

*Fr. Perozich comments —*

*For those in the church who are tired of ambiguity and long for clarity, for those who hear only socialism and politics from clergy rather than salvation, for those who experience levity rather than the sacred in liturgy, for those who experience muddled catechesis rather than solid guidance, look ye to Cardinal Sarah.*

*Here are some highlights from this article that may lead you to read his book. In the meantime, build up your personal spiritual life first by attending good liturgy, personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, praying the rosary, opening the Bible to study it asking the Holy Spirit to guide you, and reflecting on where Jesus leads you at the end of the day.*

*Respect leaders who seem to be off base on gospel truth in their pursuit for earthly utopia; pray for them; follow Jesus to work out your salvation from sin for eternal life in fear and trembling.*

*Some of Cardinal Sarah's quotes from the article:*

- It is necessary for us to be in every respect part of a resistance, to take the direction opposite that of the secularized world, in other words, the path of Christ, the one Savior of the world.*
- From now on, in order to defend our beliefs, in order to be firm, we will have to support each other in the faith and walk as a community united around Christ: "Where two or three are gathered, I am in the midst of them." From this presence we can draw our strength. The Day is Now Far Spent is a thoughtful, carefully argued response to this emergency.*

- *I firmly believe that the situation that we are experiencing within the Church resembles in every respect the situation of Good Friday, when the apostles abandoned Christ and Judas betrayed him, because the traitor wanted his own style of Christ, a Christ preoccupied with political issues. Today many priests and bishops are literally spellbound by political or social questions.*
- *Certainly, it is important to be sensitive to persons who are suffering. I am thinking in particular of people who leave their country. But why do they go away from their land? Because their nations have been destabilized by unbelieving authorities who have lost God, for whom money and power are the only things that count. These difficulties are immense. But, I repeat, the Church must first restore to people the ability to look toward Christ*
- *Today, I can say without fear that some priests, some bishops and even some cardinals are afraid to proclaim what God teaches and to hand on the doctrine of the Church. They are afraid of disapproval, of being seen as reactionaries. And so they say fuzzy, vague, imprecise things, so as to escape all criticism, and they espouse the stupid evolution of the world. That is a betrayal*
- *Above all they want people to say that the Church is open, welcoming, attentive, modern. But the Church is not made for listening, she is made for*

*teaching: she is Mater et magistra, mother and teacher. Of course a mom listens to her child, but she is there in the first place to teach, to guide and to supervise, because she knows better than her children what path to take.*

- *All pastoral care is like a house: if there are no foundations, the house collapses. Pastoral care must be built on the teaching of the Church. Too often people forget doctrine so as to focus exclusively on pastoral care; but then it is an empty, puerile, stupid sort of pastoral care. You cannot sacrifice doctrine to a pastoral practice*
- *the Church's mission is to guide man in this ascent toward God. But if the priests are bogged down in materialism, they will not be able to guide the world toward true happiness.*
  - *Catholic leaders often tend to blame this disaffection with the Church on the prevailing materialism or other developments in society. Wouldn't it be more helpful for the Church to ask herself about her responsibilities too, about how she might have turned the faithful away by desacralizing the liturgy, by turning her back on popular piety or by making her preaching insipid*
- *True reform concerns our own conversion. If we do not change ourselves, all structural reforms will be useless. Laypeople, priests, cardinals, we must all return to God. History witnessed two reformers: Luther, who wanted to change the face of the Church and ended up leaving it, and*

*Francis of Assisi, who transformed the Church by living the Gospel radically. Today, true reform is a radically evangelical life. Mother Teresa discreetly and humbly reformed the Church by tirelessly proclaiming to the world: “Care for the poor, but before that, care first for God.”*

