

THE REIGN OF JUSTICE

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“Do not be afraid”

THE sublime message delivered by an angel of the Lord, to the shepherds watching their flocks in the fields of Bethlehem, contains a sublime message for all the inhabitants of the Earth. To those who are profoundly initiated into divine ways and the effects of the Work of Redemption done in his day by the Son of God, the troubles of the present day, which pile up as time goes on, are drowned in the certainty of the imminent fulfilment of everything that that inexpressible and consoling Good News contains.

What a marvellous experience it was for those shepherds when the heavens above them suddenly opened and an angel of the Lord appeared in resplendent light and said: “Do not be afraid, for I bring you Good News of great joy for all people”! Great indeed was the joy of the shepherds. So was that of the Wise Men who came from the East to hail the birth of the Messiah. Great also was the happiness of Simeon, of Anna the Prophetess and of the few faithful ones of the Jewish nation who cherished the divine promises in their hearts and had a feeling, which was animated by the Spirit of prophecy, that the birth of the Liberator, foretold so long ago, was about to take place.

It was also a great comfort and an immense joy for Joseph and Mary to receive all the tributes from those dear friends who came to pay homage to him whom the angel had spoken about in a dream to Joseph, saying: “Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you shall name him Jesus.” Shortly afterwards, however, Joseph and Mary had to flee to Egypt, having been warned from Above that King Herod was plotting the death of the child. After King Herod’s death, they returned and settled in Nazareth where Jesus grew up and remained until he was baptized by John the Baptist and started his ministry. Until then, there had been no particular happening to record. It was just as if the angel had never appeared to the shepherds, and as if the Wise Men had never come and the star had never shone to lead them. That great joy seemed to have faded away long ago.

The Work of Redemption and its effects

At the age of thirty, our dear Saviour began his ministry. He went into the synagogue in Nazareth, took the scroll of the book, and read aloud these words of Isaiah the Prophet: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because

He has anointed me to bring Good News...” Then, he shut the book and said: “Today, this Scripture is fulfilled.” It was the prophecy of the angel of Bethlehem, taking concrete shape. But the Scribes and Pharisees failed to understand, and even as early as this, sought to throw him down from the top of a mountain.

On the other hand, a few Disciples followed the Master. In their case, the majestic Gospel of divine grace gained a footing in their hearts. On certain occasions, when they were sensitive enough to understand what our Lord taught them, and receptive to the atmosphere that surrounded to him, they had inexpressible joys. There was also the great and splendid joy of those who obtained the benefits dispensed by the Lord: healing the sick and even raising the dead. There were powerful and deeply moving manifestations, and magnificent echoes came in response from the hearts of some of the people. For instance, what an explosion of emotional response burst from the heart of the woman who cried out: “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that nursed you”! And what inexpressible impressions there must have been in the heart of the Widow of Nain, when, at the voice of the Son of Man, her dead son whom she was accompanying to the cemetery, sat up and spoke! And think of the immense happiness of Jairus, when, to his child who had just died, Jesus said: “Little girl, I say to you, get up,” and she immediately got out of bed! And then also of the joy of Martha and Mary, when Lazarus, whose dead body had already started to smell, walked out of the tomb, full of life and health!

We are aware that those cures and resurrections were not of a definite order. They were just a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. To stay alive, they would have had to change their characters. And then also, and above all, the time had not come for the decisive effects of our dear Saviour’s labours to take shape. The Lord had first of all to call, to educate and to establish his Little Flock, the members of his Body, who were to associate, in all freedom, with the Son of God by doing the sublime Work of Reconciliation, to reconcile man with God through his and their Sacrifices.

The Heavenly Calling has lasted about two thousand years. It is now drawing to a close. The last members of the Little Flock are making their calling sure. That is why we have come to the time when the Good News brought by the angel to Bethlehem, will

truly become the indescribable joy of all people in the world.

