

READING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Any rational observer of the world can see that a **big storm is on the horizon**. Shaken by the failure of political and religious structures, as well as empty cultural realities, the world is looking around for something that cannot be shaken. Yet because of the ultimate fear of death, manifested as fear of financial ruin, loss of political power, loss of ecclesial moral stature, or more basically as fear of the unknown, people are seriously shaken with existential fear. What happens when I die? Where will I go? Is this all there is? Who am I? People are grappling with the unknown and seeking to cling to whatever looks or feels comfortable.

For the third year in a row life expectancy in this country has declined, mainly due to “deaths of despair” (Fr. John Riccardo): Since 1989 suicide rates have gone up 30-40%; substance abuse and addiction are up (the US represents 5% of the world’s population yet has 80% of addicts); death by cirrhosis of the liver has gone up 65% in 25-34 year olds since 1989.

Yet the Gospel is clear: we are **called to be warriors, not comfortable complacent people**.

Matthew 7:13 has never been clearer or more challenging: “**enter by the narrow door**”. Enter by the scary door, by the door that seems impossible without the help of the Holy Spirit...

Acknowledge our utter and complete dependence on the Creator who made us out of love and for love. Then, and only then, will we move in and operate out of the power of God instead of our own resources and radical autonomy.

A SEVERE MERCY

A brief look at Sacred Scripture shows that if God cannot get His people’s attention through good times and prosperity, He will allow plague, famine and warfare to highlight humanity’s self-deluded and self-destructive behavior and bring it back into His perfect plan. To say that humanity in the early 21st century is in the grip of “strong delusion” (see 2Thess.2:10-12) is an understatement.

Could it be that we are so fixed on the world that is passing away that we are unprepared for the end of all things (or maybe just the end of an age) that is rushing toward us?

STRONG DELUSION?

*For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work ... in those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a **strong delusion, to make them believe what is false**, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thess. 2:10-12).*

If we ever doubted the impact of such strong delusion, just look at the current year 2020.

The gloves are off: during the '20 pandemic across the United States and Europe, church and religious services are not deemed as essential as abortion clinics and large-scale protests. The secularist elites continue to flaunt their disdain for faith and people of faith. The sitting New York city mayor has famously opined that New York restaurants are way more crucial to the reopening of the city than its churches. Protest marching in close quarters with large groups of people is fine. Going to church with all the precautions of social distancing is not. According to these powers that be, in a world in which “freedom of worship” has taken the place of freedom of religion, people of faith need to make way for the “grown-ups” and get out of the way of progress and reopening the economy. The not so subliminal message is that they can get together and sing silly songs and indulge in boring rituals when all else is taken care of.

This is occurring now in one of the major cities of the world, currently festooned with banners calling for the defunding of the NYPD. One might say that it is the powers that be have been deluded, if not deceived...

Along with churches and religious services, working parents were also deemed “inessential”. During the pandemic untold hardships were endured by parents at home with small children trying to work their jobs and take care of little ones and not so little ones at the same time. What kind of message does that send about the importance of families?

The same mass scale delusion justifies suicide in the name of mercy and social engineering in the name of fairness. Ignoring the needs of the poorest of the poor, immigrants in the U.S., is also a strong delusion offered in the name of “the law”. How can removing police officers who swore to protect us from

unlawfulness be the cure to the problem of lawlessness? How can killing one's young in the womb for health/choice/convenience be interpreted if not through the lens of a monstrous delusion? Instead of facilitating the destruction of entire generations of African Americans in the womb by setting Planned Parenthood facilities in the poorest neighborhoods, federal, state and local moneys could be re-allocated to alleviate the educational and societal gaps. Of course, no amount of money can cause fathers to take responsibility, but maybe more education and a push for intact families could help. The ultimate solution is becoming a redeemed converted community under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Killing the patient (the innocent child) will not ultimately cure the disease of disintegrating families and poverty. A community of one heart and mind under our Redeemer will.

What about the blurring of biological realities to serve political agendas? What about the blindness evinced by many to the fact that certain biological realities cannot be ignored if our species is to reproduce? Delusion and deception are powerfully at work at both ends of the political spectrum.

