

3rd Sunday after Epiphany (Prophecy and 2018)

“Brethren: Be not wise in your own conceits.”

1. Over the past few decades, I have heard many prophecies and statements about the future... One priest I know proclaimed at the beginning of nearly every January, “this is the year! The chastisement will come this year for sure.” He was not just joking around either. He meant it. He took the Y2K scare very seriously and almost seemed dispirited that nothing of note really happened. I often wonder what is he saying now in this new year of 2018? Think about it. How many expected something really big to happen in 2017, the momentous 100th year anniversary of the Fatima Apparitions? Many! And yet, here we are...
2. Growing up I was taught that oil supplies would be greatly depleted by the year 2000. I once saw a Saturday morning program that explained what man would look like in the future. Since all he would be doing is thinking lots and pushing buttons, not surprisingly, they depicted the future human as being mostly a big head with a tiny body... as so many aliens are represented in films. What nonsense!! In the 1970s, we were told of a coming ice age. Later, as we all know well from the false theories surrounding so-called “global warming”, the predicted ice age suddenly became a future green house. Again... what nonsense! In the early 1990’s, I remember my father becoming concerned about an imminent stock market collapse after reading a book called “Crash 95.” Others have forecast dire predictions based on a future population explosion. And yet, here we are at the beginning of 2018. We are still here... hmmm. Very little of the predictions have materialized. How many of those losing sleep over such things have long since died.
3. By the early 1970s’ Hollywood capitalized heavily on this flaw in man, providing quite a few futuristic films depicting widespread destruction caused by everything from natural disasters, animals, insects, diseases, as well as man made causes like nuclear war or even aliens from outerspace... Thus, films like the Omega Man, Soylent Green, Planet of the Apes, 2010 and so on became popular. Again, here we are at the beginning of 2018. We are still here... No aliens... just tricks of the demons for those who want to see aliens.
4. From the realm of the faith there have been many claiming to be prophets sent by God, many of whom, sad to say, have not been

approved by God's Church. Not surprisingly, they too predict similar disasters... asteroids, comets, electro-magnetic pulses, even some hidden planet on a collision course with the earth, and so on. Hmm. A number of these people ("prophets") provided dates, times, and signs... none of which have come to pass as predicted. Here we are in 2018, and we are still here. Our Lord said to beware of false prophets.

5. Once a priest of no little standing told me that we would be fighting to keep the Novus Ordo as it was under Pope John Paul II. Recently there has been prophecies of the elimination of the Latin Mass or some synthesis of the New and Old. As my grandfather often said, "We'll see."
6. Am I saying none of these things will take place? No. Will there be a chastisement? YES. We are in it now! The attacks on the faith and the loss of souls are frightening to behold with anyone who has faith, and eyes to see and ears to hear. The spiritual chastisement we are under now is much more damaging than any physical disaster. The soul is more precious than the body.
7. No, the chastisement has come and it will develop. I have no doubts. The approved prophecies speak of it. Our Lady speaks of it coming in the form of man made and heaven sent. Thus, I am not advocating that we ignore all prophecy. I am saying we should listen and study only that which is approved, and do not spread abroad unapproved prophecies. If God wants us to listen to some newer prophet, He will make it so that the Church approves this person for us. Meanwhile, let us rest assured He has indeed provided sufficient information already. We do not need new ones. I recommend Desmond Birch's Trial, Tribulation and Triumph.
8. What needs to be understood here is this: one of the oldest temptations of man is the desire for secret or hidden knowledge... to be "in the know"... or to put it another way, to be among those who figured it all out and told others what was to happen ahead of time with accuracy. How attractive it is to be the one who pulls the alarm to save the day! Sad to say, I suspect most end up crying wolf ... causing more confusion and unwanted fear that prevents good works and the fulfilling of our duties.
9. Did not Adam and Eve take the devil's bait at the very beginning, reaching out to partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil? This, of course, is one of the main reasons for the continuation and

success of the occult. People want to know about hidden things. Like our first parents, they reach out to take instead of waiting for God's timing.

