

Fr. Perozich comments —

I don't return to a restaurant which serves bland food.

I don't attend conferences, convocations, days of reflection, priestly assemblies which offer non spiritual themes or religious platitudes.

I don't continue to follow religious leaders who comment on EVERY world event and political action.

I DO listen and follow those whose speech and writings show that they are deeply in communion with Jesus for spiritual warfare and for eternal salvation.

Cardinal Sarah is one of those men.

**Cardinal Sarah:
'Religious liberty is
under threat in the West,
too'**



Cardinal Robert Sarah | Credit: Daniel Ibanez/CNA.



By Hannah Brockhaus

Rome Newsroom, Nov 27, 2022

Christians in the West should not take religious liberty and freedom of worship for granted, Cardinal Robert Sarah said in a recent interview with EWTN News.

“Threats against religious liberty take many forms. Countless martyrs continue to die for the faith around the world,” the 77-year-old Sarah said. **“But religious liberty is under threat in the West, too.”**

“It is not often an overt threat, or hatred of the faith,” he added, but an **“implicit bias against Christianity.”**

In the interview, which will air on EWTN's Vaticano program at 6 p.m. ET on Sunday, Nov. 27, the Guinean cardinal pointed to the Book of Exodus, which tells of the 10 plagues, the departure of the Hebrews, and the destruction of Egypt. Those events took place, he said, "so that God's people might have the freedom to worship him properly."

"Religious liberty is not to be taken for granted, or compromised, or neglected."



Cardinal Robert Sarah holds his latest book, Catechism of the Spiritual Life, during an interview with EWTN News in Rome. Credit: Daniel Ibanez/CNA

Cardinal Sarah spoke with EWTN News earlier this month about his latest book, "Catechism of the

Spiritual Life,” published by EWTN Publishing in English in October.

The cardinal’s seventh book is an in-depth reflection on the Catholic Church’s seven sacraments and how to make progress in the spiritual life.

One of the book’s central themes is the importance of the Mass and the Eucharist.

“We are to assemble for the Holy Mass and to receive our Lord in the Eucharist,” Cardinal Sarah said in the hourlong interview in Rome.

He criticized what he called the wide acceptance of “draconian restrictions” on Mass attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We cannot forget this: The Eucharist is the source and the summit of a Christian life,” he stressed.

“Adaptation,” he continued, **“is necessary at times. We’ll face more pandemics and other emergencies, and there will be debate concerning how best to address this in relation to the celebration of the Eucharist. This is good. Liberal democracy requires debate, but never can the importance of our worship of God be forgotten or neglected in the course of debate. Liberal democracy must not forget God.”**



Cardinal Robert Sarah. Credit: Daniel Ibanez/CNA

Cardinal Sarah was prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments from November 2014 to February 2021, when Pope Francis accepted his resignation.

The cardinal had submitted his resignation to the pope when he turned 75 in June 2020, as Church norms dictate.

While head of the liturgy department, Sarah was the most senior African prelate at the Vatican, where he had held important posts since 2001.

Sarah said his book places a special focus on the sacraments, prayer, and the cross.

“A Christian life,” he said, “must be built on three pillars: crux, hostia, and virgo. The cross,

the host, and the Virgin Mary. These are the three pillars on which you have to build a Christian life.”

The cardinal said being prefect of the Vatican’s divine worship office really drove home for him the importance of the **liturgy being a great and unique moment “to encounter God face to face and to be transformed by him as a child of God and as a true worshiper of God.”**

“Liturgy,” he added, “must be beautiful, it must be sacred, and it must be silent.”

He warned against **turning the Mass into a “spectacle”** or just a gathering of friends, taking the focus off of worship of God.

“I will encourage that the liturgy becomes more and more sacred, more and more holy, more and more silent, because God is silent, and we encounter God in silence, in adoration,” he said. “I think that the formation of the people of God to the liturgy is very important. We can show people the beauty, to be reverent, and to keep silent in the liturgy, in which our encounter with Christ is deepened.”

Sarah also praised **silent eucharistic adoration as a chance to encounter Christ in a way that can “really change our lives.”**



Cardinal Robert Sarah. Credit: Daniel Ibanez/CNA

Commenting on modern society, the cardinal said: “God has been forgotten.”

“We all live as if God doesn’t exist. Confusion reigns everywhere. Too many would reduce our lives, the very meaning of our lives, to absolute individualism and the pursuit of fleeting pleasure.”

Christians, he said, should respond by returning to the basics of the faith.

“We require a retreat from the world, withdrawal into the desert, where we can relearn the fundamentals, the basics: monotheism, the revelation of Jesus Christ, us and God, his word, our sin, our dependence and need of his mercy,” he said.

Sarah said God, through his Church and the sacraments, “guides us into an ever-deeper relationship with him. And we all have a need to reacquaint ourselves with his profound gift, which is his love.”

Faith in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, he said, is one of the Church’s fundamental beliefs, without which, “she loses the meaning of her existence.”