THE CURRENT CHURCH AND DIVINE CORRECTION

Make no mistake: infernal smoke is wafting within the church as well. Complacency and cowardice seem to be the watchwords of the decade. With so many shepherds and spokespersons refusing to call a spade a spade (or sin, well, *sin*), with so little clear teaching on spiritual warfare coming from the pulpit, it is no small wonder that the average Catholic is confused.

The witness of the Church is ineffective. The parish model is broken. Many pastors and clergy are burned out or staving off burn out and disillusionment. The laity is meant to be intimately involved in mission and evangelization. It is NOT the primary mission of the clergy. It is the mission of the laity to shine brightly with the fire of the Holy Spirit and be the "city on a hill", to be visible from long distances.

Giving in to societal and cultural trends in the name of relevance does not satisfy the heart hungry for God. Indeed, what Paul wrote to Timothy is occurring: *"For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will **accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their***

own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths” 2 Tim. 4:2.

Bowing to societal pressures and accommodating the world, even in the case of manifest absurdity such as gender “fluidity” and women’s “reproductive rights” are an example of wandering away to myths. It may make you popular in the short run, but is Church leadership about popularity, or leading people to the Way, the Truth and the Life? Jesus Himself was fundamentally unpopular in His own day because He spoke truth to power.

Benedict XVI famously observed that as the Light of God is pushed to the margins of society **humanity increasingly loses its bearings** and gives in to the temptation of self-creation. When we suppress the truth of God we lose sight of the truth of ourselves and find a need to create our own reality and order it according to our own opinions. Truth becomes a matter of personal opinion to be enforced by whoever is in power at the time. A whole society becomes **complicit in a web of lies that replaces absolute truth with feelings, emotions and opinions.**

Current events need to be read from the heart of the Scripture: when His beloved children start playing in traffic or driving off a cliff, the Lord will bring them back to safety (or correct their self-destructive trajectory) in the most effective way. The most effective way is usually the one that shows the folly of radical autonomy and usually, yes, is ushered in with suffering and uncertainty. The world and the Church are on the rocks. What does the Father want? What is the Holy Spirit saying to us?

BE PREPARED

In my prayer times I have been wrestling with what all this could mean for me, my family, my ministry and my world. My prayer has been: “Lord, do not let me be caught unprepared!”, and, “Lord, let me be a part of the solution, not the problem!” A review of my prayer journals over the past couple of decades has also yielded the constant drumbeat of God’s warning. I cannot count the number of places where the Lord plainly told me: “Be prepared, be vigilant, be ready. I come”. In His mercy He wants us to be ready while it is still day, and He will speak if we just listen.

Is the coming storm just a storm or the harbinger of the end? Ultimately the same degree of preparation is required on our part for both events. A quick review of past magisterial teaching and prophetic words indicate that **something big is coming, and may already be here.**

The following are a number of prophetic words, spoken both as prophecies in the name of the Lord, and also by recent pontiffs in their assessment of our times. Take the time to read what they say. I have placed them in their entirety in the appendix to this article.

Together with the language in Vatican II about “reading the signs of the times” they create a steady consistent warning that things are coming to a head. Keep in mind that this is merely a sampling of a wide pool of prophetic senses and insights on the same topic (extreme judgment and purification) over the past 50 years.

PROPHECIES

It was after communion at the closing Mass of our international conference on a hot May 1975 day in St Peter’s Basilica. Pope Paul VI was presiding.

As one of the participants, excited but trying not to succumb to the stifling heat, I heard Ralph Martin’s chilling prophecy of the coming hard times for the church and the world, resonating off the very walls of St. Peter’s. It went in part like this: *“Because I love you...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 will not be there...***

*I will strip you of everything that you are depending on. **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**”*

At the time I was all of 18 years old and, while sobered by the words, I anticipated them occurring in a very distant future, probably not within my lifetime. Prophecies and teachings like Fr Mike Scanlan’s prophecies given in 1976 and 1980 that seemed to “unpack” even more the specific nature of the coming troubles, were in the very air we breathed in the community where I lived during my college years at the University of Michigan.

During my time in the Word of God community in Ann Arbor Michigan I heard several iterations, both prophetically and through very specific teaching, about the coming “Hard Times” and how to respond. I paid close attention, but continued to think that these events would be in the distant future. I even wrote a series of scalding letters back to my prayer group friends in Rome along the lines of “get ready, hard times are coming”. Still I ended up putting these warnings aside for a “future time” as I got on with my life, went to grad school, got married and started a family.

