

A PLAGUE TO COUNTER A PLAGUE

God, since He is supremely good, in no wise would allow something of evil to be in His works were He not good and omnipotent even up to this point as to bring forth good even from evil.
St Augustine, *Enchiridion* xi

1. Everything that exists is good because its creator, Almighty God, is good. Even a virus such as the one that now dominates our lives is something good. That it may work harm among humanity is an incident of its operation; of its nature; of what it is. That it may flourish as a plague ('pandemic') to afflict mankind can occur only because God allows it and He only allows it for our good.

The good the virus will achieve is a diminution of the effects of another plague that afflicts us, a plague more insidious, a plague far worse than one that attacks the body; one that ravages men's souls and minds. The symptoms of this plague are fornication, contraception, abortion, euthanasia and homosexual indulgence, and innumerable aberrations in human behaviour it has precipitated. The name of this plague is 'atheism'. The corona virus may kill the body: atheism kills the soul. If many may be saved from *this* plague by a bodily plague it is an act of great mercy on the part of Almighty God to have allowed it.

Among atheism's various symptoms is confusion over the power of human will concerning nature. This can be seen in the intellectual aberration behind evolutionary theory which, in breach of reason, denies any but a material cause of reality. Its more proximate cause, however, is the public acceptance of the sexual aberration of homosexuality (or effeminacy, as the scholastics termed it). If such a massive disorder is now to be accepted as normal—so the logic runs—why should man feel constrained by any order that nature imposes? Here is the ground for the assertion that one may choose one's sex or gender. The rejection of the order nature imposes is rooted in a rejection of the One who imposed that order through nature. Its votaries repeat blindly the cry of Satan: 'Non serviam'.

*A saeculo confregisti jugum meum: rupisti vincula mea, et dixisti: Non serviam. In omni enim colle sublimi, et sub omni ligno frondoso, tu prosternebaris meretrix.*¹

The irony of the corona virus will not be lost on those who are honest. Now nature is imposing herself in a way that man is utterly powerless to constrain.

2. The abiding problem for Catholics is that the Church's popes and bishops have lost their authority as successors of the Apostles. The cause of this loss of authority is, of course, the abandonment by the bishops of Vatican II of the foundation on which it is based, the Church's claim that she is the one true means chosen by God for man's salvation.

We have been waiting for more than forty years now for an authoritative and reasoned rejection of atheism's facile postulates in a papal encyclical. The failure of its appearance, yet another symptom of the pernicious influence of that Council, is a scandal more grievous than

¹ *Jeremiah* 2: 20: It is long ago now since you broke your yoke, burst my bonds and said, 'I will not serve!' For on every high hill and under every spreading tree you have prostituted yourself.

any involving sexual abuse associated with the clergy. Silence by the successors of St Peter in so serious a matter has served to encourage the popular movement to deny God's existence, His authority and His rights.

Catholics look in vain among the bishops for one who will emulate the leadership shown for example—

- in 1871 by Joseph-Hippolyte Guibert, Archbishop of Paris, in initiating the construction on Montmartre of the Sacré Coeur Basilica;
- by Archbishop Bede Polding in Australia in the 19th century in opposing the putsch led by Henry Parkes to secularise public education;
- by Henry Edward Cardinal Manning in England in mediating settlement of the Great Dock strike there in 1889;
- by Josef Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary in standing alone for 25 years before the world against the country's Communist rulers until his betrayal in 1971 by Paul VI with the aid of the Mason, Cardinal Casaroli;
- by Daniel Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne, in confronting secular authorities over moral principle throughout his long reign.

3. The result in Australia is that we have no bishop who will stand against the secular authorities and advance Catholic principle. Not one of them is prepared to put his trust in God before trust in man. The first evidence of this debility was the decision, when the impact of the virus began to be felt, of suspending distribution of Communion on the tongue while maintaining the intrinsically irreverent practice of Communion in the hand fostered by 'the spirit of Vatican II' and permitted by Paul VI. Accompanying directives that holy water be removed from church fonts and that church doors remain open during Mass to avoid the possibility of infection passing through contact via the hand was eloquent of the logic at work.

How could any bishop who truly trusts in the God of heaven and earth suggest that Christ Who gives Himself freely to the individual faithful Catholic in Communion—the One Who gives each of us life and breath, Who has permitted this virus and its effects—is incapable of preventing its transmission to the faithful who submit in obedience to receive Him with the reverence that is due to the Sacrament? Christ told us that among the signs associated with believers is that they will be unharmed should they drink deadly poison (*Mark* 16: 18). Is contagion via a priest distributing Communion on the tongue likely to defeat Him? And isn't holy water *holy* water; not ordinary water but water with the power to overcome evil, both spiritual and physical?

One wonders whether they truly believe in God. The best that can be said of them is that they have adopted the Protestant position—another of the protocols of Vatican II—that deference to the State must come before deference to God.

Given the Australian bishops' collective silence—

- over atheism,
- over the abuses of *in vitro* fertilisation,
- over legislation banning attendance by protestors outside abortion mills,

- over legislation purporting to compel priests to break the seal of the confessional,
- and in respect of attacks on the Catholic faith generally,

it is unlikely one will appear who is prepared to face the derision of the atheistic lobby and proclaim publicly the truth that this plague is a scourge sent from heaven for mankind's correction; or one who will proclaim publicly that if ever an age deserved a plague it is our own.

