

April 15, 2020-Wednesday, First Week of Easter

Fire at Notre Dame Cathedral

One year ago today, a major electrical fire damaged the centuries-old Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France.

Many of the cathedral's priceless artifacts were rescued during the blaze when bystanders formed a human chain to retrieve art and religious artifacts. Among the items saved were a reliquary (a repository for relics) containing Jesus' crown of thorns, and a 13th century tunic said to belong to St. Louis.

Some of the 850-year old cathedral's valuable art was undamaged because it had been removed a few days before the fire. As part of Notre Dame's multi-million dollar renovation that was underway, the art pieces had been taken from the cathedral for cleaning and repair due to damage from time and pollution. Among the saved art were sculptures of the 12 apostles and the four evangelists.

The sculptures of the apostles each weigh about 500 pounds. They were installed at Notre Dame in 1859 and 1860 during an earlier major reconstruction of the cathedral by a 30-year-old Gothic-Revival architect named Eugene Viollet-le-Duc. He faced a daunting task. During the French Revolution, the cathedral's statues had been destroyed, and its bells melted down into cannons. After years of neglect, the cathedral also needed a new spire.

Viollet-le-Duc is said to be the model for the statue of St. Thomas the Apostle.

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*Then the angel said to the women in reply, "Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay." (Mt. 28:5-6)*

There is greatness and grandeur in the universe, and there is so much about it that I don't know. Perhaps the earth and sun and the planets are just like tiny atoms in some molecule is part of something so much larger and different than the universe that I can't even imagine it.

It could be so. I really don't know.

Some physicists talk about matter and anti-matter, so that for every atom that exists here, there is an unseen mirror of it on the other side that we cannot get into contact with...and from this they posit the possibility of a whole other universe.

But Scripture doesn't give a detailed map of the universe. Scripture gives insights. It doesn't tell how big the universe is, only that God made it all. Jesus didn't give all the details of a structured cosmos. He taught that it all belongs to God, and that each of us is loved, protected and cherished.

I walk by faith and not by sight. If I follow these insights, whatever the shape of this vast cosmos, I walk down right paths and need never fear.

Do not be afraid. That's good advice.

*Spend some quiet time with the Lord.*