ITS HERE NOW

The year of our Lord 2020 has put paid to the illusion of a distant fulfillment. Like many, I never would have imagined all that this year has brought us: a worldwide pandemic bringing with it a universal shut down/lockdown and a global recession accompanied by despair and existential angst and a record number of suicides.

That was only February through April. May brought international civil unrest, riots, and looting. One had to wonder why people in Delhi, Sydney, and Oslo were protesting the behavior of a couple of rogue Minneapolis police officers. Surely, I thought, they have their own rogue officials to deal with? One also wonders why some (obviously unconscionable but not indicative of most police officers or police departments) incidents of police misconduct have sparked a call to rewrite the very substance of American history. The “Cancel Culture” movement seeks to abolish all history, all religious faith, all perceived inequality. Perhaps a line could be drawn between these distressing and baffling events and a sinister plan to unmoor western civilization from its foundations?

Woe betide anyone honored with a statue: they will tear you down, whether you were a slaveowner or campaigned against slavery, or whether you were a colonial oppressor or the consecrated religious who worked on behalf of the poor and the oppressed minorities. The “cancel culture” in the United States joins the past iconoclasm of Mao’s cultural revolution and ISIS’s destruction of priceless historical and archeological treasures in the name of ideology. If at some point history took notice, that very notion needs to be expunged. In favor of what? The ugly specters of anarchy and nihilism raise their heads yet again, affording a clear view into the agenda of the pit of hell: burn it all down!

The immediate incendiary volatility of the unrests took the focus off of the pandemic and on to the failure of current political and media paradigms. Add to

that catastrophic natural disasters like the fires in Australia and Southern California, the floods in the South, hurricanes and tornadoes - and as of this writing we are only half way through the “*annus horribilis*” of 2020...

Yet the startling specificity of Fr Mike’s words from 1976 and 1980: “*are you ready for the **churches to be shut?**... for **no law, no order, no protection...**for cities and diocese to go bankrupt... for the people of God to have to choose between the world and Me, to rely on smaller communities of believers ... there will be **purification and persecution among my people**. You will have to stand for what you believe. **You will have to choose between the world and me**. You will have to choose what word you will follow and whom you will respect instead of existing parish, school and governmental structures”” So this time is now come upon all of you: **a time of judgment and of purification. Sin will be called sin...**” show me that God is in charge, that He has not been taken by surprise, and that He has a perfect plan in all this. God sits outside of the very fabric of time, and all time is *now* before Him. There is nothing that has ever happened or ever will happen that takes Him unawares. All things do indeed work for good according to His plan.*

PAPAL WARNINGS

It wasn’t until much later that I became aware of the very same theme threaded through the words of recent pontiffs: On Nov. 9, 1978 (shortly before he became pope), Karol Wojtyla stated to a gathering of US Bishops:

“*We are now standing in the face of the **greatest historical confrontation** humanity has gone through. I do not think that wide circles of the American society or wide circles of the Christian community realize this fully. We are now facing **the final confrontation** between the Church and the anti-Church, of the Gospel versus the anti-Gospel. This **confrontation lies within the plans of divine Providence...**”*

Joseph Ratzinger before becoming Benedict 16th, said similar things in an interview published in *Voices and Views* in 1969:

“*The **Church is facing very hard times. The real crisis has scarcely begun. We will have to count on terrific upheavals***”

*“Let us go a step farther. From the **crisis of today the Church of tomorrow will emerge — a Church that has lost much. She will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning.** She will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes, so it **will lose many of her social privileges.**”*

*But when the trial of this sifting is past, a great power will flow from a **more spiritualized and simplified Church.** Men in a totally planned world will find themselves **unspeakably lonely.** If they have completely lost sight of God, they will feel the whole horror of their poverty. Then they will discover the little flock of believers as something wholly new. They will discover it as a hope that is meant for them, an answer for which they have always been searching in secret.*

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

The above magisterial words and prophetic words match up to say: “Be ready, judgment and purification are coming. Be ready, but know that I am in charge of history and this is all love”. The big picture is that the present day is a time of darkness and witness.

It should also be noted that all these private revelations are just that: you don’t have to pay any attention to them (but you should).

