

NewEvangelists.org

new
evangelists
monthly

October
2017

New Evangelists Monthly #58

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Forward

New Evangelists Monthly is an informal, dynamic, crowd-sourced “meta-magazine” showcasing the best posts faithful Catholic bloggers publish each month. Here you will find many different, but faithfully Catholic viewpoints, insights and perspectives.

Contributing authors submit their very best piece from the prior month between subsequent first and second Saturdays. Readers are welcome to visit anytime, even while contributions are still being accepted for a new issue. Back issues are available in the archive.

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Remarriage and Communion [at Catholicism and Adventism]



Some time back I wrote a comment on Taylor Marshall's blog. I'm putting my comment up here too now.

The original post on Taylor Marshall's blog: [The Eastern Orthodox on Divorce and Remarriage](#)

My point was to argue that there are two separate issues that are often conflated.

There are two (or more) separate issues here, and from what I read all over the interweb, they're not always fully differentiated:



Pope Francis

1. Remarriage after divorce. The indissolubility of marriage is undeniable; it's the requirements for annulment that make it easy or hard to obtain an annulment. Whether a "*natural*" marriage can be tolerated while a "*sacramental*" marriage has broken up leaving both spouses alive is a slightly different topic and more

debatable. Tolerating such a “*natural*” marriage and maintaining the indissolubility of the marriage are not necessarily mutually exclusive positions, the way many see things.

See [Adithia Kusno in the other comments](#) for an interesting view on this.

2. Reception of the Eucharist for those remarried after divorce. This is tied logically to #1 if one maintains that, because a “*natural*” marriage after divorce is mortally sinful, communion may not be received. I read an interesting article some time back (and can’t find it now, so I can’t cite patristic sources) that explained that there were/are two views, one of which became the dominant view in the Catholic Church. View 1 (dominant view, exclusivist view) – the Eucharist may only be received in a state of grace. View 2 (inclusivist view) – the Eucharist is medicine for the soul and efficacious irrespective of the state of the recipient. Unlike the indissolubility of marriage, I see this as a view that can be changed over time, from View 1 to View 2, as needed by the Church. 1 Cor 11’s “*unworthy manner*” can just as easily be interpreted as “*in a state of mortal sin*” as “*in an unpious / hypocritical way*”, thus allowing either view to remain in conformity with Paul’s statement.

An example of unworthy communion under View 2 – “*I am a politician and must be seen as important, so I will take communion as a sign of my worthiness. I am not like those others, and I fast twice a week.*” An example of worthy communion under View 2 – Luke 18:13, “*And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*”

We have two options for the type of Church we have – an exclusivist Church or an inclusivist Church.



Eucharistic adoration at Saint Brigid of Kildare Church (Dublin, Ohio)

Exclusivist Church – as per Pope Benedict XVI, the Church is a small group of faithful, who agree with and submit to the Church on nearly everything, dogma and practice. *“I love Christ and his Church and will live her way.”* Those who feel otherwise accept that they go elsewhere. Everyone within the Church then takes communion only in a state of grace, and accepts the burden of marital loneliness should their marriage fail and unites it to the suffering of Christ. I think the first century Church was more like this one.

Inclusivist Church – the Church is for all on their path to God, and a hospital for sinners. Those who can accept and live the Church’s ways only partly are included. *“I love Christ and his Church but am too weak to be able to comply with some things it aspires to.”* Communion is open to them as medicine for the soul, in all their weaknesses they have not yet overcome. They are seen as not taking communion *“unworthily”* (1 Cor 11:27-29) if their love for God is sincere, in spite of ongoing flaws.

I don’t know where God is leading the Church. If he’s going the way of the exclusivist Church, he will not let the Church go the inclusivist way, and certainly there would be no possibility of any ex cathedra statement (cf [Deacon Peter R. C. Haight’s comment on this post](#))*. If he’s going the way of the inclusivist Church, and the Church goes this way eventually, then surely we should accept this. There’ll be fights along the way between well-meaning people with different opinions, and there may even be a council. Once it’s resolved either way, do we accept the ordinary magisterium, or do we go the divisive route?

I wish I had a time machine to look ahead at the Church in 50 or 100 year increments. I might find I was right or wrong about many things I think can or cannot change.

*I also make the following comment about [Cardinal Robert Bellarmine](#)’s thoughts on the pope falling into heresy, and a common misunderstanding about them (which went ignored with the addition of a claim about something in canon law that simply isn’t there).

Bellarmino’s four positions were 1) that the pope may teach heresy ex cathedra (Bellarmino said this was not possible); 2) the pope may be a formal heretic in

his non-infallible teachings (Bellarmine said this was almost certainly error); 3) the pope cannot be a formal heretic or publically teach heresy (Bellarmine said this was likely the case); 4) that the pope cannot teach heresy ex cathedra (Bellarmine said this was true).

Bellarmino is widely misunderstood and the hypothetical character of many of his discussions about positions 1 and 2 is ignored. A misinterpretation of Bellarmine allowing us to sit in judgement of the pope is a dangerous situation indeed.

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Missionary Thought: Wonder [at The Mission of Saint Thorlak]



This week we visit another of the qualities we choose to embrace as followers in the footsteps of Saint Thorlak: Wonder.

