

04aa11-Letter-to-Laodicea

by "Sister Anne" | Jun 1, 2017 | 04aa Mary Unveils the Apocalypse | 0 comments



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Good evening everyone!

Greetings to our audio and YouTube listeners!

Tonight, we'll speak about the letter to the Church of Laodicea. We know that these ancient seven cities were on the main circuit in the diocese of Saint John, the beloved disciple who took care, first of Mary, and then of his Churches. Our Blessed Mother has insisted that the Book of Revelation is a book for our times that concerns all the world. Since the Book is addressed to seven Churches, and seven is a Biblical number of completion, it's clear that these are seven regions (ideological or geographical) of our present Church.

It's been popular, at least since Father Bartholomew Holzhauser, a German priest in the 1600s to use the seven churches as symbols of seven eras. Father Holzhauser interpreted the seven stars, lampstands and churches as seven periods of the history, the seven days of creation, the seven ages before Christ, seven ages after Christ (at least to the AntiChrist, but not necessarily to the end of the world) and he aligns these eras with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. I have no problem with multiple interpretations of any passage of the Bible. God is infinite. He can take one Gospel parable and apply it to ten million situations. I love Dr. Scott Hahn's commentary on the Apocalypse as an instruction of the Mass (*The Lamb's Feast*).

Because Mary wants us to understand the Apocalypse right now as applying to our own era, I had not invested much time on these alternative interpretations. But in preparing for this conference on Laodicea, I came upon this interesting passage:

Saint Polycarp in his Letter to the Philadelphians made no mention of the *Letters* [of the Apocalypse]. Saint Ignatius of Antioch in his Epistles to Ephesus, Smyrna, and Philadelphia ignored the *Letters*. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, a city near Laodicea, made no reference to them. Neither did any other early writer of Asia Minor, or elsewhere. The Apocalypse was known. Its passages had given rise to the error of millenarianism [that is, that Jesus would return to earth as a man and walk among men for a thousand years]. But there is a significant silence about the *Letters*. If their warnings came home to the individual Churches, and the truth and application of each was generally recognized [in antiquity], we should have heard of it. It would have entered into the prolonged controversies as to the merits of the Book. The Seven Churches of Asia would surely be found ranged with the supporters of the Book. As a matter of fact, there is no mention of the Letters in the polemic about the authorship of Revelation. They seem to have been taken by both sides as *symbolic* and *incomprehensible*.

Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea in Palestine wrote an *Ecclesiastical History*, which he finished about the year 324. He was a prominent figure in the Christian revival under Constantine whose friendship he enjoyed. Eusebius sat beside the Emperor at the Council of Nicea, and was honored by him for many years, both in private life and in public ceremonies. His influence, therefore, was much greater than that of an ordinary Bishop, and that influence was exerted *against* the Canonicity of the Apocalypse. Eusebius tells us in his

“Life of Constantine” (iv. 36, 37), that by order of that Emperor he prepared fifty sumptuous copies of the Bible for the Church of Constantinople. From these he excluded the Apocalypse(!)

The Apocalypse is not found in the original Syrian New Testament . . . Some scholars believe that it was unknown to the Syrian Christians for four hundred years, with the exception of those who could translate Greek. Nor does it appear in Canon 85 of the *Apostolic Constitution*.

The celebrated Council of Laodicea was held in the year 360, when these Churches had attained their full development. It was attended by the Bishops of Asia Minor, amongst them the Angels or Bishops of the Seven Churches to whom these Letters were addressed. They had ample time to study the connection between the Letters and the Churches. They dropped the whole Book of Revelation, Letters and all, out of the Canon of the Scriptures(!) The Apocalypse of Saint John does not appear in Canon 60 of the Synod of Laodicea. The meaning of that is plain. The men on the spot, who had the best means of testing the Letters, and who from their position as Bishops of the local Churches, were bound to examine the question reverently and closely, came to the conclusion that the Letters were not intended for those Churches.

The Apocalypse of Saint John, by James J. L. Ratton (1915)

With that strong assurance from the Bishops who lived in the early centuries that the letters had no relevance for that era, let us proceed with confidence to apply these letters to seven regions in our present day. As we examine the text of the letter Laodicea, line by line, it is easy to apply it to modern Europe.

The Letter to Laodicea

And to the angel of the Church of Laodicea write: Thus says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you had been cold or hot! As it is, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich, and have grown wealthy, and have need of nothing’, and know not that you are wretched and pitiable and poor and blind and a naked one. Therefore, I counsel you to buy of me refined gold out of the fire that you may be made rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness be not made manifest; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. Whomever I love, I rebuke and chastise; be earnest therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and I will sup with him, and he with Me. As for him that conquers, I will give him to sit with me upon my throne, as I myself conquered, and sat down with my Father on his throne. He that has an ear, let him bear what the Spirit says to the Churches!

