the earthly condition of men must have as its subtext this primary consideration. His concern is, moreover, not simply for members of the Catholic faith but for all men, for God desires that all men—not just those who adhere to the faith He established on earth—should be united with Him forever in heaven; saved from the fires of Hell. What did we get from the Pope in his Easter message? A copy is appended below.

There has been no age like the present one for the ubiquity of its rejection of God and His authority. The miasma of atheism lies like a poisonous fog over each of the allegedly civilized nations of the world. G K Chesterton might have been writing of this age when he put in the mouth of the Blessed Virgin the following words addressed to King Alfred the Great in his *Ballad of the White Horse*:

I tell you naught for your comfort,
Yea, naught for your desire,
Save that the sky grows darker yet
And the sea rises higher.

Night shall be thrice night over you
And heaven an iron cope;
Do you have joy without a cause,
Yea, faith without a hope.

The effects of atheism are appalling, harmful beyond understanding. They include—

- the acceptance of systematic murder in the form of abortion and euthanasia;
- the perversion of sexuality in homosexuality (effeminacy) descending from toleration via acceptance to legitimization and affecting both sexes;
- indulgence in conduct and in attitudes which degrade systematically to the depths of Hell the creature God made in His own image and likeness; and worst of all,
- the coarsening of the perceptions of the common man so that he is quite incapable of realizing the immense evils of the atmosphere in which he lives.

Here is the chief problem with our modern society: its members are blind to the moral evils they accept as normal behaviour.

They do not live in the real world but in one contrived from the subjectivist principle that truth is what the members of society tolerate or accept, regardless of moral principle.

What the Pope did not say

- Almighty God would not have allowed this physical evil, so ubiquitous and profound in its effects, except for our greater good. Any plague—and this is a plague—is a sanction against man’s engagement in moral evil, that is, in sin.
- The virus’s ubiquity parallels the ubiquity of the moral evils in which men engage daily and sully their souls—abortion, buggery, contraception, divorce, euthanasia and fornication. These are inevitable consequences of atheism—calculated disbelief in God and the order He has established on earth.
- If we are to be freed from this plague there must be a conversion of heart, of individuals and of nations, from the evils that atheism brings in its train. There must be a return to God and to his rule.
- For those who believe in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ, it is imperative that we place our trust in the intercessory prayers of Christ’s Mother, Our Blessed Lady, and by Christ’s decree in his last words from the Cross on which He achieved our salvation, the mother of each of us.

Michael Baker

Low Sunday—April 19, 2020

Appendix

Vatican City, Apr 12, 2020 / 05:40 am. *The full text of Pope Francis' Urbi et Orbi message, delivered April 12 at the Basilica of St. Peter.*

Dear brothers and sisters, Happy Easter!

Today the Church’s proclamation echoes throughout the world: “Jesus Christ is risen!” – “He is truly risen.”

Like a new flame this Good News springs up in the night: the night of a world already faced with epochal challenges and now oppressed by a pandemic severely testing our whole human family. In this night, the Church’s voice rings out: “Christ, my hope, is risen!”

This is a different “contagion”, a message transmitted from heart to heart – for every human heart awaits this Good News. It is the contagion of hope: “Christ, my hope, is risen!” This is no magic formula that makes problems vanish. No, the resurrection of Christ is not that. Instead, it is the victory of love over the root of evil, a victory that does not “by-pass” suffering and death, but passes through them, opening a path in the abyss, transforming evil into good: this is the unique hallmark of the power of God.

The Risen Lord is also the Crucified One, not someone else. In his glorious body he bears indelible wounds: wounds that have become windows of hope. Let us turn our gaze to him that he may heal the wounds of an afflicted humanity.

Today my thoughts turn in the first place to the many who have been directly affected by the coronavirus: the sick, those who have died and family members who mourn the loss of their loved ones, to whom, in some cases, they were unable even to bid a final farewell. May the Lord of life welcome the departed into his kingdom and grant comfort and hope to those still suffering, especially the elderly and those who are alone. May he never withdraw his consolation and help from those who are especially vulnerable, such as persons who work in nursing homes, or live in barracks and prisons. For many, this is an Easter of solitude lived amid the sorrow and hardship that the pandemic is causing, from physical suffering to economic difficulties.

