

## A PROTEST CAN BE PROPHETIC!

A peaceful protest or demonstration can be prophetic. Prophecy is the Spirit-guided delivery of God's Word. The Bible itself and the prophet, Isaiah, tell us that God's Word can be like the rain that falls to the earth to bring life and growth. The Word does not return to the heavens without having left the earth changed for the better, more alive, refreshed and improved..

In Chapter three of St. Peter's second letter, St. Peter calls us to prepare for a "new heavens and a new earth." These will come on the "Day of the Lord." Peter tells us to hurry the coming of this day by avoiding error, by remaining stable and by growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. By this self conversion, we ourselves will be a part of these new heavens and new earth!

Prophecy can guide us in this conversion of ourselves and of our society. At this moment, we have prophets among us. In light of the civil unrest that we see around us related to the senseless killing of George Floyd, the United States bishops have offered us a prophetic statement. This is a small part of it.

**"Racism is not a thing of the past or simply a throwaway political issue to be bandied about when convenient. It is a real and present danger that must be met head on. As members of the Church, we must stand for the more difficult right and just actions instead of the easy wrongs of indifference. We cannot turn a blind eye to these atrocities and yet still try to profess to respect every human life. We serve a God of love, mercy, and justice."**

Doctor Martin Luther King realized that a public demonstration is meant to be prophetic and is thus meant to appropriately deliver God's life giving word to his people. In his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Dr. King wrote,

*"In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. . . .One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty."*

Dr. William Donahue of the Catholic League explains this further, "*Civil disobedience, which King perfected, is based on several criteria: 1) every legal*

*method of protest must be exhausted before a law is broken 2) the protest must be non-violent 3) the means must be moral suasion, not intimidation, and 4) participants should go willingly—or as he said "lovingly"—to jail."*

There is nothing wrong with public demonstrations if they are peaceful. They are a part of our culture. Peaceful and public assemblies are protected by the Constitution. They can be prophetic, i.e., they can bring us God's Word that is life giving and can guide us. But as Dr. King pointed out, 'they should aim to stay within the law, they should be non-violent and should be loving.'

In these days following the death of George Floyd, may we all learn some lessons about the value of every human life, of every human person and may we be better people and a better society because of the lessons we learn and live. God is calling us to change our hearts, our laws and our nation!

May the Lord bless you, your families and our nation!