Rev 3:14-22

To the angel of the Church of Laodicea

Laodicea in Greek is pronounced *lah-od-eeek'-ee-ah*, but in English it's usually pronounced lay-o-di-SEE-uh. Laodicea was an important city of Phrygia about 50 miles southeast of Philadelphia on the river Lycus. King Antiochus II built, or rather rebuilt, it about 250 B.C. and gave it the name of his wife, Laodice. Its ruins attest to its former greatness. Its modern name is Denizli Ladik, or just Denizli.

The Gospel had been preached in this city by Saint Paul's disciple Epaphras. *The Constitutions of the Apostles* mentions Saint Nymphas as the first bishop of Laodicea [Constitutions of the Apostles vii, 46]. In the New Testament Saint Paul mentions a letter that he wrote to the Christians of Laodicea but it wasn't preserved [Colossians 4:16], Saint Paul puts the Church of Laodicea on a par with Colossians, as regards religious zeal, in the year 62. The two Churches were only eleven miles apart. Paul was pleased with the Colossians. Apparently, he was equally pleased with the Laodiceans. So far from censuring the latter Church, he encourages communication with it, and says that Epaphras had much labor for Laodicea. In later years Laodicea rose to a high position amongst the Churches of Asia Minor. In Hastings's "Dictionary of the Bible" we read of Laodicea that it was the primatial bishopric of the region of Phrygia throughout the Christian period until the Muslims invaded the area in the 600s.

In 325, Laodicea was represented at the Council of Nicea by its bishop, Nounechios. Later in the same century, A.D. 360, a council was held at Laodicea itself, showing it to have been, at that time, the leading Church of the province. The canons of this council, or synod, are *still* quoted by theologians with great respect. The bishop historian Eusebius

mentions that Council frequently. It has left its mark upon history. There are extant, in Greek, sixty canons of the Council of Laodicea. The impression is that it was one of the most fervent Churches of the Seven.

But it eventually became decadent and lost the protection of Divine Providence. The city was destroyed by Muslims. Christianity had moved westward and spread up into Europe from the very beginning, but after the Moslem invasion overcame Christendom in the east, the Church became very strong in the west and permeated the culture of Europe. When one thinks of Catholicism, perhaps the first image that springs to mind is the mighty cathedrals of Europe. Who can count the saints, the religious orders, the missionaries, the Catholic kings and queens? The American Catholic Church was an immigrant Church from Catholic England, Catholic Spain, Catholic Germany and so many parts of Europe. Pope Francis is the first non-European Pope in over a thousand years. But the Church in Europe is no longer glorious, it's not even Protestant. The EU constitutions are sheerly materialistic without any national aspiration for divine worship. Pope Saint John Paul pleaded with Europeans to write into the draft of their constitutions their deeply Christian history, but they refused. Christianity has been attacked in Europe since the advent of Freemasonry in 1717. It's hard to know how many members remained nominal members of their churches so as not to attract attention and thus to slowly influence culture and businesses with a non-Christian agenda, but lately the leeching of Christians has been like a lake with reached the evaporation point.

The Aral Sea is north of Turkey, the land of the Seven Churches. In its recent history it had a surface area of 26,000 square miles. It was ringed with prosperous towns and a thriving fish industry, providing thousands of jobs and almost 20% of the fish consumed in the Soviet Union. But in the 1960s, Soviet engineers built an enormous irrigation network—including 20,000 miles of canals, 45 dams, and more than 80 reservoirs—to irrigate fields of cotton and wheat. The sea is fed by the runoff of mountain rain and snow, so water loss wasn't too noticeable for almost two decades—until the year that the evaporation point was breached. Deep water will cause a sufficiently cool temperature to inhibit surface evaporation. But at a mathematically calculable point, inadequate water depth will allow the sun to heat up the sea and the cool temperature can't be maintained. Evaporation accelerates and quickly spins out of control. I remember seeing dramatic pictures in the National Geographic back in the early 1990s. Sunken ships were visible. The coasts had shrunk. Large sea craft were permanently docked because the water was too shallow. Fish lost their natural habitat as the water warmed up and became more saline. Fish stopped reproducing. People were out of work and moved away. Towns were turning into ghost towns. Reporters interviewed a Soviet spokesperson who claimed that the government had no regrets because of the years of excellent cotton crops, but others said that the fields were now too salty for cultivation.

