WAR IS A PUNISHMENT FOR SIN

Bp. Michał Stobnicki

We hear in today's Gospel what the lot is of those who turn away from God, those who reject God, who despise Him. The lot of the faithless Jews, but of course also of all faithless Catholics. *Malos male perdet illos* – He will bring those evil men to an evil end, and will let out the vineyard to other husbandmen, who will render it in due season.

Dear faithful, something that so-called Catholics today think about very, very unwillingly is that God punishes evil. One of the fundamental truths of the faith. God rewards the good and punishes the evil. Without reward for good and punishment for sin there is no morality at all. But this, my dear brethren, is something that the completely new religion pushes out. Something that has completely vanished from our thinking. Who today still thinks that God can punish anyone for anything? But of course He is merciful. So why, for what reason? How is it possible that He would punish anyone? And yet for 2,000 years the holy Church taught precisely this, because it is a truth revealed by God. Good is rewarded, evil is punished. God's punishment is a consequence of sin. Where there is sin, punishment must appear. God grant it be temporal punishment in this life, and not eternal punishment, eternal damnation in hell.

And, dear faithful, note that in the beautiful Polish devotion, the *Gorzkie żale* [the Lenten Lamentations], when you take the second part and read the intentions, this truth, fundamental from the point of view of morality, is expressed very clearly, very concretely: "Let us offer these wounds, insults and humiliations to the same suffering Jesus for the whole of Christianity," and so on. "Also in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins and of the punishments for them, namely pestilence, famine, fire and war."

WAR AND SIN

War, my dear brethren, is a consequence of sin. War is a kind, one of the kinds, of God's punishment. If various discussions are now appearing on the internet, everyone has suddenly become a little Napoleon, a strategist, explaining to us what we are to think, also in the so-called right-wing internet – a whole mass of experts on Iranian affairs, who lecture on what it is all about. But none of these commentators will mention this fundamental truth: war is a punishment for sin. War is a consequence of sin, a punishment, my dear brethren, by which God still tries to shake us, through which He tries to bring us to conversion, to a return to Him.

And we see, my dear brethren, very clearly this connection between sin and punishment for sin. Look at the history of the twentieth century. The more sin spread, the more this punishment struck mankind. The First World War, the Second World War, perhaps the Third World War will soon come. This is nothing other than punishment for sin. A punishment that is still a chance for us to come to our senses and return to God. "God scourges those whom He loves, and chastises those whom He receives as sons," Holy Scripture teaches, but contemporary Catholics have presumably most gladly erased this sentence, as they have many others from Holy Scripture.

THE *GORZKIE ŻALE*

Dear faithful, and now look, for example, at the prayer books published by the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X, the Te Deum prayer books, and open the *Gorzkie żale*. And, strangely enough, in this supposedly traditional prayer book you will find a version of the *Gorzkie żale* that is already modernised, adapted to the needs, expectations, and vision of the world of contemporary man. The text is changed, similar, but changed. Most importantly – what disappears from this text in the Te Deum prayer book? The statement that pestilence, famine, fire and war are punishments. We pray for the removal of sins and temporal misfortunes, pestilence, fire, famine and war. But where does this misfortune come from? This misfortune, my dear brethren, does not come from nowhere, but is punishment for sin.

When we look into a supposedly traditional prayer

book and notice this lack, a red alarm light should go on in us, because it turns out that even within Catholic tradition a certain fundamental truth is being concealed, a fundamental truth, my dear brethren, on knowing which our eternal salvation may depend. For think how many people were saved for eternity during the First and Second World Wars. Why? Because when they heard the bombers approaching, when they heard explosions and shelling, they remembered the religion of their childhood, they remembered the Saviour, they remembered the necessity of doing penance, of making an act of sorrow for sin, they fell on their knees somewhere in cellars, beat their breasts, and in this way obtained God's forgiveness, the remission of sins through perfect contrition, aroused in a situation of mortal danger. How many souls during the First and Second World Wars were saved from eternal damnation, who, had there been no war, no punishment for sin, would most probably have gone to hell. Most probably would have gone to hell. But they were still fortunate that there were priests at the time who preached what the Church has always preached: that sin has its consequences, that pestilence, that is plague, famine, fire and war are punishments for sin – punishments meant to lead us to conversion, that is, to a change in our way of thinking, so that we stop thinking in a human way and begin to think in a divine way. And presumably only in the life to come will we learn, will we see, how many souls were saved thanks to war, thanks to God's punishment.