- *A priest who has lost his bond with Jesus, does not pray, and does not take the time to be with Christ before the Blessed Sacrament, is a weakened priest. “Apart from me, you can do nothing,” Christ said (Jn 15:5). A worldly priest, who no longer has the time to meditate on the Word of God, who rushes through his Mass or celebrates it in a profane manner, who has no interior life, cannot stand. The reason why someone can stoop to such serious intrigues is because he first detached himself from Jesus, from the force [= strength, force, fortitude] that keeps us in contact with him.*
- *The Church imposes nothing; she only proposes. But it is her mission to propose God’s teaching to the world.*
- *Materialism separates us radically from God and from the interior life. Islamism does too. God cannot inspire barbarity. Killing someone because he does not share your faith? Setting off a bomb in a bus and killing innocent people in the name of Allah? Such things are impossible for God.*

- *To say to a human being: “You are free to choose your sex,” is to destroy him. In reality it is the freedom to destroy oneself. But God alone makes us free!*
- *You also write that the modern world destroys by attacking [national and religious] identities. You, on the contrary, defend this rootedness that Simone Weil described as the first need of the human soul. That makes you a somewhat isolated voice in a Church that sometimes seems to have become a mere auxiliary of the pro-immigration party.*
  - *A - When I went to Poland [in October 2017], a country that is often criticized, I encouraged the faithful to affirm their identity as they have done for centuries. My message was simple: you are first Poles, Catholics, and only then Europeans. You must not sacrifice these first two identities on the altar of a technocratic Europe that acknowledges no fatherland.*
- *This is why we should stay calm: the Church is not in crisis; we are the one who are in crisis. Her teaching remains the same; her clarity remains the same. It is true that Benedict XVI was neither understood nor accepted; because of his years at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith he was regarded as a traditionalist, a reactionary, but he remained calm, serene and humble. He was a stronghold [socle] for doctrine, for the interior life, for the future of the Church.*

## THE CHURCH IS PLUNGED INTO THE DARKNESS OF GOOD FRIDAY



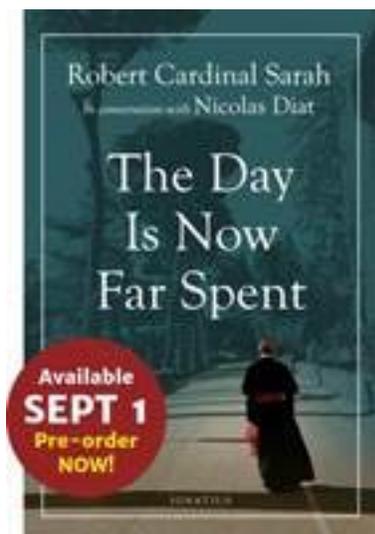
“Today,” states Robert Cardinal Sarah, “I can say without fear that some priests, some bishops and even some cardinals are afraid to proclaim what God teaches and to hand on the doctrine of the Church.”

Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, is pictured after a session of the Synod of Bishops on young people, the faith and vocational discernment at the Vatican Oct. 16, 2018.

*Editor’s note: The following is the first half of a March 27, 2019, interview with Robert Cardinal Sarah, originally conducted in French by Laurent Dandrieu; it is reprinted here with kind permission of Culture à Valeurs Actuelles. The second half of the interview will be posted on Sunday, March 31, 2019.*

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On the occasion of the publication of his new book, the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, one of the strongest voices in the Church, met with us in Rome for an exclusive interview.



Fans of NewSpeak, read no further! Although books by Catholic prelates often inspire the same polite annoyance as lukewarm tea, *The Day is Now Far Spent*, the new book-length interview of Robert Cardinal Sarah with Nicolas Diat, looks like strong drink. In recalling that a world forgetful of God is headed for ruin, dismissing both “materialist barbarity” and “Islamist barbarity”, exhorting the Church to put Christ back at the center, denouncing the Marrakesh Agreement supported by the Vatican or warning against the ordination of married men that some would like to experiment with on the occasion of the upcoming Synod on the Amazon Region, Cardinal Sarah invites his readers to participate in a genuine spiritual resistance, recalling that Christ alone is the Hope of the world.

