

Fr. Perozich comments —

Cardinal Sarah brings spiritual glory to me. I see in the words of most other church leaders worldly glory for the church to conform to the guidance of world leaders rather than that of Jesus.

Here are some highlights from the translation below of Cardinal Sarah's op ed after Life Site's introduction.

Of course you can pass right over these and go to the op ed itself to get your own highlights

- **They ended up forgetting that if the Church can help man to be more human, it is ultimately because she has received from God the words of eternal life.**

*The Church has committed herself to the struggles for a better world. She has been right to support ecology, peace, dialogue, solidarity, and the equitable distribution of wealth. All these struggles are just. But they could make us forget the words of Jesus: "My kingdom is not of this world." **The Church has messages for this world, but only because she has the keys to the other world.** Christians have sometimes thought of the Church as a help given by God to humanity to improve its life here on earth. And they did not lack reasons, so true is it that **faith in eternal life sheds light on the proper way to live in this century.***

- **Covid-19 laid bare an insidious disease that was eating away at the Church: she thought that she was "of this world." She wanted to feel legitimate in her own eyes and according to her own criteria.**

- **Faith alone has the answer.**

- **Only the Church can enable it to give meaning**

- **She must stop being afraid of causing shock and of going against the tide. She must give up thinking of herself as a worldly institution. *She must return to her only "raison d'être": faith.***

Cdl Sarah: Corona crisis has laid bare ‘insidious disease’ of Church thinking she’s a ‘worldly institution’

The Cardinal said it’s time for the Church to return to preaching about eternal life.

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JOHN-HENRY WESTEN / LIFESITENEWS

By Jeanne Smits, Paris correspondent

May 20, 2020 (LifeSiteNews) – “The Church has messages for this world, but only because she has the keys to the other world.” With these words, Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, underscored the Church’s mistaken bid to appear necessary to the world on the world’s terms.

According to Cardinal Sarah (read his full remarks below), the COVID-19 crisis has revealed both the world’s incapacity to come to terms with the scandal of death and the Church’s failure to bring to it the only possible answer and consolation that it alone can provide: the promise of eternal life.

Cardinal Sarah, born in French Guinea in 1945 to Christian parents who had converted from animism, has repeatedly deplored the developed West’s rejection of traditional values such as respect for life, for the family, and for the elderly.

In several best-selling books, Cardinal Sarah has also pleaded over recent years for the Church to return to its spiritual fundamentals, to “silence” in order to be more open to God, and to a Christ-centered liturgy.

His take on the coronavirus epidemic is that the Church now has the chance and the opportunity to return to “essentials” and to bring a world that has counted too much on the “security” of technology to understand that only she can provide answers to its newfound doubts.

“The Church has committed herself to the struggles for a better world. She has been right to support ecology, peace, dialogue, solidarity, and the equitable distribution of wealth. All these struggles are just. But they could make us forget the words of Jesus: ‘My kingdom is not of this world,’” wrote Cardinal Sarah in his op-ed for Figaro Vox, the internet platform of French daily Le Figaro on Tuesday.

The COVID-19 epidemic, wrote Sarah, “laid bare an insidious disease that was eating away at the Church: she thought that she was ‘of this world.’”

He accused the secularism of the state of being responsible for choosing to confine the elderly and to isolate them, leaving them with the risk of dying of “despair and loneliness.” “The answer could only be a response of faith: to accompany the elderly towards a probable death, in dignity and above all the hope of eternal life,” he proclaimed.

Despite the so-called protection of the elderly in nursing homes in France, in many of them healthcare personnel were not provided with masks and other protective equipment and large numbers of residents were infected in several regions. More than a third of all deaths officially attributed to COVID-19 in France (10,308 of 28,022 to date) were registered among residents of nursing homes for the elderly. In comparison, a heat wave in August 2003 in France directly caused an excess mortality of 14,800, mainly affecting individuals ages 75 and over.

To date, deaths attributed to the COVID-19 crisis have reached a world total of 323,286 individuals. Every year, 6.15 million people die of lower respiratory tract infections. But the focus on the coronavirus has led to seeing “COVID-19 deaths” as a particular tragedy. Seventy-one percent of French victims were over 75 and 18 percent were ages 64 to 75.

