



A LETTER ▶ FROM PETER HERBECK

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PLEASE PRAY...

That the Lord would fill all those who are weary with his own Spirit and strength, that they may persevere in striving to reap a harvest for the Lord (Gal 6:9).

...

That our hearts will be filled with the Lord's "perfect love (that) casts out all fear" (1 Jn 4:18).

...

For the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want to begin with a warm holiday greeting to you from all of us here at Renewal Ministries. We are deeply grateful for the partnership in ministry that we share with all of you.

During this past year in particular, with all of its challenges, we have been strengthened by the prayer, support, and encouragement we have received from so many of you as we've sought to read the signs of the times and to articulate what we believe the Spirit is saying to the Church. Now, at the beginning of this new liturgical year, we are strengthened by the unchangeable, unshakeable truth we have celebrated, and we go forward with confidence and great hope, knowing Our Lord and Our Lady are with us!

As we enter this new year, Fr. Michael Scanlan's prophetic words continue to shine light into the dark times that have come upon the world and the Church. The battle with Covid-19 continues, political instability and the troubles in the Church continue to escalate. I have felt the Lord impress upon my heart the following words from Fr. Michael's 1980 prophecy:

The Lord God says, "Hear My Word: The time that has been marked by My blessings and gifts is being replaced now by the period to be marked by my judgment and purification. What I have not accomplished by my blessings and gifts, I will accomplish by judgment and purification. My people, My Church is desperately in need of this judgment. They have continued in an adulterous relationship with the spirit of the world . . ."

We know that Scripture reminds us that prophecy is imperfect, and that we only see as through a glass darkly. Yet we are exhorted by St. Paul to "not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold fast to what is good" (1 Thes

5:20-21). As we have sought to discern this word over the past few months, our Renewal Ministries' team believes there are good things here from the Lord that He wants us to hold fast to.

First, it is clear to me that we have passed from a "time marked by blessings and gifts" into a time "marked by judgment and purification." What is meant by the time of blessings and gifts? It is the extraordinary gift of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Twentieth Century. Recent popes have all acknowledged the life-transforming experience that literally hundreds of millions of people from every nation, young and old, rich and poor, male and female, have been given.

St. John Paul II described it as "the grace of a renewed Pentecost" (1999 Plenary Assembly, Pontifical Council for the Laity). Pope Francis said the "Charismatic Renewal has received a great gift from God," and that it was a movement "birthed by the Holy Spirit . . . to be a current of grace in and for the Church" (Rome Charismatic Conference 2014).

At the heart of the "current of grace" is a most precious gift, experienced through the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which, at its heart, is what Fr. Francis Martin once described as "a revelation from the Spirit of God to the spirit of the believer that Jesus Christ is Lord!"¹ It is a grace of revelation, an experiential knowledge of the power, presence, and person of Jesus, the one whom the Bible reveals as our Bridegroom, King, and Judge.

It's crucial that we not miss or take for granted what the Holy Spirit has commu-

nicated to us. For millions of those who have experienced this blessing, it has produced radical change, total life transformation. It isn't just an emotional experience, it is a work of God, through the Holy Spirit, helping us see and respond to the most important thing anyone can ever come to know:

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!

The Holy Spirit made that truth come alive in such a unique way that it seemed as though a veil had been lifted. It produced conviction of deep



✦ UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN ✦

Marsha Williamson, a dear friend of Renewal Ministries and wife to our long-time Country Coordinator Dr. Peter Williamson, passed away after a battle with cancer on Sept. 8, 2020, at the age of seventy-four.

Before retiring, Marsha had taught and served as chair of the English Department at Spring Arbor University, and her students repeatedly voted her the recipient of Spring Arbor's Excellence in Teaching Award. More recently, she translated seventeen books, mostly from Italian, edited a number of works in English, and served as English translator to Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the papal household.

As Marsha's husband wrote to friends,

“Although the Lord did not grant physical healing, he did work wonderfully to answer many prayers and to work in Marsha and myself, helping us to recognize our faults and ask for forgiveness, leading us to a deeper surrender to God and deeper love and communion with one another. . . . Marsha's passing is sad but not a tragedy. The loss is ours, not hers. We are going to miss her greatly, but we know she has gone to be with the Lord (2 Cor 5:6-9). We know she will rise again in a new and better body (1 Cor 15). We know she will always be with the Lord (1 Thess 4:17). We will see her and converse with her again. I'm looking forward to that!”

faith that Jesus is the only Lord, the only Savior, the only hope for the human race. Not only is He **the** Lord and **the** Savior, but He is **my** Lord and **my** Savior. That confession, which was a gift of the Holy Spirit, bore great fruit.

