

## Three movies – one subject

A few years ago three movies appeared in the cinemas nearly at the same time, which at a first have not much in common. Hardly anybody took notice, that the seemingly totally different stories had the same underlying main topic. All three of them are treating namely of the *Work of Redemption*, and that indeed – amazing enough – basically in *Catholic* terms. In the focus of all three stands the Salvation of man through the victory over the powers of Satan and his reign of sin and horror. This happens as represented in all three stories through the consummate sufferings and the selfless Sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus.

The three publications are probably quite known to the most of you:

I) **The Passion of the Christ**, produced by Mel Gibson

II) **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** of C.S. Lewis

[II b) **Harry Potter** by J.K. Rowling]

III) **The Lord of the Rings** of J.R.R. Tolkien, staged by Peter Jackson

I) **The Passion of the Christ:** This film does not really need much explanations. The director, a traditional Catholic, found himself inspired to produce this film probably also in order to make up for the scandals, which he as a successful actor and movie-producer had given during the years before his conversion. His praiseworthy task was from the outset obviously blessed by God. The film itself is proof enough, but a fact may be mentioned here: When Mel was starting with his proposed project to picture the last hours of Our Lord Jesus Christ, he went into a library to find supportive material. Walking through the aisles between the shelves, a book fell down by itself onto him. It was the book of the Ven. Anna Katharina Emmerich, a stigmatised Augustinian nun from Duermen in Germany, about the bitter Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. From here Mel Gibson evidently took the inspiration for many scenes of the movie. He pictures bravely as nobody ever dared before, the cruel torments of Jesus, as far as an observer from the outside would witness them.

The movie beyond doubt is a good help to understand a little bit more of what the GodMan, the predicted Messiah, has suffered for us through His Own people of the Jews: We follow Him from His Agony in the Olive-garden through the horrendous sufferings during the night, the barbarous scourging, mockery and wicked crowning with thorns, His so bitter, yet voluntary way with the Cross through the city of Jerusalem, onto Mt Calvary, His unspeakable pains at the nailing onto the Cross, until He expired on the same, in order to overcome Satan and to undo the consequences of sin. Very short is shown His Resurrection, Mel Gibson wisely non presuming to screen too detailed things, which can't be reproduced properly by any human means.

In the film-genre he choose itself lies indeed a considerable difficulty, namely to make a *visualized realistic documentation* of an event, which touches the deepest invisible mysteries of our Faith. Even though

the author limited himself far-reaching to the picturing of the *exterior* side of Our Lord's Passion, a certain problem raises particularly for devout Catholics who are wont to meditate on the Passion of Christ.

Through regular contemplation or just by spiritual reading one necessarily forms an own image of the appearance of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the scenes of His Life and Death. These now could be quite at variance from what is presented in the film, in spite of the well chosen cast and their respectable and praiseworthy efforts. Hence some scenes are in fact perhaps less convincing, especially those where Mel Gibson's own imagination becomes too luscious. Nevertheless, I would say, we may bear with such shortcomings as 'artistic liberty', which surely does not impair the merit nor the blessing of the whole work.

**2) The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe:** As against the encouraged and edifying work of Gibson the story of Clive Staples Lewis appears rather poor, especially in the movie version. The author, a prominent professor at the Oxford University and a former atheist, had come back to the Christian Faith through the long-lasting efforts of his colleague John Reuel Tolkien. Alas, Lewis remained half-way, namely with the Anglican Church, which fact is due to his late marriage with the American writer Joy Gresham on the crucial point of his conversion.

C.S. Lewis makes the attempt to offer the story of the Redemption wrapped in a fairy-tale, which evidently can impossibly do justice to the importance and earnest of the subject. In fact, during the whole story one hardly can realize any relation to the alleged subject. The episode with the Lion 'Aslan' makes the impression to be somewhat forced and not an organic part of the whole. When Aslan then explicitly announces that he will go and die as a voluntary sacrifice instead of the traitor for the salvation of the people of Narnia ('where it is always winter, and never Christmas'), and consequently is indeed killed and resurrected, that appears simply too cheap and blunt to be a credible allegory for Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Work of Redemption.

So the story hits the eye as a chain of 'deja-vue' (seen-before) images of different fairy tales, and remains altogether on a total horizontal level, notwithstanding the Biblical subject. It is unfortunately lacking on the one side the immemorial deep *natural* wisdom, which stands behind the true old fairy tales (e.g. as collected by the Brothers Grimm), of which many pictures are borrowed.