***Here below is LifeSite’s working translation
of Cardinal Sarah’s op-ed.***

Does the Church still have a place in times of epidemic in the 21st century? In contrast with past centuries, the bulk of medical care is now provided by the state and healthcare personnel. Modernity has its secularized heroes in white coats, and they are admirable. It no longer needs the charitable battalions of Christians to care for the sick and bury the dead. Has the Church become useless to society?

Covid-19 is bringing Christians back to the essentials. Indeed, the Church has since long entered into a distorted relationship with the world. Confronted with a society that pretended not to need them, Christians, through pedagogy, did their best to demonstrate that they could be useful to it. The Church has shown herself to be an educator, the mother of the poor, an “expert in humanity” as Paul VI put it. And rightly so. But little by little, Christians have come to forget the reason for this expertise. **They ended up forgetting that if the Church can help man to be more human, it is ultimately because she has received from God the words of eternal life.**

The Church has committed herself to the struggles for a better world. She has been right to support ecology, peace, dialogue, solidarity, and the equitable distribution of wealth. All these struggles are just. But they could make us forget the words of Jesus: “My kingdom is not of this world.” **The Church has messages for this world, but only because she has the keys to the other world.** Christians have sometimes thought of the Church as a help given by God to humanity to improve its life here on earth. And they did not lack reasons, so true is it that **faith in eternal life sheds light on the proper way to live in this century.**

Dying of despair and loneliness

Covid-19 laid bare an insidious disease that was eating away at the Church: she thought that she was “of this world.” She wanted to feel legitimate in her own eyes and according to her own criteria. But a radically new reality has appeared. Triumphant modernity has collapsed in the face of death. This virus revealed that, despite its assurances and security, this earthly world was still paralyzed by the fear of death. The world can solve health crises. It will certainly solve the

economic crisis. But it will never solve the enigma of death. **Faith alone has the answer.**

Let us illustrate this very concretely. In France, as in Italy, the issue of nursing homes for the elderly, the so-called “EHPADs,” has been a crucial point. Why is that so? Because it directly raised the question of death. Should elderly residents be confined to their rooms at the risk of dying of despair and loneliness? Should they stay in contact with their families, risking death from the virus? We did not know how to answer.

The State, trapped in a secularism that chooses on principle to ignore hope and send cults back to the private domain, was condemned to silence. For the State, the only solution was to flee physical death at all costs, even if it meant condemning moral death. **The answer could only be a response of faith: to accompany the elderly towards a probable death, in dignity and above all the hope of eternal life.**

The epidemic has hit Western societies at their most vulnerable point. They had been organized to deny death, to hide it, to ignore it. It came in through the front door! Who has not seen those giant mortuaries in Bergamo or Madrid? These are the images of a society that not long ago was promising an immortal, augmented man.

Forgetting fear

The promises of technology make it possible to forget fear for a moment, but in the end they prove to be illusory when death strikes. Even philosophy merely restores some dignity to human reason when it is overwhelmed by the absurdity of death. But it is powerless to console hearts and give meaning to what seems to be definitively deprived of meaning.

In the face of death, there is no human response that can hold. **Only the hope of eternal life can surpass the scandal of death.** But who is the man who will dare to preach hope? It

takes the revealed word of God to dare to believe in a life without end. **It takes a word of faith to dare to hope for oneself and one's family. The Catholic Church is therefore called back to its primary responsibility.** The world expects of her a word of faith that will enable it to overcome the trauma of this face-to-face encounter with death that it has just experienced. Without a clear word of faith and hope, the world can sink into morbid guilt or helpless rage at the absurdity of its condition. **Only the Church can enable it to give meaning** to the deaths of loved ones, who died in solitude and were buried in haste.

But if that is so, the Church must change. She must stop being afraid of causing shock and of going against the tide. She must give up thinking of herself as a worldly institution. She must return to her only “raison d’être”: faith. The Church is there to announce that Jesus conquered death through His resurrection. This is at the heart of her message: “And if Christ has not been raised, then empty too is our preaching; empty, too, your faith ... and we are the most wretched of all men” (1 Corinthians 15:14-19). **All the rest is only a consequence of this.**

Our societies will come out of this crisis weakened. They will need psychologists to overcome the trauma of not being able to accompany the elderly and the dying to their tombs, but even more, they will need priests to teach them to pray and to hope. The crisis reveals that our societies, without knowing it, are suffering deeply from a spiritual evil: they do not know how to give meaning to suffering, finitude and death.