



The Church is going to disappear...

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The path of the Church, down through the centuries, has had its moments of victory, moments of great success, of resplendent holiness, of positive moral influence on the members in the interior and even outside of its Mystical Body. But, in making an overall summary, we must humbly admit that this path has not been a triumph without defeats. The Church has also experienced times of enormous difficulty and of painful failures. And this is caused by her enemies. Already Saint Peter had warned the faithful on the subject of future difficulties: "Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9).

may take up a history book, he may study the times of the persecutions, Arianism, the time of the Albigensians, the Renaissance, Secularization, Evolutionism, Communism, Atheism, and very quickly he will see how many times the Church has been vanquished, persecuted, put aside, marginalized and ridiculed by her enemies, sometimes even undermined and corrupted by traitors from within!

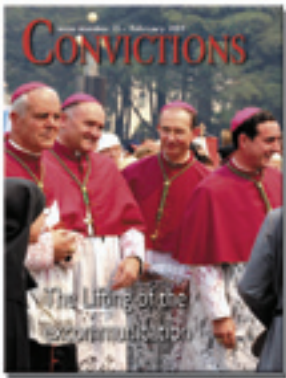
G. K. Chesterton summed up these defeats of the Church by speaking of the death of the Church: "Christianity has undergone a great number of upheavals and in each one of them she dies." But always she arises again and re-emerges from the ruins, "because she has a God who is accustomed to the way out of the tomb."

Today the Church is in crisis. Christian countries turn in large numbers to new religions. An ever-increasing number of faithful fall away from the Church. The desire to be saved by Christ diminishes. The scandals in the interior of the Church are only one of many reasons for this walkout. A generalized indifference takes hold everywhere. To live the faith becomes less and less of an acceptable alternative to a life without God.

If we would like to explain this tendency we cannot ask the explanation from those who have given up all religious practice. St. John tells us of them: "They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us; but they were to be made manifest, that not one of them is of us" (1 John 2:19). The imperfections of the Christians and the scandals which they cause may

Thus we see that the struggle of the Church is not a simple human matter that depends on the genius of man. It is a struggle against the "powers of darkness". It is easy, already now, to know the end of this battle. It will not end differently than did the life of Jesus Christ in the year 33. The work of the Redemption in the eyes of men turned out to be a catastrophe: The Lord was accused, condemned and publicly executed. The sentence and the sufferings were most humiliating. Jesus died on the cross. The world triumphed – so it believed – in its complete victory and in the total fiasco for the cause of the faith. And yet: precisely this defeat caused a changing in the entire history of the human race.

The work of Jesus, of the apostles and of the Church will never and nowhere be crowned by a forceful and everlasting success. Whoever wishes



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never be a sufficient reason to leave the Church. The crowd who chose Barabbas on Good Friday proved that the credibility of those who preach is not the only element and even not the first element in the decision for or against the faith. Often the infidel himself is unable to express his reasons. Therefore it's not up to him to explain the satisfactory conditions for returning to the faith. Is it necessary that the dead resuscitate so that he will return to the faith? Is it necessary that the Pope nominate bishops who are more worthy? Is it necessary that the Church allow the "remarried" divorcees to receive the sacraments and women to become priests? And even if all of these conditions were filled, the infidel would find others! To believe demands accepting the realities coming from God and preached by the Church, it demands not placing conditions, setting aside all the prejudices and submitting ourselves to the truths of the faith.

Among the prejudices and the conditions that the infidel has – in order to believe – he includes the success of the Church. She must be accepted by men of power, she must be in the praises of great masses and then he would claim to want to believe.

On the contrary, the Church does not look for success on this earth. Jesus did not want it, either. God said clearly, "Let no one deceive you in any way, for the day of the Lord will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself as if he were God" (2 Thess. 2:3-4). St. Luke poses the question, if the Son of man will still find faith when He returns (Luke 18:8), and Saint Paul knew already that "there shall come a time, when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4). In the Gospel of Saint Matthew we read, that "because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold," (Matt. 24:12) and that "no flesh should be saved, unless those days had been shortened" (Matt. 24:22). In a word: we must admit that the true faith, towards the end of the world, will be less and less accepted.

Actually, this sad vision helps us to not lose courage. The value of the Church does not depend on its visible success. It is not the successful outcome in the eyes of the world that is demanded. No one knows at which point of history is situated the present day and when the end is approaching. It is not necessary to know what will be the state of Christianity tomorrow. The future of the Church is not in our hands. The duty of the faithful is to believe, to work for the kingdom of God and to be ready at every moment for the coming of the Lord. May He find His servant watching? What we must do is easy: pray, receive the sacraments, do penance, profess our faith, live our faith.

To believe demands accepting the realities coming from God and preached by the Church, it demands not placing conditions, setting aside all the prejudices and submitting ourselves to the truths of the faith.

And what is more, in our times, we must be watchful and suspicious of false prophets. Numerous are those who promise us heaven, who threaten us with terrible punishments, who speak to us of various apparitions. Let us keep our faith simple. Let us base our judgment on our catechism, on the liturgy, on the certain doctrine of the Church of all times.