On the other side it is missing entirely the *supernatural* depth and richness of the Catholic Faith to present eternal Truths credibly in allegorical form. Hence the impression remains, that Lewis just had better stayed with the fashionable genre 'fantasy' (modern pseudo-fairy tales), without forcing any deeper religious statements into that frame.

The *movie* then disappoints a bit from the artistic point of view, too, by lacking the perfection in the production, which one should expect from our contemporary computer technology. Then also embarrassingly some scenes and even the soundtrack appear occasionally as cheap copies from Peter Jackson's film-version of 'The Lord of the Rings'; similar as if somebody played a Haydn Symphony on a synthesizer.

Nevertheless the film contains no immorality nor blood-thirsty violence, and in general the difference between good and evil is sufficiently clarified, and malice is not glorified. Therefore it probably can be watched by teenager children without damage.

[II b) **Harry Potter**: A short note, in brackets, so to say, to be dropped concerning the *Harry Potter* series, which likewise was published around the change of the millennium. Let the author herself, J.K. Rowling, tell us, where she is standing. She speaks about her own books, here with a special reference to ‘The Goblet of Fire’:

*“These books help the children to grasp that this feeble and weak Son of God is only a joke, Who is still hard to stamp out, but Who will be humiliated and annihilated, when the deluge of fire will come.”*  
(Statement to a journalist of the ‘London Times’ from 19<sup>th</sup> October 2000)

In the mentioned volume Satan incarnates himself by taking bone matter from a corpse, flesh from a living person and blood from Harry Potter. All this is done in a ritual, the words of which have a strong analogy to those of the Consecration in Holy Mass. (cf. ‘Civilisation of the Devil’, Acknowledgement: Marchons Droit. France)

Justifiably one could call *Harry Potter* the opposite of the Work of Redemption, or the attempt to undo the same, an intentional corruption of those who are the most endangered, the children and teenager. The evidently intended corruption is not so much on the level of impurity, but even worse (because it does not appear in the pictures directly). It is the celebration of diabolic magic, of disobedience, revenge, lie, pride, disrespect for the elders and mocking Christian values.

Additionally the comet-like rise of the divorced, unemployed and needy Rowling as well as the unforeseeable success of a third class piece of trivial literature confirms, who the one is who inspired that work.]

III) **The Lord of the Rings** of J.R.R. Tolkien, staged by Peter Jackson.

Let us then proceed to the proper subject of this modest exposition, the Trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, which many people are inclined to place in a line with *Narnia*, *Harry Potter* or other cheap fantasy products. That such thinking is entirely wrong, is already somewhat proved by the fact that the official, classical British Literature Critic awarded this story the ‘Book of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century’. But let us hear what the author himself writes in a letter about his own literary work: “It is about God and His sole right to Divine honour.”

This short quote shows that, in order to get a deeper insight in the literary work of Tolkien, we need to know a bit more about his person. [Further-reaching information can be found in *The Catholic* 5/2002 and 5/2003.]

John Ronald Reuel was born in 1892 as the first son of a protestant Lady, Mabel Tolkien, in South Africa; who moved after the death of her husband back to England with her two sons. Their living was principally dependant on the support of her strictly protestant relatives. Nevertheless with great courage and under the loss of all that support (as she had foreseen), Mabel Tolkien converted to the true Faith together with her boys in the year 1900. Her death followed soon (1904) caused mainly indeed by the consequent grieves and deprivations. Not without reason therefore John Tolkien holds his mother a ‘martyr for the Faith’. He remembers the time of the conversion:

“I am one who came out of Egypt [Protestantism], and pray God none of my seed shall return thither. I witnessed the heroic sufferings and early death in extreme poverty of my mother who brought me into the Church...” (Letter to Michael Tolkien, 250/1963 [all quotations and their numbers are taken from the book ‘The Letters of J.R.R.Tolkien’ by Humphrey Carpenter, Unwin, 1990])

Before her death Mabel Tolkien had commended her sons into the spiritual care of Rev. Father Francis Morgan of the Birmingham Oratory. “Fr Francis obtained permission for me to retain my scholarship at [the protestant] K(ing) E(dwards) S(chool) and continue there [in spite of his conversion] and so I had the advantage of a (then) first rate school and that of a ‘good Catholic home’ – ‘in excelsis’; virtually a junior inmate of the Oratory house, which contained many learned fathers. Observance of religion was strict. Hilary [Johns younger brother] and I were supposed to, and usually did, serve Mass before getting on our bikes to go to school.” (306/1968)

To that fortunate environment, especially to Fr Francis, second to his dear mother, John owed his powerful love to the Church, the heart of which was his love to Jesus in the Holy Eucharist: “I fell in love with the Blessed Sacrament from the beginning – and by the mercy of God never have fallen out again”. (43/1941) A very few quotes more about this subject taken likewise from letters to his son Michael: “Out of the darkness of my life, I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: The Blessed Sacrament... There you will find romance, glory, honour, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves on earth”. (43/1941) • “I find it for myself difficult to believe that anyone who has ever been to Communion, even once, with the least right intention, can ever reject Him without grave blame.” (s.a.) • “The only cure for sagging Faith is Communion. Though always Itself, perfect and complete and inviolate, the Blessed Sacrament does not operate completely and once for all in any of us. Like the act of Faith it must be continuous and grow by exercise. Frequency is of highest effect.” (s.a.)

The third person who greatly influenced his piety, and that way his whole life, was the holy Pope Pius X. through his Pastoral Letters and Encyclicals, evident also in his love to the Eucharistic Christ. At the outset of the II Vatican Council, Tolkien will write: “I suppose the greatest reform of our time was that carried out by St Pius X, surpassing anything ... that the Council will achieve. I wonder what state the Church would be for it.” (250/1963)

How much Tolkien, whose second son, John, is a Catholic Priest, suffered under the confusion, which came about with the Council, we understand from the fact, that, as it is said, he wept all through the Mass,

when the new rite first was enforced (he died shortly after in 1973). In his letters to Michael we find some remarks about the changes of the Church. “I know quite well that, to you as to me, the Church which once felt like a refuge, now often feels like a trap. There is nowhere to go. (I wonder if this desperate feeling, the last state of loyalty hanging on, was not, even more often than is actually recorded in the Gospels, felt by Our Lord’s followers in His earthly life-time?) I think there is nothing to do but to pray, for the Church, for the Vicar of Christ, and for ourselves; and meanwhile exercise the virtue of loyalty, which indeed only becomes a virtue when one is under pressure to desert it.” (306/1967)

And from the same letter: “The other motive, *aggiornamento*: bringing up to date: that has its own grave dangers, as has been apparent throughout history. With this ‘ecumenicalness’ has also become confused. (...) I have not met a ‘protestant’ who shows or expresses any realization of the reasons in this country [England] for our attitude [of ecumenism]: ancient or modern: from torture and expropriation and all that. Has it ever been mentioned, that Roman Catholics still suffer from disabilities not even applicable to the Jews? As a man whose childhood was darkened by persecution, I find this hard [his mother had died of it]. But charity must cover a multitude of sins!”

Coming back to the earlier life of Tolkien. Father Francis had sent John to Oxford where he graduated and became and stayed a well-renown professor, until his retirement. At that famous university he worked and prayed for more than ten years (with certain success) on the conversion of his friend C.S. Lewis. So he was sorely disappointed when Lewis then went away with an unbelieving philosopher; giving up his conversion. Although there are some similarities in the works of both, due to their regular mutual exchange of their essays and letters, one decisive difference would always separate their writings. Opposite to Lewis’ works, in Tolkien’s literature the Supernatural shines through, palpable for a sensible Catholic, not too pushy for others.

Tolkien’s life-work, on which he laboured (from the first ideas to the completion) for probably more than 30 years, is **The Lord of the Rings**, which has justly been called an ‘epic journey taken in the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Francis Fox). This monumental poem is not only entertaining, but indeed edifying, not because poetry is turned into theology; but because the true Christian values, Faith, Hope and Charity; selfless heroism, loyalty and suffering; compassion and providence are the underlying fundament. These ideals become intelligible for a generation that has lost the sense for everything supernatural. Especially for our young people without true guidelines and heroes in a time which mixes truth and error, good and evil as two equally considerable things, it is appreciable that **The Lord of the Rings** gives always a clear statement of what is bad or good; even misdeeds and sins of good ones are not beautified. The borderline between good and evil is always unmistakable; even though the heroes do have their weaknesses. Vice is clearly pictured as object of abhorrence, virtue celebrated as praiseworthy.

Tolkien comments: “Are there any ‘bounds to a writer’s job’ except those imposed by his own finiteness? No bounds, but the laws of contradiction, I should think. But of course, humility and awareness of peril is required. A writer may be basically ‘benevolent’ according to his own lights (as I hope I am) and yet

not 'beneficent' owing to error and stupidity. I would claim, if I did not think it presumptuous to one so ill-instructed, to have as one object the elucidation of truth, and the encouragement of good morals in this real world, by the ancient device of exemplifying them in unfamiliar embodiments, that way to 'bring them home'." (Letter to Mr Hastings, 153/1954)

With that John Tolkien is always very critical with himself and aware of the problems of this genre: "Great harm can be done, of course, by this potent mode of 'myth' – especially wilfully. The right to 'freedom' of the sub-creator is no guaranty among fallen men that it will not be used as wickedly as is Free Will. I am comforted by the fact that some, more pious and learned than I, have found nothing harmful in this tale or its feignings as a 'myth'. (s.a.)

His deep Catholic Faith had accompanied John Tolkien through the century of two World-Wars with their dreadful circumstances and the worldwide overthrow of Christian civilisation. Nevertheless **The Lord of the Rings** is then much more than a personal mastering of his subjective experiences of increasing darkness enveloping mankind. It is a valid and objective, though picturesque and allegorical representation of objective and supernatural truths, and especially of the war of the prince of darkness against the Reign of Christ the King.

Nevertheless this fact is wisely not so on the surface as to strike the eyes immediately, otherwise the story could not have reached its extraordinary popularity in a godless world, both in written form and on the screen.

[The film as such is, I would say, made very much as good as possible, though it has to fall short against the voluminous brilliant written story of the Oxford professor; and there are a few deplorable deviations from the book. Nevertheless the movie-director Peter Jackson must be duly admired for his work. He spared himself neither time, nor labour, nor money, and employed not only a whole army of designers and artists, but also a famous Symphony-Orchestra, and also the newest computer-animation technics, in order to bring into being a product, which deserves the title of a true art-work. And that is the case, not only for the film as a whole; but indeed nearly every greater scene presents itself as a real visual delight, which could hardly better be imagined. Also the cast is chosen with artistic inspiration and surely very much corresponding with Tolkiens own imaginations. (That some of the actors have privately a less edifying life-style, does not more hinder a good performance, as does the mean and insignificant personality of Michelangelo impedes the artistic value of the Pieta.)

But it has to be mentioned, that only the *extended* version of the movie contains some of the most Catholic scenes (e.g. Aragorn meditating at the statue of his mother), which have fallen a victim of time and perhaps a bit of the fear of men in the normal version. Although the movie contains no impure scenes (though a few immodesties), and violence is used as moderately as possible and only as a means and not as an end in itself, the film is properly qualified as not apt for public below 15 years.]

An introduction into the story will be helpful first, in general to become conscious of the *presence of a spiritual sense*; and then, to recognize the single multi-fold concrete *Catholic* elements, which are everywhere, here more diffuse, there quite clear; for example the veneration of Our Lady (the fall of Sauron takes place on the 25<sup>th</sup> March), the Angels (Frodo is healed on the Feast of St Raphael, the 24<sup>th</sup> October, whose name means ‘Medicine of God’), the concepts of sacrifice, temptation; sin, etc.

Here only a few spotlights in order to kick-start your own ‘treasure-hunting’ along the Catholic track of the story.

Who would be the person of that *Lord of the Rings*? Through the consequences, which the Rings have, it becomes clear that we are dealing with the **father of lie** who has brought sin and darkness into the world (the Master-*Ring* representing probably **pride as the root of all other sins**, the other rings the Capital Vices): “The Dark Lord and the Ring are one.” The Master-Ring (sin) has its own incalculable dynamic, it can not *be possessed* by anybody, but *it takes possession* of the user. It can not be undone but in Mt. Doom in Mordor. Sin could not be undone but on Mt. Calvary, which was a horrible cursed place where the most wicked criminals were put to their just and shameful death penalty. Christ had to take Original Sin and all our personal sins (Ring) onto Himself and take it through the hell of His unjust torments (Mordor) unto Mt. Calvary (Mt. Doom) in order to undo the dreadful consequences of sin and to destroy the power of Satan (Sauron).

Then it is essential for an appropriate understanding to realize, that **Our Lord Jesus Christ** in this poem is represented not by one figure only, but by three, according to His Threefold Office: The wizard *Gandalf represents Christ in His Office as the Prophet and Teacher*, whereby the ‘magic’, which he occasionally moderately employs is no more than a symbol for Christ’s Divine power of miracles.

*Aragorn*, the meek, yet valiant heir of the Throne of Gondor (Israel), hidden under the appearance of a wild ranger, stands obviously for *Christ the King* (hiding His Divine Glory under the appearance of a human). He is rejected by the steward of his own people. Only after the great final war, he receives his due royal honours.

*Frodo*, the innocent and humble Hobbit, who voluntarily takes upon himself the task to destroy the Ring of malice under the sacrifice of his own life, embodies *Christ the Highpriest*, Who sacrifices Himself, accompanied by Sam (St John?).

Sauron will be so blinded by his pride that he simply can not imagine that someone could try to walk right into the dungeon of the lion to destroy the powerful ring, instead of using it. One of the key-scenes concerning the Person of Our Lord is the death of Boromir, representing the Jews and their final conversion. Boromir being the junior-steward of the deteriorated royal house of Aragorn’s ancestors in Gondor (Israel), had addressed Aragorn when he realized that he was his King with the significant words: “Gondor needs no king”. Later he tries to take the Ring of Power by force, but repents bitterly and dies heroically defending the hobbits (the Catholics). He gives up his spirit after his Confession in the arms of Aragorn; uttering (in the film) his beautiful last prayer: “My Brother; my Captain; my King”, which needs no explanation. Aragorn

closing his eyes, intimates the Sign of the Cross.

The **Church** is represented by the little **fellowship** moving across the dark landscape, enduring every privation, frightened, but full of courage; keeping up hope even in seemingly hopeless situations; at the same time following *and fulfilling* the Providence of God. Tolkien's love for that fellowship was the theme of his life, and at the heart of that love was, as we have seen, his intimate devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

The *Bread of the Angels*, the **Most Holy Eucharist**, could therefore impossibly remain unregarded in this story; it is figured as the **Lembas**, the magical way-bread of the Elves. It is only through its power that the hero, Frodo, can keep up courage and finally reach his destination.

Very impressively Tolkien (and Jackson) unfolds the immense efforts of all merely *natural* powers against the devil and their grandeur; *and* their ultimate failure. Whereas the final victory is gained in spite of human weakness by infallible Divine Providence and the mediation of the Queen of the Angels.

Tolkien had acknowledged in one of his letters, that "everything of beauty in my books comes from the Grace of the **Blessed Virgin Mary**". It is clear then that She, too must have a pre-eminent place in **The Lord of the Rings**. She is indeed primary represented by **Galadriel**, the Queen of the Elves, who has equipped the fellowship with very special gifts, and guards them from afar. Her name is invoked effectively in the most dangerous and hopeless situations, and her gifts grant comfort and strength where all human help fails. Galadriel represents *the Immaculata*, the Apocalyptic Woman 'who cometh forth as the morning rising fair as the moon, bright as the sun; terrible as an army set in battle array' (Cant 6,9); wonderful for the good ones; terrible for the wicked.

Nevertheless we can find a figure of the Blessed Virgin also in **Arwen**, the daughter of Elrond (a prince of the Elves), holding in her arms Frodo deadly wounded by the black riders. Through her Our Lady is featured as the sweet and pure Virginal **Mother-Bride of Jesus** (cf. Cant 4), especially also in a beautiful scene, where she tells Aragorn that she being immortal prefers to die with him (Aragorn being a mortal man). That reminds that Our Lady voluntarily accepted death in order to be more similar to Her Son Jesus.

The **Elves**, fair folk and immortal, are obviously a figure for the **Angels**. Their names end with 'el' and many words contain the same syllable; the Hebrew word for God: **Elrond**, **Caladriel**, **Glorfindel**, etc.

The **Nine Black Riders** were once human kings, who through the power of the evil Rings became ring wraiths; men-demons, hunting after the Master-Ring.

In the mines of Moria (the Jewish Temple was on Mt. Moria in Jerusalem), the former glorious subterranean Kingdom of the Dwarfs (Kazaddum), the fellowship encounters an angel-demon of the old times, a **Balrog**. The Balrog has still some visible features of an Angel, now corrupted and horrible. A worthwhile meditation on hell!

King Theoden (i.e. 'God-given') represents the weak Popes, seduced by the Wormtongues of Modernism under Satan's dominion, who finally through Gandalf/Christ is converted by an Exorcism and takes up the sword (Truth) again.



**Saruman**, the renegade, mighty Superior of the Order of Wizards, might represent one of the higher ecclesiastical dignitaries; who are practicing ecumenism with the devil and are trying to bring about something good with evil means.

Concerning the **Orcs** – if we could see with the Eyes of God, in the cities and everywhere we would see ourselves in our times surrounded by ‘spiritual orcs’; that is people in mortal sin. (Urukai – malicious sinners.)

