

Reflections on Ralph Martin's 1975 Prophecy

By Peter Herbeck | June 16, 2020

The following text came from [a talk I shared today](#) on [Renewal Ministries' YouTube channel](#).

I hope you're walking in the peace and comfort of the Lord Jesus in these days. These are trying and challenging times, but times that are not outside of God's will. God has a great purpose for this hour for the Church and for the salvation of the world. I want to follow on the lead that my good friend Ralph Martin took last week when he reflected on a YouTube video on a prophetic word that Fr. Michael Scanlan gave in 1976—a prophecy that I had read a number of times over the years, and had prayed through, and which I really felt the Lord was speaking to us through.

We know St. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians, “Don't quench the Spirit, don't despair of prophecy either, but test everything, and cling to what is good.” It's great to hear that word from Fr. Mike, to be able to chew on it and discern what the Lord is saying to us. I really do think it helps us understand this moment.

I'd like to reflect on [a prophecy Ralph gave in 1975](#) at the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference at the Basilica at St. Peter's in Rome. He gave it at the closing Mass, after Communion, after a time of worship and quiet:

“Because I love you, I want to show you what I am doing in the world today. I want to prepare you for what is to come. Days of darkness are coming on the world, days of tribulation. . . . Buildings that are now standing will not be standing. Supports that are there for my people now will not be there. I want you to be prepared, my people, to know only Me and to cleave to Me and to have Me in a way deeper than ever before. I will lead you into the desert. . . . I will strip you of everything that you are depending on now, so you depend just on Me. A time of darkness is coming on the world, but a time of glory is coming for my Church, a time of glory is coming for my people. I will pour out on you all the gifts of my Spirit. I will prepare you for spiritual combat; I will prepare you for a time of evangelism that the world has never seen. . . . And when you have nothing but Me, you will have everything: land, fields, homes, and brothers and sisters and love and joy and peace more than ever before. Be ready, my people, I want to prepare you.”

I wasn't at this particular meeting, but over the years, I have spoken to a number of people who were there, and collectively, a lot of leaders from around the world really experienced the confirmation of the Holy Spirit in the moment.

I think it's wonderful that it begins, **“Because I love you.”** The Old Testament describes that God reveals his secrets to the prophets. He lets key prophetic people who He wants to communicate through bring encouragement to his Church and help them see what the Lord is doing. As the Spirit is poured out on all flesh, the Spirit is meant to lead us. The Spirit wants to speak to us and speaks through different people at different times.

This was a very important moment, I think, in the history of the Church. It says, **“Days of darkness are coming on the world, days of tribulation.”** Unquestionably, there have been times in different parts of the world since 1975 that people have experienced this, but I think maybe we are living in one of the most unique periods in the history of the world and the Church. Just beginning in January and February with the Coronavirus, the whole world shut down because it was responding to this unseen enemy that was taking life, and it looked like lives were going to be taken in huge numbers all around the world. Humanity not only was stopped and brought off the treadmill of the world, but was forced to confront its own mortality. The strategy of the devil is always to enslave the human race through the fear of death. There was a moment when he wanted to enslave the world even more in the grip of fear. In that time, what happened? Our businesses were shut down, the quarantine happened, and our economy went from the strongest in the world to the point where it almost collapsed, and it’s still unclear where it’s going. There are signs, but clearly, that was shaken. Our confidence in our health, security, and the rest—that was shaken.

And just as we come out of quarantine, the experience of what happened with George Floyd, the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, the nuclear bomb that went off, in terms of the response to it around the world, and the fact that it touched a deep, unhealed wound in the life of the United States, in the history of our life and culture. Some people responded appropriately to it, but there was also the spirit of anarchy, the spirit of revolution, disordered spirits, and there’s a whole lot of shaking there. There’s shaking in the security we have in the government, there’s shaking in the security we have in our finances, there’s shaking in our own health and what the future looks like, there’s shaking and lack of trust in politics and politicians, in the news organizations that used to be trusted many years ago, and people are on shaky ground.

