

Letter from the Superior General to the friends and benefactors of the Society of Saint Pius X

My dear faithful, friends and benefactors,

Currently, we are living in an unusual, almost unprecedented moment in history, due to the coronavirus crisis and all its repercussions. As in such a situation, a thousand questions arise, to which there would be a thousand answers, or more. It would be utopian to pretend to provide a solution to each problem in particular, and that is not the purpose of these few considerations. Rather, we would like to analyse here a danger that is more serious, in a certain sense, than all the evils that currently afflict humanity: it is the danger that Catholics run of reacting in an overly human way to the punishment that is currently afflicting our world, which has become pagan once more, through its apostasy.

For several decades, we have been expecting a Divine chastisement, or some land of providential intervention, to remedy a situation that has seemed unsalvageable for quite a long time. Some imagined a nuclear war, others, a new wave of poverty, a cataclysm, a communist invasion, an oil crisis, etc. In short, we could expect some providential event by which God would punish the sin of apostasy of our countries, and bring about a healthy reaction from those who were well disposed. In any case, we expected something that would make things plain to see. But while they may not have the form we expected, the current troubles undoubtedly play this revealing role.

What is happening with this current crisis? Let us try to analyse the emotions that are winning the hearts of our contemporaries, and above all, let us try to examine whether our dispositions as Catholics manage to rise to the level of our faith.



### **FEARS THAT ARE TOO HUMAN**

To put it simply, we can find three lands of fears that are nowadays intertwined in almost all human beings, and which exhaust all their energy.

First of all, there is the fear of the epidemic, as such. It is not a question here of discussing the harmfulness of the coronavirus. But what is certain is that our godless world is attached to mortal life as the most absolute good, before which all other considerations must bow down and become unimportant. Consequently, and inevitably, this distorted perspective generates a universal and uncontrollable anxiety. The whole world seems to be losing its mind. Hypnotised by the peril threatening the priority of priorities, literally panicked, everyone appears fundamentally incapable of thinking about other issues, or of rising above a situation that is beyond them.

Then there is the spectre of the economic crisis. Understandably, it is perfectly normal for a father to be worried about the future of his children, and God knows very well that, at the moment, there are numerous legitimate concerns to be dealt with. But I am referring to the more general, and ultimately much more selfish, fear of becoming a little poorer and of no longer being able to enjoy what was taken for granted and subject to untouchable rights. This perspective is strictly linked to the previous one: for if life here on earth is the supreme good, the riches that allow us to enjoy it more, or as much as possible, also become, by force of circumstances, a supreme good.

To all this is finally added the dread of the loss of individual liberties, which men have eyed until now. Never before has there been such a general awareness of "human rights".

The analysis of this threefold fear and all that is related to it could be developed at length. Let us only say that their common basis is fundamentally natural, purely human, and that they could be summed up in the apprehension that nothing will be the same as before the crisis: this "before" being confusedly and universally perceived as the ideal and inalienable well-being, of which enlightened humanity had made the glorious conquest.

However, if we analyse this fear and the behaviour it provokes in depth, we paradoxically find subterfuges similar to those used by the pagans of ancient times to explain any phenomenon that escaped them. That ancient world, certainly cultivated, civilised and organised, but unfortunately ignorant of the Truth, resorted to monsters, gods of all lands, and above all to crude myths, to portray what it could not understand. Today, we are witnessing similar reactions: in the face of fear, in the face of the uncertainty of the future, a whole series of explanations is born, going in all directions, systematically contradictory to each other, and intermingled to no end. Their inconsistency is evident by the fact that they are continually superseded, in the space of a few hours or a few weeks, by explanations that are more in demand, more refined, seemingly more convincing, but not necessarily truer. We are faced with genuine myths, where real elements are mixed with fictitious stories, without being able to grasp their limits. And we see a great yearning being born for some miraculous solution, a utopian solution, capable of suddenly dispelling the thick fog and resolving all our problems.

It is a bit like the ancient cry of confusion, anguish and despair that reappears, after two thousand years, in a humanity that has become pagan again. And it could not be otherwise: it brings out, for those who can see, how this godless humanity is helpless and doomed to madness. Above all, it is remarkable that modern man who has lost his faith, and therefore no longer believes, is by the same token willing to believe everything without real discernment.

#### **OUR HOPE IS FIRMLY GROUNDED IN HEAVEN**

But as far as we are concerned, are we sure that we are completely immune to this spirit? Of course, the three fears we have just mentioned are understandable, and even legitimate to a certain extent. What is not legitimate is to let these fears prevent and stifle any supernatural considerations, and above all compromise the possibility of benefiting from this ordeal.

After all, let us never forget that we only remain in reality and in truth if we look at this situation through the eyes of our faith: Nothing escapes God and His Divine Providence. It is certain that, above and beyond the contingencies that strike us, God has a precise plan. And that reminding people of their mortal condition, and of the fragility of their projects, belongs to this plan.