That manifestation, extraordinary in its power, is described especially by the Prophet Isaiah in very poetic language. He says of mankind: “The ransomed of the LORD will return [from death, from ‘the land of the enemy’] and come to Zion with singing and crowned with everlasting joy. ... The desert will rejoice and blossom like the rose. ... I will turn the desert into a lake, and the dry land into flowing springs of water. ... There will never again be an infant who lives just a few days. ... There will be a highway called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it. It will only be for those [the redeemed] who walk in God’s ways. Fools will not wander on to it. ... The calf, the lion and the fatling will be together, and a little child will lead them. ... They will not hurt or destroy on all my Holy Mountain [the Earth become Paradise again].”

Elsewhere again is mentioned the sigh of relief of all who have suffered under the yoke of “the god of this world”, Satan, the Adversary: “How the oppressor [the tyrant] has ceased, and how fury has ended! The LORD has broken the rod of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. ... The whole world has peace and quiet, and everyone sings for joy.” That then will truly be the full accomplishment of this promise given by the angel: “Great joy for all people,” the whole human family redeemed by the blood of Christ.

The calling of the Little Flock

First of all, as we said above, God’s plan had to be accomplished in the formation of the Church of Christ, which the Bible also calls the Little Flock. As we are shown in Revelation, it comprises the 144,000 individuals chosen in the time since the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, until now. They are our dear Saviour’s associates who willingly give themselves up as sacrificial victims with him to lay down their lives on behalf of humanity.

Aside from that Body of true Disciples, there has been the formation of the official churches which have understood nothing about that calling that has taken place all along the Gospel Age. They have thought to convert the world, whereas the time had not come for that. The Little Flock, also called the Body of Christ, first had to be chosen and established. It is exactly as in the days of our dear Saviour: the religious people among the Israelites also utterly failed to understand. Only a small handful of faithful people were able to grasp the will of God and to become aware of the times and seasons, and of the work to be done.

Do not forget the equivalent

HAD Jeannette had any say in the matter, the place where she was born would certainly not have been her choice. This spot, somewhat off the beaten track, still preserved the harsh heritage of the past. But no one may choose father, mother, native land or period. By the time she was twenty-two, Jeannette had never even chosen the colour of her dress, the shape of a shoe, or how she was to spend even a single day. She learnt, at an early age, that she was a part of the patrimony, on the same footing as the house, the vineyard and father’s bicycle. Life was organised by order. Command and obedience seemed to be the only principles by which a pacific coexistence was to be obtained. Simply to ask “why” was a serious breach of father’s infallibility, which would throw sand into the gears of family relations, causing them to grate unpleasantly. Jeannette had to learn that that

was what you had to pay, for the favour of coming into the world.

The world in question was first the ancient house clinging with the rest of the village, to the rugged mountainside. It included the garden, the vineyard, a few neighbours and particularly an uncle. Uncle was a feeling man and loved children, so that inevitably children loved him, which earned him reproaches and even the scorn and the jealousy of adults. Later, when school opened to her a gloomy vista of desks, that was also the world. It was in this period of her life, when a sensitive soul feels the need of sunshine and kindness, that she became acquainted with care.

But above all, the world was the immense spectacle that offered itself to her eyes. It was a wordless language which spoke more eloquently than all else. It was the far-stretching valley at her feet, where thousands of apricot trees were obtaining sustenance from the soil of the moraines. It was also the giant granite

mountains stretching high up into the sky, some capped with eternal snow, standing out, clear cut, against the blue. That world, Jeannette could feel, offered itself to her, holding nothing back and revealing its delicate secrets to simple hearts. There, there were no guarded properties whose entry was prohibited. The eye could penetrate the region without asking for permission to look, or if there was anything to pay.

The selfishness that ruled the lives of all around her, distressed her. Fences, walls and hedges roused her mistrust much more than any feeling of security. Nature — so generous and free of frontiers, of charge and of any kind of tight-fistedness — gave her great comfort. In summer, when a radiant dawn announced the break of a new day, and the Sun would rise over the distant mountains (4,000 metres [13,000 feet] high) which formed the horizon, she felt the need to sing the glory of God thus manifesting Himself.

