

Cooperation with God



“Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is – towards Christ our Redeemer, towards Christ, the redeemer of man. We wish to look towards him – because there is salvation in no one else but him, the Son of God – repeating what Peter said: ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life’” (*Redemptor Hominis*, No. 7).

That’s Pope St. John Paul II writing about Christ as Redeemer of Man in 1979, his first encyclical. And that’s a big part of a healthy Christian response to everything we have just seen go down in [Washington](#). Yes, there is corruption in the world. Yes, there is media bias. Yes, two branches of government are run for the next two years, at least, by a party that has [no patience for pro-lifers](#), even among Democrats. Yes, the [incoming president](#) presents himself as Catholic and a defender – and even expander – of [abortion rights](#). And this is all the more reason to be fixed intently on Christ. Be not afraid, even with a pandemic and so much misery in the world.

Also from *Redemptor Hominis*, we read: “Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it” (No. 10).

We’ve heard time and again and yet tend to forget in the busyness of a day that the measure of our lives is love; that’s what we’re going to be judged on. So much of what we see on social media is not love; it’s hate. And there are a lot of people in this country who do feel disenfranchised. That was at the heart of some of the protests this summer, and it was, too, at the Trump rally at the Ellipse that went bad

as people headed to the [Capitol](#). People felt deep distrust for institutions even before Trump decided to enter politics. And he played on it and exacerbated it. And he lied, misleading many people who had the best intentions.

And with our poor senses of history and short attention spans, and the [cancel culture](#) of censorship demanding perfect adherence to the accepted ideology as proxy religion, we are grateful for Congress to be able to come together again. The word “sacred” was overused in coverage of the [riot on the Hill](#), especially at a time when government rules have kept people away from places of worship, but what they were getting at is good and true. The American experiment that is designed to protect life and liberty – and that first freedom to love God – is a good one, despite its flaws and deficiencies and evils when you consider legal abortion. And woe to those of us who have been bad stewards. Bad stewardship includes treating a president as if he were a savior.

Speaking of loss of confidence in institutions: The Catholic Church, of course, comes to mind. This reminds us of how, in practical terms, it is important for us not to get caught up in campaigns of the world – and to be extra cautious when they start to take on religious fervor and invoke the Most Holy Name of Jesus as a political statement. Each baptized Christian is the Church. If it is sick, we must look at our sins that continue to perpetrate the filth.

And consider [our mission](#). Once again, from Pope John Paul II’s first encyclical: “The Church’s fundamental function in every age and particularly in ours is to direct man’s gaze, to point the awareness and experience of the whole of humanity towards the mystery of God, to help all men to be familiar with the profundity of the Redemption taking place in Christ Jesus. At the same time, man’s deepest sphere is involved – we mean the sphere of human hearts, consciences and events” (No. 10).

Politics isn’t going to redeem us. Cooperation with God and

his grace will.

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