

FEBRUARY 27, 2026 MSGR. SAM BIANCO

Liable to judgment. Liable to judgment.

I'm sure you've heard the magazine called Vogue. It was founded in 1852 and it has a circulation in excess of 1.2 million people. It covers matters of fashion, style, news, haute couture, beauty, culture; its stories and photos are trend-setting. Many famous people have been on the cover of Vogue magazine. It has an enormous influence on thought, dress, and what many all over the world think is important. Some styles are good, some are neutral, and some are a reflection of evil and destruction of good human values.

On January the first this year, Pope Leo spoke to over 180 diplomats who were represented at the Vatican. He said, "War is back in vogue and a zeal for war is spreading." This vogue style the Pope alludes to highlights policies aimed at destroying the fragile unity of the human family. We don't live it as well as we should. Still we try to remember that there is God and that we are his children, brothers and sisters. We need more cooperation and less fracturing of the bond of the human community.

One of the grievous sins against our humanity is the corrosion, the crassness, and the corruption of language. It is more than vulgarity, it's a distortion of truth with ever-diminishing objective standards of what words mean. As the Pope tells us, George Orwell's observations on doublespeak, nonspeak, are writ large today. This is especially destructive in families, where mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, can't find a common basis for dialogue. "Let's discuss it" becomes "Let me talk and I'll tell you why I'm right and you are wrong."

Many of us were born during the Second World War. During that time, there was a need for collective security to maintain the independence of all countries. At the war's end, an effort was made to ensure a different world order. From Canada's point of view, the establishment of the United Nations and NATO were the directions we took for multilateral cooperation, and we made our armed forces into UN peacekeepers. Not all these efforts were completely successful, but they were steps in the direction of multilateral cooperation.

This has changed today. Although we in Canada have a history of colonialism, we're making efforts internally to seek peace and reconciliation with First Nations. Now, we need to recommit to multilateral support and collaboration. The United Nations needs to be reborn and given new life. We're going to build up our armed forces. People say we want cooperation because we're not one of the great powers. That is true. At the same time, all small nations have to join together for collective security.

There's an integration of all life issues here. The child in the womb, the elderly person who's dependent, the handicapped person wanting support, the mentally ill person crying for liberation are all part of the human family. All the vulnerable persons become more vulnerable if we do not properly use our resources and talents. If the bulk of our resources are devoted to the instruments of war, so many people may be abandoned. This is the global challenge and the church challenge.

As much as the world needs an increase in conscience growth and sensitivity, so does the church. Through the vision of synodality, both Popes Leo and Francis are calling for a more consultative way of being church, and among the priorities in the church is the role and place and

talents of women, not just discussion, but practical action and use of talents.

We're liable to judgment on two fronts. Have we supported our brothers and sisters in need? As we spend more on arguments, is the burden and cost to be borne by the poorest people in the world? Will our tax policies reflected in the arms race support poor persons with food and shelter? To those of us who believe in God, there is the judgment when God asks us how do we treat our brothers and sisters in need? For non-believers, the question is always do we treat others as we ourselves want to be treated? Do we do enough to help, house, and feed one another?

The second judgment that comes from God is the one that Cain had to hear. "Where is your brother?" Do we have evil in our hearts? Sadly, is the mark of Cain still in us? For believers, there's the judgment that comes from God on the last day. Jesus tells us "From the heart comes evil thoughts." Murder. He pleads with us to pray each day that we be delivered from evil in our hearts.

For non-believers, the judgment comes from self-integrity and the consequences of war. For all people, believers and non-believers, the judgment we are liable to was pronounced at the Nuremberg Trials. War, it was pronounced, is essentially an evil thing. The issues are deeply personal at the local and family level. Pope Leo says, "Humility and courage cry out, especially the courage to forgive in large and small constituencies." Home, family, church, friendship.

The words that Jesus speaks in Matthew today follow upon the Beatitudes, highlighting from Jesus the plea and the command for peace and mercy. Before he spoke the Beatitudes, all the sick were brought to him. People with faith, little faith, or no faith can understand and identify with most of what Christ says in the Beatitudes.

Before we cry havoc and let loose the dogs of war, Jesus' warning needs to be heard. There's enough liability to go around. We have enough freedom and dignity to accept responsibility. The liability for judgment comes from Jesus, the one who has deep, personal identification and love with those who suffer. Peace in the human heart is never out of style. It should always be in vogue.

Brothers and sisters, we all come to terms quickly to a more human and divine way of living, or we throw ourselves into the fire of hell that consumes. The whole world is meant to live the lifestyle, the righteousness, the beauty of Jesus.