In 1 Thess. 5:20 Paul invites us not to despise prophecy but to test it: “Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good”. The idea is to test private revelation and prophecy against the fullness of revealed truth through the Scriptures, Sacred Tradition and Magisterial Teaching. Do these words and ideas contradict or hold up and confirm the Scriptures? Judge for yourself as we hold up these prophecies against the Gospel.

You definitely need to **pay attention** to Jesus in the Gospel. All the above words merely confirm and follow Jesus’ constant warnings to be prepared, to be vigilant, to stay awake, to have your lamp lit with plenty of extra oil (oil is a symbol of our personal relationship with Him). He said the day of the Lord would come like a thief in the night, and that judgment is coming. He said STAY AWAKE because we do not know the day or the hour. Staying awake is an apt metaphor meant to indicate a shaking off of the slumber of comfort and complacency.

OUR RESPONSE

Be of good courage.

Messages like these, saying essentially the same thing, are simultaneously horrifying and exciting. The horror stems from our own weakness, frailty, compromised double mindedness. We are perennial fence straddlers.

The excitement comes from the Holy Spirit who lives in us and through us and draws us back to the Father. As we diminish He increases within us and yearns on our behalf for the courts of the Lord.

THE TIME OF THE SPIRIT AND WITNESS

The current time is the **time of the Holy Spirit and of witness**. Be a **credible witness** to the love of Jesus. Nothing else will do. Is there enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian?

In the short term it means look to existing communities of believers and form such communities where they do not currently exist. Seek out like minded believers but don't stop there. All the while search for the "poor" and needy to help and assist. They are closer than you think.

Now more than ever the proclamation of the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit is crucial. "**Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel**", 1Cor. 9:16. To be a **Christian is to be a missionary**. The present time is a time of the Spirit and of witness. Rev.12:11 points out that the **Evil One is conquered by the blood of the Lamb and the witness/testimony of the saints**. Indeed, the Evil One has been conquered. Col. 2:15 graphically portrays Jesus leading Satan in a triumphal procession in chains. He would like us to forget that and live in fear. Do not let him!

Be ready to "**proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable (convenient) or unfavorable (inconvenient); convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully**"
2 Timothy 4:2-

and yes, this is the **work of the laity**, you and me, as well!

Above all, do not give up!

What does all this mean for us today, right now? Should we be afraid and confused? No, that is not the will of the Father who loves us, and who is saying at every turn: *“Be wise and prudent but do not put your faith in the world and its values and systems, turn to me and be saved”*

Here are some practical ways we can take on to be prepared and awake:

ACTION STEPS

Know that we have been created to live today, for such a time as this. Of all the times in the world, He chose this one for you and me. Everyone is living today because the Lord meant them to. We were born for this! There are no accidents. Our mission is to be “agents behind enemy lines” rescuing the dead and dying.

1. **Repent and reform**- life’s mortality rate is 100% but so is the “immortality rate”: our bodies will end, but our spirits are eternal.
 - a. There are no accidental disciples: be intentionally His and seek to do His will. Your life is not your own. His will, not ours, be done.
 - b. What does the Lord want from me? What is the Holy Spirit saying?
 - c. Discern what “season” you are in? There are harvest seasons and rest seasons. You can’t go 100% all the time. You are not meant to gather in all the time. Sometimes the Lord calls you to rest and regroup. We are still in the middle of a forced silence and solitude: let’s not waste it and make the most of the forced rest. Use the sabbatical that you have been given. Nothing takes the Lord by surprise, therefore the days and months we have are planned/allowed by Him.
 - d. What is the Lord speaking to you?
 - e. Choose who you will respect and obey. You cannot serve two masters.
 - f. Forgive, forgive, forgive: are there broken relationships in your life? Do not yield to bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness. Do not have a “long memory” for offenses and slights. Forget them and forgive them for your sake as much as theirs.