Instead of that, what she had to learn to understand was that to live in this world, money was required. Without it, it seemed, nothing could be done. At the service of that tyrant, you had to reckon, to work, to earn your bread by the sweat of your brow, and not to waste time looking at the stars. And so, when still very young, Jeannette bent her back in her father’s vineyard.

At home, life was governed so arbitrarily that it was impossible to feel at ease. To advance an opinion or a preference, was unheard-of audacity. At school also, things were very unattractive. At Sunday school, there was nothing in the formulas she had to learn by heart, to stimulate any zeal in her. The catechism, to her mind, was a holy muddle. She was unable to unravel the tangle of the kind merciful Father Who was one and the same as the harsh and pitiless judge, so she remained quite unconvinced.

Since, at home, the simplest proposal would

In the world called Christian, they celebrate Christmas as the anniversary of our dear Saviour's birth. That day is the subject of all manner of rejoicing, gastronomical in particular. Children love the Christmas festival because of the good things and the gifts they receive. Religious people obtain certain impressions from it, but are unable to rejoice with real joy because they do not know the Lord's ways and his wonderful programme on behalf of the human race. Their concept is that he is a vengeful god, who punishes and condemns. How, with those ideas, is it possible to have unmixed joy? Our dear Saviour makes a different God known to us: the God of all mercy and of all compassion.

What religious people are also unaware of is the collaboration to which God invites real Disciples in the course of the Gospel Age, now drawing to a close. This collaboration is collaboration in sacrifice, to pay the small quota which our Lord permits them to contribute, so that they may share in his sufferings and also in his glory. As that quota is now on the point of being fully paid, the Restoration of All Things is already beginning in the calling up of the Host of the Lord. That is the start of the New Earth, in which there is this invitation: "Come to the waters [of life], and you who have no money, come, buy." Soon, the New Earth is going to spread to all parts, conferring on mankind the sublime, majestic and un hoped-for effects of the Salvation paid for by Jesus Christ on the Cross. That will then be the real Christmas, the wonderful Christmas made manifest in the Restoration of All Things, foretold by all the Prophets and also by Apostle Peter at Pentecost. Tears will be wiped away, and pain and sighing shall fly away for ever. There shall be no more crying or pain, and death shall be no more, for the former things will have passed away, and all things will have become new. That will be the accomplishment, in full, of the angel's words: "Do not be afraid."

"Do not be afraid"

At present, people are very much afraid, they have terrible anguish. The more capable they are of realizing the horror and the vastness of the frightful events being prepared, the greater is their terror. But that terrible fear will be changed into gladness by the introduction of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Christendom is not informed concerning divine ways. Its members are ignorant of the birth of the Kingdom of God, just as the Jews were unaware of the Saviour's birth. Only God's true children, today as of old, know that the Kingdom of God is now being born on Earth, and are working on its birth.

Heathens are afraid of their gods, and Christendom, in general, is afraid of its god. So, he cannot possibly be the true one, since the Almighty holds out only pardon, kindness, affection, peace, confidence and rest. His Son invites us: "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest [I will neither scold you nor punish you. I will not destroy you with my power, though I have been given all power in Heaven and on Earth. I make use of that power to do you good and to make you happy. I will provide you with the blissful relaxation of your nerves]." What a difference there is between the kingdom of the Adversary, and the Kingdom of God! It is like night and day.

The matter is a very simple one: all one has to do is to live up to the principles of the Kingdom of God, as shown in the Gospel and in the Universal Law: exist to do good. He who does good is joyful; he who does not do so deprives himself of joy, and thereby deprives himself of the good he could do himself. Yet mankind wish for nothing better than happiness. To acquire it,

however, one has to become attached to the divine programme and to live up to what it indicates.

"Peace to you!"

Some wonderful promises are held out to us, they are sure and certain; we have a marvellous programme, magnificent things to achieve. The question for us is to work with all the strength of our soul on the Kingdom of God, so that the Earth may once more become a Paradise. There, all mankind will be given the opportunity to live out the conditions of life that will prevent their going back into the grave. The dead will rise again on Earth. Resurrection is assured to them by the Sacrifice of Christ and his Church. That is part of the radiant, sublime and powerful hope contained in these words of the angel to the shepherds: "I bring you Good News of great joy for all people."