From the earliest age, it is written, Thorlak Thorhallsson showed an unusually deep interest in everything. He was a contemplative by nature, slowly studying things around him and considering them from every possible angle, savoring the ideas and questions which came to mind as he did. It is no surprise that he was drawn to the Book of Psalms as a very young boy and learned to read by memorizing them. As an adult, and after his ordination, he would go on to write volumes of spiritual reflections and poetry of his own, tragically lost to fire and plunder over the centuries. Enough has been written about him to know that he lived this sense of wonder his entire life, and that his greatest desire was to share this wonder with everyone he could.

So, what is wonder, and how do we cultivate it as Saint Thorlak's missionaries?



Wonder and contemplation go hand-in-hand, though one does not necessarily require the other. You could say that contemplation is the act itself, and wonder is the emotional sense of falling in love that contemplation brings about. Wonder is the delight in seeing how God and Creation each reveal the other, and the thrill of being invited into this mutual revelation. Wonder is the expression on a baby's face at things the rest of us consider ordinary, like a ring of keys or a puff of dandelion seeds. Wonder is the excitement of observing something bigger than we are. Ideally, academic learning should begin with wonder – although as they get older, school children do not always see their subjects quite so romantically.

Our lifestyles generally do not allow for much wonder. We live in task-oriented times. We place more emphasis on information than the wonder it might evoke, and much of the information we face is not fodder for fancy. Check the weather, check the traffic, check our messages, check our appointments, check our agendas. Get driving directions, learn a set of facts, watch some viral videos, indignantly react to injustices and infringements highlighted in news feeds. Cheer on sports teams, enjoy photos of friends and family, check reviews to make a purchase, read the label on a box of ingredients. Information abounds. Wonder is in shorter and shorter supply.



Some people manage to live lives of wonder because they are naturally inclined that way. Most of us don't. Most of us reach saturation somewhere during the day and spend the rest of our time coping with the stress of processing and handling the rest of the business on our minds before going to bed for the night. We unwind with fiction. We sleep. Perhaps we dream. And then we begin again.

Missionaries of Saint Thorlak strive toward contemplation in all that we do, but realistically, many of us struggle with finding wonder. But we mention it this week, not as a social commentary, but as a necessary element of spiritual nourishment. In that chain of our lives, with God at our origin, we can more easily recall God when we experience moments of wonder than when we plow through yards and yards of plain information. Thus, we have two choices, if we seek to actively experience God in our everyday moments. One, we can cultivate an interior sense of wonder, making a habit of looking for how God is revealed in the things around us and how the things around us are revealed in God. Two, we can cultivate an exterior sense of wonder, seeking to experience this mutual revelation through others.

One does not have to exclude the other.

In fact, those who live very rich spiritual lives do both.

The people around us are not just extras on stage, or place holders in humanity, or fellow citizens of the



earth. They are there because of a wondrous truth: that life itself arises from the simultaneous fusion of needing love, giving love and receiving love. God needs, gives and receives; as, simultaneously, couples need, give and receive.

If that is not enough to supply wonder, or perhaps a bit much to recall during your ordinary doings, then consider this: Each person in your path, known or unknown, creates an encounter by being in your path. With one glance, you are both revealed – and you reveal each other. How long, how deep, depends on the participation you each put into that glance.



Notice – especially for you readers who struggle with social anxiety, experience pain with eye contact, or who do not feel genuinely friendly – none of this requires any socializing or social activity. This is all about connection. One glance of yours, acknowledging another person's presence, affirms their purpose. Accepting one glance from someone else – being noticed without need of any words – affirms yours.

Tiny steps.

Infused by wonder.



One might say that this is like taking our ordinary activities and slowing them down to super slo-mo, or putting them under a microscope. How ridiculous, to look so closely at things so routine.

Then again, when was the last time you watched something in super slo-mo, or under a microscope? Something plain and dull, like a house fly, or a drop of water, or a discarded hair, or a carpet fiber?

It looks different. When you see things that closely, that slowly, and see all that goes into something so insignificant... you feel wonder. You can't help it.

Saint Thorlak had a horrible time socializing. It was not his forte. It was painful and stressful and intimidating. Yet people came to see him all the time, even when he was a young boy, to listen to him speak and ask questions. He didn't resent it. He found that he didn't like socializing... but he thrived in sharing wonder. One or two moments of imparting the love he felt toward God and Creation, and his cup was filled, good measure and flowing over. And so were the cups of those who visited him.

As an adult, Saint Thorlak served hundreds of people, day after day, as priest, abbot and bishop. He never learned to love socializing... but he was beloved, and he loved each person in his path, with the wonder of each one reflecting a different aspect of God to his hungry heart.

Hunger for wonder... and we can never be spiritually starved. Use Matthew 7:7-12 for confirmation.





PRAY: Heavenly Father, open my eyes, my ears and my heart, as wide and trusting as the eyes of a child, and show me how You see the things I see every day.

CONTEMPLATE: Look back over your day and recall how you revealed God to someone in your path – or how someone in your path revealed God to you. Don't fret if you recall none right away. Try again, tomorrow, and the day after, until you begin noticing regularly.