4. Anyone who wants to see how the bishops of the Church dealt with plagues in previous ages should study the articles of Robert de Mattei on St Gregory the Great and the plague of the late 6th century² and on St Charles Borromeo and the plague that afflicted Milan in the 16th century.³ Both saints understood that such epidemics are scourges sent from Heaven as chastisement for the sins of the people and that they can only be tackled by recourse to spiritual measures; by prayer and penance. Robert de Mattei says this of St Charles:

“He rebuked the civil authorities for having placed their trust in human measures rather than divine ones... The magistrates who governed the city continued to oppose public ceremonies out of fear that the large gathering of people would spread contagion...

“While the pestilence spread the Archbishop then ordered three general processions to take place in Milan on 3rd, 5th and 6th October ‘to placate the wrath of God’. On the first day, the Saint, despite it not being the Lenten season, placed ashes on the heads of the thousands gathered, exhorting them to penitence. Once the ceremony was over, the procession went to the Basilica of St. Ambrose. Charles put himself at the head of the people, dressed in a hooded purple robe, barefoot, penitential cord at his neck and large cross in his hand. In the church, he preached on the first lament of the prophet Jeremiah *Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo*, affirming that the sins of the people had provoked the just indignation of God...”

In our own age we can hope for no such leadership because, thanks to Vatican II, our bishops are part of the problem. In the absence of leadership we must look to Christ's Church and her perennial teachings to guide us.

5. The secular authorities have proscribed all attendance in churches for the foreseeable future. Catholics can no longer attend either daily or Sunday Mass. God does not ask the impossible but, as St Catherine of Siena teaches, He ask of us infinite desire. I suggest we should each of us endorse the priest's recitation of the *Pater Noster* after the Consecration at Mass each morning at the time we expect he will recite it and repeat fervently each hour—*may Thy Kingdom come, may Thy will be done on earth as in heaven*. As well we should pray the Litany of the Saints with its cry to Almighty God to deliver us—

ab omni peccato	from all sin
ab ira Tua	from Thy wrath
a subitanea et improvisa morte	from sudden and unprovided for death
ab insidiis diaboli	from the snares of the devil
ab ira, et odio, et omni mala voluntate	from anger, hatred and all ill will
a spiritu fornicationis	from the spirit of fornication

² <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2020/02/de-mattei-gregory-and-coronavirus-of.html>

³ <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2020/03/de-mattei-how-st-charles-borromeo.html#more>

a fulgure et tempestate
a flagella terraemotus
a peste, fame et bello
a morte perpetua...

from lightning and tempest
from the scourge of earthquake
from plague, famine and war
from eternal death...

— and close with the Litany of Loreto and its accompanying prayer which invokes Our Lady's intercession in respect of the very issues that confront us—

*Concede nos famulos tuos, quaesumus, Domine Deus, perpetua mentis et corporis sanitate gaudere: et gloriosa beatae Mariae semper Virginis intercessione, a praesenti liberari tristitia, et aeterna perfrui laetitia. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen*⁴

For the more rigorous I would suggest personal involvement each day in the Church's Divine Office, the prayer of the Church that surrounds and accompanies the daily sacrifice of the Mass, whether in the *novus ordo* here⁵ or in the *usus antiquior* here.⁶ At a minimum they should join in reciting Lauds (Morning Prayer) and Vespers (Evening Prayer).

I would advocate the use of holy water in any situation where the possibility of contagion may exist. We should keep holy water with us at all times *and use it*. And let us make sure the water we use has been properly blessed, not with the perfunctory attention to blessing that characterises the actions of many *novus ordo* priests.

6. It is fitting that we should be confronted with these evils in the season of Lent where we recall, and live in sympathy with, Christ's sufferings, passion and death for our sakes. What matters is not this passing life but eternity. The antiphon to the Invitatory psalm (Psalm 94) at *Matins* for Lent in the *forma extraordinaria* is apposite—

*Non sit vobis vanum mane súrgere ante lucem: Quia promisit Dóminus corónam vigilántibus.*⁷

In contrast to the evils that may accompany the corona virus the Church offers us the *corona vitae*, the crown of life. Our duty is to keep watch over ourselves; to conform ourselves to the laws God has laid down and in our conduct imitate the infinite offering made by His Son Jesus Christ of himself for our salvation; to endure with equanimity and charity the proscription of our liturgical lives imposed on us in this sacred season.

Whatever befalls us in our own person and in our nation as a result of this virus let us accept it as God's will for our ultimate good.

March 25, 2020—*The Annunciation of the Lord in the Fifth Week of Lent*

⁴ 'Grant we beseech Thee O Lord that we Thy servants may enjoy perpetual health of mind and body; and through the glorious intercession of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, be delivered from present sorrows and come to enjoy the fullness of eternal happiness. Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.'

⁵ <https://universalis.com/1100/today.htm>

⁶ <https://www.divinumofficium.com/cgi-bin/horas/Pofficium.pl?date1=03-26-2020&command=prev&version=1960%20Newcalendar&ctestmode=regular&lang2=English&votive=>

⁷ 'Do not think it vain for you to rise early; for the Lord has promised the crown to those who keep watch.'