

DISTRICT OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Society of Saint Pius X

*Saint Mary's House
13 William Street
Rockdale NSW 2216*



15 September 2021

Dear Faithful,

There are many things I want to say to you during these COVID times, and this letter will just be a beginning. We have many sorrows and many opportunities – and sorrows which *can be* opportunities.

Today's feast of the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady is, despite its name, a very *encouraging* feast. This title of our Mother reminds us of just how much she is like us and how easily she understands what we are going through. Our Lord was certainly not pretending to bleed as He hung on the Cross; neither was our Mother's Immaculate Heart pretending to bleed with sorrow on so many occasions throughout her life – certainly many more than the seven we especially recall today. Among these “unsung sorrows”, there were many which took place even after the Ascension of her Son. Although she surely did not want to be parted from Him, she willingly remained behind because her work was not yet finished. True, she had suffered together with her Son during His entire life, but she had yet to suffer together with His Church as it lived through its infancy and took its first tottering steps. So she was there that day to receive the apostles when they returned, covered in blood, from their first scourging. She was surely there to bless Stephen with her prayer as he ventured forth to preach on the day he was killed. She was there to see the fear and uncertainty in the eyes of Christian men and women who looked to her during that first persecution raised up by the Pharisee, Saul. She lived it all. Perhaps it is these last, uncommemorated sorrows which are the most touching and give us the most encouragement.

Our heavenly Mother has been a Catholic as we are, suffered with the Church as we do, but she suffered with a confidence and a firmness of purpose that made the demons tremble.

There is no doubt that we live in dark times – though *not* so dark as many moments in our Mother's life. Because we have faith, we suffer from the restrictions placed upon access to the Mass and the sacraments. Because we have faith, we take seriously our Mother's warning at Fatima and have *long-since* noticed that Russia's errors are *continually* spreading. COVID did not begin that process although there is no denying the increase in power which anti-Christian governments have gained during the last 18 months. Whatever specific theory one might hold about COVID and the response to it (none of which are matters of faith), anyone with faith can be alarmed by the greater influence over daily life now enjoyed by governments which are hostile to the ideals of Christ.

But, dear friends, if this was all that our faith gave us eyes to see, what a tragedy that would be! Is our faith, which is a participation in the very knowledge of God Himself, given to us merely to improve our political insights? Or, just as mistakenly, does faith throw light on world events merely so that we might become emotional and restrict our reactions and activity to the natural level? Surely not! Faith is meant rather to be the source of *divine activity within man* – the beginning of man's living God's life and wielding God's power.

The devil does not fear our emotions however impressive they may seem to us. So let us try to push aside fear, anger, and sadness. Their influence tends to overshadow and impede the action of grace wherein our real power lies. Precisely because these are serious times, only thought and action driven by faith, hope, and charity will do. The devil certainly *does* fear these divine powers within us as he feared the actions of Our Lady on earth, so saturated with divine life was her slightest thought or deed.

If we see ourselves merely as helpless victims of powers beyond our control, then we see less than half the truth. Victims we may be, to some degree, but *nothing could be more essential to our religion than the truth that victims are not helpless – they are powerful*. If we are going to understand this power and wield it, we must grasp that it firstly gains victories of grace and, only secondarily, changes in the natural order. If our churches are closed, but grace nevertheless converts souls more abundantly than ever before, this is the real victory which overthrows the devil's kingdom. If political rights are suppressed, but more people deepen their spiritual lives and overcome years of bad habits, then the devil will remember what it means to fear. However much we may wish and act for better things at *every* level in this chaotic situation, let us not be blind to the priorities which even the devil can see.

With our priorities in order, then we can renew our confidence in the divine acts which bring about these changes. Whenever we act by faith, hope, and charity, we add a divine element to the reality of the world. In the concrete, we usually do this through prayer and sacrifice. *“Prayer is a more powerful force than all physical energies taken together ... It is essential to trust in this force which is of divine origin – to keep in mind from whence it comes and where it goes,”* (Fr Garrigou-Lagrange). We may bring the power of sacrifice to bear upon the world in many ways. Besides sacrificing our wills when they are constantly contradicted by the present circumstances, there are also the sacrifices which come with doing our duty of state well. These were the very sacrifices which Our Lady of Fatima emphasized as being most important. We each have a place in the battleline assigned to us by our King. We each have a role – parent, child, priest, religious, boss, employee, teacher, student, friend. It is a completely personal and exclusive role. Christ literally *entrusts* us with it for there is no one in the world who can carry the fight from *our* place in the line of battle. If each of us made just one serious improvement in performing our personal duty, consider the damage we would collectively inflict upon the enemy and the mercy we would merit for the world by this legion of purposeful sacrifices.

Dear friends, the present situation indeed has the potential to dramatically change the world, but we have more control over the nature of those changes than we realize. Our enemy can do nothing to neutralize our supernatural powers if we are determined to wield them. We can make him rue the day he ever thought to close our churches and interfere with our schools. *On the following page, you will see the program we will undertake during the month of October*. Begin sooner if you can, and carry on once the month has ended. October will conclude on the Feast of Christ the King. If we suffer now from leaders who do not recognize Him, let us show that we truly want *“this Man to rule over us”*. Having tasted the bitterness of life under a different regime, let us submit ourselves whole-heartedly to His benevolent reign in our personal lives. The more we yield to Him, the more powerful we become.

I began this letter by saying there are many things I want to share with you. I will give a short talk approximately each week which will be available on our websites: <https://sspx.com.au/en> and <https://sspx.org.nz/en>. I close for now with a reminder of Our Lady of Sorrows and her militantly maternal dispositions when her children are in danger. *“Over the iron forest, he saw Our Lady stand. Her eyes were sad withouten art, and seven swords were in her heart — but one was in her hand.”*¹

In the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary,



Fr Daniel Themann, District Superior

¹ *The Ballad of the White Horse*, G.K. Chesterton