RELATE: Share a moment of wonder with someone by telling them (or writing to them) something that delighted you. If you feel embarrassed doing this, treat it like an experiment and do it simply to observe their response. (Other people are as inexperienced with wonder as we are, so do not be discouraged if they seem unimpressed. Remember, it's your wonder you are offering them a share in – not their approval you are seeking.)

This contribution is available at <http://mission-of-saint-thorlak.weebly.com/mission-activities/missionary-thought-for-the-week-of-september-4-2017-wonder>
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Are You Under-Utilizing Goodreads? Tips for Readers and Writers [at Carolyn Astfalk]

Maybe you log books you read on [Goodreads](#), but are you taking advantage of its other features?

For instance, did you know you can post a general update on Goodreads, like you would a status on Facebook or other social media? You can!

While logged into Goodreads, look in the left-hand column beneath what you're currently reading.

All it takes is a little time browsing and clicking to discover what's there. Pro tip: Scan the WHOLE page, including the sidebars, menus, and widgets for links. I guarantee there's more there than you realize.

Here's a Top 10 that scratches the surface of things you can do on Goodreads.

1. Bookshelves

For readers: Shelf your books according to genre, content, level of enjoyment or any way you want. Scan bar codes of paperbacks you own and organize your home library by actual shelf, if you'd like. Add books directly from Amazon as you purchase. You can also see stats on your books such as pages read and books read per year as well as books read by year of publication.

For authors: Use shelves to attract friends and followers to books you'd like to highlight. Shelves can also provide handy reference for when you're making recommendations or creating an article or blog post about books (ex. Favorite Civil War romances).

Check out: [My Catholic Fiction shelf](#), buckling under the weight of 111 books!

2. Quizzes

For readers: Can't get enough of your favorite book? Take a quiz and see how much you know. Better yet, create a quiz to share with other fans of your

favorites and share.

For authors: Generate interest in your book or series by creating fun questions that you and quiz takers can easily share on social media.

Check out: [This quiz on Cynthia Toney's Birdface series.](#)

3. Lists (formerly Listopia)

For readers: Have a hankering for sweet romances set in the South or cozy Christmas mysteries? There's probably a list for that. Find recommendations based on your interests or preferences.

For authors: You cannot add your own book to a list, but nothing prevents you adding each other's books to *appropriate* lists. (No spamming irrelevant lists.) Employ some creative thinking and browsing to see where your book might fit according to genre, setting, characters, content, etc.

Check out: This [Ultimate List of Christian Dystopian Books](#).

4. Creative Writing

For readers: Find new authors or something by an author you already love in the creative writing section. Search by genre, friends, popular, new, or active. Let the author know (kindly, please) what you think in the comments.

For authors: Post new work or a sample chapter for feedback or to introduce readers to your published books. Although I've spent little to no time on Wattpad, I think this is somewhat similar.

Check out: The [first chapter of Cape Cursed](#) by Janice Palko.

For readers:

For authors:

Check out: [Reading Is My Superpower](#)

6. Awards

For readers: If you're looking for some assurance of a book's quality, you can

turn to the lists of award-winning books! You can search for the award by name. Unlike in the general listings, not any member can add books to these lists, so you can be assured that the books listed have, in fact, won the award.

For authors: To have your award-winning book listed as such, you'll need to contact the sponsoring organization and/or a Goodreads librarian. A Goodreads librarian can establish a new award list. As it needs to be updated, the awarding organization should post a message in the Awards folder in the Goodreads Librarian Group. Once listed, your award will also show up as a literary award on your book's page in the details section along with the edition and ISBN.

Check out: The well-hidden [lists of book award winners](#). Whether you're looking for [Newbery Medal Winners](#) or recipients of the [Catholic Arts & Letters Award \(CALA\)](#), you can find them here.

7. Reading Challenge

For readers: The annual reading challenge adds an edge of fun and competition to your reading. Your home page will list how many books you've read and how close you are to goal right on your landing page. View your books read and see how your friends and others are meeting their personal challenges.

For authors: The Reading Challenge offers more opportunities for exposure. You can easily share your progress on Facebook, Twitter, or in an update status to draw readers to your Goodreads account. It's also a great way to share the books of author friends, particularly at the end of the year, when Goodreads will generate attractive graphics to boast of your accomplishment.

Check out: [How I'm doing in the 2017 Challenge](#).

8. Groups & Discussions

For readers: Find groups of people with similar reading interests, including book clubs that regularly read and discuss books. Discussions work in a similar fashion, but pertain to a specific issue or item rather than being anchored to a community. Goodreads allows you to easily find discussions related to books on your shelves.

For authors: Start or join in on conversations about your book. Participate in a couple of the many author groups, such as those for Indie authors or a group for

book bloggers or book tubers.

Check out: The discussion regarding Theresa Linden’s upcoming release, [Standing Strong](#), and the [Tuesday Talks Group](#).

9. Recommendations

For readers:

For authors: Encourage your “promoters” to recommend your book to others through their network of friends. Recommend *your* favorites too!

Check out: How to [request recommendations](#) from your friends and the Goodreads community.

10. Events

For readers: Feeling particularly bookish and looking for something to do? Find book signings, book expos, and author events in your area by searching your region.

For authors: List wherever and whenever you are selling/signing books, visiting a book club, speaking, etc. Make it easy for people to find you.

Check out: [What’s going on near you](#).

What creative ways have you found to use Goodreads?