The times are fulfilled. There is a time for sowing and a time for reaping. Mankind have sown the wind and are going to reap the whirlwind. But on the other hand, our dear Saviour and his Church have sown peace, forgiveness, reconciliation and blessing. Good is stronger than evil, and love is stronger than death. That is why, at the height of the storm that will break on mankind as the equivalent of their own line of conduct, the voice of the Son of Man will make itself heard, as of old when the storm broke on the Lake of Gennesaret, and will say to the unleashed waves of the nations in uproar: "Peace! Be still!" and they will calm down. The Kingdom of God will be introduced with all its blessings, to the great joy of the oppressed. Evil days will be forgotten, misfortune will fly away, and joy and peace will come to remain for evermore. All people will sing, united with a single heart: "To the Lamb, be praise, honour, glory and power, for ever and ever!"

Touching little scenes

We are pleased to share with our readers two short animal stories, published in the French magazine *Rustica*, which are delightful because they communicate benevolence and friendship.

Firstly, there is a colour photograph showing us two cows in a barn, with one of them joyfully giving her milk to two beautiful young goats. The picture is accompanied by the following lines:

Good warm milk!

Animals often offer us unusual and even tender sights. That is the case in this barn, where, in the absence of their natural mother, two little kids suckle a cow, which apparently does not refuse to give its good warm milk to these strangers.

Secondly, in another edition:

A fisherman's story

It was July. The air was sweet. A gentle breeze was caressing the water. Birds were chirping in the bushes. Focusing on my float (and fishing with hempseed), the bites on the bait were numerous and quick! It was a real pleasure! Then, the flapping of wings caught my attention. A European turtle dove was circling and hovering above me. It landed on the shore, but unsuccessfully tried to drink from there: the water level was too low. I was already a little surprised that it landed near me, but I was completely amazed when it took off...and landed on my fishing rod! I finally understood: the bird wanted to quench its thirst at all costs. I tilted the rod towards water, and the bird was delighted to take a few big swigs. Then, after an unusual curtsy, the dove took off for other places. I'm still astonished by that!

Signed: Jean-Michel Klein, age 51, from the town of Bétheny in France.

They are wonderful experiences from the readers of

the above magazine, who happily want to share those charming and beneficial impressions with us.

Reports of so many negative occurrences and events, reach us every day from the world in which we live, where violence, dishonesty, environmental pollution and threats to life, make up the majority of the news.

However, what a comforting sight is the two young kids hungrily suckling a compassionate and generous cow! And what a cheerful scene nature offers us at still water, when a dove, in search of a support to be able to dip its beak in and to quench its thirst, uses sign language as a last resort to expressively communicate to a human being, to "hold out the rod"!

That is flair and confidence from the bird. It was pleasure and joy for the fisherman, who was impressed and moved by the service boldly requested from this clever little animal, and which he immediately granted.

Seeds and goodwill

The following report in the Hindi-language Indian newspaper *Kalki* on the 29th of March 2020, describes the enthusiasm with which a young girl dedicates herself to our planet. While numerous environmental activists make their voices heard through demonstrations and strikes, and sometimes even with a certain aggression, this young girl acts with gentleness and dedication. Her efforts, which she also wishes to continue, can serve us as a perfect example, because they show us that talk is not enough to make a better world, and that it requires concrete actions guided by benevolence and altruism.

400,000 "seed balls"!

The big effort of a school girl!

Rakshana gives out her invitation: "Join us to scatter seed balls and make the world green again!"

She is in Class 7 at Velammal Vidyalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School in the city of Karur in southern India. Her parents, Ravindran and Sangeetha, are farmers. Since she was five years old, and together with her parents, in the last eight years, they have planted trees in over 120 villages and have handed out at least 80,000 saplings of mango, jackfruit and banana trees and various types of vegetables seedlings.