**Smeagol**, perhaps the most interesting figure of the whole story, symbolizes something like the **Gollum** in each one of ourselves. He features the ‘schizophrenia’, the fight between our by Original Sin wounded nature, and our good resolutions, supported by the supernatural graces. Gollum (Cain) in a frenzy of greed had killed his own brother, seduced by the mere sight of the Master-Ring, which Deagol had found. Instead of amending his murder; he tries to flee from his past, hounded by his own bad conscience. With love-hatred embracing and chaining himself to the Ring (his sin), he is devoured by its power spiritually without being able to find peace any more, until his both tragic and providential end.

Remarkable is the picturing of the consequences of sin (ring) also in Bilbo (Adam who brought the evil into paradise/‘the Shire’); and his angry rebellion, when Gandalf tries to get him away from it. Likewise a mortal sinner thinks that the Priest, who tries to draw him out of his sins would rob him of something ‘precious’.

### **Key-scenes**

Each of the three parts has some key-scenes which can give us like an antiphon the crucial ideas along the complex main-line of the story. We have in the first part the hard struggles of Bilbo to let go the Ring (the symbol of the separation from mortal sin); the temptation of Boromir to do something good with evil means; and the devotion to Our Lady.

In the centre of the second part we may distinguish the view of the vanity and weakness of everything merely *natural*, including friendship, fight, etc., and even a good marriage, if not built on God's grace. The Elven-prince Elrond presents to his daughter in an extremely poetical and beautiful future-vision the consequences of giving up her angelic life in order to marry a human. Highlighted also in the Second part the necessity of Christian Hope, and the tragic fight of the remnant of good will against the corruption of sin within the person of Smeagol (which will prove lost in the last part).

The third part of the film brings an increasing oppression of the divers scattered members of the ‘Church’ (the fellowship); all is aiming towards the culminating point and the final all-embracing trial.

One key-scene of the third part, I would see in the phase of the wandering towards Mt. Doom of Frodo, Sam and Smeagol, from the extreme, nearly vertical ascend to Cirith Ungol on. Here the roles are temporary changed: Sam taking the part of Jesus accompanying a soul burdened with a heavy cross, Frodo. (All suffering is indeed consequence of sin/Ring.) The diabolic tempter, Gollum, tries with cunning to

estrangle Frodo from Sam (Jesus) and to make himself be regarded his friend; in order to achieve his aim, Frodo's perdition. It is deeply affecting to see how he finally comes to send Sam away, the one who truly loves him, preferring Gollum and his wicked advices; and to make the application onto our own life: How often have we mistrusted Jesus and His selfless Love, and even cast Him out by mortal sin, and have given credit to the devil and his lying promises. But as Jesus the sinner, so Sam follows Frodo, saves his life, and when the Ring (the cross) becomes too heavy, Sam carries both Frodo and the Ring. When the cross-bearer who had been carrying the weight for so long with best will, finally would fail through weakness, infallibly Providence (God) steps into the gap and ensures that the end is reached.

The other decisive scene for the whole movie (which happens basically parallel) has a special importance and application for our times: The little remnant army of the united good fighters is standing in front of the dark gates of hell (Mordor), surrounded by an army so huge as to make every combat with natural means absolutely illusionary, worse than David against Goliath. The situation seems lost, but the bravery of the small troop provides just enough distraction for the enemy to enable the Ring to be destroyed; and together with it Sauron's (Satan) power. The earth opens beneath the feet of the wicked army and swallows them up entirely.

We are the little militia of Catholic Tradition, according to human means without any hope to overcome the overwhelming evils of our times. But we will bravely endure until the Pope will consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. That means to destroy Communism, the 'Ring to rule them all' or the 'firstborn of Satan' (Leo XIII).

Before the end after the immense decisive battles and the definite victory Aragorn is crowned sovereign King before all peoples and is united in marriage to the daughter of the Elven-prince Elrond, Arwen. These ceremonies, including the honouring of the heroes, especially the humble Hobbits; take place on the top of Minas Tirith; the 'White City' (the Heavenly Jerusalem). It happens on a square which, certainly not by chance, has the shape of St. Peter's Square in Rome. Quite obvious is this allusion to the Marriage of Christ and His Bride, the Church, at the Last Day, to which we also look forward. God bless Tolkien! and, well done, Peter Jackson! May this allegorical story with its joyful end keep our own hope up and our thoughts always directed to the final end in Heaven, and strengthen us for our own daily battles!