

TESTIMONY

God saved us from Covid. He is better than any vaccine

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My philosophy teacher was quite a character: he had a 19th century-style handlebar moustache and sported a green and red checkered jacket! No doubt, his look was a bit quirky, but his thinking was certainly straightforward and sharp. He used to say: "My

dear young friends, always keep a close eye on reality and never trust the way it appears... Dig deep, much deeper! Reflect on what others fail to discern... and never forget that the world is divided between those who *think without doing* and those who *do without thinking*. Do you want to stay grounded? Then, simply take the mean between the two common options: neither here nor there!" This was his great advice, especially relevant today when we are so eager to follow those who think without doing and those who do without thinking.

It seems everyone has fallen into a veritable trance-hypnotic Covid-19 trap:

immunologists, the whole scientific committee, virologists, journalists... They are all caught in some pandemic swamp and with only one way out: the vaccine. It has taken on the form of a new religion, indeed the one and only true religion, to which even some church hierarchies bow down fervently. "This is a difficult and confusing period. And, above all, we must protect the health of others ... So in this case God ... that is, our faith, our prayers ... take second priority. In short, everyone has become a priest of this new-fangled false faith where God risks becoming *passé*, perhaps only nostalgically remembered but nothing more than this.. After all, our Lord is not AstraZeneca or Moderna or Pfizer, who are able to provide us with a true defense against the Evil One (the Virus)."

This false religion also provides sacramental guidelines: "Sanitise your hands very well and only with a certain type of product...). Always maintain social distancing of at least 2 metres, even among family members. Use only one type of mask. Only take certain medicines recommended by official medical protocols (e.g. paracetamol) and under careful supervision."

This false faith also identifies new saints: the vaccinated, who are absolute role models and take ritual photos of themselves with their injection-ready arms faithfully exposed. They are all beautiful, happy, free, beloved people, because these new "holy" persons can go back to normal living without obsessing over Covid-19. They are living the dream, at long last, of managing life according to their desires. This is all true with the unthinkable exceptions of being suddenly struck down by an embolism, heart attack, cancer, or a stroke... but at least they die vaccinated. And, let's not forget, there are the new Commandments they follow here:

- Thou shall immunize thyself (even if you have to travel 100 km)
- Thou shall not covet thy neighbour's vaccine (like Sputnik)

- Thou shall not disobey thy parents (rejecting the state's vaccine programme)..or thou shall be punished by CHT (Compulsory Health Treatment).

Just note however, the vaccines are said to be so “unsafe” that you are required to sign a waiver exonerating the doctor and the pharmaceutical companies from any legal liability. Now and forever, amen.

Is that it? No. This fake faith also teaches us the essence of life: it is a time kindly granted to us by the vaccine. So, once vaccinated, we can reclaim time lost and spend it again as we wish: buying happiness tucked away at various supermarkets, in last-minute exotic vacation offers, and so forth. Of course, they all safely "vacuum-packed" with magical language that is so convincing so as to create within us needs and desires we never had before.

Am I a dreaded “anti-vaxxer” or some crazed conspiracy theorist? No, not at all! A year ago, I was on an oxygen ventilator for a month and a half. I had severe Covid-related bilateral interstitial pneumonia. And let's revisit the beginning of February 2020. This was when pandemic was not yet clearly and officially known, yet I decided anyway to immediately suspend meetings between those living in the community and their families which took place regularly every month in the pre-Covid era. I made this decision after few of the guests' families had been hospitalised. These were the first signs of the virus. For about 10 days, I worked inside our community with a fever (thinking I had a ‘normal’ flu) only to collapse after I suddenly became short of breath and my fever shot up to 40 degrees. After being pumped full of paracetamol and antibiotics, I was taken for a lung X-ray. What was the prognosis? Certain and imminent death due to advanced bilateral interstitial pneumonia. All the medical experts agreed on thing: intubate me or I would die in hospital.

As a nun I hesitated because I have always believed that the end of any living parable was in God's hands, and not in those of a virus that had escaped by who knows how. Some say the virus was released by lab scientists, others by bats, and still others by military conducting bio-warfare. So honestly, I had some very negative thoughts on being admitted to hospital. In the meantime, my sister, who lives in the province of Bergamo and has a daughter, daughter-in-law and niece who are all professional nurses at the same hospital, was admitted for having a slight fever. Two or three days later, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte issued his Ministerial Decree allowing for the creation of Covid hospital wards. My sister was then moved in compliance with the official Ministry of Health protocols to another hospital without, however, being sure

– again, she was only mildly feverish - that she was really infected with Covid-19. She was kept in that specific ward for a while and died very quickly, just a few days after being discharged.

I refused to go to hospital, even though I was certain that I had contracted Covid and was positive. I was gripped by a terrible fear that I might have unknowingly transmitted the virus to children in our community (especially the weakest, such as the HIV-positive, those who are immunocompromised and others with serious illnesses). But we were all - and I repeat “all” - protected by God. I am certain of this.

Our community was sustained by constant prayers from friends, volunteers and family (above all, from a volunteer nurse to whom we owe infinite gratitude for the courage she had in setting up her camper inside our community while providing 24-hour assistance and constantly being advised by her equally splendid volunteer medical colleagues). Thus, protected by God (and assisted by this nurse) we fought and won our battle.

At this point I declare in all-caps: I HAVE NO DESIRE TO REPLACE MY FAITH WITH ANY NEW DEVIANT RELIGION.

Please understand me: I don't want to criticize the vaccine's effectiveness or not. Everyone is free to do what he or she wants, but let me call upon Mary, our protector and mother, whom I personally still believe to be a miracle worker.

Allow me to share a 4th Century Marian prayer I love:

"We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test (even with Covid-19) – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin."

Don't we realise that with all the prayers offered up to heaven that all the time it was Mary who was our antidote (i.e. our vaccine)? Don't we realise that Our Lady is still capable of working miracles? It's up to you to pray and see for yourself.

Meantime....leave me my religion intact!

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