The fruit was visible, expressed through repentance, conversion, a radical change of life, new power and a new capacity to live differently, a thirst for holiness, a desire for Christian community, a new love for Scripture and the sacraments, the emergence of charisms, the experience of signs and wonders and miracles, deliverance and healing, a newfound love for praise and worship for many, a zeal for the salvation of souls, a desire to tell others about Jesus, a passion to serve (especially the poor and less fortunate), and so much more.

All of these blessings and gifts were given to weak and broken people. And it goes without saying that, as with every movement, organization, and institution of the Church, it is marked by human weakness. That is plain to see.

What we must see, and what many have failed to see, is that the Number One thing at the center of this current of grace is clarity and profound conviction about who Jesus is. This is what the Holy Spirit desires the whole Church to know and to experience.

This grace was an opportunity for the Church: to awaken her; to lead her—that is, every person, every institution, every organization—to put Jesus at the center of everything; to give Him first place; to lead the Church out of compromise, indifference, lukewarmness, apostasy, deep-rooted sin, and bondage to demonic strongholds that cripple her life and witness; and to free her from the fear of men and the temptation to grovel after the world.

That time of “blessings and gifts” has now given way to “a period to be

marked by judgment and purification.” God's mercy is such that He continues to give his blessings and gifts to all who seek Jesus with a sincere heart. But Fr. Michael is right, the Church is desperately in need of God's judgments. She is under judgment now. The signs are there in plain sight. One doesn't have to be a great prophet or mystic to see it. So many arrows are pointing down for the Church: a huge and growing apostasy; closing of parishes and schools; bankrupt dioceses; open divisions in the Church, cardinals against cardinals, bishops against bishops, national synods of bishops in opposition; the rise of the “Nones”; the problem of universalism; a growing number of bishops, priests, and laity publicly promoting the LGBTQ agenda; and, to our great shame, the abysmal ignorance of Scripture and the tragic trend to empty the person of Jesus of his singular significance.

The following examples from recent polls indicate how few Catholics know Jesus as He ought to be known.

1

One national poll from 2020, called *The State of Theology*, included two sobering responses by Catholics. Sixty-six percent of Catholics agreed with the statement, “Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God.”² This means that two-thirds of Catholics completely miss the fundamental point that Jesus is not a creature; He is “God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten and not made, one in being with the Father.”

2

The response to the second statement was even more straightforward: “Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God.” Fifty-seven percent of Catholics polled agreed with that statement!³

3

Finally, a 2019 PEW Research poll found that sixty-nine percent of Catholics do not believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.⁴

Christianity is Christ. The Church exists to preach “the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God” (Eph 3:8-9). The fact that so many baptized, self-identifying Catholics can completely miss the central truth of our faith and still think they are Catholic is an indictment on our leadership. In order for the Church to come out of this darkness and malaise, God has to exercise redemptive discipline.

A “period marked by judgment and purification” has come upon the Church because God loves us. He “disciplines those whom he loves” (Heb 12:6). His judgments are good; through them, He removes all that hinders love.

A number of dioceses have taken some steps over the past few years to acknowledge these serious failures in leadership. Those are good steps, but the change that repentance is meant to bring requires a fuller, deeper response. One key element is to acknowledge that what we are experiencing is a chastisement from God, and not just the result of secularization and the impact of a post-Christian culture.

Acknowledgment of sin and failure matters, changing policies and procedures matters, but the deeper change the Lord is looking for is what He has revealed through what Fr. Scanlan’s prophesy calls a period of “blessing and gifts.” He wants a more radical, total, and unconditional response to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Only the fire of the Holy Spirit can burn away timidity, cowardice, the fear of men, inordinate self-love, crippling

attachments, discouragement, self-condemnation, and the like.

