



A Little Slice of Christianity

If the institutions and technocrats of the European Union, that ever-expanding bureaucratic monster, take a dislike to something or someone, it's a sure sign that the disliked person or institution is probably doing something right.

As one Hungarian member of the European Parliament declared a few years ago, the EU is the most secularist institution in Europe. It is little surprise, therefore, that the two countries which draw the continued ire and vitriol from all the forces who support the liberal ascendancy in Europe are the avowedly and unashamedly Christian nations of Poland and Hungary.

The governments of both countries are continually referred to as “far-right”. Apparently, anyone who supports national sovereignty, the family, Christian marriage and limited immigration is always “far-right”; yet semi-communists and Marxists are never described as being “far-left”.

If there is one thing that unites Poland and Hungary in their determined refusal to accede to the secular liberalism which is hollowing the heart of formerly Christian Europe from within and leaving it an empty shell, it is the power and influence of memory.

Viktor Orban, the Calvinist Prime Minister of Hungary, married to a committed Catholic, has written that the “key” to Hungary’s survival for eleven hundred years, was the nation’s formal adoption of Christianity.

The towering figure of St. Stephen, or Istvan, of Hungary, crowned in 1000 A.D., marked the epic beginning of Hungary’s Christian history, although there had been a Christian presence in the land since the second century. Similarly, in Poland, the baptism of Mieszko I in 966 A.D. is known as the “baptism of Poland” and provides a focal point for the spiritual foundation of the nation. The extraordinary celebrations in Poland in 1966 to mark the millenni-

um of Poland’s Christianity, organized by the saintly figure of Ven. Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, who will be beatified in Warsaw in September 2021, was a testament to the importance of memory in the life of the nation during the brutal rule of the communists.

The obliteration of memory, or its falsification, were essential characteristics of the two atheistic systems, Nazism and Communism, which both Poland and Hungary were forced to experience during so many decades in the twentieth century. It is hardly surprising, therefore, or it should not be surprising, that these two heroic nations are engaged in the recovery of memory and the consequent discovery of what has been buried under a mountain of lies.

Rather like a child who hates his parents, his grandparents and all his ancestors, secularist Europeans are engaged, like their totalitarian predecessors, in the denial of Europe’s Christian heritage and the suppression of the culture it inspired. Hungarians and Poles know from bitter experience that the cancelling of history leads to the burning of books and then to the arrest, imprisonment and killing of people for the crime of seeking to preserve authentic memory.

Along with the strongly pro-family Law and Justice Party in Poland, the ruling Fidesz Party in Hungary believes, as Prime Minister Orban has said, that “we are a people who think that the last hope for Europe is Christianity”. This is precisely why what happens to these two countries is so important, not just for Europe, but for the world.

All the forces of Mordor are now focused, with devilish determination, to destroy the Christian political ascendancy in Poland and Hungary. Speaking recently to a senior Hungarian politician, I was told that these forces are determined to defeat the government in the next elections in

2022. The same is the case in Poland. The great danger is that the Siren call of a sick and barren Europe will pull these countries onto the rocks.

There are, however, two figures of memory and veneration who can be signs of hope in the darkness and beacons of light for the future. In both men, the spiritual and cultural foundations of the nations were embodied, and their example and spiritual influence, their “memory”, will be an important weapon in the existential battle ahead.

Both Ven. Józef Cardinal Mindszenty and Ven. Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński (soon to be beatified) lived through the darkest hours of oppression in their native Hungary and Poland. Under Nazi occupation and then during the decades of atheistic communism both men were heroic models of Christian fortitude and resistance to the oppression of the lie. The Christian heritage and culture of their respective nations provided the strength they needed to face arrest and imprisonment. Wyszyński, Primate of Poland, was imprisoned and under house arrest from 1953 to 1956; Mindszenty, truly a “white martyr”, was tortured and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1949, spending eight years in a communist prison until a brief moment of freedom during the 1956 Hungarian uprising, after which he spent the next fifteen years in the US Embassy in Budapest.

Mindszenty and Wyszyński, Catholic warriors and true Princes of the Church, were witnesses to the truth in times of tyranny. They should inspire present-day Hungarians and Poles, and all of us, to resist false ideologies with the fortitude that has always animated the faith of our fathers.

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