The gradual loss of European Christians over the past three centuries seems to have reached the evaporation point. In 1997 there were about 400,000 religious in Europe. In 2015 they were less than 300,000. Germany closed 515 Churches in the last decade and the pace is accelerating. Two thirds of the 1,600 Catholic Churches in the Netherlands are being shut down. I read an article just two couple of months ago which quoted a bishop encouraging his pastors to find lodging with parishioners because the rectories were being sold. Hundreds of Catholic Churches in Europe have gone up for sale as hotels, residences, museums, workshops, supermarkets, flower shops, and even a bar in Edinburgh, Scotland. Will Europe be overcome by Moslems as happened to ancient Laodicea?

Thus says the Amen, the faithful and true witness,

the beginning of the creation of God

Rev 3:14

“Amen” highlights the fact that our God is strong, dependable and unchangeable. By Him were all things created: “You in the beginning, Lord, did found the earth. And the works of your hands are the heavens [Hebrews 1:10]. Europe was a witness from the beginning of the Christian faith when Saint Peter left Antioch and headed west to Rome. Europe had sent out missionaries to the whole world. Jesus is calling Europe back to be once again a “faithful and true witness.”

I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot.

Would that you had been cold or hot! As it is, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit you out of my mouth.

Rev 3:15-16

I know your works. First of all, He highlights tepidity. Later in the letter it's pride and loss of Faith. Like Sardis, Jesus does not find one good thing to say in praise of Laodicea. But in Sardis there were a few who had not soiled their garments. Here in Europe is nothing but tepidity, enough to make God vomit.

The ancient city was situated at a critical juncture. The great road from the west (from Ephesus and from Miletus) ascends the Meander Valley eastwards, until it enters “the Gate of Phrygia.” In the Gate are a remarkable series of hot springs, and warm mud-baths, some in the bed of the Meander, others on its banks. Laodicea received all its water from these springs. The water passed through a six-mile aqueduct. Laodicea had no other water source. The aqueduct was under the surface of the ground and arrived no longer hot, but far from the pleasant coolness of well water. The rings of calcium carbonate encrusting the remains of the aqueduct testify to the water’s temperature: lukewarm.

The text of the Letter applies three Greek adjectives to persons. Normally these adjectives are applied to liquids: *chliaros* (lukewarm), *zestos* (hot), and *psuchros* (cold). Drink the water at Laodicea, or go to Church there, and it will be enough to make you vomit! “*I will spit you out of my mouth,*” the Lord says through Saint John [Re 3:16]. Jesus wasn’t the only one doing the spitting in the Apocalypse.

The serpent cast out of his mouth, after the woman, water like a river, that she might be swept away in its flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman; the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed the river which the dragon had cast out of his month.

Rev 12:15-16

Mary said to Father Gobbi, June 14, 1980, Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

204h—What is this flood of water if not the ensemble of these new theological theories, by which an attempt is being made to bring your heavenly Mother down from that place where the Most Holy Trinity has put her? Thus, it has been possible to obscure me in the souls, in the life and in the piety of many of my children.

To the Priests, Our Lady’s Beloved Sons

And at Madrid (Spain), September 29, 1988, Feast of the Holy Archangels

390c—Your native land . . . has officially departed from the road of its time-honored fidelity to Christian tradition to welcome atheistic and materialistic ideologies. Thus the error of indifferentism has been accepted into political and social life, and in the name of a false freedom, divorce, abortion and all the methods of preventing life have been legitimized. What is left that is Christian today in this country of yours, which has been a light to all the world, thanks to the example given by many of its saints and many of its martyrs? Return, O Spain, along the road of conversion and of your greater fidelity to Christ!

To the Priests, Our Lady’s Beloved Sons

A flood of tepid water. People have grown indifferent to Jesus and Mary. “I would that you were cold or hot.” Not hot or cold, but “cold or hot.” Cold is placed first. It is impossible to take this warning in the sense that God wishes us to be spiritually cold. Father Holzhauser suggests that hot stands for the fervor of charity, and cold for the fear of God. The “ardor of love” and the “chill of fear” are literary expressions which have come down to us from the ancient Greek and Roman classics. Virgil uses cold as the symbol of fear. The fear of God is repeatedly insisted upon in this Book [Rev 11:18, 14:7, 15:4, 19:5].

In Europe, Christians aren’t running to Church with love of God, or running to Church with fear of punishment. They’re not even walking to Church. Absorbed in worldly interests, they are content with the earth. Their forefathers built magnificent cathedrals that reached to heaven, but their descendants don’t bother to look up. Of the seven ancient cities, none is more difficult to describe than Laodicea. There are no extremes, and hardly any special features. Yet it’s in this even balance where its peculiar character lies. Those were the qualities that contributed to make it essentially the successful trading city, the city of bankers and finance, which could adapt itself to the needs and wishes of others, ever pliable and accommodating, full of the spirit of compromise. European materialism is a form of socialism. They reject the excited greed of Sardis/American capitalism. Socialism only aspires to comfortable, and moderate living.

