

## Column

Is there any good news out there? If there is, we don't hear much about it in recent days.

The coronavirus and the fear associated with it continue. Domestic terrorism runs rampant in many of our cities. In some, whole blocks have been occupied by thugs, while in others businesses into which hardworking citizens have sunk sweat and their life savings have been burned or severely damaged by frenzied mobs. Historical monuments continue to be desecrated and, worst of all, innocent people have lost their lives.

Meanwhile, the ones who put their lives on the line to ensure that ordinary citizens can lead quiet and peaceable lives, our law enforcement personnel, have not received the support they deserve from a number of elected officials. In some places, there has even been talk of defunding police departments, thus ensuring that the anarchists win.

Is there any good news out there? As I pondered this question, words from a prayer in the Anglican Prayer Book come to mind: "O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers . . ."

Composed in the 6th century, this prayer reflects the anxiety of that time in history. The Western Roman Empire had collapsed late in the previous century, and uncertainty and danger were afoot.

We too live in a time of uncertainty and danger. The end of the social order which has allowed the people of this land to go about their business in peace and to flourish seems nigh at hand. A new barbarism threatens our civilization and way of life.

It is for this reason that the petition that follows takes on a new earnestness and urgency for our day: "Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations."

The dangers and temptations we face at this time can easily overwhelm us if we try to tackle them under our own steam. What is needed is exactly what is asked in this prayer, divine strength and protection.

The good news is that we can offer up this request with great confidence, knowing that the God we meet in Jesus is not a God afar off, but a God near at

hand. We don't face the challenges of our day alone. We have Jesus' own promise to assure us: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [age]."

That promise cannot fail. The One who stands at the beginning also stands at the end, and at every point in between.

Let us cling to Jesus' words and not succumb to fear, but rather be moved to pursue studied and steady Gospel action.

*O GOD, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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