Q - Why did you choose such a somber title, which might frighten the reader? [The full title of the French edition is: *It is Toward Evening, and the Day is Now Far Spent.*]

A - This book is first of all a call to clarity and clear-sightedness. The Church is going through a major crisis. The winds are extraordinarily violent. Days without scandals, real or fake, are rare. The faithful can therefore legitimately wonder about it. I intended this book for them. I hope that they can come out of reading it with the joy that Christ gives: “Stay with us, Lord, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent” (Lk 24:29). The resurrection of the Son of God is what gives Hope in the darkness.

Q - Was your choice of this verse from the Gospel passage about the travelers to Emmaus a way of pointing out that the Church does not sufficiently put Christ and prayer at the center?

A - I firmly believe that the situation that we are experiencing within the Church resembles in every respect the situation of Good Friday, when the apostles abandoned Christ and Judas betrayed him, because the traitor wanted his own style of Christ, a Christ preoccupied with political issues. Today many priests and bishops are literally spellbound by political or social questions. In reality, these questions will never find answers apart from Christ’s teaching. It makes us more capable of solidarity and fraternity; as long as we do not have Christ as our older brother, the firstborn of a multitude of brothers, there is no solid charity, no true otherness. Christ is the only light

of the world. How could the Church turn away from this light? How can she spend her time getting bogged down in purely materialistic issues?

Certainly, it is important to be sensitive to persons who are suffering. I am thinking in particular of people who leave their country. But why do they go away from their land? Because their nations have been destabilized by unbelieving authorities who have lost God, for whom money and power are the only things that count. These difficulties are immense. But, I repeat, the Church must first restore to people the ability to look toward Christ: “When I am lifted up, I will draw all men to myself” (Jn 12:32). The crucified Christ is the one who teaches us to pray and to say: “Forgive them, for they know not what they do.” It is by looking to the Son of God that the Church will be able to learn to bring people to prayer and to forgive as Christ does. This book means to try to restore to the Church the sense of her great divine mission. So that she can bring people to Christ who is Hope. This is the meaning of the title of our book: today everything is somber, difficult, but whatever difficulties we may be going through, there is only one person who can come to our aid. It is necessary for there to be an institution to lead to this person, and that is the Church.

Q - To call the Church back to her true mission: that is a way of saying that she sometimes strays from it. You go so far as to denounce the shepherds who betray their sheep, which many Catholics find difficult to believe....

A - Your comment is not specific to our age: look at the Old Testament, which has an abundance of bad

shepherds, those men who like to make a profit on the meat or the wool of their sheep, without taking care of them! There have always been betrayals in the Church. Today, I can say without fear that some priests, some bishops and even some cardinals are afraid to proclaim what God teaches and to hand on the doctrine of the Church. They are afraid of disapproval, of being seen as reactionaries. And so they say fuzzy, vague, imprecise things, so as to escape all criticism, and they espouse the stupid evolution of the world. That is a betrayal: if the shepherd does not lead his flock to the restful waters, toward the green pastures that the psalm speaks about, if he does not protect it against the wolves, that shepherd is a criminal who abandons his sheep. If he does not teach the faith, if he revels in activism instead of reminding people that they are made for prayer, he betrays his mission. Jesus says: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered" (Mt 26:31). That is what is happening today. People no longer know where to turn.

Q - Nowadays isn't there for some people the temptation to align the Church with the world's values so as to stop being a sign of contradiction to it?

A - Obviously, there is a large majority of priests who remain faithful to their mission of teaching, sanctifying and governing. But there is also a small number who give in to the morbid, wicked temptation to align the Church with the current values of the Western societies. Above all they want people to say that the Church is open, welcoming, attentive, modern. But the Church is not made for listening, she is made for teaching: she is *Mater et*

*magistra*, mother and teacher. Of course a mom listens to her child, but she is there in the first place to teach, to guide and to supervise, because she knows better than her children what path to take. Some have adopted the ideologies of today's world under the fallacious pretext of being open to the world; but instead we should bring the world to be open to God, who is the source of our existence.