The bishop of Laodicea is lukewarm and indifferent. Hence our Lord is about to reject him. God withdraws the graces that have been neglected. Tepid souls easily deceive themselves, believing they are secure in God’s grace when in reality they are in a miserable state, stripped of God’s grace and blinded to their true condition.

Today bring to me souls who have become lukewarm, and immerse them in the abyss of my mercy. These souls wound my Heart most painfully. My soul suffered the most dreadful loathing in the Garden of Olives because of lukewarm souls. They were the reason I cried out: "Father, take this cup away from me, if it be your will." For them, the last hope of salvation is to flee to my mercy.

Diary of Saint Faustina #1228

Father Frederick William Faber commented that when Jesus pleaded with the Father, "Let this cup pass from Me." He was not complaining about the horrible physical pains which He was about to endure, and He knew well what they would be. What then was the provocation for this horrific mental anguish that even caused Him to sweat blood? What provoked this plea for a relief of pain that overrode the excruciating torments of the Crucifixion? What caused his most unbearable pain? Father Faber tells us that this most intense suffering of Jesus was because He knew that even after He had paid the price of their offenses in full some souls would remain indifferent and not reach out to take advantage of this payment to God of their sins. Because of their tepidity, they would be lost. Father Faber suggests that this was Jesus cup in the Garden.

You say, I am rich, and have grown wealthy,

and have need of nothing, and know not that you are the wretched and pitiable and poor and blind and naked one.

Rev 3:17

We have no need . . . Although a continuous stream of wealth was poured into the lap of Laodicea on account of these connections, the town regarded itself as practically self-supporting by virtue of the industries common to the region. This boasted sufficiency is specifically mentioned in the letter addressed to the Laodiceans. It is characteristic of a city secure in its commercial prosperity. God sent it an earthquake in A.D. 60. The Imperial government was ready to bestow financial aid as it had done for other cities of Asia. But Laodicea proudly turned down the offer: "We have no need." But the Letter says that they were spiritually poor, desperately poor, blind, naked!

Therefore, I counsel you to buy of me . . .

refined gold out of the fire, that you may be made rich.

Rev 3:18

Why would they exchange crops or flocks for gold? Because this was currency that was accepted anywhere. A market was held at which the people of the valley met and traded with strangers from a distance; and this market continued to meet weekly in the same place until about fifty years ago, when it was moved two or three miles north to the new village called Serai-Keui. There was plenty of gold in ancient Laodicea. Cicero, a Roman politician living around 60 B.C., spoke of Flaccus, the governor of Laodicea who had appropriated twenty pounds of gold that the Jews had collected for the Temple in Jerusalem. (That suggests a Jewish population of 7,500 adult men). There is very little gold in Europe today. The Euro, like the dollar is a fiat currency. It's only worth as much as the private banks say it's worth. The system is extremely fragile. Jesus is advising the Church to seek true wealth, based on poverty of spirit:

Honor Yahweh from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce;

So, your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.

My son, do not reject the discipline of Yahweh or loathe his reproof,

For whom Yahweh loves He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.

How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding.

For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold.

She is more precious than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her

and [buy] white garments, that you may be clothed,

and that the shame of your nakedness be not made manifest

Rev 3:18

“That the shame of your nakedness may not appear” [Gn 3:10-11] refers to spiritual nakedness, wanting a spiritual garment. It is reminiscent of the nakedness of Adam after the fall

Laodicea was especially well-known for its long-haired *black* sheep. The city’s strategic position made Laodicea an extremely prosperous commercial center, especially under Roman rule. According to Strabo, its distinctive products included garments of glossy black wool. This glossy black wool, as well as the glossy violet dark wool produced at Colossae, was probably attained by cross breeding. The glossy black fleeces have now entirely disappeared; but they were known in comparatively recent times. Pococke, writing in the eighteenth century saw a great many black sheep in the region. This wool was woven into garments of several kinds for home use and export trade. Small and cheap upper garments, called *himatia*, and also tunics of several kinds, were made in Laodicea; and one species of the tunics, called *trimita*, was so famous that the city is styled Trimitaria in the lists of the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, and in some other late documents.

All these garments are black. In the letter to Sardis we talked about the color of white being a color of purity and joy, how the ancients wore white to celebrate military victories, and how the baptized wore white to celebrate their victory over sin and death. “*For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ*” [Gal 3:27]. How many today in once-Christian Europe, are not even baptized! How lacking they are in grace and light! They live in perpetual danger of dying without God’s saving grace and facing an eternity of damnation.