LITTLE NAPOLEONS AND AYATOLLAHS

And now, my dear brethren, when we realise this, at the same time terror probably arises in us, because what will happen when the Third World War comes? Do Catholics, including Catholics of tradition, realise that war is a punishment for sin, or have they already forgotten it completely? Hearing the sounds of exploding bombs, will there still be anyone to fall on his knees and beat his breast? Are we still able to recognise the value of the punishment that God sends upon sinful man? Are we still able, my dear brethren, to draw the conclusion that if there is punishment, it means there is sin for which one must do penance? It is nothing complicated. It is enough to connect two dots. But contemporary Catholics, including those in tradition, listening intently to these various YouTube Napoleons, have apparently already forgotten it completely. What is worse, there are no longer today, as you see, priests who would remind people of it.

And what are we dealing with? Dear faithful, I observed in a fleeting way, to a minimal extent, various commentaries and analyses by these little, ridiculous Napoleons that appeared on the internet, and for example a whole mass of positive comments about the Islamic ayatollahs of Iran. And what was given as an example? What was given to us as an example? Well, various sages wrote – right-wing, conservative, traditionalist – that the ayatollahs stood up in defence of the Lord Jesus, because when in Paris the blasphemous staging of the Last Supper took place during the ceremony of the Olympic Games, in Iran they hung banners with Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper. Another fundamental problem: what was written on those banners? "Jesus, the prophet of Allah." In other words, they tell us to be delighted that the Lord Jesus was insulted, only in a different way. The Western blasphemy – worthy of condemnation. But when in Iran they blaspheme the Lord Jesus, that is something worthy of delight. And was it not, my dear brethren, exactly the scene we are dealing with when the Lord Jesus was brought and set before the Jewish high priests? He was struck on the cheek, so first He got it on one side, then on the other cheek.

Dear faithful, we must pray that we see things as they are, and not as they are presented to us. We must, my dear brethren, realise that blaspheming the Lord Jesus, no matter who it comes from, is a sin and deserves punishment. We must realise that this conflict that is smouldering there is not our Catholic war. It is not our war. Just as what took place in Ukraine did not concern Polish, Catholic interests. But you will see, these various clever internet heads will try to involve us in something that in truth does not concern us. That trap has already been set somewhere.

FOUNDATION OF LASTING PEACE

Meanwhile, as Catholics we should realise that the solution to this whole situation, this mess in the

world, is not any geopolitical analyses, building some alliances, installing missiles, armament. There is no peace and there will be no peace in a world that is godless, because God permits war as a punishment for sin. The only foundation on which lasting peace can be built in your life, in your family, in our nations, between nations, is the foundation of true faith, the Catholic faith. As long as people do not turn to the true God, as long as they do not begin to do penance for sin, which is the source, the cause of war, so long there will be no peace in the world. So long there will be no peace in the world.

Dear faithful, let us ask on this Friday of Lent, after the Second Sunday of Lent, that we never turn away from the true God, that we never let ourselves be caught in the trap of some little Napoleons who always want to explain to us what and how we are to think. God gave us reason, gave us reason so that we would use it, so that through this reason we would know the reality surrounding us and know the Creator of the whole world, God Himself. He gave us free will so that, using it with the support of God's grace, we would reject what is evil and choose what is good. And may we, my dear brethren, prove to be people who will render to God the fruit in due season. What the deicide Jewish nation did not do, what a whole mass of so-called Catholics also did not do. We are called to render to God the fruit in due season. He knows those seasons in the life of each of us, but it depends on us whether we bring that fruit. We have free will. God will force no one to good, just as He forces no one to evil. Let us use this free will and bring fruit, let us prepare fruit for God as long as He allows us to live here on earth.

Let us listen closely to the words of today's prayer over the people, which will be said at the end of Holy Mass: "Grant, O Lord, to Thy people the salvation of soul and body, and may the love of good works earn for us Thy unceasing protection." Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.