One of the things the prophecy reveals is that He’s shaking the nations because many are clinging to things that are contingent—they are shakable, and we’re putting ultimate attention and value on them, treating them as ultimate in some kind of way, and they’re not. The only thing that’s unshakeable, as Hebrews 12 tells us, is God. The Lord is allowing these trials to come, first, to get our attention. Many good teachers on YouTube and other places are saying that they sense the Lord drawing his people near and drawing his Church close to Him, and the prophecy talks about it in those very terms:

“Days of darkness are coming on the world, days of tribulation. . . . Buildings that are now standing will not be standing. Supports that are there for my people now will not be there. I want you to be prepared, my people, to know only Me and to cleave to Me and to have Me in a way deeper than ever before.”

Why these trials? Because the Lord doesn’t have the attention of his people and the attention of a world that’s building a whole worldview and way of life that acts as if God doesn’t even exist, with very little real serious reference to God—when the reality is we’re made by God; we’re made for God; this is his creation. The only place we can come to safety, where we can overcome the enemies in our world, is in the Lord, in Christ, in God Himself. He’s offered his life to us, his salvation, in his Son—and in more and more ways, people are ignoring Him, and falling away from the Church, partly because the Lord has permitted the sins of the compromise of the Church be exposed over the past decade. The Lord wants his body to be clinging to Him and not other kinds of security, other kinds of distraction, other kinds of comfort.

To be His; to belong to Him; to be living in the First Commandment; to belong to God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself, as Jesus said in the Last Supper discourse—this is what He called us to when He said, “You’re my friends, and I’m drawing near to you. I’m going to give you my Spirit.” If you pay attention, He’s going to be living in you like living water. He’s going to live in you and refresh you. He’s going to speak to you, and He’s going to lead you to all truth, and so follow.

He says, **“I want you to be prepared, my people, to know only Me and to cleave to Me and to have Me in a way deeper than ever before. I will lead you into the desert.”** That’s where we’ve been for the last number of months, and we may, in one way or another, be staying there. The key thing is, even though things are unfolding, and we’re trying to get the economy going again, there’s a lot of responsibility more and more people are carrying. So whatever burden you might be in, and whatever challenge is there, remember as we go forward that the Lord has called us to draw near. No matter how busy, how challenged things are, stay in conversation with the Lord. Pay attention to Him—because what matters most is the word that He has for us. The Church needs to understand that the Church itself is going to stay under the discipline of the Lord, the redemptive discipline of a loving God who’s seeking to purify his Church and draw it near.

Hebrews 12 says, “The Lord’s discipline is on those He loves.” Why? He wants to produce peaceful fruit of righteousness in us. He wants to bring us back to right relationship with Him. He wants to expose our hearts so that we can humbly bow down before Him and pay attention, even if we only do it a few minutes a day, a little bit of time every day. Don’t let the responsibilities and the pressure push the Lord to the margins. The key—for us individually, for our families, for the whole Church, for the salvation of the world—is to pay attention now, to become radically His, to belong to Him.

This is exactly what He was saying: **“cleave to Me.”** We’re not to cleave to these other things. The Lord is exposing their emptiness and how quickly they can be gone. But He’s there forever. He’s the rock upon which we stand—the only unshakable reality in all of existence—and He’s come for us. He wants us to live from a place of security, leaning on Him, and knowing ourselves where He is going, so we can read the signs of the times and respond to what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

“I will strip you of everything that you are depending on now, so you depend just on me.” This is a word for each of us, not just a few people, but the entire Church. The Lord is leading us into this because of what’s coming. **“A time of darkness is coming on the world, but a time of glory is coming for my Church.”** Both things are happening. Both will continue to escalate—the escalation of the challenge and the darkness. There’s a way in which the world will never be the same. We’ll never go back, exactly, to what we had. I think the intensity of the spiritual battle will increase. But as the grace of God increases in us and the glory of the Lord is revealed more and more in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, we can see the majesty, and we can have the wisdom and insight into the Lord, and we ourselves will be strengthened. We’re going to experience more of Him, and that’s what He wants us to know—that we don’t have to be afraid. No matter how much shaking goes on, no matter how much the devil tries to have happen, the Lord’s got this end game in mind, and He’s right there with us, and all He needs is for us to walk

with Him and to surrender and to give Him everything in our lives—to put Him at the center of it all.

