

CARDINAL SARAH'S HOMILY

What saves the world is the man who worships Christ

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**Robert
Sarah***



*We publish extensive excerpts from the homily delivered on Saturday, 26 July, by Cardinal Robert Sarah, special envoy of Pope Leo XIV, at the shrine of Saint Anne d'Auray in Brittany (France), in front of 30,000 faithful, for **the 400th anniversary of the apparition of Saint Anne**. The original text in French was published by www.fr.aleteia*

(...)

Four hundred years ago, Saint Anne appeared to Yvon Nicolazic in this very place and said to him, 'Me zo Anna, mamm Mari' ('I am Anne, mother of Mary', in Breton). Yvon, fear not; I am Anne, mother of Mary.' Tell your rector and priest that there once stood a chapel dedicated to me on the land called Bocenno, where we are now. It was the first chapel in the whole country dedicated to me. It has lain in ruins for 924 years and six months, and I wish it be rebuilt as soon as possible, for you to take care of it, and for you to come there in procession, because God wills me to be honoured there. God wants you to come there in procession."

Dear brothers and sisters, Saint Anne told Yvon Nicolazic, "God wills this place."

He chose this land to make it holy. He wanted a part of your land, a part of your country — France — to be a sacred place, a place reserved for Him. He wanted your ancestors not to cultivate it or exploit it for livestock or agriculture. He chose this place to be honoured. There is a great mystery here that we must meditate on. Many other churches and locations were available, but God chose this one. Why?

Firstly, to remind us that God comes first and that the glory of God precedes us and does not belong to us. God created us through an act of free love; all creation is the work of His hands and a gift of His love. [...]

We did not deserve His love. He loved us first and we owe Him everything, because it is He who gives us life, movement and existence. For us, His creatures and children, honoring God and giving Him glory is doing justice. Glorifying God is not optional; it is a duty and a necessity. It is important to be aware of this, especially in Western societies, where God is often considered dead, useless or uninteresting.

All too often, religion is presented in the West as an activity that serves human well-being. It is equated with humanitarian actions, such as acts of charity, welcoming migrants and the homeless, and promoting universal brotherhood and world peace. Spirituality is seen as a form of personal development that brings a little relief to modern man, who is focused on his usual political and economic activities. While these issues are important, this view of religion is false.

Religion is not about food or humanitarian actions. In the desert, this was the first temptation that Jesus rejected. In order to redeem humanity, we must overcome the misery of hunger and poverty, which the devil offers to the Lord. However, Jesus replies that this is not the path to redemption. He makes it clear that even if everyone had enough to eat and prosperity was widespread, humanity would not be redeemed.

We see precisely how, in affluent countries, wealth and abundance lead to self-destruction because people forget God and think only of their wealth and earthly well-being. It is the bread of God that saves the world. God feeds man with the bread of God, and the bread of God is Christ himself.

The world will be saved when man kneels before God to worship and serve him. God is not at our service. We are at his service. We were created to praise and worship God. It is through worshipping God that we discover our true dignity and the ultimate reason for our existence. It is only when we kneel before God that we discover our true greatness and nobility. If we do not worship God, we will end up worshipping ourselves.

God chose this place to be worshipped, and God chose France to be a holy land reserved for him. Do not desecrate France with barbaric and inhumane laws that advocate death when God wants life. Do not desecrate France, for it is a holy land reserved for God. (...)

Our first obligation is to worship and glorify God. This is the highest manifestation of our gratitude to God and the most profound response to His exceptional love for us. To worship God, we must withdraw in silence. Come here in the silence of your heart and listen to God. This is what is called entering into a sacred state of mind. There are sacred places, places chosen by God and reserved for Him. These places must not be profaned by activities other than prayer, silence and liturgy.

Our churches are not theatres, nor concert halls or venues for cultural or entertainment activities. The church is the house of God. It is reserved exclusively for Him. We enter it with respect and veneration, dressed appropriately, because we

tremble before God's greatness. This is not fear, but respect, awe and admiration.