Jesus not only urges them to be clothed in the white garment of baptism but He calls them out for being naked. Black clothing doesn’t count. They are dressed for Satan. The United States is catching up, but for many decades American tourists were shocked at the promiscuity in Christian Europe. The clothing is designed for dark reasons: lust is a sin that permeates our era. Soon we’ll be reading about the woman called “Babylon the Great” who lifts up the golden cup full of fornication. Babylon is the “Great City” because she encompasses many cities, even these city-churches.

And [buy from Me] eye salve to anoint your eyes,

that you may see.

Rev 3:18

Just as there is a reference to the need for baptism in the injunction to buy white garments, there is probably an allusion to the anointing of holy chrism for baptism and confirmation. Laodicea was famous for its eye anointment, but the Church was blind to its own blindness. It needs the illumination of Christ. The eye salve industry of Laodicea was all mixed up with its religious beliefs.

Between Laodicea and the “Gate of Phrygia” lay a famous temple, the home of the Phrygian god Men Karou, the Carian Men. This was the original god of the valley. His temple was the center of society and administration, trade, and that primitive superficial religion which was a system of performing the duties in the orderly way that the god approved. In connection with this temple there grew up a famous school of medicine. The names of the leading physicians of the school in the time of Caesar Augustus are mentioned on Laodicean coins which bear either the serpent-encircled staff of Asklepios or the figure of Zeus.

Typical of lukewarm Laodicea, their Zeus is a compromise composite who share traits with their old god Men-Karou. Europe is doing something similar by trying to revive its Celtic and Nordic deities. Again, typical of their spirit of compromise, the Laodicean school of physicians followed the teaching of Herophilos (330–250 B.C.), who, on the principle that compound diseases require compound medicines, began his strange system of assorted mixtures, some of which have only lately been expelled from modern pharmacology. The Phrygians ground their ingredients into small cylindrical tablets which were exported to all parts of the Greek and Roman world, then people smeared the powder, on weak eyes.

Whom so I love, I rebuke and chastise;

be earnest therefore, and repent.

After all these insults to their low level of Christianity, Jesus suddenly softens and tells them that He is only rebuking them because He loves them. He didn't have a single good thing for which to commend them, but He loves them, probably for the sake of their ancestors and countless saints. It's actually difficult to translate the Greek word. "Rebuke" is positive, not negative, a sort of illumination even as punishment is administered, so as to bring the one rebuked to a confession or at least a conviction of sin. In other words, it means to convince:

Blessed is the man whom God chastises.

Heb 11:7

Behold I stand at the door and knock. [Rev 3:20]

How tender the scene, Jesus humbly knocking at the door of the heart of Europe. So many artists have portrayed this scene. Some place no latch on the outside of the door, to emphasize that only the one inside can freely open the door. Laodicea was situated as a guard and door-keeper, a very strong fortress, planted right on the line of the great road where it opens onto the main valley of the Meander River.

Saint James says, "For the coming of the Lord is at hand . . . Behold the judge stands before the door" [James 5:8, 9]. In Saint Matthew's Gospel we read, "When you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh even at the doors" [24:33]. In which texts the door is the sign of the imminence of the judgment. Laodicea was a knot on the road-system. Not merely the great eastern highway and central route of the Roman Empire, but also the road from Pergamum and the Hermus Valley to Pisidia and Pamphylia passed through its gates; while a road from Eastern Caria, and at least one from Central and West Phrygia, met in the city. Laodicea was the door to prosperity, the great commercial and financial center.

Europe is still a cultural gateway, touching Asia, almost touching Africa, with many of her children in Australia and the Americas. If Europe would open its door to Christ, it would have a great impact on the world. Pope Saint John Paul could speak most of the languages of Europe. He appealed many times for them to open their doors. In his very first homily as Pope he cried out: "Open the doors to Christ, open them wide! Open the borders of states, economic and political systems, the vast domains of culture, civilization, and development-open them to his saving power!"

Mary herself would repeat the phrase, Sunday, October 22, 1978, at Vacallo, Switzerland. Then She said to Father Gobbi on

December 8, 1997

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

602e-Open the doors to Christ. Open the doors of your mind, to receive his divine word with humility and docility. In the deep darkness which envelops the minds of a humanity submerged in errors, only his word brings you the light of truth.

602g-Open the doors to Christ. Open the doors of your soul, to receive Him in a worthy manner, at the moment when He communicates Himself to you under the Eucharistic species. It is Jesus in his divine Person, with his glorious body and his divinity, whom you receive when you approach Holy Communion. You must prepare in your souls a dwelling place which should be worthy of Him.

602j-Open the doors to Christ. Open the doors of your heart, that you may welcome Him with the firmness of your love. Jesus brings you to the perfection of love. He loves in you; by means of you, his love spreads to all. He wants to love each person whom you meet along your way. By means of you, his divine charity spreads, and thus you become the instruments of the triumph of his merciful love.