2. Study and understand the **written Word of God**: contrary to public perception there is absolute right and there is absolute wrong. Contrary to public perception, God has some clear cut and definite words on a whole host of subjects pertaining to human flourishing. Do not, I repeat do not, presume on God's mercy and forbearing. Seek Him and *do what He says*.
 - a. Read the Scriptures **every** day. Just start somewhere. Don't waste time with the "right" reading or study plan, just *do it*.
 - i. The Scriptures are a user manual, a mission manual, and a love letter, all rolled into one. Let it act on your mind and on your heart.
 - ii. Just as you eat regularly for sustenance, so read regularly for spiritual sustenance and power.
3. **You ARE your brother's keeper**: How can I take care of the poor and marginalized?
 - a. Keep asking the Lord for more. There is always more of His power and love through the Holy Spirit. How can He use me for those around me?
4. **What stands in the way** of the Holy Spirit in my life?
 - a. Be honest with yourself: what are the obstacles to the Lord in your daily life? Are you avoiding Him? How are you allowing your expectations and limitations to be projected upon Him?
 - i. Do not be half-hearted or lukewarm!
 - ii. Is every part of your life under His Lordship? What does it mean that my life is not my own, that I was bought and paid for with a terrible price?
5. Be ready for **spiritual combat**:
 - a. There *is* a spiritual battle. Everyone is involved. It cannot be wished away. The very root of human conflict is in this cosmic confrontation. There are no human enemies, everyone is a child of God. Pray for those who you see failing to see Him and know Him.

- b. Watch how you speak about people, especially political or entertainment people who live 'out there'. The same applies to your religious leaders. Watch your speech. Words are powerful. Use them for good and for hope, not for hopelessness and discouragement.
 - c. Forgive.
 - d. Put on the whole armor of God, Eph. 6-do not be caught unprepared. And then, **STAND** your ground. The armor described by Paul only covers your front, not your back.
 - e. Use the power of God to overcome strongholds of sin and despair- 2 Cor. 10:5, especially the ones that dwell in our minds and hearts.
 - f. Lead by example.
6. Do not fear! Don't let the **fear of bodily death** overcome you and your decisions. If we have died with Him, we will also rise with Him.
- a. The highest good for secular society is a healthy, financially secure life. The highest good for a Christian is knowing, loving and serving the Lord in this life and being with Him in the next. Therefore, death has no sting. Satan controls the human race through the fear of death. Don't let him.
 - b. Society is being shaken, quite literally, by the fear of death and the fear of economic and political collapse. If we hold on to the Kingdom we will not be shaken. Choose what you will rely on.
 - c. Attitude of gratitude: instead of focusing on what is wrong or what is missing, give thanks to God for what you have and trust that He will supply the rest at the right time. **STOP COMPLAINING!**
7. Seek out **community**
- a. Expect small and great miraculous encounters
 - b. Not all are what they seem to be
 - c. Do not judge by the exterior
 - d. Identity, identity, identity: we are first and foremost children of God. Being a son or daughter of God is our first allegiance. Everything else, family, friends, political party is secondary. We are not of this world.

We seek to make the world a better place, but not through education, political actions, or recreation. These are all good things, but who is your Lord? We belong to the Lord and are citizens of heaven. We are to know, love and serve Him and realize that utopia does not exist. Perfection through purely human efforts is doomed to failure.

- e. Don't seek popularity or consensus: seek the kingdom first and all else will be added.
 - f. There is protection within the Body of Christ and like-minded brothers and sisters: don't go at it alone! Let holiness be "contagious"
 - g. Remember your place within the Body: submission to proper authority is a hallmark of holiness. Accountability *is* protection.
 - h. Write down what you hear Him say: "Speak Lord, your servant is listening"
 - i. Am I still going at it alone in some areas? Where do I need to let Him in? Have I let past hurts cut me off from family or community?
8. Act to influence the culture and the world through **signs and wonders in evangelism**. Proclamation and demonstration.
- a. Expect a higher and deeper anointing for evangelization and more and stronger charisms
 - b. Expect a deeper authority to operate in kingdom living and demonstration
 - c. Expect the grace and anointing to evangelize, sanctify, penetrate and perfect the temporal order (Decree on the Laity).
 - d. Remember that God's actions start on the edge of the impossible: as soon as we think there is something we can "do", we will take credit for the outcome. Only when it seems impossible does God step in to show His power and love.
9. **Pray, pray, pray**. Draw near to Him and He will draw near to you.
- a. The kingdom of God is brought about by obedience and worship

- b. Worship is vocal praise, yes, but it also obeying the Father in all things
- c. Spend time daily with Him. Communication with the Lord: oxygen.
- d. Prayer is communication with the Beloved. It is a conversation. Talk to Him like you talk to your family and friends. Just speak from your heart and make sure *you listen*.