Q - In your book you talk about a crisis of moral theology: isn't this above all the temptation to sacrifice doctrine to pastoral care, in other words, the content to the container, and a false concept of mercy, which is so concerned about vaunting its understanding that it thereby forgets to recall the rules for living well?

A - All pastoral care is like a house: if there are no foundations, the house collapses. Pastoral care must be built on the teaching of the Church. Too often people forget doctrine so as to focus exclusively on pastoral care; but then it is an empty, puerile, stupid sort of pastoral care. You cannot sacrifice doctrine to a pastoral practice that was reduced to congruent part of mercy: God is merciful, but only to the extent to which we acknowledge that we are sinners. In order to allow God to bestow his mercy, it is necessary to return to Him, like the prodigal son. There is a perverse tendency to falsify pastoral care, to pit it against doctrine and to present a merciful God who demands nothing: but there is no such thing as a father who demands nothing of his children! God, like any good father, is demanding, because he has immense ambitions for us. The Father wants us to be in his image and likeness.

Q - You speak about the faith of believers becoming insipid, what Benedict XVI called a “bourgeois Christianity” or what Pope Francis calls the “paganization of Christian life”. Aren’t these Christians, who no longer want to be the salt of the earth but prefer to be its sugar, an even bigger challenge than the heresies of the past?

A - This sort of softness or insipidness is part of contemporary culture: it is necessary to be tolerant, to respect people, to evolve with them. Certainly, we have the duty to be understanding, to walk alongside people, but at the same time it is necessary to help them to strengthen their muscles. It takes muscles to be a mountain climber. The same qualities are required to climb the mountain of God: it takes the muscles of faith, of will, or hope, of love. It is important not to deceive the faithful with a soft, undemanding, amoral religion. The Gospel is demanding. “If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out! If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off!” (cf. Mt 5:29-30). Our role is precisely to bring people to this evangelical requirement.

Q - You write that “the West is experiencing the radical, deliberately willed solitude of the damned.” How do you talk about God to people who, as you write, “do not feel the need to be saved”?

A - Look at Christ: do you think that the people whom he had in front of him wanted to listen to him? Opposition to God, to the Truth, has always existed. In the West it is difficult to talk about God, because the mollifying society of comfort thinks that it has no need of Him. But this material comfort is not enough. There is a hidden happiness that people are seeking confusedly without

knowing it. The Church must reveal to man these interior needs, these riches of the soul that make him fully human, which make him fully happy. Saint Irenaeus says that “God became man so that man might become God”; the Church’s mission is to guide man in this ascent toward God. But if the priests are bogged down in materialism, they will not be able to guide the world toward true happiness.

Q - True reform concerns our own conversion. If we do not change ourselves, all structural reforms will be useless. Laypeople, priests, cardinals - we must all return to God.

A - Catholic leaders often tend to blame this disaffection with the Church on the prevailing materialism or other developments in society. Wouldn’t it be more helpful for the Church to ask herself about her responsibilities too, about how she might have turned the faithful away by desacralizing the liturgy, by turning her back on popular piety or by making her preaching insipid?

I am convinced that the primary responsibility for this collapse of the faith must be taken by the priests. In the seminaries or in the Catholic universities we have not always taught doctrine. We have taught whatever we liked! Catechizing children was abandoned. Confession was disdained. Besides, there were no longer any priests in the confessionals! We are therefore partially responsible for this collapse. In the 1970’s and 1980’s in particular, each priest did whatever he liked during Mass. No two Masses looked alike: that was what discouraged so many Catholics from going to church. Pope Benedict XVI says that the

crisis of the liturgy caused the crisis of the Church. *Lex orandi, lex credendi*: as we pray, so we believe. If there is no longer any faith, the liturgy is reduced to a show, a folklore display, and the faithful turn away. We have probably been guilty of negligence. The desacralization of the liturgy always has serious consequences. We wanted to humanize the Mass, to make it comprehensible, but it remains a mystery that is beyond understanding. When I say Mass, when I give absolution, I grasp the words that I say, but the intellect cannot comprehend the mystery that these words bring about. If we do not do justice to this great mystery, we cannot lead the people to a true relationship with God. Even today we still have an excessively horizontal pastoral practice: how do you expect people to think of God if the Church is occupied exclusively with social issues?