602k-Open the doors to Christ. Open the doors of your life to Christ when He returns in the splendor of his glory. The Christian life must be ever oriented to this expectation. And so I invite you to live in trust and in a great hope. Let yourselves be carried with filial abandonment in the arms of your Heavenly Father.

To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons

Not long ago I gave a conference on the approved apparition of Knock, Ireland. It was very Apocalyptic. A woman, dressed as a bride, Saint John, a lamb, an altar, moving angels. The sun was setting. The people were outside the Church. They were drenched in rain. They had been through a severe famine and now the crops had just failed so famine was again at the door. There were no words. But the village was named Knock.

Behold I stand at the door and knock.

Where else do we see God knocking in the Bible? Bethlehem. Father Faber has a moving meditation.

Alas! the spirit of Bethlehem is but the spirit of a world which has forgotten God. How often has it been our own spirit also! How are we through discourteous ignorance forever shutting out from our doors heavenly blessings! Thus it is that we mismanage all our sorrows . . . God comes to us repeatedly in life; but we do not know his full face. We only know him when his back is turned, and he is departing after our repulse. . . . We do not sufficiently, or of set purpose, accustom our minds to supernatural principles. The world's figures are easiest to count by, the world's measures the most handy to measure by. It is a tiresome work to be always looking at things from a different point of view from those around us; and, when this effort is to be lifelong, it becomes a strain which cannot be continuous; and it only ceases to be a strain by our becoming thoroughly supernaturalized. Thus, it is that a Christian life, which has not made a perfect revolution in man's worldly life, becomes no Christian life at all, but only an incommodious unreality, which gets into our way in this life without helping us into the life to come. Hence it is that we do not know God when we see Him . . . God is always taking us by surprise, when we have no business to be surprised at all. Bethlehem did not in the least mean what it was doing. No one means half the evil which he does. Hence it is a grand part of God's compassion to look more at what we mean than what we do. Yet it is a sad loss for ourselves to be so blind. Is it not, after all, the real misery of life, the compendium of all its miseries, that we are meeting God every day, and do not know Him when we see Him?

"Bethlehem" by Father Fredrick William Faber, Chapter: "The Midnight Cave" (1860)

If a dream had protected the Magi and the Holy Family, why could not all the city have benefited from a dream? They did not see the soldiers who were coming to slay their children. These soldiers would not respect closed doors. Why did these people of Bethlehem not recognize the Christ Child? They had not opened their doors to a pregnant woman and her husband, a lawful son of David. They had closed their hearts to grace. Today they have shut the doors of their wombs, not wanting the inconvenience of child-bearing. With a shrinking population they can't keep open their businesses, so they opened the doors of their country to anyone who wanted to come, anyone but Jesus Christ. And now their land is overflowing with followers of Mohammed who blaspheme Jesus, and who regard women as slaves.

At Jesus' first coming the doors of Bethlehem were closed. No hostility, just indifference, tepidity. The Messiah fled away, never to return there, not even during his public ministry. But some faithful shepherds/pastors were watching their flocks by night. They believed the angelic messenger:

Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people;

for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God.

Lk 2:10-13

At Jesus' second coming it is midnight again:

At midnight there was a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.

and:

Hark! my beloved is knocking. Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.

If any man hears my voice and opens the door,

I will come in to him, and I will sup with him, and he with Me.

Rev 3:20

He wants to eat with us.

A kind host will offer a cold guest something warm, or something chilled if the traveler is warm.

The host goes out of his way to welcome and refresh the guest.

Will Europe rise to open the door? Perhaps some of them:

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. . . At midnight there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'

Mt 25

For this book is about the Great Day, the New Day with the Morning Star

Mary often compares the two comings, the first at Bethlehem and the second as something imminent. We usually equate the second coming with the Last Judgment and the end of the world. But we forget that the Book of Revelation talks about a second coming, a big judgment, and then a thousand years period where Christ will reign. We need to listen to her or when a period of chastisement enters our lives, we'll make the mistake of thinking that the world is nearly over and we don't have to worry about evangelizing people, that it's too late for that and we just need to focus on ourselves. Mary spent a lot of time trying to correct this wrong attitude.

Speaking of Jesus' First Coming:

64d-Many times during the day He had, so to speak, knocked at the door of my heart. The time had come for his birth and I, the Virgin, was now, as a Mother, to give Him to all humanity.

64e-But humanity had no place to receive Him. Every door which closed, opened a new wound in my heart which opened itself more and more to beget in love and pain—in this pain—my Son Jesus.

64f-And thus there was no welcome for Him but the poverty of a cave and the warmth of an ox and the young donkey which had carried us throughout the day.

To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons

114n-Since that time, each year the Church renews this mystery. Since that time, my Son is ever being born again in hearts.