“A time of darkness is coming on the world, but a time of glory is coming for my Church, a time of glory is coming for my people. I will pour out on you all the gifts of my Spirit. I will prepare you for spiritual combat; I will prepare you for a time of evangelism that the world has never seen.”

I believe that. I believe that for all who surrender and walk in Him now and come under his loving order and discipline and purification of his Church, He’s pouring into us and leading us to align our lives in the right way as the saints talk about—to love the first thing first, to love God first in our hearts—because God wants to fulfill with great glory and splendor in each of our lives the purpose for which we’re made. He’s saying to us, “You don’t trust me yet. Come, let me expose the fear that’s in you, the insecurity, the attachment to idols. Let me take it away from you to free your heart, so you can hear my voice and you can have the strength of the Spirit at work in you and bear my fruits, because the days are coming when the grace for a profound global evangelism is coming on the earth.”

I really believe it. In 1990, Ralph Martin, a team of people, and I were praying in a planning meeting, and someone shared a prophetic word. When they did, the Holy Spirit came down in tremendous power in the room, and there was lots of worship, and I personally experienced what was one of the most significant experiences of my life. I experienced God, and I felt the Holy Spirit, and I was just shaking. I had a vision, and in the vision what I saw was a glimpse of the Lord on his throne, and He stood up, and He said, “I’ve risen from my throne to proceed my coming. There will be a revelation of the Son of Man in your lifetime.” Then He took a step forward, and I just experienced the holy, pure fear of God. I was shouting, “Oh, my God! He’s so awesome! He’s so glorious! He’s so amazing!” I think it’s one of the guiding things I’ve believed deeply in my bones since that day.

You know how in each of our lives there are a few moments where God really broke in? That was one of those moments, and I think this prophecy from 1975 also confirms it. **“Evangelism that the world has never seen.”** That’s what this is all about. The key is for us to be surrendered and attentive to the Lord, because it’s all about Him. In his time, and in his way, as He leads us through purification, He’s going to increase his light, his glory, his presence, and his power. He’s going to reveal Himself.

The answer for the Church and the world isn’t more strategy or higher IQs. It isn’t going to the right college, it isn’t our tech power, it’s not our bank account. All these things, they exist and they’re powerful, but they’re totally secondary. God made the world through his Son. He’s enthroned Him and set Him at his right hand. All authority, power, and the destiny of human life are in the hands of the King. As the apostles said themselves, “Judgment has been given over to the Son” (Jn 5:22)—final judgment, but also judgment at this time, when He comes with tough love and the right kind of love we need, so that, as a friend of mine said, whatever it takes to get rid of whatever hinders God’s love—He’ll do it.

What stands in the way of our receiving and walking in his love and commandments? This is an exciting time. It's a time of purification. It's a time for us to face our fears. It's time for us to face our compromises. It's time for us to bow low in humility and say, "Lord, Father, send the Son. Come, Holy Spirit, send the Lord Jesus. Reveal his glory and majesty. Lord, reveal your glory in the Church and in the world."

This, I think, is the heart of what God and the Holy Spirit are doing. The Lord wants each and every one of us to be a part of it. There's no one too small. This is not about the elites and the experts going out. This is the children of God beginning to cry out to God. When his glory is revealed, part of what happens is the fear of the Lord, which is a beautiful thing—not a slavish fear, but a cleansing, purifying, amazing fear that orders us—and we see God in his greatness, and people in the world begin converting, and the Church begins getting purified. The Church has tried in so many ways to make it all happen, and the Lord is leading us to experience our powerlessness. So many of our efforts fall flat: many people leaving the Church, fewer people giving money to dioceses and parishes in financial crisis, etc. Its happening in many places all around the world. But the Lord is allowing it to happen—until we come to a place where we say, like this prophecy, "draw near," and we see Him, and we say, "We've got everything we need. I don't know what I was thinking, why I was relying on so many other things. Lord, I give You my life. I'm all in. Let's go."

I think that's a big part of what the Lord wants to produce in us. Every one of us is called to be a part of it. Let's just say "yes" to Him. Let's bow down and say, "Lord, re-order my loves. Let me love the right thing. Let me love first things first. Let me love You at the center of my life. Lord, I give You everything: my time, talent, and treasure. Lord, change my heart. Change my mind. Let me live in the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit."