

How far from saintly!


A translation of <https://campanitasdefe.com/2023/10/23/cuan-lejos-de-santo/>

Summary. This little bell presents some reflections on what is taking place in these days of **October 2023**, primarily in the **war** in the **Middle East** and in the so-called **Synod on Synodality** being held in **Rome**. The poem that closes the text, entitled “**Lo veo venir**” (**I see it coming**,) contains in one of its lines the severe and apt title of the text. Such a piece, ultimately optimistic, may be heard read by me [here](#).

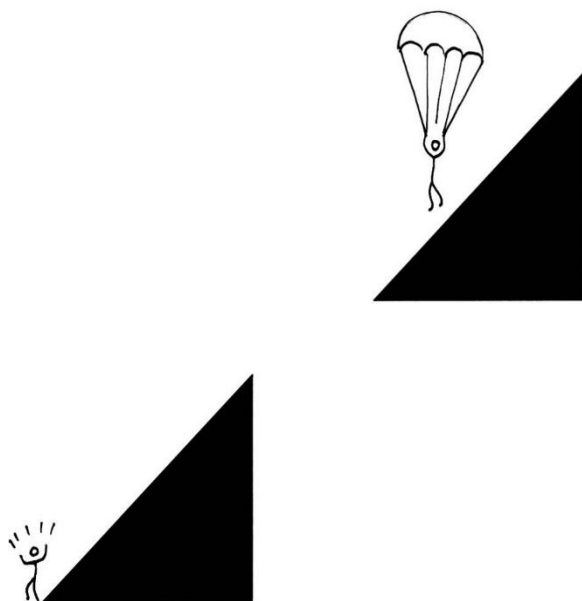
The blog [Presentation](#) provides information about the purpose of these little bells and the blog [Organization](#) shows how the entries are grouped by categories. This entry belongs to the category “**Experiential little bells**.”

We are living in dreadful times marked by imminent **rumors** of **war**, something as distressing and nearly as horrific as **war** itself. Following a ruthless attack against **Israel** — the nation of the **vine** and the **fig tree** — the conflict enters, in a sadly natural manner, into the continuation of the historical cycle of **vengeance**, unhesitatingly replicating the repeated “buzz” of a fierce **hurricane**.

The matter falls back, **side-against-side**, always **side-against-side**, into the logic of **take-it-as-you-hit-me**, **take-it-because-you-started-it**, **take-it-so-it-hurts**, **take-it-because-I-hate-you**, into the relentless **take-it-and-take-it-and-take-more**, such a profoundly human reaction consisting in forgetting **equilibrium** and **refusing forgiveness**, thereby embracing the **selfish spiral of the number six** — the one ever **negative**, **destructive**, and **turbulent** — and ever distant from the **nine** imbued in the **loving and holy rectitude** of **unity**:

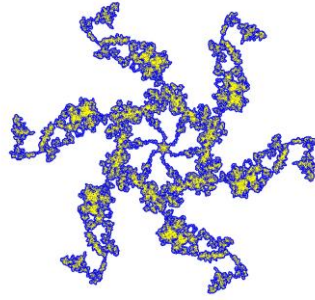

$$= 0.999... = 1$$

which is also symbolized by the emblem of a **hypotenuse** that allows one to find the **Origin**:



Clearly, in the light of these symbols, we can observe — amid the generalized *give-and-take* of these days — that, as the celebrated **Les Luthiers** jokingly affirm in their “*Thales’s theorem*,” “*no one uses the hypotenuse*,” as a good friend once reminded me — one bearing the name of a wise visitor: hello, **Melchior**! For, as is explained in this blog, *somewhat strange*, but perhaps not so much, given that there are indeed people on both sides of the conflict who *understand* it, the very solution to the core of the problem, in the **Middle East** and everywhere else, is **Jesus Christ**: the *equilibrium* and also the *hypotenuse*, with the geometric equation $X=Y$, which readers may study if they so wish.

The days pass since the most recent outburst of archetypal **rage** and the world quickly *divides* into *judgment* and *partisanship*, crudely justifying what has occurred on *one-side-or-the-other*, as if being *riddled with bullets* at a concert, or *stabbed* in a park, or *disemboweled* in a hospital within a city already in *ruins* and without knowing who fired the shot, were somehow *worse-or-better*; as if being a *hostage* under such circumstances were not nearly equivalent to **death** itself; as if in all these *chaotic* events one could not perceive the **devil** himself pushing toward *hell* — yes, that one which is eternal and real — as if, from this long human history in those regions and across all humanity, it did not emerge with full force that *repentance* and the *sacrificial love* of **Our Savior** were not the only response to the repugnant kicks of the **Evil One** ...



... And continuing with what ought not to be, it turns out that these days become even more ominous because of what is taking place not near *Jerusalem*, the *Holy City*, but in *Rome*, the *Eternal City*, where a forced zeal for modernity, aimed at making *everything* inclusive to *everyone*, provides further grounds for a reasonable *unease* in those who strive to become santitos (little saints). For although we are told sweetly, as a preamble to the so-called *Synod on Synodality* — what a *name*! — that in *God* and in *His Church* there is room for “*everyone-everyone-everyone*,” without distinguishing the *wheat* from the *chaff*, and without calling *everyone-everyone-everyone* to the very first action to which *He* exhorted us at the beginning of *His* ministry, namely:

“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (Mt 4:17),

then, that entire gathering represents, to put it mildly, an undesirable *disorder* that, indeed, *ought not to be*, even if other *strange things* have already occurred.

It is expressly obvious, in my view, that given the generalized *reign of sin* in the world — even as the very word is excused and has nearly lost its meaning — that the calls to repentance of *John the Baptist* and of the other *prophets* remain fully valid in these days, and with an indispensable and vital urgency. For not only is it true that *Jesus*, who will judge us all, is *the same yesterday, today, and forever*, but it is also true that the *Spirit of God* never changes *His* message, even if *He* allows us to understand things more fully in due time (Jn 14:26). And, clearly, the *Triune God*, in its entirety, neither evolves nor changes, for *He* is absolutely *perfect*.

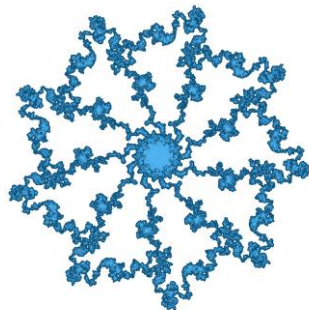
The notion of “*everyone-everyone-everyone*” is in fact foreign to the *Word of God*, unless it is validated by *conversion*. For, as an example, as *Saint Paul* explains:

*“Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things **will not inherit the kingdom of God**” (Gal 5:19–21).*

This reality exhorts us to labor for the **salvation of souls** and to pay attention to **divine signs**, rather than focusing on the **changing climate** and other **earthly** matters. How can we believe ourselves to be so valuable simply as we are and nothing more, thereby forgetting the vigorous call to become **santitos**, which represents an extraordinary and essential **war** that we are called to fight — and to win? What merit is there in living without direction, that is, in thinking that **everything** is fine and therefore that **everything goes**?

Here, from these very modest **little bells of faith**, I wish to conclude the two-thirds ($2/3 = 0.666\dots$) of the three sections of this writing by raising a **prayer** for **ALL**, one that echoes a good **dream of love**, one adorned with a beautiful blue **novena** to encourage our inner **warfare**:

*Lord, Triune God, You who possess proven compassion, please sustain it; allow Your chosen people, seen in a **tender branch**, to repent fully and to recognize You; and may the same also occur with the rest of humanity; so that Your true peace may finally come to reign within us ...*



... Attempting to share a bit more, and now in this **third third** and more **optimistic** part of the text, I wish to inform you — while maintaining the proper perspective of one who is almost insignificant — that my course in Spanish **Chaos, Complexity & Christianity**, which I taught in English a record number of forty-four times at the **University of California, Davis**, is now part of the **Master's Program in Science and Faith** at the **Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum** in Rome.

As some friends may joyfully imagine, having my course alive there is a great honor for me, and it has prompted me to attempt to offer it at other institutions as well, both in Spanish and in English. At present, I can say that I have promising possibilities in *Colombia* and *Chile*, as well as in the *United States*, which I trust will keep me occupied in the years to come. That said, I assure you — although this will not surprise some — that it is not common for me to knock on a door and have it opened, for the materials I have and that approach *love through science* are indeed considered “*strange*,” leaving *silence* as the most common companion. Even so, in the same spirit as the prayer for *ALL*, I entrust myself to *Him*, knowing who *truly is in control*, so that *His* will may be done in me, and I perhaps may contribute a little, if it so please *Him*.

Finally, here is “*Lo veo vernir*” (*I see it coming*,) a heartfelt and much-beloved poem that one day may come to be sung as a song. Although it was written more than twenty-one years ago, the line that gave this little bell its title — “*How far from saintly!*” — has accompanied me insistently in recent months, reminding me of the ambivalences of my own efforts and experiences, and, from this, it arose naturally to be employed to speak about *our collective lack of holiness*. As you will note, however, the poem goes beyond that severe phrase — which represents a candidly acknowledged reality in me — and instead focuses on the very advent of the *love* of *Jesus*, the only solution to the *unchanging problems* that we *ALL* face.

May *His* hour indeed come soon — the hour of *Christ!* — the hour of the greatest *dream*...

I SEE IT COMING

Truly, I see it...

Many times, I have seen it...

At times it seems
that enchantment arrives,
yet in the end it escapes
and is only a foretaste.

At times the dream
descends from on high,
and a noble symbol
departs without command.

At times it seems
a faithful mantle draws near,

yet swiftly withdraws,
leaving me untouched.

At times the dream
trills without breaking,
and a sincere verse
drifts away unbound.

At times it seems
the flower is opening,
yet the moment passes,
and greenness remains.

At times the dream
is nourished by ardor,
and a not-yet flows,
bleeding my love.

At times it seems
that I am already building,
yet I employ another piece
that is not from on high.

At times the dream
rises as it approaches,
and I live and understand:
how far from saintly!

Nevertheless...

**Life bestows
its feverish dream,
its time draws near
I see it coming.**

The bell inscribes
its subtle song,
beauty draws near
I see it coming.

**Life bestows
its feverish dream,
its time draws near
I see it coming.**

The light adorns
its gentle aurora,

beauty draws near
I see it coming.

**Life bestows
its feverish dream,
its time draws near
I see it coming.**

The fig tree sketches
what is upright to the end,
beauty draws near
I see it coming.

**Life bestows
its feverish dream,
its time draws near
I see it coming.**

Clear in the silence
I can feel it now,
its hour is arriving
I see it coming.

(March / August 2002)



The poem read by me in Spanish may be heard [*here*](#).