114o-And today, also, there is a world which rejects Him and, in great part, closes its door to Him, just as in those days, the great ones ignore Him.

To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons

154o-Never as in these present times has my heart been so utterly pierced by a crown of thorns: these are the sins, the ingratitude, the sacrileges, the desertions and the betrayals, especially on the part of my beloved sons and of consecrated souls.

154p-Often I cannot enter some of their houses because they close the door on me and do not want me.

154q-From being gardens of God some of them have become swamps in which Satan covers and corrupts everything with filth.

To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons

217i-Beloved children, on this holy night, I want you all with me, about the crib of my divine Child.

217j-Once again the doors of the houses are closed. The nations are in rebellion against the Lord who comes, and plot to fight against his royal dominion.

217k-The greatest cold envelops the hearts of men. It is so cold in the world today! This is the coldness of hatred, of violence, of unbridled egoism. It is the coldness of the lack of love which kills.

To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons

And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. [cf Mt 24:12]

Jesus is not accusing the Europeans of coldness, but of indifference. Yet, a closed door feels the same.

Mary speaks of the Second Coming

342i-Everything is again repeated for his second nativity. His return in glory is just as it was then. The night of the denial of God has descended upon the world; the coldness of rebellion against his law of love has reduced humanity to an immense desert; error has closed minds to the understanding of the greatest mystery of love; hearts have become hardened by egoism and hatred which is spreading everywhere. Doors are still obstinately shut to the Lord as He comes.

342j-You, O beloved ones, throw open your hearts to blessedness and hope and, in imitation of your heavenly Mother and of her most chaste spouse, Joseph, undertake to make yourselves attentive in preparing the roadways for Christ who is returning in glory.

342k-His second nativity is already at the doors. And so open your minds to the heavenly voices which, in many ways and through many signs, are telling you that his return is near. As the love of my motherly heart was the most precious crib for his first nativity, so also the triumph of my Immaculate Heart will be the crib at his glorious return.

367c-Prepare yourselves with me for the coming of Jesus, which is realized each day in the mystery of his real Eucharistic presence and under the human clothing of every person whom you meet. This daily encounter with Jesus must become for you a joyous and perennial Nativity.

367d-Open your souls to receive the gifts of his grace and of his love. Throw open the doors of your hearts, to offer Him a warm dwelling place of love, when He comes to give Himself personally to each one of you, at the moment of Eucharistic Communion. Let your minds be illumined to know how to always recognize Him under the fragile and painful features of the little ones, the poor, the sick, the needy, the sinners, those far away, the marginalized, the oppressed, the persecuted, the dying.

To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons

411l-If you only knew the chastisement which awaits you if you again close the door of your hearts to the anguished voice of your heavenly Mother! Because the divine Heart of my Son Jesus has entrusted to my Immaculate Heart the last and extreme attempt to lead you all to salvation.

Mary is warning us. The people of Bethlehem were chastised in their blindness. They did not open their doors to the infant Christ, and their own infants were soon slain. The people of Egypt did not open their doors to the sons of Israel, and soon their own sons were drowned. Abortion in its many forms is the great crime of our era which has closed its door to life. there will be a reckoning.

I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before You will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?" Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been

Rev 6:9-11

These souls are under the altar, slain on the altar of convenience and self-love. They are asking for justice. Why does God delay? Chastisement is a blessing. It's a great work to punish the guilty, to put an end to a crime situation, to free the victims and to deliver a community from an ongoing horror. Man has free will. God ordinarily allows men to do what they want, even if He must watch victims suffer. He measures everything in the light of eternity. He is waiting for the free will of enough persons, who pray and beg Him to intervene. Every aborted child has free will. They can die in bitter hatred for the parents and doctors and taxpayer dollars that murdered them in the womb, or they can make a mighty act of forgiveness for those who deprived them of every chance to grow in grace, forcing them to die like unripe seeds, undeveloped for all eternity, praising God as infants, but not as mature lovers. God has to wait for enough of these mighty prayers to rise up from under the altar before He can lawfully intervene.

And when He comes He has a method to push open most doors!

383d-The Holy Spirit will come, to establish the glorious reign of Christ and it will be a reign of grace, of holiness, of love, of justice and of peace. With his divine love, He will open the doors of hearts and illuminate all consciences. Every person will see himself in the burning fire of divine Truth. It will be like a judgment in miniature. And then Jesus Christ will bring his glorious reign in the world.

546g-Tongues of fire will come down upon you all, my poor children, so ensnared and seduced by Satan and by all the evil spirits who, during these years, have attained their greatest triumph. And thus, you will be illuminated by this divine light, and you will see your own selves in the mirror of the truth and the holiness of God. It will be like a judgment in miniature, which will open the door of your heart to receive the great gift of divine mercy.