We interviewed Rakshana. "My parents planted a sapling when they went to the temple. I asked them: 'Why did you do that?' They answered: 'It is one of the most beautiful things that one can do in the world.' Since that day, I have felt the great wish to participate in activities like the planting of saplings.

From the 14th of July 2019, we started preparing the 400,000 seed balls. In the cities of Kovai and Bangalore, we bought various types of local seeds that are suitable for lining the roads and for making shaded areas. We formed a group of 100 local people and worked day and night to make the seed balls, with a mixture of soil and manure.

We decided to scatter them in the town of Kanyakumari (in southern India) and in the region of Kashmir (in northern India), in all areas of farmland, woods and hills, and also along the roads. We loaded the seed balls on to trucks, and over the distance of 8,000 kilometres (there and back), we scattered 400,000 of them, which means 50 seed balls per kilometre. These seed balls are viable for at least two years, without breaking down. When it rains, they will start to grow and become trees. For this project, my parents donated 600,000 Indian rupees [approx. 8,150 US dollars] (including road tolls).

During our entire journey, we also spoke to people to make them aware about (1) the abolition of child labour, (2) girls' education, (3) putting an end to the sexual harassment of women, (4) saving birds from extinction, and (5) organic farming. We were warmly welcomed in all the places we went through. People asked us about what our action stands for. We did not

become an immediate cause of dissension, Jeannette decided to get married and was quite determined to choose her husband herself. Great was the general indignation when, at the age of twenty-two, she declared her intention.

Gustave was a good and honest lad, but of a different religion. On top of that, he was a barber, and no one could take that seriously. "Where are your wits? Can't you see that he's not good enough for you?" was constantly being dinned into Jeannette's tears.

When one needs an excuse for drowning one's dog, one says it has got rabies, as the saying goes, and after all, it was for them that the lad was not good enough. In the first place, he was taking their daughter from them, and he would certainly not be any good in their vineyard. But the real objection that overrode every other was that they themselves had not chosen him. So, the matter was foredoomed.

"It'll be no use coming to complain afterwards!" they said.

To make the best of a bad situation, Jeannette and Gustave managed to live in a room under her father's roof. They faced up to the ordeal, fully disposed to do their best, yielding to the demands made on them, and being daily subjected to a reproachful and nagging atmosphere, and to a bitterness that was ill-disguised. But because the two were one in heart and mind, it was impossible to hurt them.

Out of the mire of human wickedness, diabolical plans were conceived for the purpose of separating them, and in this way, to recover the power that had been lost. At the end of three years of this sort of life, the two felt it was turning into a nightmare. Jeannette, who was expecting her second child, felt her nerves were giving way. Coming home from work, Gustave would frequently find her in tears. So, they began to consider leaving. It would

now need only one more drop to make the cup overflow. Deliverance came like a flash of lightning, directed, it would seem, by a hand that was as mighty as it was invisible.

That morning, his shop being empty of customers, Gustave passed the time by watching the removal van across the road. The spectacle of people moving is a curious one: what a job it is! How complicated people are!

At noon, he finds Jeannette on the verge of a nervous breakdown. "Oh please, let us leave here!" she begs.

"Right you are. Get ready, we shall leave today, this very afternoon. I'll be back shortly." Gustave himself is surprised by his own decision and by his assurance. It is not at all like him. As a matter of fact, he has nothing in view yet, neither a lodging nor a removal van. Nevertheless, the instinct by which he feels irresistibly urged on, does not disappoint him. He is able to come to an immediate arrangement with the owner of the house opposite

his shop, and immediately, a providential friend comes forward for the removal. In the space of a few seconds, a new impression has taken hold of Gustave. In all this, there is something more than chance, and a feeling of undefinable well-being warms his heart.

Now, every second is fully employed, and in themselves, they discover incredible powers of execution. The undertaking takes on the appearance of an escape or an abduction. By midnight, they are in a real glory hole, but it has been worth it.