Q - A reform of the Roman Curia is expected any day now. In your book you are rather skeptical about these structural reforms....

A - True reform concerns our own conversion. If we do not change ourselves, all structural reforms will be useless. Laypeople, priests, cardinals, we must all return to God. History witnessed two reformers: Luther, who wanted to change the face of the Church and ended up leaving it, and Francis of Assisi, who transformed the Church by living the Gospel radically. Today, true reform is a radically evangelical life. Mother Teresa discreetly and humbly reformed the Church by tirelessly proclaiming to the world: "Care for the poor, but before that, care first for God." She knew by experience that we are too poor to care

for the poor. As long as we are not enriched by the presence of God in us, we cannot care for the weakest among us.

Q - There's a lot of talk too about synodality, collegiality. In your book you point out the risk of bishops' conferences contradicting one another. Do you fear that a reform of the centralism of the Roman Church endangers its unity?

A - Christ founded one Church; its mode of government is hierarchical. The first person responsible for the Church is the Pope. The first person responsible for the local Church is the Bishop in his diocese, and not the Episcopal Conference, which is helpful for exchanging ideas, but not for setting a course of action. I think that it is necessary to rediscover this primary responsibility of the Pope and of each bishop. The great bishops of history, for instance Ambrose or Augustine, did not spend their time planning meetings on the one hand, forming committees on the other, and traveling continuously. The bishop has to be with his people, teach his people, love his people.

An Episcopal Conference has no canonical authority, and no competence of its own in the area of doctrine. Moreover, I am sad to note that there are already contradictions among the episcopal conferences, which does not promote the peace of mind of Christians. "That they may be one," the Lord said, so that this unity might inspire faith. If we continue along these lines, undermining doctrinal and moral unity, we will contribute to the growth of unbelief.

**Part 2)**

“There are men of the Church,” says Robert Cardinal Sarah, “some of them high-ranking, who have tarnished the Church, disfigured the face of Christ, but Judas must not lead us to reject all the apostles.”



*Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.*

Q -What do you think about the book *Sodom* [by homosexual activist Frédéric Martel]? Do you think that we are presently witnessing an all-out offensive against the priest figure, who is a stumbling block for a hyper-sexualized society?

A - I have not read that book. But I think that there is a specially orchestrated plan to destroy the Church by cutting off her head: the cardinals, the bishops and the priests. There is a persistent campaign to destroy the priesthood, and in particular to destroy celibacy, which is supposedly impossible and contrary to nature: because if they destroy celibacy, they irreversibly affect one of the greatest riches of the Church. Abandoning celibacy would further aggravate the crisis of the Church and would diminish the position of the priest, who is called to be not

only another Christ, but Christ himself: poor, humble and celibate. If celibacy disappears, what dies will be the witness the Jesus intended to give.

There are some who want to weaken the Church, to modify her teaching on sexuality. But when we see the enormous number of faithful priests in the priesthood, we should remain calm and continue our witness of total self-giving to God through celibacy. This witness is not understood. Is it detested? Jesus Christ himself was not accepted, since he died on the Cross. Jesus told us: “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you” (Jn 15:20).

There are men of the Church, some of them high-ranking, who have tarnished the Church, disfigured the face of Christ, but Judas must not lead us to reject all the apostles. These serious failings do not condemn the Church: on the contrary, it shows that God trusts even weak persons, so as to show the power of his love for us. He does not entrust his Church to exceptional heroes, but to simple men, to show that He is the one who acts through them.

Q - On the subject of pedophilia, you speak about a “mystery of Judas”, explaining that this abominable betrayal of the priesthood was preceded by many others: what are they?

A - A priest who has lost his bond with Jesus, does not pray, and does not take the time to be with Christ before the Blessed Sacrament, is a weakened priest. “Apart from me, you can do nothing,” Christ said (Jn 15:5). A worldly priest, who no longer has the time to meditate on the Word of God, who rushes through his Mass or celebrates it

in a profane manner, who has no interior life, cannot stand. The reason why someone can stoop to such serious intrigues is because he first detached himself from Jesus, from the *force* [= strength, force, fortitude] that keeps us in contact with him. In order to avoid administering the sacraments like a mere official, as though they were simply human phenomena, one needs an energy that comes from our relation with the Holy Spirit. And unfortunately, many among us have lost this intimate relationship with Jesus. Priestly activism leads to clerical autism, the source of all the excesses.

Q - What do you think of the condemnation of Cardinal Barbarin [Archbishop of Lyon]?

A - I have been acquainted with him for a long time. I have a lot of admiration for him. He welcomed me very kindly when I came to Lyon to present my book *La Force du silence* [[\*The Power of Silence\*](#)]. I cannot help but suffer from the martyrdom to which he is being subjected, all the more because I am convinced that he is innocent. The whole Church is bearing this suffering collegially. The Pope really was right to make the decision not to accept his resignation so as to respect the presumption of his innocence while awaiting the judgment on appeal. And Cardinal Barbarin was courageous to withdraw, going off to a monastery, for the good of the diocese and to bring peace to the victims of those abominable acts. But I am shocked that people have condemned Cdl. Barbarin while the horrible priest who committed those unspeakable crimes has still not been judged.... I stand beside Cardinal Barbarin in prayer, just as I stand beside the victims.

Q - Many of our contemporaries see the Church as a totalitarian organization, which is going to impose a way of life on them. You declare on the contrary that the Church is the rampart against contemporary totalitarianism.

A - I mean the new ideologies that impose a radical change of morality and of human anthropology, a new vision of the family and of sexuality, with considerable financial and media pressures. The Church imposes nothing; she only proposes. But it is her mission to propose God's teaching to the world.

Q - You go so far as to dismiss "Islamist barbarity" and "materialist barbarity" in the same breath, at the risk of shocking your readers.

A - In any case, that is my conviction! They are two devils which may have different methodologies but are acting toward the same end. Materialism separates us radically from God and from the interior life. Islamism does too. God cannot inspire barbarity. Killing someone because he does not share your faith? Setting off a bomb in a bus and killing innocent people in the name of Allah? Such things are impossible for God.

But materialist barbarity does not have destruction as its stated purpose; it claims to lead human beings to the happiness of liberation.

To say to a human being: "You are free to choose your sex," is to destroy him. In reality it is the freedom to destroy oneself. But God alone makes us free! Nowadays how much human destruction there is, under the pretext of freedom! In the name of this same freedom, many young people have been destroyed by pornography. Man

self-destructs; God, on the other hand, creates, so that men might have life and have it abundantly.

Q - You also write that the modern world destroys by attacking [national and religious] identities. You, on the contrary, defend this rootedness that Simone Weil described as the first need of the human soul. That makes you a somewhat isolated voice in a Church that sometimes seems to have become a mere auxiliary of the pro-immigration party.

A - When I went to Poland [in October 2017], a country that is often criticized, I encouraged the faithful to affirm their identity as they have done for centuries. My message was simple: you are first Poles, Catholics, and only then Europeans. You must not sacrifice these first two identities on the altar of a technocratic Europe that acknowledges no fatherland. The Brussels Commission thinks only of constructing a free market in the service of the major financial powers. The European Union no longer protects the peoples [within it]. It protects the banks. I wanted to restate for Poland its unique mission in God's plan. She is free to tell Europe that everyone was created by God to be put in a precise place, with its culture, its traditions and its history. This current desire to globalize the world by getting rid of nations with their specific characteristics is sheer madness. The Jewish people had to go into exile, but God brought them back to their country. Christ had to flee from Herod into Egypt, but he returned to his country upon the death of Herod. Everyone must live in his country. Like a tree, each one has his soil, his milieu where he flourishes perfectly. It is better to help

people to flourish in their culture than to encourage them to come to a Europe that is completely decadent. It is false exegesis to use the Word of God to improve the image of migration. God never intended these rifts.