Friends, we need to be more convinced than ever that the “current of grace” that has touched our lives really is for the whole Church. I’m convinced that more than anything else, our leaders need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, one that doesn’t simply console—though that is a good thing—but an experience of the fire that Jesus said He has come to cast upon the earth! A fire that produces fear of the Lord, zeal for souls, a passion to preach the whole counsel of God’s Word, a freedom to pass that fire on to others, a courage that is willing to do whatever it takes to lead the Church out of its Laodicean lukewarmness and compromise, and a single-minded devotion to help as many people as possible to learn how to live under the lordship of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

FOOTNOTES

1. Fr. Francis Martin, “The Challenge of Galatians 5,” SCRC Spirit, Accessed on November 19, 2020, https://scrc.org/events_and_news/spirit/SCRC_SPIRIT_MarApr2010.pdf.
2. “The State of Theology,” Ligonier Ministries, Accessed November 19, 2020, <https://thestateoftheology.com/data-explorer/2020/6?AGE=30&MF=14®ION=30&DENSITY=62&EDUCATION=62&INCOME=254&MARITAL=126ÐNICITY=62&RELTRAD=16&EVB=6&ATTENDANCE=254>.
3. “The State of Theology,” Ligonier Ministries, Accessed November 19, 2020, <https://thestateoftheology.com/data-explorer/2020/7?AGE=30&MF=14®ION=30&DENSITY=62&EDUCATION=62&INCOME=254&MARITAL=126ÐNICITY=62&RELTRAD=16&EVB=6&ATTENDANCE=254>.
4. Gregory A. Smith, “Just one-third of U.S. Catholics agree with their church that Eucharist is body, blood of Christ,” Pew Research Center, Accessed November 19, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/05/transubstantiation-eucharist-u-s-catholics/>.



Only the fire of the Holy Spirit can burn away timidity, cowardice, the fear of men, inordinate self-love, crippling attachments, discouragement, self-condemnation, and the like.



SAVE THE DATES FOR Renewal Ministries' 2021 Virtual Events



1

FEBRUARY 27, 2021
[VIRTUAL EVENT]



**LIFT JESUS
HIGHER RALLY**



CONSUMING FIRE

“For our God is a consuming fire.”
HEBREWS 12:29

For details, visit www.ljhr.ca or
email contact@LJHR.ca

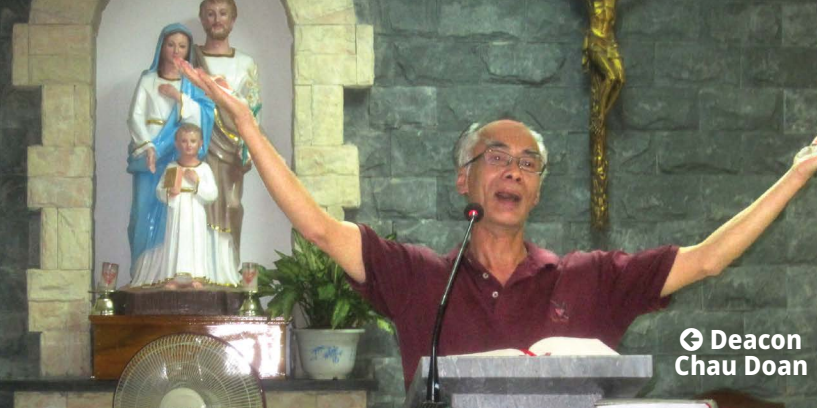
2

APRIL 17, 2021
[VIRTUAL EVENT]



**RENEWAL MINISTRIES'
ANNUAL GATHERING**

For details, visit
RenewalMinistries.net/gathering
or email Kathleen Kittle at
kkittle@renewalministries.net



Deacon
Chau Doan

SPREADING THE GOSPEL IN VIETNAM

The Diocese of Providence, Rhode Island, recently ordained Rev. Paul Hiep Nguyen to the priesthood and Seminarian Doan Nguyen to the diaconate, with his ordination to the priesthood planned for this June. As Country Coordinator Don Turbitt explained, neither of these ordinations would have been possible without the help of Renewal Ministries' supporters.

Both Fr. Paul Hiep and Deacon Doan came to the US from Vietnam in 2011, at the invitation of Bishop Thomas Tobin. Don had shared with Bishop Tobin that a bishop in Vietnam was open to sharing a couple seminarians with the Providence Diocese, and Bishop Tobin instructed Fr. Frank Santilli to extend the invitation during his time on mission with Don. When Fr. Paul Hiep and Deacon Doan first came to the US, they had to learn to speak more fluent English, so it took two years before they re-entered seminary training.