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Mystical Union Is Not a Fairytale - It's Child's Play [at joy of nine9]

Twenty-five years ago, my husband discovered a book at a Trappist monastery which questioned my basic premise about the nature of reality, rekindled joy in my drooping spirit then challenged me to change and to live in mystical union with Christ. Although many Carmelites might not recommend this book as a valid description of pure Carmelite spirituality, *Guidelines For Mystical Prayer*, by a British Carmelite nun, Ruth Burrows, changed my life.

Sister Ruth Burrows describes Petra, a woman who lives only by faith without any experiences of God, and Claire, a “light on” nun who experiences mystical encounters. Both women know their core identity had shifted from ego-centric to Christ-centric. The Spirit of Jesus lives in them and they live surrounded by the Holy Spirit, plugged into the universal God.

Mystical Union IS Possible- Just Open the Window

We poured over this book, reading it again and again, soaking in every nuance, digging out every morsel, every detail which described this new life. My husband and I were filled with an exuberant joy because we finally we realized our deepest longings could be fulfilled; a simple spiritual life was real, was possible. Indeed, Christ lives in us.

I witnessed a similar epiphany in a brilliant young friend who said he was a confirmed atheist. Although, when I asked Davin what he had read on spirituality or Christianity, he simply replied, “The library!” One day, while attending a small group, we were praying as Davin relaxed on the margins, supposedly just observing. Suddenly, he started to laugh. Our eyes popped open in surprise. The quiet, subdued young man was beaming and started talking quickly, raising his voice in excitement:

I’m hot all over, especially inside my chest. It is like a glowing, warm, golden mist that’s all around me, inside of me ... but it was there all the time; I just couldn’t feel it or see it. It’s like all of a sudden I am plugged into a circuit board of power that has been here the whole time. God is real.

He exists. I can't believe it. Why did I not see something all around me, in my face? Oh and I feel this energy flowing between everyone in this room and connecting to me as well, like electrical currents, like invisible bands or cords. I want to jump up and down and start yelling on the top of my voice that God exists and He is right here.

My young friend had an instantaneous experience of the Mystical Body of Christ, revealed to him with sudden clarity. It was a pure moment of mystical union, even though he was not “worthy”, had not fasted or prayed, had not even wanted such an experience with his logical, brilliant brain. God saw the deepest longing of his heart, a longing he could not even admit to verbally—it was a longing to discover the source of all life, Divine Love

We have all read of saints who claim to live in mystical union with Christ. The image which comes to mind is of a medieval monk, morose and miserable, wearing a hair shirt and living on bread and water. However, I discovered the claims of saints are not bogus but true, and furthermore, it is completely realistic to expect that I too will live joyfully in the Resurrection.

The accounts of the saints might be couched in fanciful, archaic language but they are not allegories or fairytales. This Resurrected life is not a for a select few because humans are wired for a life lived in and through a mystical connection to God.

Christ Lives in Me

The life described by St. Paul so eloquently is actually factual. The life of saints is possible; a simple spiritual life.

”Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me.” ([Galatians 2:20](#))

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Life In Christ means as a Christian you must:

recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. ([CCC 1691](#))

Christians are:

”sanctified ... [and] called to be saints,” [[1 Cor 1:2](#)] Christians have become the temple of the *Holy Spirit* [cf. [1 Cor 6:19](#)], having become their life, prompts them to act so as to bear ”the fruit of the Spirit” [[Gal 5:22, 25](#)] . Healing the wounds of sin, the Holy Spirit renews us interiorly through a spiritual transformation [cf. [Eph 4:23](#)]. ([CCC 1695](#))

I craved the life of an intense regime of self-sacrifice as a consecrated, contemplative religious. When God called me to marriage and to be a mother, I really did feel like I was taking second best. Then, twenty years ago, a consecrated, lay contemplative who served in a listening house, said to me, ”You really have been given the best of both worlds. You are married with children yet you are living the contemplative life.”

Her response still brings tears to my eyes. To live a childlike spirituality of joy is not easy for a modern-day adult. I have been through decades of counselling and spiritual direction to allow Jesus to heal me, and save me from myself, my fears, and my ego. I have decades yet to travel through. There are tears in my eyes now because so few understand the little way of surrender. It was my children who stripped me and formed my spirituality.

Child’s Play

Christ offers even adults an easy way to commune with Him. Relax. Give up striving. Surrender to His love and let it saturate every cell of your body. Then simply let His love flow through you. It ends up being a long journey to such carefree lifestyle because pride and ego get in the way. It is so simple that it seems complicated to our adult, logical minds.

No wonder Jesus praises children,

I assure you,” He said, ‘unless you are converted and become like children, you will never get into the kingdom from heaven’ [[Matthew 18:4](#)]

Union with the living God is child’s play. Listen to this debate between two of my pre-schoolers.

It was early evening. We often played musical beds at bedtime because the

younger children liked the security of a sibling or two falling asleep with them, especially when older brothers and sisters were still up and having fun. So it happened that I was laying down on Emily's bed nursing an infant while she played with my hair and sucked her thumb. Five-year-old David was almost asleep across the room. His breathing was slow and deep. The only other sound in the peaceful room came from a fan that created just enough white noise to drown out the other kid's voices.

