Cardinal Robert Sarah has given an interview on the coronavirus pandemic... with Charlotte d'Ornella of the French journal *Valeurs* . This is a short extract:



By Edward Pentin

The opening lines (my tanslation):

"D'ORNELLA: ***How do you feel about the coronavirus crisis?***

CARDINAL SARAH: This virus acted as a warning. In a matter of weeks, the great illusion of a material world that thought itself all-powerful seems to have collapsed. A few days ago, politicians were talking about growth, pensions, reducing unemployment. They were sure of themselves. And now a virus, a microscopic virus, has brought this world to its knees, a world that looks at itself, that pleases itself, drunk with self-satisfaction because it thought it was invulnerable. The current crisis is a parable. It has revealed how all we do and are invited to believe was inconsistent, fragile and empty. We were told: you can consume without limits! But

the economy has collapsed and the stock markets are crashing. Bankruptcies are everywhere. We were promised to push the limits of human nature ever further by a triumphant science. We were told about artificial procreation, surrogate motherhood, transhumanism, enhanced humanity. We boasted of being a man of synthesis and a humanity that biotechnologies would make invincible and immortal. But here we are in a panic, confined by a virus about which we know almost nothing. Epidemic was an outdated, medieval word. It suddenly became our everyday life. I believe this epidemic has dispelled the smoke of illusion. The so-called all-powerful man appears in his raw reality. There he is naked. His weakness and vulnerability are glaring. Being confined to our homes will hopefully allow us to turn our attention back to the essentials, to rediscover the importance of our relationship with God, and thus the centrality of prayer in human existence. And, in the awareness of our fragility, to entrust ourselves to God and to his paternal mercy.

Is this a crisis of civilisation?

I have often repeated, especially in my last book, *Le soir approche et déjà le jour baisse*, [The Day is Now Far Spent
] that the great mistake of modern man was to refuse to be dependent. Modern man wants to be radically independent. He does not want to depend on the laws of nature. He refuses to be dependent on others by committing himself to definitive bonds such as marriage. It is humiliating to be dependent on God. He feels he owes nothing to anyone. Refusing to be part of a network of dependence, inheritance and filiation condemns us to enter naked into the jungle of competition from an economy left to its own devices.

But this is all an illusion. The experience of confinement has allowed many to rediscover that we are really and concretely dependent on each other. When everything collapses, only the bonds of marriage, family and friendship remain. We have rediscovered that as members of a nation, we are bound by bonds that are unbreakable but real. Above all, we have rediscovered that we are dependent on God."

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