

## LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This past week I quickly read three BBC commentaries raising the questions: *Are we headed toward Armageddon? Is the world on the verge of collapse? Is Western Civilization on a rapid spiral toward its decline?* Each carefully researched and thought out commentary issued warnings that unless things change the end is imminent. So I thought to myself after reading these articles that I'm not the only one issuing a clarion call for a radical change for the sake of our salvation.

The difference though is the articles were written from a strictly secular point of view with an emphasis on *climate change, world and national government, and economics*. Surprisingly the question of religious faith and morality seemed to be consciously and purposefully dismissed as perhaps irrelevant to the subject of decline. It seems to me scientific data can be debated with regard to *climate change, the government, and the economy*, but when it comes to civilizations rooted in *God and the Natural Law*, it is certain that when the moral compass of a civilization is neglected grave consequences are inevitable.

Jesus opens today's gospel with two questions: "*Can the blind guide the blind? Will they not lead each other into the pit?*" Think of the all-seeing *Evil Eye* of Mordor from Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. From the *Land of Shadow* the *Evil Eye* of the *Dark Lord* sees all things in its quest to come into the possession of the *One Ring*. The *One Ring* leads to corruption, enslavement, destruction, and death in its quest to usurp an omniscient and omnipresent good reflected in the lives of a moral and virtuous people. *The Lord of the Rings* can be likened to a parable of the battle waged between good and evil, truth and untruth, light and darkness, heaven and hell, and ultimately God and Satan.

The battle is real, but thanks be to God in Christ Jesus, the victory is secured and realized only to the extent that we are guided by the omniscient and omnipresent eye of God. In other words, we would be fools to turn our eyes away from God who alone can effectively guide us through the treacherous things of life in this world. If not turned to the Lord we become indeed the blind guiding the blind and we end up in the pit. Beware! As St. Cyril of Jerusalem wisely wrote: *The dragon sits by the side of the road, watching those who pass. Beware lest he devour you. We go to the Father of Souls, but it is necessary to pass by the dragon.*

This Wednesday we begin the penitential season of Lent. Our foreheads will be marked with the words: *Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel.* Lent is the season that prepares us for the great feast of the *Paschal Mystery*. *Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday* are a *Triduum* celebrating the culminating moment in the history of all created things whereby salvation is attained for us through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The *Paschal Mystery* is the definitive victory over the *Lord of Darkness in the Land of Shadow*.

Is the end of our civilization imminent? Are we embarking on Armageddon? Is the world going to end? The answer to these questions is a definitive yes. The *old order* will pass away and the defeat of the *Lord of Darkness* will be fully realized. It may happen in our lifetime. It may not happen for another million years. But how much longer will you be in the *here and now* of this life in this world? Whose eyes guide you through the trials and tribulations, the fears and anxieties, the distress and sorrows of this life?

If our eyes are not firmly fixed on the Lord and if we do not daily surrender all things to him, we are indeed the blind guiding the blind and we will indeed fall into the pit. May Lent open our eyes to the ever watchful and ever benevolent eyes of the *Lord of Heaven and Earth* who knows the way and will not lead us astray.

Sincerely in the *Lord Jesus*,

Fr. Anthony Buś, C.R. - Pastor