Don recently expressed his gratitude for "so much good (that) has happened over the last twelve years" of his missions in Vietnam. He wrote, "Because Renewal Ministries sent me out on missions, Deacon Chau of Michigan (also a Renewal Ministries' Country Coordinator) took me to Vietnam, and Fr. Frank Santilli took the main responsibility for two wonderful seminarians, by God's grace, my mission work has helped to produce one (and soon to be two) Catholic priests."

On these two pages, we share both Don and Deacon Doan's reflections on the tremendous blessing of Fr. Paul Hiep and Deacon Doan's "yes" to follow God's call to a new land.

REFLECTION FROM DON TURBITT

I didn't know how much parents must do for their sons before they are ordained priests. Our Providence Diocese paid for their education, thank God. But Fr. Frank has been and continues to be the spiritual father of these exceptionally fine young men. He is not just their advisor, which is a huge responsibility, but he also cares for all their needs—physical, emotional, and spiritual. All I can take credit for is teaching them how to drive. In Vietnam, everyone drives a motor bike, not many drive a car.

Fr. Hiep and Deacon Doan call my wife and I "Grampy" and "Nana." We have thirteen blood grandchildren and these two spiritual grandchildren. How humbled we are to be part of their holy lives!

Vietnam has left a deep mark on my soul. I love the people I have met there and the spiritual life I experienced with them. I was very blessed to do the first reading at Fr. Hiep's ordination Mass. The second reading was in Vietnamese. Hiep's brother is a priest in Vietnam and had hundreds of people from his parish watch the ordination Mass on Skype. The next Sunday, Fr. Hiep celebrated his first Mass at our parish, St. Philip Church, which he and Deacon Doan have called home for the past nine years. Fr. Frank has done everything for these two great men, but I am still a humbled grandfather with a deep sense of fulfillment in my mission work.

The following interview took place between Renewal Ministries' Editor Heather Schultz and Deacon Doan.

Q: Please tell me about your call to the priesthood.

A: God calls each person to follow Him in different ways. God revealed my vocation to me in different events of my life, through different people I have met, and especially through prayer. Prayer is the best way through which I have discerned my vocation.

I would like to tell you about one event that happened in my discernment to the priesthood. During Father Frank's visit at my seminary in Vietnam, one day when I was standing at the hallway of the seminary, Fr. Frank approached me and said, "The Holy Spirit moved me to talk with you." He explained that when he had been sleeping, the Holy Spirit woke him up and told him that a seminarian needed his help, but at that time, Fr. Frank did not know who the seminarian was. Fr. Frank got up and prayed, and at the morning Mass, Fr. Frank recognized that the seminarian was me. After several talks, Fr. Frank asked me if I wanted to become a priest for Providence. I told him it was impossible, but Fr. Frank told me if God wanted it, nothing was impossible. He told me to trust in God's plan for me.

...

Q: How did you come to study and eventually be ordained in America?

A: In early November of 2011, Fr. Frank and Don travelled to Rome for a meeting. They invited me to go with them and then go to the US. We spent a week visiting historical places near Rome before leaving for the US. It was the first time I had been away from Vietnam.

I stayed at St. Philip Parish, where Fr. Frank is the pastor and Mr. Don Turbitt is a parishioner, for three months. In February, I returned to Vietnam. During the visit, Fr. Frank and I discussed whether I wanted to study for the Diocese of Providence. After praying and consulting my spiritual director and my formation advisor, I decided to accept the invitation. In August of 2012, Fr. Paul Hiep and I returned to the US as seminarian students for the Diocese of Providence.

...

Q: Please share some of the struggles and blessings of your transition to a new country and culture.

A: Moving to a new place with different culture, customs, and language is not easy. First, I struggled with missing my family and friends. This made me very lonely. However, it happened only for a short time. When the school year began, I was very busy studying. This helped me feel better. Moreover, I have received great support, both physically and spiritually, from the Diocese of Providence, from the bishop, from priests and brother seminarians, and especially from Fr. Frank and Don and Pat Turbitt. I do not have my blood family here, but I have a very wonderful and great family, the Diocese of Providence. They are blessings for me. The time goes by fast, and I am grateful for all I have now. The Diocese of Providence and the people here are great gifts from God, for which I am always thankful.

...

Q: How have Don Turbitt and Fr. Frank helped support you?