This disease has not only deprived us of human closeness, but also of the possibility of receiving in person the consolation that flows from the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and Reconciliation. In many countries, it has not been possible to approach them, but the Lord has not left us alone! United in our prayer, we are convinced that he has laid his hand upon us, firmly reassuring us: Do not be afraid, "I have risen and I am with you still!"

May Jesus, our Passover, grant strength and hope to doctors and nurses, who everywhere offer a witness of care and love for our neighbours, to the point of exhaustion and not infrequently at the expense of their own health. Our gratitude and affection go to them, to all who work diligently to guarantee the essential services necessary for civil society, and to the law enforcement and military personnel who in many countries have helped ease people's difficulties and sufferings.

In these weeks, the lives of millions of people have suddenly changed. For many, remaining at home has been an opportunity to reflect, to withdraw from the frenetic pace of life, stay with loved ones and enjoy their company. For many, though, this is also a time of worry about an uncertain future, about jobs that are at risk and about other consequences of the current crisis. I encourage political leaders to work actively for the common good, to provide the means and resources needed to enable everyone to lead a dignified life and, when circumstances allow, to assist them in resuming their normal daily activities.

This is not a time for indifference, because the whole world is suffering and needs to be united in facing the pandemic. May the risen Jesus grant hope to all the poor, to those living on the peripheries, to refugees and the homeless. May these, the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters living in the cities and peripheries of every part of the world, not be abandoned. Let us ensure that they do not lack basic necessities (all the more difficult to find now that many businesses are closed) such as medicine and especially the possibility of adequate health care. In light of the present circumstances, may international sanctions be relaxed, since these make it difficult for countries on which they have been imposed to provide adequate support to their citizens, and may all nations be put in a position to meet the greatest needs of the moment through the reduction, if not the forgiveness, of the debt burdening the balance sheets of the poorest nations.

This is not a time for self-centeredness, because the challenge we are facing is shared by all, without distinguishing between persons. Among the many areas of the world affected by the coronavirus, I think in a special way of Europe. After the Second World War, this beloved continent was able to rise again, thanks to a concrete spirit of solidarity that enabled it to overcome the rivalries of the past. It is more urgent than ever, especially in the present circumstances, that these rivalries do not regain force, but that all recognize themselves as part of a single family and support one another. The European Union is presently facing an epochal challenge, on which will depend not only its future but that of the whole world. Let us not lose the opportunity to give further proof of solidarity, also

by turning to innovative solutions. The only alternative is the selfishness of particular interests and the temptation of a return to the past, at the risk of severely damaging the peaceful coexistence and development of future generations.

This is not a time for division. May Christ our peace enlighten all who have responsibility in conflicts, that they may have the courage to support the appeal for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. This is not a time for continuing to manufacture and deal in arms, spending vast amounts of money that ought to be used to care for others and save lives. Rather, may this be a time for finally ending the long war that has caused such great bloodshed in Syria, the conflict in Yemen and the hostilities in Iraq and in Lebanon. May this be the time when Israelis and Palestinians resume dialogue in order to find a stable and lasting solution that will allow both to live in peace. May the sufferings of the people who live in the eastern regions of Ukraine come to an end. May the terrorist attacks carried out against so many innocent people in different African countries come to an end.

This is not a time for forgetfulness. The crisis we are facing should not make us forget the many other crises that bring suffering to so many people. May the Lord of life be close to all those in Asia and Africa who are experiencing grave humanitarian crises, as in the Province of Cabo Delgado in the north of Mozambique. May he warm the hearts of the many refugees displaced because of wars, drought and famine. May he grant protection to migrants and refugees, many of them children, who are living in unbearable conditions, especially in Libya and on the border between Greece and Turkey. And I don't want to forget the island of Lesbos. In Venezuela, may he enable concrete and immediate solutions to be reached that can permit international assistance to a population suffering from the grave political, socio- economic and health situation.

Dear brothers and sisters, Indifference, self-centeredness, division and forgetfulness are not words we want to hear at this time. We want to ban these words forever. They seem to prevail when fear and death overwhelm us, that is, when we do not let the Lord Jesus triumph in our hearts and lives. May Christ, who has already defeated death and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, dispel the darkness of our suffering humanity and lead us into the light of his glorious day, a day that knows no end.

With these reflections, I would like to wish you all a happy Easter.