10. Mary Todd Lincoln, the wife of Abe Lincoln, attended séances to learn the fate of her deceased boy Willie (d. 1862) and later to know about her murdered husband. Victor Hugo attended many séances to learn about his deceased daughter Leopoldine as well as talk to famous people like Luther, Galileo, Byron. Czar Nicholas II and his wife Alexandra regularly consulted Ras Putin, thinking him a legitimate mystic, on who to appoint to which office in the kingdom of Russia and positions in the Orthodox church.
11. Let's take a step back and consider a few things on how God has always worked. Tradition keeps us sane. God loves us and always prepares us for the most important events in history even up to the very end by way of types (prefigurements) and prophecy. He does this to help us prepare and get the most fruit from that event. He also does this because only He can see the future so clearly... it is a proof that He is God and Lord and Master of all time. He has told us His Christ is the Alpha and Omega...the first and the last...and in the end He WINS!
12. Consider for a moment some of the most important event of all time. The coming of the Christ to the earth: His Incarnation and His Passion, Death and Resurrection. Were they foreknown? Search the Sacred Scriptures. What we will find is not precise dates and times. He speaks of many things like a Virgin of the flesh of David bearing a child... being born at Midnight in the city of Bethlehem. He gives some times to Daniel in terms of weeks of years but they were provided in a mysterious form. The lesson? It seems God is not inclined to provide exact dates for the most important events of all time. What does that say about events of a lesser nature? He is not likely to give exact dates and times, but rather requires us to practice VIGILANCE. He wants us to be vigilant... staying free from sin and fulfilling our duties.
13. Our Lord prophesied the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. He did not name the year... 70 AD. But he gave the signs to look for. The Christians at the time saw them unfolding and safely left the city. They were rewarded for their vigilance.
14. Our Lady told Sr. Lucia at Fatima to look for a strange unknown light in the night sky in the reign of Pope Pius XI (a future Pope, not yet

elected or named). When it appeared, which it did, this would be a sign of the Second World War. She had to keep vigil.

15. Our Lady spoke to Ven. Mother Marianna of many things in the future, including the defining of the dogma of Her Immaculate Conception, a great leader for Ecuador, Gabriel Garcia Moreno, and many abuses of the Sacraments in the late 20th Century. All of them have come to pass... but to see this, one has to be vigilant. In fact, the main messages given to the holy mother Marianna revolved around one symbolic event, the extinguishing of the Vigil Lamp for the Most Blessed Sacrament. What brought about the evils, one might argue, is the lack of vigilance in fulfilling the will of God (praying, adoring, fulfilling our duties). What did His Majesty command us in the Gospel: "what I say to you, I say to all: Watch" (Mark 13:37).
16. Instead of giving into our desire for seeking what is going to happen next or to be among the first to pull the alarm, which has more and more ended up being false alarms, let us realize this is an itch in man that will never be satisfied. It is a distraction... At times I turn on the radio as I drive across our country to find religious programming. When coming across Protestant stations, not surprisingly, they inevitably talk about the Apocalypse. Many infamous heretics started their career with a misreading of the Apocalypse. Once I visited a pew making factory in North Carolina. After the sales representative showed us all the kinds of pews they made, he said he liked Catholics because they always buy the best pews, solid oak, while the fundamentalists and others buy cheap plywood pews. I asked why is this? He said because they expect the world to end in a few years.
17. If we want a prophecy that is sure to be fulfilled, let me provide one... we here, each and every one of us, is going to die some day, be judged and rewarded or punished according to what we did or did not do with our time on earth. In the light of all history, I could say, we are to die soon ...as our years are 70 or 80 for those who are strong, which is not much in light several millennia. Let's do something with our time! Let's build up the Church... do good things now instead of wondering what is going to happen in the future. (compare to lottery... invest in chance or give to what is certain).

18. It is 2018 and almost none of the dire prophecies spread about have come to pass. Will the world end this year? It might. Will this be the year for the big chastisement that we so justly deserve? Could be. The fact of the matter is, you will die regardless, and the more merits we have from seeking to build up the Body of Christ on earth, the better prepared we will be to face those trying times or our own death. Thus St. Paul tells us to redeem the time... to build on the foundation that is Christ... to work out our salvation.
19. King David says in the Psalms... "The sun ariseth... Man shall go forth to his work, and to his labour until the evening" (103:22-23). The Sun has not yet set... it still light. There is surely to come a night, as Our Lord Himself predicts, in which no man can work, nay even the three days of darkness...but in the meantime, let us keep focused on making this day count... seeking ever to labor before the sun sets on our life or on the world around us. We still have time to do good works and time to build. Let us live, therefore, as if we were to die tomorrow but build up the Body of Christ as if our work were to last forever.