(...) Sacred places do not belong to us; they belong to God. The purpose of the liturgy is to glorify God and sanctify the faithful, and sacred music is a privileged means of facilitating their active and fully conscious participation in the sacred celebration of the Christian mysteries. [...]

During the apparitions, Saint Anne asked Yvon Nicolazic to rebuild and take care of the ancient church. This task is difficult, costly and demanding, yet it reflects what God wants today. God still wants us to rebuild his house. God comes to tell each one of us: *'I have chosen your soul and your heart as sacred places to be worshipped.'*

Your baptised soul is a sacred place; do not profane it by giving in to disorderly passions or the spirit of the world. Do not steal God's place in your life. If the church of your soul is in ruins, then heed God's call. It is time to rebuild it, building on the solid foundation of rock on which we must base our lives and our hope.

Yes, it is time to rebuild the church of our soul. It is time to confess the sins you have committed in word or deed, night or day. Confess now during this favourable time, and on the day of salvation, receive the heavenly treasure. *'Above all, watch over your soul,'* says Saint Cyril of Jerusalem. Take care of your soul by putting aside a time of intense silent prayer every day. It is time to expel the idols of money, screens and easy, vulgar seduction. God wants your heart and soul, just as He wanted this land of Brittany. Your soul is a sacred place; take care of it. Only there, in the sanctuary of your soul, can God speak to you, console you and draw you back to him through radical conversion. Only in this inner sanctuary will you be able to hear His call to be holy and to worship Him. *'Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.'*

(...) If you profane this inner sanctuary by leading a life dominated by sin and worldly entertainment, you risk missing out on life itself and never truly being yourself.

My beloved brothers and sisters, let us not steal from God the sacred sanctuary of our souls. God created it and redeemed it; let us not profane our bodies. Our bodies are the temples of God, and the Spirit of God dwells within us. Let us not destroy this temple, for the temple of God is sacred, and this temple is us. God has entrusted us with it so that we may take care of it and worship Him in silence. God wants you.

Saint Anne brings a special message to this place. She and Joachim had no children because of her advanced age. Her heart must have been filled with sorrow and anxiety. How much suffering for a woman who longs to become a mother but sees her wait

prolonged.

How much Saint Anne must have wondered: is it my fault? Why such a trial? There are surely men and women among you who suffer from not having children. There are surely parents among you whose hearts, like Saint Anne's, are filled with suffering, anguish and worry for sick children, children who have abandoned the faith and seem to be drifting away from God, or for their families and their country, which seems to be in danger.

Our trials and sufferings sometimes leave us in a state of profound incomprehension. Why does a child die? Why do innocent people suffer? Why is there war? Why is there betrayal? Why, Lord? Sometimes we feel abandoned by Him. It seems that God is no longer there; for Europe, God is dead. Should we revolt? Have we become indifferent to God? Should we abandon religious practice just because He doesn't seem to listen to our prayers? Should we stop praying and going to Mass on Sundays?

Let us look to Saint Anne for guidance. What does she do? Does she rebel against God? Does she turn away from Him? No, she remains in adoration. God is greater than our inability to comprehend, greater than our doubts. God is greater than our hearts. When confronted with evil, we have no easy answers; we have no answers that are purely human. In the face of evil, adoration is our only response. Our only response to the mystery of evil is silent adoration. Evil is indeed incomprehensible, but through faith, we know that adoring trust in God is stronger than the absurdity of evil.

Saint Anne came here to tell the Bretons, the French people, and people everywhere that adoration is the only remedy for despair. Faith in and adoration of God are the only things that can guarantee people solid, lasting peace. [...] Faith and adoration are the only things that can guarantee us peace.

I address all of you who suffer: look at Saint Anne. I address all of you who despair for your children, your parents or your country: look at Saint Anne. Like her, let us persevere in adoration. Adoration of God will never disappoint us. It was the patient and silent adoration of Saint Anne that allowed Mary, the mother of the Saviour — the most beautiful, pure and holy of all creatures — to be born.

Those of you whose hearts are filled with suffering and sorrow: your adoration will bear fruit in hope. Relentless adoration tears away the darkness and brings the light of hope. [...]

* *Cardinal*