The door of her father's home is closed to them for ever. After a few days, the muddle they are in, through having moved so suddenly, begins to clear somewhat. There is a balcony in their new abode. Jeannette has put her daughter Mireille there, and from her kitchen, she can listen to the babbling of the child, who, from this new outlook, observes everything that is going on. There is a bird nesting under a roof, a passer-by down in the

always understand their language, so we gave them leaflets in Tamil and English. Many people shook our hand to encourage us."

After she had already received more than 20 awards from local authorities and government ministers, she was invited by the Chief Minister of the state of Tamil Nadu, Mr Edappadi Palaniswami, to his General Secretariat. He appreciated and praised her action, donated 100,000 rupees [approx. 1,360 US dollars] to her cause, and awarded her the title of Best Young Girl.

"I will continue this activity for the rest of my life," says Rakshana.

While the world is being swamped with bad news, with all sorts of crimes being the daily bread of the media, there is certainly too little said about the positive and beneficial deeds carried out by goodwilled and honest people who have the wish to bring improvement, relief and benevolence to their fellow people. How comforting it is to learn that there are people like that, that they are not as rare as one might think, and that they act with zeal for the common good, which is suitable to encourage those who still hesitate to engage themselves in benevolent and altruistic activity!

When we hear about those sorts of things, we cannot help thinking about these words of our Lord Jesus: "Blessed are the meek [the gentle], for they shall inherit the Earth" (Matthew 5: 5). He was talking about those who are animated by the zeal to do good, to love others and to respect the Earth, which are the most important bases to be able to hear the Lord's calling and to associate in his magnificent plan of the Restoration of All Things on the entire Earth.

Because that is precisely the intention of our dear Saviour who redeemed all humankind from death and the curse, at the price of his precious blood that flowed on Calvary, in order to make the meek his people, his beloved children. He said: "When I am lifted up from the Earth, I will draw all people to myself" (John 12: 32). The call of the Saviour, the Desire of All Nations, will soon be an irresistible call for humanity, who will soon have to deal with unbelievable difficulties, with unsolvable problems... The humiliation of the Great Tribulation, which Jesus announced in chapter 24 of the Gospel of Matthew, will be enough to open the ears and soften the hearts, so that humankind finally opens itself to the wonderful "divine seed".

Rakshana will then be happy to associate with the noble work of the evangelists who, every day and without ceasing, sow the good seed of God's Word in unhappy humanity. That is what will produce life in all the softened hearts who hunger for truth, justice and joy. God will produce countless other seeds until goodness, justice, and brotherliness and sisterliness have opened up everywhere.

Did the Almighty not promise to "the father of all who believe", the great Abraham: "I will multiply your descendants, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. ... And through your descendants, all the nations of the Earth will be blessed"? (Genesis 22: 17 and 18). But the Original Bringer of that blessing, that Descendant in question, the Original Seed who brings life everywhere and who overwhelms evil and death for ever, is our dear Saviour, the beloved Son of God. He himself expressed it like this: "Very truly, I say to you, unless a seed of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." John 12: 24.

Those moving words remind us of what we should never forget, namely, that it was at the price of the suffering, the abasement and the death of the beloved Son of God, that we, as the Almighty's heirs, can receive all the blessings He has planned for us, all the treasures of love and grace with which He would like to crown us, who want to be his children in Heaven and on Earth. Those who will be his children in Heaven, are those

who have come from the Original Seed and who, for their part, together with him, have given their lives for the Salvation of humanity. They are 144,000 "seeds" who die with their Saviour in order to give life to all other people. When that work of love and sacrifice is completed, all humankind will be called to become earthly children of God.

The Almighty is full of love for desperate humanity. His heart overflows with the wish to bring humankind the definitive Salvation, the remedy for all its ills, the relief for all its suffering, the comfort for its heart, and the healing for its wounds, in other words, eternal life in peace and happiness on the Earth that has become Paradise again. His call is gentle, and his voice is friendly: He gives choice to those who want to listen. Let us therefore, without any resistance, employ ourselves in his Work that banishes trouble and brings blessing. Let us tirelessly sow the seed of divine love, altruistic and selfless love, and let us direct our gratitude to the Author of our Salvation, to the One Who is the Source of this love, and Who brought it to Earth, as Apostle John has told us: "We love Him, because He loved us first." 1 John 4: 19.

