

RETURN TO THE LORD

Our attention is on the Ukraine this week. Our Facilities Manager, Oleg Berezovski is Ukrainian and his mom and sister still live there. He is very upset and feeling quite powerless about all that is unfolding there presently. Much has been written about Vladimir Putin and what he is doing and why. Much remains shrouded in mystery. But one thing is clear the path he has embarked upon is a path which has forsaken the way of the Lord. Even though President Putin claims to be a follower of Christ. Simply put and to quote Our Lord himself: A good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit. What is happening in the Ukraine is bad fruit.

Mr. Putin must be resisted. Will he? Can we? Do we have the inner strength and the conviction of assisting those in the Ukraine? My friends, I have been following these developments for a while now. One thing which stands out to me is that we Americans view ourselves as the ones who must stand up for what is true and right. We must rally the other countries. It is our responsibility. It is who we are. BUT. But there is a presumption that we are making which is being overlooked. Has our own country also forsaken the way of the Lord—but in a different way? And if we have forsaken the way of the Lord can we fulfill our responsibility to stand up for that which is true?

You will ask? Us? How have we forsaken the way of the Lord? In our morality. Personally. Socially. Nationally. As a nation we do not worship God so much anymore. And we do not feel very upset about it—at all. We have substituted what will pass muster politically for what is the right and moral thing to do. Too many times. We have opted for a sexual morality which places individual pleasure first and chosen to eliminate the life-giving component of our sexuality. It just makes sense to do so. We have gone our own way under the banner of “I’m basically a good person and I haven’t harmed anybody. I am just trying to do my best,” we say. Without actually allowing ourselves to be called to task. Or challenged. But it is clear to me. And to you who do gather to worship and who do care to live a moral life.

I proclaim to you this day that it is time for us to return to the way of the Lord. Now. Not at some future time. Now. It is time to return to the way of the Lord. Now. It is time to return to the full practice of our Catholic faith and stop taking some

supposedly easier road. There is no such road. Our Lord has revealed to us that this life is about the cross and carrying it, and helping each other to carry it. That is his way. Putting myself first and my wants and desires first and my predilections first and producing a rationalization to justify my selfishness—that will not do. We can no longer forsake the way of the Lord.

It is time to return to the way of the Lord. As a world. All nations. For the United States of America. As a community. As a parish. As a family of faith. It is time for each person to step up and embrace our Catholic faith. In our lives. In our homes. In our minds. In our attitudes. In our ways. In our sacrifices. In our faithfulness. In our relationships. In our sexuality. In our workplaces. In our innermost selves. To surrender to God and to embrace what Christ taught as his way. We cannot claim that we do not know. We know. We just grow tired and weary and we allow our faith to slip away.

Do you realize that we cannot discover the best way to live in this world—by our own means, our own efforts, by our own design. It must be revealed to us—by God. AND IT HAS. We must be assisted in our efforts to live it. AND WE HAVE BEEN—GIVEN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

My friends, Lent is supposed to begin on Wednesday. Let's not wait. Let's start early. Will you fast with me? Will you pray with me? Will you choose to come more to Mass this Lent? Even daily Mass? Will you do that for the Ukrainians? Will you do it for America? Will you do it for your family and loved ones? Will you do it for yourself? Don't just do something for Lent. Do it for someone or for some reason or cause. Sometimes signs are given. Are we paying attention to the one that is going on right now? Let us choose to embrace the way of the Lord—in every aspect of our life. It is the only way that saves. The only way that leads to life.

May the Lord bless us today and give us his peace!