David suddenly sat straight up in bed, popped his eyes open and yelled excitedly, "Someone just called my name. I think it was God!"

Emily took her thumb out of her mouth and lisped, "Who is God?"

I turned my head to look at her and smiled, "You know, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Emily was still puzzled, "You mean the priest at church?"

"No", I responded, "The God that fills the whole universe."

Emily took her thumb out of her mouth and said very dismissively, "Oh, *Him*. I know *Him*." Then she closed her eyes and stuck her thumb back in her mouth. Discussion closed.

I barely held in my laughter. This little squirt took for granted her close relationship with the Living God, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. God is close to babies and little children. His relationship with them is not complicated, as natural as breathing. They are simply His children; He loves them and they reflect love back.

David interrupted and added joyfully, "Well, He called my name!"

Emily opened her eyes and stated very authoritatively but in a nasal, little girl voice, "It was just your imagination, Daaave." Then she closed her eyes and started sucking her thumb again.

David was upset. I countered her statement, "It could be God, Emily. The Holy Spirit lives in our hearts and does communicate with us." David was satisfied and he lay back down to sleep. Emily just closed her eyes in dismal and popped her thumb back in her mouth.

I was astounded, one of my preschoolers had heard the voice of God and the other took a relation with the Heavenly Father completely in her stride as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

Maybe a deep connection with Christ is natural; adults just complicate the simplicity of God. The problem is tapping into and living out from my core where God has inscribed His fingerprint on my heart. It is hidden in my deepest self. Actually, if we can block out our own ego and selfishness, and simply stop and listen, we too can hear the voice of Christ and allow Him to draw us close to His heart. The experience of little children and the saints are really true. If you are a secret cynic, or simply someone like me who tried to no avail to connect to God with only my own strength, why don't you give God the permission to save you and transform you into a normal Christian?

connecting with [theology is a verb](#)

and [reconciled to you](#)

This contribution is available at <http://melaniejeanjuneau.blog/2017/09/27/mystical-union-is-not-a-fairytale-its-childs-play/>
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A Bittersweet Reunion and Excerpt from Emily's Hope [at Plot Line and Sinker]



1994 (the year after my near death experience)

I recently attended a neighboring church for Mass and was approached by a woman who said that I probably wouldn't remember her, but that she had been a nurse at the hospital when I came in many years ago and nearly died.

"You were whiter than a ghost," she said. "And we didn't think you were going to make it."

"Neither did I," I responded.

"We've never seen anyone as critically ill as you and survive."

"But I did! Not only that, I went [on to have two more children.](#)"

"I know! I've been following you through friends. I just wanted to tell you how happy I am that you survived."

"Thank you." *You and me both.*

A special shout-out to all the nurses and doctors on duty that night. And another special shout-out to Our Lady, who was also instrumental in helping me to survive.

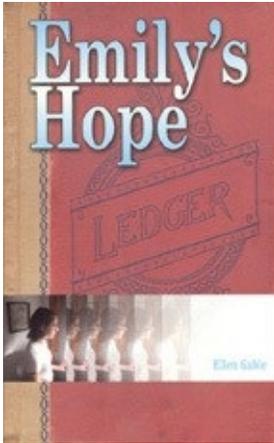
I included this experience in [an article I wrote in 1995](#) and below is an excerpt from my first novel, [Emily's Hope](#), and is based on the true story of my near-death experience, written in the third person. This illustrates the powerful intercession of Our Lady, especially when death is whispering in one's ear:

The pain in her abdomen became more excruciating with every passing moment. She sat on the sofa and dialed the number of the high school. It seemed like an eternity for the line to connect. One, two rings. *Please, someone pick up*, she silently begged. Hearing the secretary's voice, Emily could barely speak, but she uttered enough to make it clear that she needed her husband. She dropped the phone to take a deep breath. Feeling an overwhelming need to vomit, she rushed to the bathroom just in time to spill the contents of her stomach. She gripped the cold, hard toilet, as if in some way, it would make her pain bearable. Disoriented, she thought of her baby and quickly glanced at his smiling, inquisitive face, oblivious to his mother's pain.

I've got to stay conscious for my baby, she repeated over and over in her mind. She moved back to the floor next to the sofa, trying to sit upright with her young child next to her, while drifting in and out of consciousness. Keeping a death grip on him, she woke up as the paramedics were prying her hands off her son and placing her on a stretcher. It all seemed like a dream. She overheard the paramedics talking about what a "little thing" she was.

Too weak to make a sound, she wondered where her young son was. She caught a glimpse of her husband holding him at the back doors of the ambulance.

His right arm cradled their son's little body, while his left hand clasped his small head to his chest as if to shield and protect him from the turmoil that surrounded them both. But her husband's face. . .his face was so broken and distraught that Emily felt the anguish of a wife and mother abandoning her family. Tears welled up in her eyes and for a moment, Emily forgot her pain.



Then his eyes caught hers and he realized that she was watching him. Everything changed. His chin lifted as if for courage and penetrated her being with a look of tenderness, of confidence and reassurance. *Whatever happens, I will be strong for you and for the sons we both love and for God, who has asked so much of you.* He seemed to say all of this with his eyes, all of this and more. As his love reached out to her through the shouts of the paramedics and their frantic procedures, the beeping of machines and the overwhelming wail of the siren, its light already flashing, her terror began to fade and her heart surged within her. Now reassured, she allowed herself to fall back to sleep.

