

## Restoring the Spire

Our gendered humanity—submitted to one another in reverence to Christ (Eph. 5:21)—points beyond itself. It reveals the One who made us to co-create in His image. I glimpsed something divine yesterday in a lovely young couple wheeling a newborn: he proud and protective of his bride, she dotting over their new creation. The power and tenderness of ordered humanity cries out: 'Holy is the Lord!'

On a recent visit to Paris, African Cardinal Robert Sarah likened the torched spire at Notre Dame Cathedral—created like a divine finger to point all upward to God—as a prophetic sign of how we as a Church have failed to direct the world heavenward. Have we forgotten that we in our gendered humanity are called to be that spire? It cuts both ways: we can dignify the other's existence and magnify Him; we can demonize the other and deflect His glory.

Sarah cites 'gender ideology'—a refusal to accept one's nature from God—as a sign of this incendiary spire. He views LGBT+ reality as 'trans-humanity', an 'avatar' that results from refusing the God who made us. To cast off the call to reconcile with one's male or female being is to cast off God, to burn with a strange fire that shrouds His witness on the earth.

Agreed. But what comes first? The fallout from male-female hostility or a host of exotic gender fractures? I say the former. We cannot with any integrity or authority call obvious sinners to repentance when we tolerate a host of traditional sins, namely misogyny—the dishonor of women in all of its diverse forms. Simply put, cruel and unusual treatment of the more vulnerable gender is the fuel that drives gender-bending.



I too recently visited France where we held a conference on gender reconciliation in Orleans. It was wonderful, starting with an early morning run where I inadvertently followed the path taken by St. Jean D'Arc who as a teenager obeyed the voice of God and led French troops to rout the English in the 15th century. What a girl.

Her courage reminded me of the women at our conference. One had been sexually abused by her father, another abandoned as a bride by a religiously-unhinged husband. Another woman, an

exquisite artist who shared her gifts with us, realized that she had been poisoned by her father's ongoing adultery and expressed contempt for women. She saw her self-contempt for the first time as a quiet agreement with his sin.

Jesus gave me His heart for these women and reminded me of my subtle misogyny—my wound of corruption--pornography, self-justifying arrogance, my flimsy efforts to put women's needs ahead of my own, starting with Annette. I was seized with my sin and could repent to the women honestly, as did a young French pastor. Jesus loosed a healing flood for these remarkable women. The mercy levels rose quickly as we men repented, granting Jesus freedom to dissolve strongholds of misogyny in the women.

Jean D'Arc blazed a trail for victory in Orleans. As 'her weakness was turned to strength and she became powerful in battle, routing foreign armies' (Heb. 11:34), so we followed Jesus who led us to do our part to restore the spire of holy relating. We rejoiced together in the good gifts Jesus is reclaiming in our gendered humanity.

As we are faithful to repent for any way we have stoked that torched spire, we help restore that spire. May Notre Dame provoke us to become glorious signposts of the One who made us to honor Him in how we love each other.

Please take time to watch our new video and become '[Chaste Together](#).'