



AFTER IRELAND

July 2018

Dear Friend of Clear Creek Abbey,

Following the resounding—the deafening—defeat of the pro-life cause in Ireland on May 25th by a referendum that repealed the eighth amendment of Ireland’s constitution protecting the unborn, someone asked me, “What now?” Despite the rather great odds against a favorable result—that is to say against an outcome that would have been in harmony with the age-old teaching of the Church and the immemorial common sense of civilized peoples—despite the slim chances of success, there still remained (before the voting) some hope. There remained the hope that the Irish people would see through the New World Order that was pushing them into the acceptance of almost unlimited abortion, thereby robbing them of their patrimony. There remained a glimmer of hope that the descendants of Saint Patrick would keep their Christian respect for the unborn, a profoundly Christian attitude enshrined in their constitution. But on May 25th that hope flickered and failed. What now?

Like so many pilgrims on the road to what might be termed our “spiritual Emmaus,” pro-lifers around the globe said to one another with sadness on the day the election results were announced, “We had hoped that the Emerald Isle would rise up again to its divine vocation and redeem the West from its folly.”¹ Indeed, the vote in Ireland was about more than just Ireland. It was about matters of life and death that continue to concern the entire world. The days leading up to the referendum witnessed, in fact, an attempt by many Catholics and other Christians to beat back the shady tactics of those hidden “puppet masters” of a decadent West, those men of money and influence who had turned their particular attention to this last bastion of Catholic culture in order to crush the efforts of those who fight for what is left of human dignity as sons and daughters of God. So, here we are again, pilgrims walking together after the Irish defeat, fleeing the ensuing darkness. What now?

In his wonderful homily delivered at Chartres Cathedral in France (just a few days before the Irish referendum), speaking to the thousands of pilgrims who had traveled on foot all the way from Paris, His Eminence Robert Cardinal Sarah addressed the same fundamental issue, referring to the words of Saint John in his Gospel, “The light has come into the world, and men have preferred darkness.”² He went on to say some very substantial and consoling things:

Let’s look around us! Western society has chosen to establish itself without God.
Witness how it is now delivered to the flashy and deceptive lights of a consumer

¹ See the Gospel of Luke 24:13-32.

² Jn 3:19.

society: to profit at all costs and frenzied individualism. A world without God is a world of darkness, of lies, and of selfishness! Without the light of God, Western society has become like a drunken boat in the night! She does not have enough love to take in children, to protect them beginning from their mother's womb, to protect them from the aggression of pornography.³

It is not feasible to comment here on all the remarkable insights contained in Cardinal Sarah's powerful homily. However, I must share one particular quote because it directly pertains to what we strive to accomplish here at Clear Creek Abbey:

Dear people of France, it is the monasteries that made the civilization of your country! It is men and women who have accepted to follow Jesus to the end, radically, who have built Christian Europe. Because they have sought God alone, they have built a beautiful and peaceful civilization, like this cathedral.

People of France, peoples of the West, you will find peace and joy only by seeking God alone! Return to the Source! Return to the monasteries! Yes, all of you, dare to spend a few days in a monastery! In this world of tumult, ugliness, and sadness, monasteries are oases of beauty and joy. You will experience that it is possible to put concretely God in the center of one's whole life. You will experience the only joy that will not pass.

Dear pilgrims, let us give up the darkness. Let's choose the light! Let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary to know how to say "fiat", that is, yes, fully, like her, to know how to welcome the light of the Holy Spirit like she did.⁴

So, what now, after Ireland? Perhaps if we take the good Cardinal's advice and return to prayer in monasteries, we will find what the travelers to Emmaus discovered after their meeting with the mysterious fellow-pilgrim, during the supper they shared and the breaking of bread. "Was not our heart burning within us, while he spoke with us in the way. . . ?"⁵ Maybe, in fact, God was really with us in the defeat of Ireland on May 25th—despite the tragic outcome. Perhaps it is the living Prince-of-Life, returned from the dead, the Light of the world, who walks with us and guides us now along a different path, beyond the seeming triumph of darkness, toward a complete and certain victory of the light.

+ br. Philip Anderson, abbot

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³ Cardinal Sarah, homily on Pentecost Monday 2018, translation New Liturgical Movement.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Lk. 24:32.