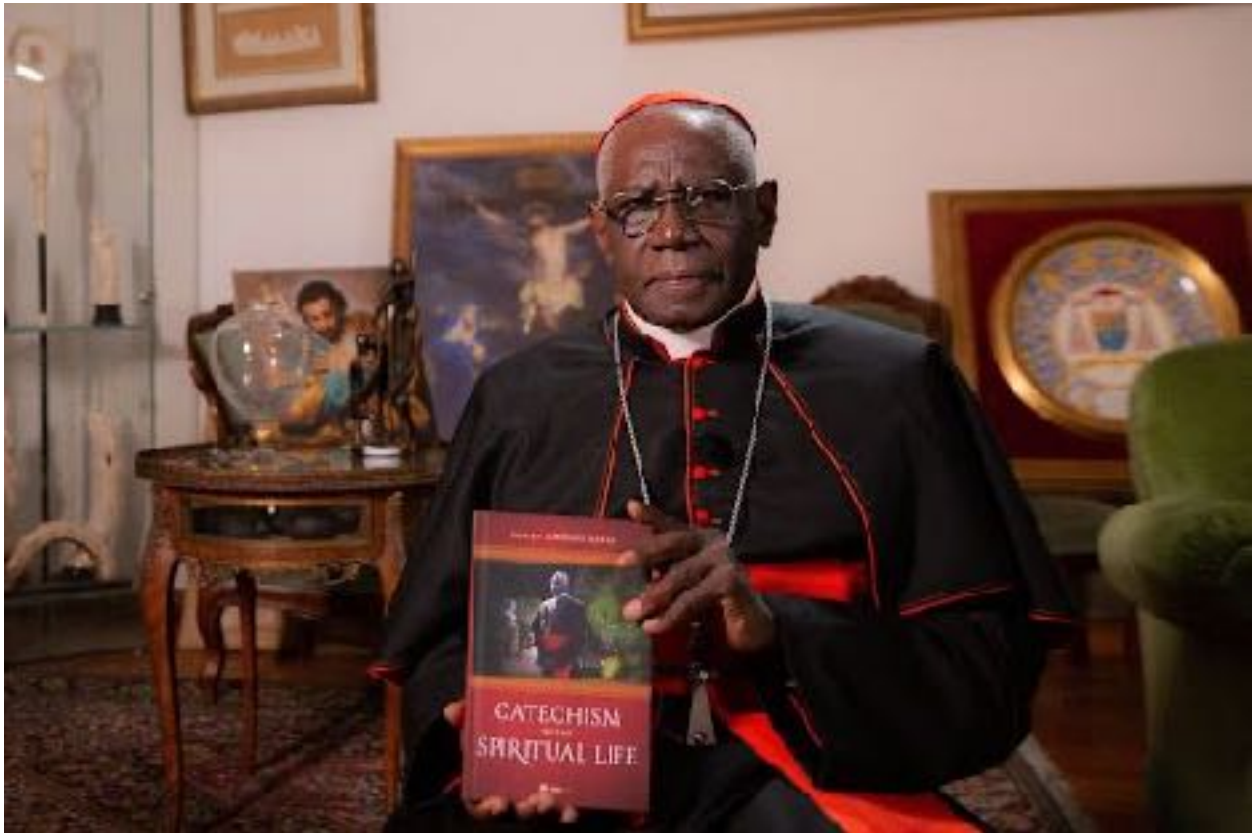
“The Church is not a social organization to meet the problems of migration or poverty,” he continued. “The Church has a divine purpose: to save the world.”

“If Christ does not dwell within the Church, tangibly, visibly, sacramentally, then what good news do we have to offer to the world? What is the meaning of evangelization?” he said. “When Christians forget why they are Christian, the community must fall into decline. They forget the Gospel and lose sight of their purpose.”

Cardinal Sarah said spiritual warfare is much the same as it has ever been, even if many bishops and priests have ceased to remind Catholics of its reality. Our weapon in this war, he explained, is the word of God.

There is a need “to turn to God every day, not just for consolation amid worldly adversities, but because we depend upon him entirely in the cosmic struggle. We are all at war whether we recognize it or not. It is good that all of us should become aware of that fact, and

make sure every day that we fight on the side of God,” he said.



Cardinal Robert Sarah. Credit: Daniel Ibanez/CNA

The book, “Catechism of the Spiritual Life,” Sarah said, is meant to be a response to the “confusion of this day, outside and even inside the Church.”

“I saw a need for a representation of some reflections on our spiritual progress in our spiritual life: progress in our personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.” He added that he hopes his book answers “a profound need of our time.”

“Every one of us must strive, continuously, to draw closer to Jesus Christ, to return to his Word, and to the **simplicity of the faith in his self-revelation.** It is the

simplicity of the desert, of recognition of our dependence upon God, and encountering him and the gift of his love and his grace, by which he configured us to himself,” he said.

“That is why I decided to write ‘Catechism of the Spiritual Life.’”