10. Do not fear! The future is in Jesus' hands.

- a. Do you know Him?
- b. Do you trust Him?
- c. The Lord has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love, and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7)

APPENDIX OF PROPHECIES AND PAPAL QUOTES

1. **Ralph Martin**, 1975 International Catholic Charismatic conference in St Peter's basilica

*"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 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"***

2. **Fr Michael Scanlan**, 1976 prophecy

*Son of man, do you see that city going bankrupt? Are you willing to see all your cities going bankrupt? Are you willing to see the **bankruptcy of the whole economic system** you rely on now so that all money is worthless and cannot support you?*

*Son of man, do you see **the crime and lawlessness in your city streets**, and towns, and institutions? Are you willing to see **no law, no order, no protection** for you except that which I myself will give you?*

*Son of man, do you see the country which you love and which you are now celebrating—a country's history that you look back on with nostalgia? Are you willing to see no country—**no country to call your own** except those I give you as my body? Will you let me bring you life in my body and only there?*

*Son of man, do you see those churches which you can go to so easily now? Are you ready to see them **with bars across their doors**, with doors nailed shut? Are you ready to base your life only on me and not on any particular structure? Are you*

ready to depend only on me and not on all the institutions of schools and parishes that you are working so hard to foster?

Son of man, I call you to be ready for that. That is what I am telling you about. The structures are falling and changing—it is not for you to know the details now—but do not rely on them as you have been. I want you to make a deeper commitment to one another. **I want you to trust one another, to build an interdependence that is based on my Spirit.** It is an interdependence that is no luxury. It is an absolute necessity for those who will base their lives on me and not the structures from a pagan world. I have spoken and it will take place. My word will go forth to my people. **They may hear and they may not—and I will respond accordingly—but this is my word.**

Look about you, son of man. **When you see it all shut down, when you see everything removed which has been taken for granted, and when you are prepared to live without these things,** then you will know what I am making ready.

3. Fr Michael Scanlan, 1980:

The following prophecy, given by Fr. Michael Scanlan, was shared in a New Covenant magazine article by Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan in May of 1980 (see pages 769-772 in link).

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 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. They are not only infected with sin, but they teach sin, embrace sin, dismiss sin.** Their leadership has been unable to handle this. There is fragmentation, confusion, throughout the ranks. Satan goes where he will and infects whom he will. He has free access throughout my people—and I will not stand for this.

My people specially blessed in this renewal are **more under the spirit of the world than they are under the Spirit of My baptism.** They are more determined by fear of what others will think of them—fears of failure and rejection in the world, loss of respect of neighbors and superiors and those around them—than they are determined by fear of me and fear of infidelity to my word.

Therefore, your situation is very, very weak. Your power is so limited. You cannot be considered at this point in the center of the battle and the conflict that is going on.

So this time is now come upon all of you: **a time of judgment and of purification. Sin will be called sin.** Satan will be unmasked. Fidelity will be held up for what it is and should be. My faithful servants **will be seen** and will come together. **They will not be many in number.** It will be a **difficult and a necessary time.** There will be collapse, difficulties throughout the world.

But more to the issue, there will be **purification and persecution among my people.** You will have to stand for what you believe. **You will have to choose between the world and me.** You will have to choose what word you will follow and whom you will respect.

And in that choice, what has not been accomplished by the time of blessing and gifts will be accomplished. What has not been accomplished in the baptism and the flooding of gifts of my Spirit will be accomplished in a **baptism of fire.** The fire will move among you and it will burn out what is chaff. The fire will move among you individually, corporately, in groups, and around the world.

I will not tolerate the situation that is going on. I will not tolerate the mixture and the adulterous treating of gifts and graces and blessings with infidelity, sin, and prostitution. **My time is now among you.**

What you need to do is to **come before Me in total submission to My Word, in total submission to My plan, in the total submission in this new hour.** What you need to do is to drop the things that are your own, those things of the past. What you need to do is to see yourselves and those whom you have responsibility for in light of this hour of judgment and purification. You need to see them in that way and do for them what will best help them to stand strong and be among My faithful servants.

