

God or Nothing *

Coviddide: the paralyzing span of time since we first learned of the coronavirus, including all ensuing events: nonstop panic news, work stoppage, empty roads, neighbor aversion, governmental reaction and over reaction...and the ever ironic closing of churches. Someone, somewhere, mentioned the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, but Coviddide has been more like having four flat tires on a rainy day and a broke air compressor.

What a relief the first signs of reopening have been. It has been burdensome to witness the interruption of normal human activity, and I have never been so happy to see people heading into bars on a sunny afternoon. They may be boozy but at least they're smiling!

As to the churches: We were all blindsided and had no information beyond the horrendous stories and scare charts. Until now I had assumed that no one would consider closing the Church, given Her role as comforter, healer, and guide, particularly in times of crisis.

We were not made for isolation. God made man to be a relational being, in the image of God, in the Trinitarian model. As man enters more deeply into that divine relationship, he becomes increasingly civilized, compassionate, and joyful. But when he does not, says Cardinal Sarah [whose book's title* I stole] – "man becomes closed in on himself. Another person becomes a problem and is no longer an extension of himself." In extreme cases, that leads "to a passionate, desperate quest for his own self, far from Jesus Christ."

Somehow I expect – "need" is perhaps the better word – to know that the Church remains constantly available, as Christ is constant, to make up for my own inconstancy. Fortunately, our priests make that sacrifice for us, but when the church doors closed my heart froze.

Now, however, comes a time of hope as an overlong Lent seems finally to be giving way to Easter. There is a thaw in the weather and in our hearts. Surely, God is calling us to remember that spiritual wellbeing – which is life in Christ – is secondary to nothing. And it is to be hoped that, in the future, the Church will have procedures and strategies in place learned during the Coviddide, so that Her heart, which is Jesus Christ – the Eucharist – is always available to Her children when we need Him most, which is pretty much all the time.

The Church exists to lead us upward, toward heaven, and away from isolation, fear, and darkness. May She, our Mother, stand forever opposed to the political, elemental, and spiritual forces that at best don't much care for – and at worst desire to destroy – the Christian moral fabric that creates the only truly healthy society.

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