Q - You write that Italy and the countries of the Visegrad Group [Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia] are going in the right direction, whereas many voices in the Church condemn them. Don't you think that the Church in doing so is endangering its future: how can she evangelize the nations while condemning their concern about remaining themselves?

A - Are leaders who speak as I do in the minority today? I do not think so. There are many countries that are going in this direction, and that ought to lead us to reflect! All the migrants who arrive in Europe are penned up, without work, without dignity.... Is that what the Church wants? The Church cannot cooperate with this new form of slavery that mass migration has become. If the West continues down this disastrous road, there is a great danger that, for a lack of a replacement birth rate, Europe could disappear, invaded by foreigners, as Rome was invaded by the barbarians. I speak as an African. My country has a Muslim majority. I think I know what I am talking about.

Q - Some people in the Church seem to have resigned themselves to crossing out Europe, writing it off as a loss. You, on the contrary, write that the paganization of Europe would lead to the paganization of the world.

A - God does not change his mind. God gave a mission to Europe, which received Christianity. Then the European

missionaries brought Christ to the ends of the earth. And this was no accident, but rather God's plan. This universal mission, which He gave to Europe when Peter and Paul came to settle in Rome, from which city the Church evangelized Europe and the world, is not over. But if we put an end to it by sinking into materialism, godlessness and apostasy, then the consequences will be serious. If Europe disappears, and with it the inestimable values of the old continent, Islam will invade the world, and we will totally change our culture, anthropology and moral vision.

Q - You quote at great length Benedict XVI, when many people consider that interrupted pontificate to be a failure. In what ways was it fruitful, in your opinion?

A - God saw that the world was sinking into a disastrous confusion. He knows that no one knows any more where we are going. He knows very well that we are still losing our national identities, our beliefs, our vision of man and of the world.... In order to prepare us for that situation, God gave us solid popes: he gave us Paul VI, who defended life and authentic love, despite very strong opposition, with the Encyclical *Humanae vitae*; he gave us John Paul II, who worked on the marriage of faith and reason so that they might be the light that guides the world to an authentic vision of man - the life of the great Polish Pope was itself a living Gospel. He gave us Benedict XVI, whose written teaching has an unequalled clarity, depth and precision. Today he gives us Francis who literally wants to save Christian humanism. God will never abandon His Church.

This is why we should stay calm: the Church is not in crisis; we are the one who are in crisis. Her teaching remains the same; her clarity remains the same. It is true that Benedict XVI was neither understood nor accepted; because of his years at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith he was regarded as a traditionalist, a reactionary, but he remained calm, serene and humble. He was a stronghold [*socle*] for doctrine, for the interior life, for the future of the Church.

Q - In an address to Catholic young people, you quote this very beautiful line by the English poet T. S. Eliot: “In a world of fugitives, the person taking the opposite direction will appear to run away.” Are young believers dedicated to being part of a Catholic resistance?

A - It is necessary for us to be in every respect part of a resistance, to take the direction opposite that of the secularized world, in other words, the path of Christ, the one Savior of the world. I encourage young people to look to Christ. In Hemingway’s novel *The Old Man and the Sea*, we watch the hero try to tow into port a huge fish that he has caught. But he cannot lift it out of the water alone; by the time he arrives in port, the sharks have devoured the fish. Young people nowadays are weakened by so many demands that if they become isolated they run the enormous risk of being devoured. Today, if you are alone, there are many sharks that will devour your faith, your Christian values, your hope. Jesus created a community of twelve apostles, and when it was necessary to send them on a mission, he sent them two by two. From now on, in order to defend our beliefs, in order to be firm, we will

have to support each other in the faith and walk as a community united around Christ: “Where two or three are gathered, I am in the midst of them.” From this presence we can draw our strength. *The Day is Now Far Spent* is a thoughtful, carefully argued response to this emergency.