Emily's eyes opened again this time as the paramedics were inserting an intravenous needle in her arm. Although it felt like they were stabbing her with an ice pick, all she could manage was a wince and a quiet moan. It seemed as if every ounce of energy had been sucked from her being. *This is what it feels like to die.*

Then she imagined her little boys' faces, and suddenly the possibility of dying weighed heavy on her heart. *Please, God, I can't die,* she silently prayed. *I don't want my little boys growing up without a mother.* All at once, a feeling of warmth surrounded her, then she felt at peace. There was no bitterness, only acceptance, a calm that was huge enough to quiet an ocean. She silently recited a Hail Mary. . . .*now and at the hour of our death. Amen.* Those last words took on powerful meaning with the possibility that this could be her hour. She knew that whatever happened would be God's will, and she would submit to that, whatever it was.

Drifting into unconsciousness, the last thing she heard was "We're losing her...."



October 22, 2016 Our five sons left to right in order from youngest to older:
Paul, Adam, Tim, Ben and Josh

This contribution is available at <http://ellengable.wordpress.com/2017/09/29/a-bittersweet-reunion-and-excerpt-from-emilys-hope/>
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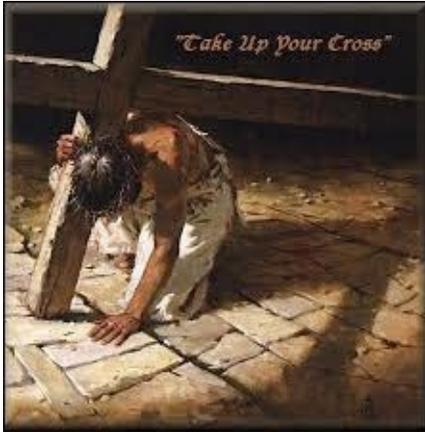
The Cost of Discipleship [at Christ's Faithful Witness]

Sermon by Fr. Joseph Mungai, FMH

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sept. 3, 2017

St. John the Apostle Awasi Catholic Church, Kisumu Archdiocese, Kenya

Years ago, when Poland was still under Communist control, the Prime Minister ordered the crucifixes removed from



classroom walls. Catholic Bishops attacked the ban, which had stirred waves of anger and resentment all across Poland.

Ultimately the government relented, insisting that the law remain on the books, but agreeing not to press for removal of the crucifixes, particularly in the schoolrooms. But one zealous Communist school administrator, the director of the Mietnow agricultural college, Ryszard Dobrynski, took the crosses down from his seven lecture halls where they had hung since the school's founding in the twenties.

Days later, a group of parents entered the school and hung more crosses. The administrator promptly had these taken down as well.

The next day two-thirds of the school's six hundred students staged a sit-in. When heavily armed riot police arrived, the students were forced into the streets. Then they marched, crucifixes held high, to a nearby Church where they were joined by twenty-five hundred other students from nearby schools for a morning of prayer in support of the



protest. Soldiers surrounded the Church. But the press was there as well, and pictures from inside of students holding crosses high above their heads flashed around the world. So did the words of the priest who delivered the message to the weeping congregation that morning. "There is no Poland without the cross."

Perhaps the cross has come to symbolize something easy to us because we have not had to sacrifice for our faith in our lives. The more we are called upon to carry our own crosses, the more we will understand the cross Our Savior carried to the hill called Golgotha. That is why today's gospel challenges us to deny ourselves, take up our crosses and follow Jesus. (Mt 16: 21-27)



"Customer Satisfaction" has become an important word today. The modern world values three things: pleasure, convenience, and comfort. This is a human standard.

In today's gospel we heard about two standards -- human and divine. Peter took Jesus aside and rebuked Him for speaking of His future suffering and death. Jesus' response is *"Get thee behind me, Satan! . . . You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."*

At Caesarea Philippi, Peter rightly confessed *"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."* (Matt 16:16) But Peter's understanding of Jesus' messiahship is something kingly, glorious, and triumphant. Thus, when Jesus revealed to his disciples that He was to undergo passion and death, the knee-jerk reaction of Peter was "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you." As soon as it was said, Jesus rebuked Peter because he could be a hindrance to the plan of God.

Early Christian theologian Origen suggests that Jesus was saying to Peter: "Peter, your place is behind me, not in front of me. It's your job to follow me in the way I choose, not to try to lead me in the way **you** would like me to go." Satan is banished from the presence of Christ, and Peter is recalled as Christ's follower. Like Peter, the Church is often tempted to judge the success or failure of her ministry by the world's standards. But Jesus teaches that worldly success is not always the Christian way. The standard of God is never about pleasure, convenience, and comfort. On the contrary, it is sometimes excruciating, inconvenient, and uncomfortable.

The incident was an eye-opener for Peter. Peter now has to learn that the standard of



God is not about comfort, not about privilege, not about convenience. It is often about pain and sacrifice. This is the cost of discipleship.

There are three consequences of discipleship. First, self-denial, which is a means of opening our world to others and to God. In a world devoted only to materialism, people tend to become very self-absorbed.