Information or intoxication

From the Belgian magazine *En Marche* No. 1638, on the 7th of November 2019, we quote the following article, written by Soraya Soussi, that greatly interested us:

The Nocebo Effect of "information overload"

[The Nocebo Effect is the opposite of the Placebo Effect. Information overload is also known as "infobesity", "overinformation" and "information anxiety"]

In Western society, there has never been as much information and education, as today. The mass media, with their constant flow of information, have tended to flood 21st-century humanity with information, with the risk of affecting the mental state of the individual. That is a saturation that works like a Nocebo Effect, the dark side of the Placebo Effect.

"In the last 30 years, humanity has produced more information than in the last 2,000 years of history, and that quantity of information is doubling every four years..." wrote P. Aron and C. Petit in 1997, in the French book L'info, nerf de la guerre [Information, the nerve of war], and reported in the French publication Le Monde Informatique. Today, the mass media and the constant flow of information, are omnipresent in our daily life. Our brain is constantly called on to process information, whether sought or imposed, leading to a cognitive overload. ...

Guaranteed overdose

...infobesity. To better understand: information overload leads to various pathologies. In the Digital Age [also called the Information Age], 21st-century humanity has never received as much information. ...it is even a duty for a responsible citizen to be informed about societal issues in the world. Information has become mobile with the progress of technology, and is sent to our sophisticated and miniaturized devices, to accompany us everywhere. The media can "be like a remedy, capable of acting like an antidote for our anxieties, or of providing a solution to a problem" admits Dr Patrick Lemoine, a psychiatrist and sleep specialist. The only problem is that humanity no longer understands the world it lives in. This information — self-administered and poorly dosed as a medicine against ignorance — then becomes harmful to the recipient. That is what Dr Patrick Lemoine calls the "Nocebo Effect of information"...

The result:... exposure to only news flashes, which create a buzz and a distorted image of the world, and which support sensational information... This anxiety-causing information overload can activate the Limbic

System (the centre of feelings in the brain)...and lead us into a state of constant stress, whose adverse health effects are known: anxiety attacks, burnout, depression, etc. "News gives us, every hour, new reasons to be worried and vigilant," says Rolf Dobelli, a Swiss author and businessman. It is impossible to have the necessary distance to decipher the received information or to remember it, which causes the information overload to affect the hippocampus, the part of the brain that controls our memory.

Does choosing mean giving up?

If information overload works like a Nocebo Effect, should we therefore learn to better measure this information? And to go further, should we learn to understand this need for information? Ask yourself about the reason and the need to be constantly informed. To question one's own behaviour to information, could be a way to better understand the constant flow that we are exposed to. If we are faced with information that is conveyed too densely and quickly, shouldn't we then promote quality information? To better understand: read background information (slow journalism). Numerous magazines have understood that and are swimming against the current of constant information. They offer alternatives to increasingly abundant and similar news, by analyzing, with hindsight and precision, the questions our societies are asking today. Media awareness is also a tool to thwart the drift into information overload, even at a young age. If the frantic pace of our days invites us to read urgent reports in the world, should we not choose the way we approach it, with a critical eye on what is reported? To take the time and to choose the information that really interests us, are also factors that should be taken into account in our thirst for learning and knowledge.

Let us firstly spend a moment on the title of that report "The Nocebo Effect of 'information overload'". The author informs us about the term Nocebo Effect, which they define as the dark side of the Placebo Effect. For them, does it mean that information overload should resemble a placebo, which means, a neutral substance that replaces a medication? According to Dr Patrick Lemoine, who is quoted in the report, the media can "be like a remedy, capable of acting like an antidote for our anxieties, or of providing a solution to a problem". But when that remedy is a placebo with a Nocebo Effect, that means that it in no way is a remedy for our anxieties or problems.