A: No word can express enough how great their support of me is. They have supported me both physically and spiritually. They have bought me clothes, shoes, school supplies, etc. They always care for what I eat, where I stay, and how I live in a new country far away from my home. Whenever they see me, they often ask if I need anything. They celebrate different events with me, for example my traditional Vietnamese Tet New Year or my birthday. They pray for

me always, and even more, they ask their friends to pray for me. They are my new family here: in my heart and mind, Fr. Frank is my Dad, and Don and Pat Turbitt are my grandparents.

...

Q: What were your thoughts as your ordination to the diaconate was approaching?

A: The diaconate is the first step in the Holy Orders for me to approach to the priesthood. It is God's unconditional love for me. I am not worthy, but out of love for me, God chooses me and makes me his instrument for his work of salvation. My vocational priesthood is a great and unconditional love of God for me.

...

Q: What is it like to serve in a different country?

A: In the past, it was difficult because I missed my family and friends in Vietnam. However, my spiritual director advised me that it does not matter where I stay or who I am with, because if I become a priest, I will be with God and his people and stay in God's house. Every person I have met or will meet will be my brothers and sisters. Now I have no feeling of the difference. I am a servant of God. God calls me for his people. Wherever I go, whomever I meet, or whatever I deal with, God is with me, and his blessings and grace for me are always abundant. I am loved everywhere and by all people. I see no difference here.

Q: Do you want to share more about how God has been working in your life during the past decade? Is there more you want to share with those who have helped support you in this journey?

A: Again, I want to say that my life and my vocation is a great and unconditional love for me. In every moment, God is with me, and He loves me so much. Each person I meet is a great gift from God. They have supported me physically and spiritually. I give thanks to God for the gift of them. I want to thank all people I have met in different parishes, to the Diocese of Providence, to the bishop, priests, and seminarian brothers, and especially to Fr. Frank Santilli and my Grampy Don Turbitt and Nana Pat Turbitt. Also, I am always grateful to my parents, my brothers and sisters-in-law, and all my nephews and nieces in Vietnam who always follow me, pray for me, and encourage me in my journey to the priesthood.

To all of you, please pray for me and continue praying for me, and for all religious and diocesan vocations. We need more and more prayers for more and more vocations to serve God and His people. Thank you!

📍 Pictured L-R

Country Coordinator Don Turbitt, Deacon Doan Nguyen, Fr. Hiep Nguyen, and Fr. Frank Santilli.





I LOVE YOU TOO MUCH TO LIE TO YOU

Q&A

With Peter Herbeck and Msgr. Charles Pope

The following interview is an abridged version of Peter Herbeck's discussion with Msgr. Charles Pope (pastor of Holy Comforter-St. Cyprian Catholic Church in Washington DC) for an episode of the 2021 Season of The Choices We Face.

PETER HERBECK (PH): Tell us about your recent battle with Covid-19.

MSGR. CHARLES POPE (MCP): I have a long history of pulmonary weakness. From December 2019 to February 2020, I had pneumonia. I broke three ribs, had pleurisy, a partially collapsed lung, and a torn chest wall with internal bleeding.

I felt healthy by the time Covid came around. I caught it just as we were beginning to open up. I was taken to the ER in respiratory failure. It was touch-and-go for the first day or two. I spent eleven days in the ICU, and another day or two in a step-down unit, until I was finally released. I feel great now.

PH: Can you talk about courage, which is such an important virtue for the moment we're living in? In an angry, rage-filled culture, with the Church often being intimidated—courage is something we need.

MCP: "Courage" gets its roots from the Latin word "core," meaning "heart," and "age," meaning to act or do. We must have a heart that's able to act, that's full of zeal and joy for the truth and of great, holy reverence and fear of the Lord, and a desire to please Him. Do we want to please the world or the Lord? Choose the Lord, because you'll stand before Him one day in judgment.

Too many of us are just languishing; we don't act like people who are on the

winning team. Jesus is going to win, but sometimes we don't act like that. We're cowering and fearful. We don't want to say anything. We don't have to shake our fist at people, but just honestly say to them, "I'm sorry, that's not the mind of God. I can't in all sincerity and good conscience agree with you on this, because I believe in the Lord, and He teaches against this."

Speak clearly and honestly. Instead, people hide out, including clergy, bishops, and others who don't want to talk about controversial issues. We must regain a sense like the martyrs had in the early Church; they had amazing courage and fortitude to stand against the fiercest opposition. Sometimes, part of our job is to accept that we're going to be persecuted and hated by this world. Part of courage is being realistic.

