

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord."
Luke 2:8-11 (NABre)

The traditional Romanian Christmas carol, "*O Ce Veste*" ("What Wonderful News") is, as it were, a response to the angel's announcement, as if the shepherds who received this news from the angel then went out to spread the news abroad. The hymn goes on to explain that this news is about a "great shepherd," sent in the name of the Father "to be born, and to grow, and to save us." "He who is without beginning is born as the prophets foretold." Good news indeed!

In our own day, a short film by Dallas Jenkins entitled "The Shepherd" offers a modern rendering of the same idea. In this film, which went on to inspire the film series *The Chosen*, a poor, disabled young man is one of the shepherds, and he is a witness of the angelic announcement. He immediately runs off as best he can, exclaiming, "People must know!" a line ad-libbed by the actor, and which actually was retained in the final version of the story. (It has become the marketing slogan for season six of *The Chosen* and appears now on hoodies and coffee mugs.)

We are living in a time of great alienation and isolation. Though we might be tempted to characterize our day by its political or cultural manifestations, the root of our difficulties goes much deeper. A new book by British poet and writer Paul Kingsnorth, *Against the Machine: On the Unmaking of Humanity*, offers a rather harrowing account of our current circumstances and how we got here, but it hardly offers any of the usual political, scientific, technological, or philosophical theories as solutions. The fact that this former radical environmentalist and Wicca practitioner now finds himself living in the Irish countryside and is a member of a Romanian Orthodox parish offers a clue about where he thinks a solution can be found, though that is rather understated in the book itself.

A recent article in the Jesuit publication, *America* (“Good News—and How to Spread it), January, 2026 pp.8-9), reports that studies by the Pew Research Center indicate that “Gen Z” (Americans between 18 and 29 years old) is the least religious generation in the history of the nation. *And* is the most churchgoing. People of this generation who identify as Christian (45% including Catholics), are more engaged in church services and activities than older generations.

I am not writing a book report here, nor am I about to declare “Mission Accomplished” as far as the New Evangelization is concerned.