**THE CHURCH IN CRISES**

**Our Lord always watches over his Church, but allows her to be rocked by crises**

Luiz Sergio Solimeo

In, [The American TFP](http://www.tfp.org/) > Catholic Perspective

The Church is often pictured as Peter’s Bark sailing on the seas of history.

Sometimes calm winds fill her sails and she skims over the waves with lofty and serene grace. At other times, however, the winds howl, the sea churns with frothy waves, lightning bolts crisscross the skies, thunder alarms the sailors, and the ship appears to be sinking.

As the roaring squall tosses Peter’s Bark about, the Saviour sleeps. With the Apostles, we cry out: “Lord, save us for we perish!” Awakening, Jesus reassures us as he did them: “Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?” He stands up and in an imposing voice orders the storm to cease and quiets the sea.[1](http://www.tfp.org/our-lord-always-watches-over-his-church-but-allows-her-to-be-rocked-by-crises/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church&utm_campaign=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church#easy-footnote-bottom-1-57484)

Today the Church is buffeted by [sexual-abuse scandals](http://www.tfp.org/the-sexual-abuse-scandals-symptom-of-a-profound-crisis-of-faith/) and cover-ups by ecclesiastical authorities. She is under attack by her enemies, while uncertainty and confusion shake her children.

Many do not understand why our Lord seems to sleep or why he allows evil to penetrate the sanctuary. It apparently contradicts both the Church’s promised indefectibility and the holiness of the Mystical Spouse of Christ. Their faith wavers: If the Church is not holy, she cannot be the true Church of Christ.

Others react by seeking to reform the Church, blaming the crisis on her tenets, teachings, and [divinely instituted hierarchical structure](http://www.tfp.org/the-church-cannot-change-her-hierarchical-structure-instituted-by-christ/).

Our Lord promised that the gates of Hell would not prevail against the Church,[2](http://www.tfp.org/our-lord-always-watches-over-his-church-but-allows-her-to-be-rocked-by-crises/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church&utm_campaign=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church#easy-footnote-bottom-2-57484) and that he would [assist](http://www.tfp.org/crisis-in-the-church-and-assistance-from-the-holy-spirit/) her daily to the end of time.[3](http://www.tfp.org/our-lord-always-watches-over-his-church-but-allows-her-to-be-rocked-by-crises/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church&utm_campaign=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church#easy-footnote-bottom-3-57484) However, he did not promise that she would not undergo crises, scandals, and apparent failures.

Much to the contrary, Our Lord’s parables about the Kingdom of God, which includes his Church, clearly affirmed that good and bad alike would be part of her until the end of time. Only then will God send his angels to cleanse the earth of scandal.[4](http://www.tfp.org/our-lord-always-watches-over-his-church-but-allows-her-to-be-rocked-by-crises/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church&utm_campaign=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church#easy-footnote-bottom-4-57484)

This earthly life is a period of trial. Thus, some will do evil and give scandal to others. “It is impossible that scandals should not come,” says Our Lord, “but woe to him through whom they come!”[5](http://www.tfp.org/our-lord-always-watches-over-his-church-but-allows-her-to-be-rocked-by-crises/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church&utm_campaign=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church#easy-footnote-bottom-5-57484) Saint Paul explains how these scandals help purify our Faith: “For there must be also heresies: that they also, who are approved, may be made manifest among you.”[6](http://www.tfp.org/our-lord-always-watches-over-his-church-but-allows-her-to-be-rocked-by-crises/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church&utm_campaign=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church#easy-footnote-bottom-6-57484)

God permits temptation, but always provides sufficient grace to resist. Saint Paul teaches: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.”[7](http://www.tfp.org/our-lord-always-watches-over-his-church-but-allows-her-to-be-rocked-by-crises/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church&utm_campaign=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church#easy-footnote-bottom-7-57484)

Expounding on the episode of our Lord asleep in the boat, Saint John Chrysostom explains that the storm symbolizes the Church’s future trials, during which the faithful, the athletes of Christ, will be fortified. After quoting Saint John Chrysostom, Cornelius a Lapide, the distinguished Scripture commentator, cites Seneca to show that even a pagan writer understood the spiritual gain accrued from the struggle against temptation: “Life without temptation is like a dead sea.”[8](http://www.tfp.org/our-lord-always-watches-over-his-church-but-allows-her-to-be-rocked-by-crises/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church&utm_campaign=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church#easy-footnote-bottom-8-57484)

The Church is the “House of God” whose cornerstone is Christ.[9](http://www.tfp.org/our-lord-always-watches-over-his-church-but-allows-her-to-be-rocked-by-crises/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church&utm_campaign=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church#easy-footnote-bottom-9-57484) It is “the Holy City, the New Jerusalem” brought down from Heaven.[10](http://www.tfp.org/our-lord-always-watches-over-his-church-but-allows-her-to-be-rocked-by-crises/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church&utm_campaign=Our+Lord+always+watches+over+His+Church#easy-footnote-bottom-10-57484) However, God permits temptations even inside this sacred place, as our first parents were tested in the Earthly Paradise. In this way, our love is purged of all attachments to divine consolation and human concerns.

1. Matt. 8:25-26.
2. Matt. 16:17-19.
3. Matt. 28:18-20.
4. [Matt. 13](http://www.drbo.org/chapter/47013.htm) (in toto).
5. [Luke 17:1](http://www.drbo.org/x/d?b=drb&bk=49&ch=17&l=1-#x).
6. [1 Cor. 11:19](http://www.drbo.org/x/d?b=drb&bk=53&ch=11&l=19-#x).
7. 1 Cor. 10:13.
8. Cornelius a Lapide, Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram (Paris: Vivès, 1881), Vol. 15, p. 234.
9. 1 Cor. 3:9, 11; Matt. 21:42.
10. Apoc. 21:2.

Permission to publish was granted by ANF Customer Service, 26 February 2019