PH: Joseph Pieper described courage as the willingness to sustain a wound in defense of what's true, good, and beautiful. What are the elements of courage, and where does it come from? How can people who feel like they are often afraid or timid get courage?

MCP: Courage is one of the four cardinal virtues. It's fortitude, which is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Ask for it! Some people are afraid to ask for it, because they know it might involve stepping out more. But ask for it, because when you do get it, it will help you not be afraid to step out there and be part of the mix.

Fortitude, or courage, is not just about running into a dangerous situation. St. Thomas Aquinas discusses its four parts in the *Summa Theologiae*:

1 MAGNANIMITY. It means to be large-minded—to think, "I want to evangelize the world. I want to go out and conquer error with truth." Jesus said, "Go therefore into all nations and baptize them and teach them everything I've commanded you" (Mt 28:19). With large-mindedness, we're able to undertake something great for the kingdom of God.

2 MAGNIFICENCE. Its Latin roots mean not just thinking great things, but doing great things. After having this glorious vision of the beauty of truth and the glory of the kingdom of God, we set forth to say, "Come with me to my Father's house. I've met Him, and the truth is setting me free. I'm not what I want to be, but I'm not what I used to be. Come!" And people begin going out and doing great things. They may evangelize like that, or by founding hospitals or offering tutoring services where they can interact and talk about the Lord in those contexts. It means getting out and doing.

3 PATIENCE helps us resist giving way to sadness. It's pretty discouraging today, as we see the Christendom that those of us who are older once knew falling to pieces. People can't even find

the right bathrooms—that is very confused. I'm suffering like Augustine. The whole Roman empire was crumbling, and he loved the Roman Empire. I love my country, and I love my culture, but it's crumbling to pieces. Patience helps me deal with the sadness and sorrows and bear up under the difficulties that come.

4 PERSEVERANCE helps us pursue our purposes even when there are discouraging results or lack of support. We sometimes wonder if it's two steps forward and one step back. We persevere, we keep going. Jesus says, "Keep preaching this Gospel. When all this latest foolishness is over, you'll still be preaching the Gospel." Nations have come and gone. Empires have risen and fallen, and here we are, still preaching the Gospel. Persevere. Preach the Gospel in season and out of season.



PH: How do you connect a capacity to see the glory and majesty of the King and the ability to live with freedom and courage?

MCP: We need fear of the Lord. Sometimes we think of just a cringing fear. But ideally, as we grow in our love for God, it moves to a fear that holds God in awe. He's so glorious, his truth is so wonderful, I can't not share it. I can't not go forth and bring people and say, "Come and go with me, meet the Father who Jesus introduced to me and brought me right into his heart. Meet my Savior, Jesus." Go forth as credible witnesses who love God with all their heart and want to please Him, and who are joyful witnesses to the glory, the majesty, the power, and the ultimate victory of God and his kingdom.



PH: Revelations 12:11 says the martyrs "loved not their lives even unto death." How do you explain what's being revealed there?

MCP: They defeated the evil one "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives unto this world" (See Rv 12:11). Ultimately, they loved it for God in heaven.

All three things are critical. We're not conquering because we're eloquent; only the blood of the Lamb put sin to death. It's very paradoxical. Good Friday didn't look like a victory, but it was. There is a saying, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hatred cannot drive out hatred, only love can do that." I would add—and this is where we come to the cross—pride cannot drive out pride, only humility can do that. Jesus defeated Satan's pride and our own pride—and broke his back—by his humility and his obedience to the Father, and it is by the blood of the Lamb that we will conquer. Sometimes it's paradoxical. We seem like we're losing, we have martyrs, people are in prison for their faith. We think, "I thought we were victorious here, Lord." It's all paradoxical, because we're breaking the back of pride and of Satan's pride through the humility and blood of the Lamb.

Then, there is "the word of their testimony." You've got to speak. Don't be afraid, or think, "They'll know I'm a Christian just by the way I live my life." Say something too. People need to know what you're doing and why you're doing it, and we have to speak up. We are in the trouble we are in today in our culture, where we have confusion about the most basic things, because we have not been speaking—we Christians who have been tasked with being the voice of truth, the light of the world, and the salt of the earth. The word goes forth from us, but we've been much too quiet. The word is testimony, not just quoting from the Catechism or the Bible, but saying, "In the laboratory of my own life, I have tested God's Word, and I know it's true." That's what helps us to teach and speak with authority; we tested this word, and we know it by experience.