It is therefore recommended to use information after careful consideration. In fact, this information overload, imposed on us by all the media, is based on two points: the hunger for profit by the spreaders of this information, and our curiosity, which is exploited in that way. The problem is that our brain is not created to receive and manage such a flow of data, which besides, is mostly useless for us. That is why the term "infobesity" describes an overload of information that we expose our society to. Just like the modern food industry offers fast food — which, even if it is practical, is not always harmless to health, even if it is attractively packaged — so do the media produce what one could call "fast-think" or "spoon-fed" information. But unfortunately, this endless consumption of information, including audiovisual, harms our brain, which is not only designed to take something in, but also to reflect, think and consider. But the constant loads of modern media do not leave us time to think. And even worse, when the media literally bombard us with novelties, they wither and ruin our very important ability to think.

Information overload therefore forms our opinion, which should actually come from our personal thoughts. That explains why the media, all over the world, are asked about everything. One needs the advice of others on all occasions, because one is often no longer capable of forming one's own opinion. We do not have

street, and daddy across the road, shaving his customers and cutting their hair.

Suddenly, Jeannette hears Mireille call out: "Grandfather, grandfather!" She hurries to the balcony in surprise. Was her father coming to her? No, he has gone on straight ahead without looking up, evincing utter indifference. Jeannette's heart is heavy within her, and Mireille cannot understand it and goes on calling: "Grandfather, grandfather!"

Several years went by, and the breach remained as wide as ever. One day, at the local cobbler's where Jeannette takes the shoes to be mended, she is given a *Monitor of the Reign of Justice*. Like Gustave, Jeannette is already aware of the low worth of what the world and its religions are able to give.

They have suffered a lot, and unaware at first, this has made them try to avoid the beaten track. In general, they are incapable of following a sudden impulse. Their past difficulties have taught them to think before

they speak, and to go into things before making up their minds.

Interested, though rather sceptical, they read that first *Monitor*, and then several others. While the full meaning of what they read escapes them at first, they nevertheless realise that it is the Truth. Their thirst for justice is satisfied. To Jeannette, it is like the dawn breaking and dispelling the mysteries of the night. Knowledge of the true God — of his love, his justice and his wisdom — falls in her heart, into soil that has been well prepared, and it makes her very glad indeed.

In it, Gustave finds what he has long been hoping for, while not believing it possible. That hope is now taking definite shape, and the outlines of that programme are also becoming clear to him. Though it is not for tomorrow, the promise nevertheless stands, and there is also time in which to fulfil it. Until the coming of God's Day, and if one is to avoid being profane, there is something

to be done. Living in fraternity has to be learnt, habits have to be reformed, there are difficulties to be overcome, and the roots of faith need to be thrust down into the soil of virtue. Soon, nothing remains hidden from them. From their very first attendance at the meetings, they realise that the doors of the Kingdom are wide open.

Does this mean that henceforth all difficulties will be removed from their path, every obstacle broken up, the past effaced and the future made smooth? It is with the help of the Universal Law that the mind is able to fathom all these things. Jeannette and Gustave realise that what is acquired without effort, is also easily lost. The grace they have just obtained must be defended, and to do this, they will have to put up a stiff fight. As we sing in one of the dear Messenger's hymns: "In the fight for life unfettered, we must quite determined be: imitate our glorious Shepherd, and display great energy."

So that they may not be behind in applying those principles, Jeannette and Gustave come to a decision. Obedience to what is good, must not be put off for any excuse at all. Now, concerning her parents, the rift has remained open. Might it now be possible to mend it? It is going to be a delicate undertaking, but they are going to make the effort: they will go and hold out a hand of friendship.

Their kind advances are received there with ceremonial condescension. Afterwards, the parents congratulate themselves, in a selfish way, on the children having made the effort, though they judge it to be one of self-interest. Jeannette and Gustave are not deceived, but little do they care for what is thought of them, the approval of their conscience is enough for them.

Once the work has begun, it must not be left to take care of itself. Perception of good is to be acquired only with experience. Jeannette acts with sincerity. She knows her parents