Second, we take up our cross. This value is difficult for the modern world to absorb because we are used to being comfortable. Crosses in life abound. They are present in our day-to-day existence. They may appear in a form of illness. They may also appear in a form of relational misunderstandings or conflicts. In the name of convenience and comfort, some people may rebel against God because of illness. Or some may withdraw when they are faced with relational problems. For instance, in marital life, a simple misunderstanding already offers discomfort. It's so sad that the only resolution for conflict that a husband or a wife knows is divorce. One must instead take up the cross and face the conflict. Find solutions to the problem. Carrying the cross can be liberating.

Third, we follow Jesus. Following Jesus is something definitive and radical. When we



follow Him, we follow the total aspects of His Person and life. There is no room for “pick and choose” mentality here. We cannot just say that we follow Him in His way of love, but not in His way of forgiveness or accepting the cross. This attitude will never make us His true disciples.

The gospel calls us to take seriously our vocation as Christians. Pleasure, convenience, and comfort is not the end of our lives. In the final analysis, life has taught us that sacrifice and pain are sometimes necessary, and a means to attaining glory. Amen.

(Say a prayer for my mum Lucy, to have a speedy recovery).

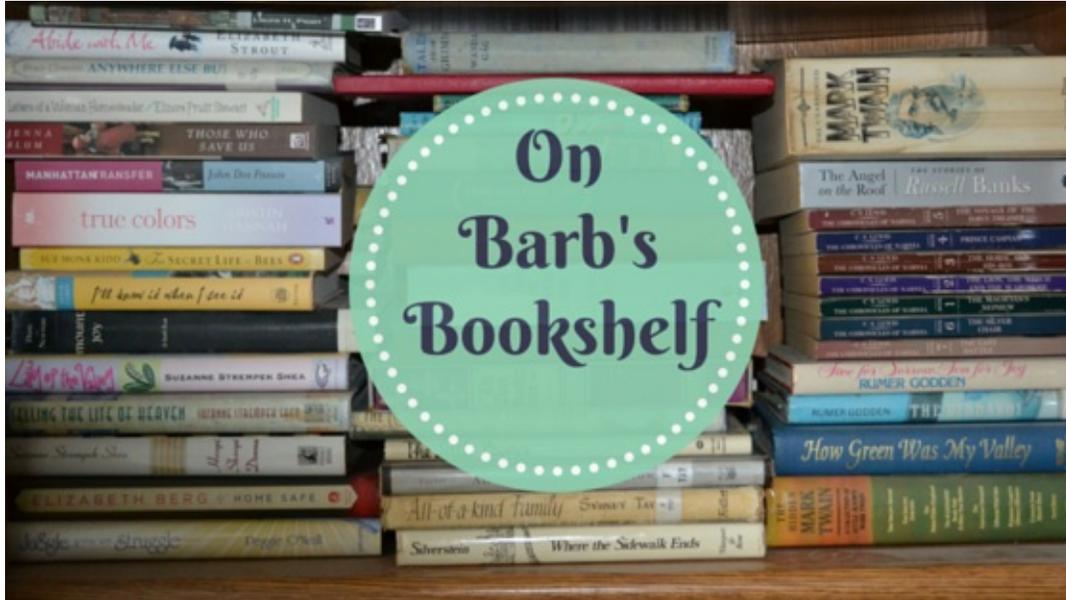
Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

**Fr. Joe Mungai, FMH, is a Franciscan Missionary of Hope, a relatively new congregation started in Nairobi, Kenya in 1993. He was ordained June 7, 2014.*

This contribution is available at <http://christfaithfulwitness.blogspot.co.at/2017/09/the-cost-of-discipleship.html>
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Super Girls and Halos [at FranciscanMom]



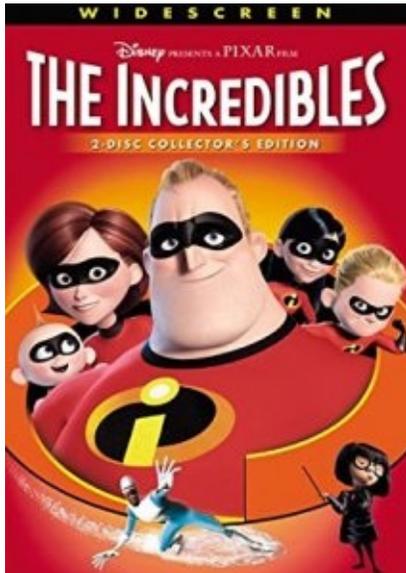
I always felt like female superheroes were for sporty girls who were physically strong, and beautiful too — and who could rock a form-fitting, skimpy costume.