Finally, "They loved not their lives unto this world." Too many people do. With Covid, many people were all worked up about something that could kill their body. Covid is serious, but mortal sin—which nobody pays attention to or talks about—and being excluded from heaven has eternal consequences and is much more serious. So, would that we could love our life more unto eternity and to God and his kingdom than be obsessed with being happy and healthy in this world, which is passing away.



PH: Talk to me about Revelation 21:8, "Cowards . . . will be thrown into the lake of fire."

MCP: A Christian's first job is to announce the kingdom, and if you're not even doing Job One, you're kind of a useless servant. Not everyone has the personality to stand on a street corner and say, "Thus sayeth the Lord." But so many people aren't even saying it at their own kitchen table with their own kids. Find the courage to talk about it with your kids—and expect that you're going to get gruff. Jesus did too. It's hard, but if we don't do Job One, Jesus says that is so serious. "You wicked servant, depart from me" is kind of the image (Mt 7:23).

The Greek word for coward is "deilos," which means to be afraid of loss. I might not get the promotion, I might not be liked, I might not get access to power, I might lose my job. The Lord says, "What's more important, to lose your job or to lose eternity?" He's warning us, and He's asking for a good, holy, reverent fear of Him that takes Him seriously. He says, "Go therefore unto the nations and make disciples" (Mt 28:19).



PH: As the culture has gotten more aggressive in its opposition against the Church, it seems the Church is getting more timid. The culture's coming after us, saying, "You need to

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I LOVE YOU TOO MUCH TO LIE TO YOU

Q&A With Peter Herbeck and Msgr. Charles Pope

salute this, or it's going to cost you. You need to be quiet about this, or it's going to cost you." What would you say to people who have the opportunity to preach, but who are constantly in a tension, "What should I say?"—and usually end up not saying and delivering the full meal?

MCP: Courage, my brothers. I stood up one day in church and said, "I love you too much to lie to you. There are not fifty genders. There are only two sexes, and God made us male and female. Genderism is not of God." And four people got up and very visibly walked out. Well, maybe that's the wolf going out, because it's the job of the priest to drive away the wolf from the flock. The wolf is filled with error and lies, and he may come in sheep's clothing, but he is the wolf. I'm not saying those four people were the wolf personally, but we can't just worry about upsetting people, saying, "Oh, let's welcome Brother Wolf to the congregation." What? The job of the priest is to say, "That's the wolf!" And drive it out, protect the flock.

If you're a priest, bishop, or deacon, read Gregory's Pastoral Rule. He says the high priest would wear bells in his vestment when he went into the Holy of Holies, and there would be a rope tied around his ankles in case

he got struck dead, but as long as the people outside heard the bells ringing, they knew he was still alive. If the bells stopped ringing, that priest was dead. He said, "A silent priest is a dead priest." Our people desperately need to hear from us; they're agonizingly crying for it.

PH: What advice do you have for lay people working for companies that are saluting to the world and expect employees to take stands or go to a gay pride parade? It's violating their conscience, but they don't know what to do. That requires wisdom and real courage.

MCP: Be polite but firm, and say, "I'm sorry, but for sincerely held religious beliefs, I cannot celebrate LGBTQ Day or wear the rainbow. I don't hate these people, but I can't countenance the behavior any more than I can countenance fornication, adultery, pornography, or any other sexual sins. I cannot celebrate that. I believe in God, and I ask you to respect my religious liberty."

You can always throw that out: "If you really come after me, I'll see you in court. I will battle you. I'm not just going to sit here and say, 'Oh, I'm going to get fired.' I have rights too." You don't

have to get ugly right away, you just have to signal, "I have some religious liberties, and I'd like you to respect them. I don't want to participate in this gay pride day at the workplace. Again, for sincerely held religious beliefs. I actually believe that God has taught us something about this that I'm required to follow."



Let me implore the reader to try to believe, if only for a moment, that God thinks that people with modest prosperity and the happiness of their children are not in and of themselves blessed. All this must fall from them in the end. And that if they have not learned to know him they will be wretched. And therefore he troubles them, warning them in advance of an insufficiency that one day they will have to discover and rectify."

//C.S. LEWIS



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