To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons

Did Mary say He is coming as a man to live among men? No. She has *never* said that about the Second Coming. She said that He'll be coming in *glory*. He will reign in glory. When He walked on earth was He revered as God? No, it wasn't glorious. He was crucified. But his Second Coming will be glorious because men will revere Him in their hearts, in their deeds, in their governments, in their businesses, in their families. This will be the Great Day for which the Alleluias of Chapter 18 of this book will resound.

But let's finish our meditation on Laodicea.

Before Jesus opens the door of this world, Mary invites us to enter her door.

154j-Enter into my Immaculate Heart: it is the refuge which the Mother gives you. In it you will find all that I have prepared for you in order to pass through the terrible hours of purification through which you are now living.

154k-The whole Church must now enter into my refuge: with the Pope, the bishops, the priests and all the faithful.

154l-It is for this reason that I am leading you to all parts of the world. The time has come when the small remnant,

who will remain faithful and with whom Jesus will bring about the realization of his reign, must enter, in its entirety, into my Immaculate Heart.

154m-Whoever does not enter into this refuge will be carried away by the great tempest which has already begun to rage.

To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons

443u-I am the Mother of the Second Advent and the door which is being opened on the new era.

453h-In the midst of the innumerable sufferings of the times through which you are living, you look upon me as a sign of sure hope and of consolation, because I am the luminous door which opens upon the new era that has been prepared for you by the Most Holy Trinity.”

To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons

The door of the New Jerusalem is the opposite of the door of Laodicea:

Arise, shine . . . your doors shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut; that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.

Isa 60:1,2,11

By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, and its gates shall never be shut by day—and there shall be no night there/

Rev 22:24,25

It's not a coincidence that doors appear in different parts of the Apocalypse. The symbols are consistent. It's the same book, the same story. Laodicea is connected to the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is a new Church, comprised of members from all the old Churches. Some of the members will repent, reform, prove themselves worthy. On the day of Pentecost 3,000 were baptized, many of them were the very persons who had called for Jesus' crucifixion and called down the blood of Christ on themselves and their children. Yet, they repented and became members of the household of God. Jesus is knocking in hope. Some will open.

I will come in to him, and I will sup with him,

and he with Me. As for him that conquers, I will give him to sit with me upon my throne, as I myself conquered, and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Rev 3:20-21

At the Last Supper Jesus told his Apostles:

I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel

and:

Jesus said to them, Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel

and:

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, matters pertaining to this life!

Lk 22:29-30; Mt 19:28; 1Cor 6:2-3

When Jesus forgives, He totally forgives. Saint John of the Cross said that God has only one desire, “to make the beloved equal to Himself.” God became man that we might become god. God the Father adopts us in Christ, sons with the Son. The supper image is of two equals sitting at table together. Are we that humble with the enemies we have forgiven? We must pray for the humility of God. We must pray for a love that is all-embracing.

But a seat at God’s table is not an ordinary chair. It’s a throne, and the feast isn’t ordinary food. It’s a communion of love. God lays down his life to feed us. Are we laying down our life in return? Do we understand the intimacy we are being called to? And then there is the image of ruling with God who reigns from his throne. The meek will inherit the earth. Christians will reign from heaven or from earth, administering a new kind of justice that the earth has never seen. God will be glorified. Evil will not have the upper hand. We’ll be speaking more about this soon, but there is one more door to knock on immediately after we leave Laodicea.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

After this I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up hither, and I will show you what must take place after this”

Rev 3:20–4:1

This is the door of prophecy.

If you open your heart to Christ, He is going to open doors to you. First of all, He will open the door of opportunity for you to be able to have the joy of spreading the Gospel

When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles

and

Praying . . . that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have been imprisoned

Acts 14:27; Col 4:3

But we must not be surprised that our understanding opens up and we begin to see things more clearly in the light of Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit. We are not in the dark. We don’t need ointment for our eyes. We see clearly. To others it seems like clairvoyance. “How did you know that?” They don’t see it clearly. Things just seem naturally clear to you, which previously seemed mysterious. Passages of the Bible, words of the saints that seemed disconnected or obscure, are now popping out into the sunshine. Just because other people don’t see it, doesn’t mean you have to doubt your eyesight or put on dark glasses.

You are not only looking through a door, you are sitting on a throne, next to Jesus. Like Saint John, you can lean back on Jesus’ breast and He will tell you which one is Judas. Saint John, like the others, ran away in the garden, but John was the first one to compose himself and get into the courtyard, and inform Mary, and follow Jesus to the Cross, and later John ran to the empty tomb. He saw the wrappings on the ground, and he understood that Jesus’ body had not been stolen. He had risen from the dead.

Happy Eastertide!

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