God first of all shows today's man, poisoned by positivism (the negation of a Divine order), that the works of nature that surround him are His work, and that they obey His laws. God makes the modern Prometheus, indoctrinated by transhumanism (the negation of man's limits), understand that the nature that He created escapes the technique and control of the human sciences. This is an extremely necessary lesson, especially today. We must treasure it and make it our own, all the more so, as modern man, blinded by his dream of absolute power, has made himself incapable of grasping it. We must also find in it, new incentives to worship the greatness of God and to live intimately dependent on Him.

More concretely, what would Our Blessed Lord tell us, He to whom nothing escapes, and who has planned everything in advance? "Why do you fear, O ye of little faith? Do you not believe that I am truly God? That I am truly almighty? That I direct everything in my wisdom and

goodness? Is there a single hair on your head that falls to the ground without My knowledge and without My permission? Am I not the master of life and death? Do you think a virus can exist without Me? That governments can make laws without Me being the supreme master? Tell me: what is the worst thing that can happen to you, during this storm, if I am with you in the boat?"

The whole problem lies in the answers that we are able to give to these questions. Is Our Blessed Lord truly in the boat, which is our soul? If so, are we really looking at things through the eyes of our faith, which allow us to interpret every event of our daily life under the light of faith? Do we maintain total trust in Him, even when we do not fully understand what is happening? Are the eternal answers that our Catholic faith offers us sufficient? Or do we feel the need to dilute them with those continuously updated answers that we can find on the Internet? As the months have gone by, has our confidence in Our Lord Jesus Christ increased? Or have they contributed to our self-withdrawal and our sense of hopelessness? Each of us must answer these questions sincerely, in good conscience.

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There are also some among us who fear, beyond the epidemic itself, the outbreak of a long-term religious persecution, and in particular against Christians. It is understandable that this question should arise, because we know that the world hates us, and that sooner or later this must happen: either in connection with the epidemic, or independently of it. We will not escape it. This is an evangelical truth, which predates any prediction of the current rampage. Our Blessed Lord warned us: "You shall hear of wars and seditions. [...] Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There shall be great earthquakes in divers places, and pestilences, and famines. [...] They will lay their hands upon you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, dragging you before kings and governors, for my name's sake." <sup>1</sup>

But here too, our fears must be bathed in the soothing light of our faith: "Do not be afraid<sup>2</sup>- Having been warned of this for a long time, we have to prepare ourselves for it, peacefully, by surrendering ourselves unreservedly into the hands of Divine Providence, and without desperately looking for a way out. Let us think back to the first century Christians, under the persecutions: those who looked too closely at the persecutors, the instruments of torture or the wild beasts, and forgetting the God of love who called them to join Him, saw nothing but danger, pain and fear. .. and ended up apostasizing. They had no lack of clear information, but their faith was not strong enough, and it had not been sufficiently nourished by ardent prayer: "And take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with gluttony and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit upon the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times." <sup>3</sup>

And Our Blessed Lord also warned us: "The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." <sup>4</sup> In every ordeal, there is the secret and precious gift of seeing ourselves reshaped to be more like our Divine Saviour, our model, and thus being able to "fulfil in my flesh those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ<sup>5</sup>-

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<sup>1</sup> St Luke 21:9-12

<sup>2</sup> St Luke 21:9

<sup>3</sup> St Luke 21:34-36

<sup>4</sup> St John 15:20

<sup>5</sup> Col 1:24

There is also a final reflection that can help us to adhere to reality and leave the coronavirus problem in its place. Alongside this present crisis, the Catholic Church is going through a much more terrible and devastating crisis, which must affect us even more. Woe to us if this is not the case, because it would be a sign that we no longer see with the eyes of our faith! This other crisis is indeed much more deadly, because those who have lost their faith because of it, risk losing their souls forever. To this, unfortunately, in the present situation, is added the total absence of a supernatural message from the Church's hierarchy on the consequences of sin, on the necessity of penance, on the love of the cross, and on the preparation for death and the judgment that awaits all men. It is truly a catastrophe within a catastrophe!

So as for us, let us not lose hope, which is based neither on our efforts or abilities, nor on our analyses – however pertinent they may be – but on the infinite merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is to Him that we must always turn, but especially when we are overwhelmed and bending under the weight of our burden. Doing so is, especially for us who know Him, a duty of charity towards those who live in tragic ignorance of this comforting reality. If we really want to be true apostles for our neighbours, in these privileged hours, the most effective and appropriate apostolate is that of an example of unlimited trust in Divine Providence. This is an exclusively Christian way to carry our cross and to maintain hope. Our desire to return to "normality" must first of all be one of fully recovering this trust, nourished by faith, hope and charity.



In order to obtain these precious graces, let us all intensify our fervour - parents and children - in our Rosary Crusade, which brings us together and unites us, so that our ardent prayer may find therein a passionate cry that God Himself will be unable to resist: for the Mass, for vocations, for the world and the Church, and for the triumph of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This is the genuine way out of the present crisis, without waiting for the end of the epidemic !

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulations or distress? Or famine or nakedness? Or danger or persecution or the sword" [...] In all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord<sup>6,7</sup>

May God bless you!

Menzingen, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021,  
On the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary,

Don Davide Pagliarani, Superior General.

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<sup>6</sup> Rom 8:35-39