



WEEKLY LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR KEN

Each week I include a Bible verse at the end of this letter. Today I would like to also begin with one: “Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes from place to place and there will be famines. These are the beginning of the labor pains.” (Mark 13:8). Recently we learned of the devastating earthquake in Venezuela, with which we have a personal connection through our Betania III community and the family of Maria Esperanza. Then, we heard of another terrible earthquake in Columbia, with which we also have a personal connection because of our own Father Walter. Not long after, we saw pictures of the horrible mud slide in Nepal. Three disasters, literally one right after the other. What’s happening? Are these the events to which Jesus referred? In a way, we can’t help but wonder. Is this the beginning of God’s judgment, His chastisement? Is God giving us a message?

Jesus also said, “But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Mark 13:32) I do believe that there will be a judgment, but I don’t think this [is] it. So, while I don’t believe this is it, I do believe that there is a message in this string of catastrophes. What is it? Before I share my thoughts, I also want to make clear that I do NOT believe that God sends these disasters to teach us something or tell us something. I do believe that He has given us the Holy Spirit that does teach us in moments such as this, and I think that this is what He is trying to tell us: We better start learning to get along and help one another. What one believes absolutely matters, but I sometimes feel as if I’m on a sinking ship and no one notices and no one is helping because we’re too busy fighting with the other passengers on board. Too much of the world’s attention and energy, and too many of the current “isms” are focused on telling people, “Forget everyone else. Just worry about what you want and what makes you happy.”

The heroes of 9/11 didn’t have a checklist of questions to decide whom they would help. No one has suggested that we should create a list of the kind of people to whom we should come to their aid amidst the recent earthquakes and disasters. That’s how it should be. Again, one’s beliefs and values do matter. However, we also need to rediscover our common God-given humanity. If we don’t, the world will not actually come to end, but it might as well.

“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.” (John 15:12)