

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost, 2008

*“And when Jesus drew near the city, He wept over it saying,
if thou also hadst known ... the things that are to thy peace.”*
(Lk. 19:41)

Those words of Christ are were a warning for all mankind, and are for us at this period in the life of the Church. The same “Living Word of God” warned us of false prophets who could possibly deceive even the elect. And some items of recent news could be quite disturbing — except, of course, that we know the Church will always emerge triumphant.

Scotland, in our days, was always known as a very religious country; but we learn that the Humanist Society – now equated with others as a religion – are preaching their ideas on life in a kind of missionary endeavour. A few years ago, when they were first allowed, they celebrated 82 marriages. This year so far they have celebrated 700; and they claim that in two years’ time they will have more marriages than the Catholic Church. Then we are informed that “plans” are under way by Muslim scholars to provide a Gaelic translation of the Koran; the Muslim Academic Trust, which will publish the translation, believes it is important that every language has a version of the “holy book”.



Now we have been warned of the dangers that have grown up around us; and yet unsuspecting souls welcome and applaud those who are agents of secularism. Pope John Paul II expressly warned the youth about the inroads of this dangerous ideology at a previous World Youth Congress, when he said:

“Secularism is by nature and definition a movement of ideas and behaviour which advocates a humanism totally without God, completely centred upon the cult of action and production and caught up in the heady enthusiasm of consumerism and pleasure-seeking, unconcerned with the dangers of ‘losing one’s soul’ ... But it is precisely here that we are faced with the bitter experience ... that man can build a world without God, but this world will end by turning against him.”

Pope Benedict XVI, addressing the World Youth Congress at Cologne, spoke of “true revolution”:

“The saints, as we said, are the true reformers. Now I want to express this in an even more radical way. Only from the saints, only from God does true revolution come, the definitive way to change the world. In the last century we experienced revolutions with a common programme expecting nothing more from God; they assumed total responsibility for the cause of the world in order to change it. And this, as we saw, meant that a human and partial point of view was always taken as an absolute guiding principle. Absolutising what is not absolute but relative is called totalitarianism. It does not liberate man, but takes away his dignity and enslaves him. It is not ideologies that save the world, but only a return to the living God, our Creator, the guarantor of our freedom, the guarantor of what is really good and true. True revolution consists in simply turning to God who is the measure of what is right and who at the same time is everlasting love, and what could ever save us apart from love?”

Again in Australia recently our Holy Father urged Catholics to fight against the secularism that threatens the Church. He said Catholics had to lead a “renewal of faith” against a creeping “spiritual desert” of secularism that was threatening the Church. “In so many of our societies, side by side with material prosperity, a spiritual desert is spreading: an interior emptiness, an unnamed fear, a quiet sense of despair.” In his solemn and final homily the Pope asks the pilgrims to think about their future: “What will you leave to the next generation? What difference will you make? Do not be afraid to say ‘yes’ to Jesus, to find your joy in doing His will, giving yourself completely to the pursuit of holiness, and using all your talents in the service of others.”

Repeatedly during the Congress, the Holy Father described the Holy Spirit as God’s creative, life-giving and courage-giving force. While expressing the need to protect the environment and respect the gift of God’s creation, he made it clear that human beings are God’s greatest creation: “At the heart of the marvel of creation are you and I, the human family, ‘crowned with glory and honour’ (as the Psalms say).” Just as the natural environment can be destroyed by selfishness and exploitation, so too can human life be destroyed or damaged by not recognising human dignity and the plan God has for each person’s life. “Experience shows that turning our back on the Creator’s plan provokes a disorder which has inevitable repercussions on the rest of the created order.”

Let us commend the whole human family to the protection of the Blessed Virgin who, from Christ on the Cross, was proclaimed the “Mother” of all mankind; the woman who will crush the serpent’s head; and let us place ourselves and all dear to us under especial protection by being faithful to the power of her Rosary.

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