

Merciful Chastisement?

September 4, 2021

These "Comments" refer frequently to an imminent Chastisement, even a "rain of fire," which an angry God will inflict upon a sinful mankind. Yet Catholics have always learned from the Church of the extreme mercy of Almighty God, the supreme mercifulness of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. See for instance the marvellous revelations of His mercy made to Sister Josefa Menendez in a French convent in the 1920's, and described in her book "The Way of Divine Love." Tell the world, said Our Lord to the Sister, that I long to forgive anybody any sin they ever committed, if only they will turn to me with trust in my mercy. At one point she found His mercy so extreme that He had to say to her, "Yes, Sister, write down what I just said to you, write it down!" The question can then arise, how can such a merciful God think of inflicting on mankind a "rain of fire" such as Our Lady warned us of at Akita in Japan in 1973?

For Catholic liberals who have lost their grip on the great truths of their Faith, the problem is insoluble. For them, if God exists He is such a soft old sugar-daddy (pardon me, divine Lord!) that He could never punish anybody for anything, so that if Hell exists then it is virtually empty, except perhaps for Cain and Judas Iscariot (and Adolf Hitler). On the other hand, for Catholics who still treasure their penny catechism with its ancient truths, the solution is obvious – let me just live in accordance with those ancient truths, and I will see why it is entirely normal for a merciful God to punish sinful men, even severely.

For instance, God exists and from Him all of us human beings come, by His individual creation of our spiritual souls giving life to our material bodies. and to Him at death we are all meant to go, to His glorious Heaven by having believed in Him, loved, served and obeyed Him for the duration of our brief

lives on earth. Nor is that unreasonable or unjust on His part, given the variety of gifts that He showers upon us during our brief life. But immediately after it begins eternal life, lasting for ever in Heaven or Hell, depending on what use we have made of His gifts.

So if we loved God here below, we enjoy everlasting bliss with Him in His Heaven. If we defied God here below, we endure everlasting torture without Him, in the Hell He created for obstinate sinners and fallen angels (Mt. XXV, 41). Either way, in Heaven or in Hell, the next life after death for every single man who lived, lasts for ever and ever. Therefore men's life on earth, even if it lasts 80 or 100 years, is as brief as a breath of wind, whereas his life after death is as eternal, in a certain way, as God Himself. Then in which life is it more important to be happy? Clearly, in the next life. Did not Augustine pray, "Lord, punish me as much as You like in this life, just so long as You do not have to punish me in the next!"?

The problem is that by the fault of Adam and Eve from the very beginning of the human race, temptations in this life to defy God, notably those of pride and sensuality, can be so enticing that men rather more easily choose the way to Hell than the way to Heaven (Mt. VII, 13-14). Then what does God need to do to help men nevertheless to choose Heaven, as His love wants them all without exception to do (I Tim. II, 4)? He has the power to force them all to choose His way, but that would destroy the whole purpose of creating them, because then His Heaven would be filled, in effect, with robots. Then what God prefers to do is to make known to the natural conscience of all men His ten Commandments, and if men still touch forbidden fruit, so to punish them in one way or another that they will again choose Heaven.

But can the heaviest punishments in this life compare with the tortures of eternal Hell? Not remotely! Then how cruel are the cruellest punishments in this life, if only they help to keep

me on the right way to enjoy eternal life? If only I choose to endure them in the right way, understanding that they come from the love of God, then they are not essentially cruel at all.

Kyrie eleison.