For **there will be casualties. It will not be easy, but it is necessary.** It is necessary that My people be, in fact, my people; that My Church be, in fact, My Church; and that My Spirit, in fact, bring forth the purity of life, the purity and fidelity to the Gospel.

3. John Paul II:

*“We are now standing in the face of the **greatest historical confrontation** humanity has gone through. I do not think that wide circles of the American society or wide circles of the Christian community realize this fully. We are now facing **the final confrontation** between the Church and the anti-Church, of the Gospel versus the anti-Gospel. This **confrontation lies within the plans of divine Providence**; it is trial which the whole Church, and the Polish Church in particular, must take up. It is a trial of not only our nation and the Church, but, in a sense, a test of 2,000 years of culture and Christian civilization with all of its consequences for human dignity, individual rights, human rights and the rights of nations.”*

In 1998 he argued to U.S. bishops: “The new evangelization that can make the twenty-first century a springtime of the gospel is a task for the entire People of God, but will **depend in a decisive way on the lay faithful being fully aware of their baptismal vocation** and their responsibility for bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to their culture and society.”

4. Benedict XVI:

*“The future of the Church can and will issue from those whose roots are deep and who live from the pure fullness of their faith. It will **not issue from those who accommodate themselves merely to the passing moment** or from those who merely criticize others and assume that they themselves are infallible measuring rods; nor will it issue from those who take the easier road, who sidestep the passion of faith, declaring false and obsolete, tyrannous and legalistic, all that makes demands upon men, that hurts them and compels them to sacrifice themselves. To put this more positively: **The future of the Church, once again as always, will be reshaped by saints**, by men, that is, whose minds probe deeper than the slogans of the day, who see more than others see, because their lives embrace a wider reality. Unselfishness, which makes men free, is attained only through the patience of small daily acts of self-denial..*

*“How does all this affect the problem we are examining? It means that the big talk of those who prophesy a Church without God and without faith is all empty chatter. We have **no need of a Church that celebrates the cult of action in political prayers**. It is utterly superfluous. Therefore, it will destroy itself. What will remain is the Church of Jesus Christ, the Church that believes in the God who has*

become man and promises us life beyond death. The kind of priest who is no more than a social worker can be replaced by the psychotherapist and other specialists; but the priest who is no specialist, who does not stand on the [sidelines], watching the game, giving official advice, but in the name of God places himself at the disposal of man, who is beside them in their sorrows, in their joys, in their hope and in their fear, such a priest will certainly be needed in the future.

*“Let us go a step farther. From the **crisis of today the Church of tomorrow will emerge — a Church that has lost much. She will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning.** She will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes, so it **will lose many of her social privileges.** In contrast to an earlier age, it will be seen much more as a voluntary society, entered only by free decision. As a small society, it will make much bigger demands on the initiative of her individual members. Undoubtedly it will discover new forms of ministry and will ordain to the priesthood approved Christians who pursue some profession. In **many smaller congregations or in self-contained social groups, pastoral care will normally be provided in this fashion. Along-side this, the full-time ministry of the priesthood will be indispensable** as formerly. But in all of the changes at which one might guess, the Church will find her essence afresh and with full conviction in that which was always at her center: faith in the triune God, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, in the presence of the Spirit until the end of the world. In faith and prayer she will again recognize the **sacraments as the worship of God and not as a subject for liturgical scholarship.***

*“The Church will be a more spiritual Church, not presuming upon a political mandate, flirting as little with the Left as with the Right. It will be hard going for the Church, for the process of crystallization and clarification will cost her much valuable energy. **It will make her poor and cause her to become the Church of the meek. ...***

*But when the trial of this sifting is past, a great power will flow from a **more spiritualized and simplified Church.** Men in a totally planned world will find themselves **unspeakably lonely. If they have completely lost sight of God, they will feel the whole horror of their poverty. Then they will discover the little flock of believers as something wholly new.** They will discover it as a hope that is meant for them, an answer for which they have always been searching in secret.*

*“And so it seems certain to me that the **Church is facing very hard times. The real crisis has scarcely begun. We will have to count on terrific upheavals. But I am***

*equally certain about what will remain at the end: not the Church of the political cult, which is dead already, but the Church of faith. It may well no longer be the dominant social power to the extent that she was until recently; but it will enjoy a fresh blossoming and be **seen as man's home, where he will find life and hope beyond death.***