By ABC Television – eBay itemphoto frontphoto back, Public Domain, Link

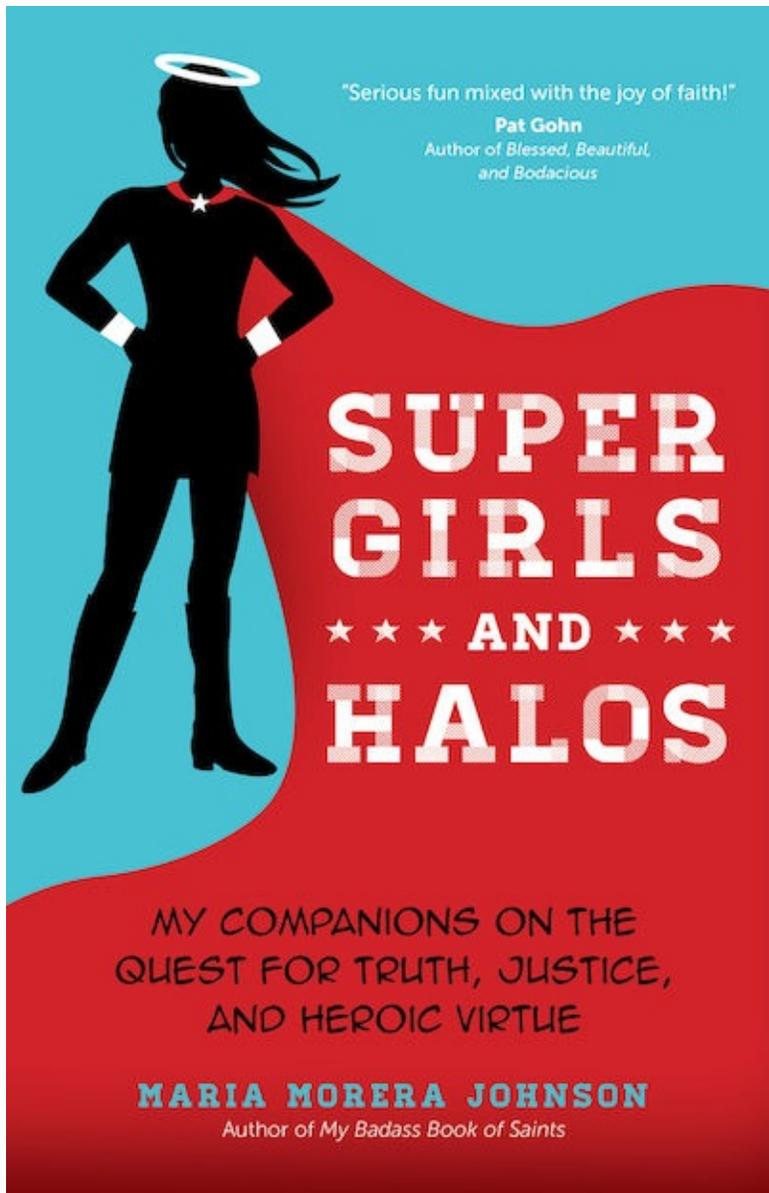
I did like that Batgirl's real name was Barbara, like mine, but that was about it for my appreciation of superheroes.

I love that Maria Morera Johnson began her new book, [*Super Girls and Halos*](#) (Ave Maria Press, 2017), with a quote from the only superhero movie I ever liked: [*The Incredibles*](#). Mrs. Incredible is probably the first “supergirl” I could relate to. She’s a mom. She worries about her family. She’s the most real superhero I’ve encountered.



Comic books and action movies aren't my go-to genre, maybe because I didn't find superheroes relatable. My taste in comics, as a kid, ran more to Archie than to Wonder Woman, and you won't find either Betty or Veronica in this book. But superhero comics, movies, TV series and video games are super-popular, and I think Maria has hit on the reason for that:

We can envision ourselves in the roles we see on the screen and respond to these courageous characters with admiration and appreciation for the fortitude or integrity they exhibit. Characters such as Katniss Everdeen and Wonder Woman often resonate with us because we admire their virtues. We might live vicariously through their fictional adventures, but can emulate their traits, such as courage or justice, in our daily lives. (viii)



Let's chat with Maria Morera Johnson, author of [*Super Girls and Virtues: My Companions on the Quest for Truth, Justice, and Heroic Virtue*](#):

Was it difficult to pair up the fictional heroines with real saints?

The fictional heroines were easy — they are my favorites! The saints, however, had a way of finding me. A saint of the day would pop up when I was organizing the heroine's attributes. Or I'd see a holy card and investigate. I mean, I've had these Catholic things around me, now they were suddenly coming to life! The most dramatic happened on vacation in Scotland when I encountered a small shrine to an Australian saint, St. Mary MacKillop. I'd say, the saints wanted to

play with me, and I was happy to invite them along for the adventure.

Unlike the heroines who depend only upon themselves and the development of their human virtues, the saints, cooperating with God's plan, receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit to help them grow in holiness. They accept God's will in their lives, regardless of the sacrifice or tedium. This can be called heroic virtue. (xv)

Which saint/heroine pair was the most surprising to you?

I think Rey from *Star Wars* and St. Clare of Assisi caught me off guard. It was a tough section to write about, Justice, but it came together rather easily when I was able to find the right saint and the kind of heroic virtue that understands God is due our worship as well as our love. I think people understand Wonder Woman in a chapter about Justice, but Clare, who is peaceful rather than warrior, has raised some eye brows and a little head-scratching. I think I do the pairing justice, if you'll pardon the pun.

As a lover of literature, I find that the most compelling, realistic characters are those that remain true to their natures. (xii)

Which saint or heroine do you think is most like you?

I definitely found Dana Scully from *The X-Files* to have a similar, or at least familiar quest for the Truth. It's the most personal chapter in the book, where I talk about my own falling away from the faith and my struggle to come back. It pairs beautifully, I think, with St. Benedicta of the Cross, who converted to Catholicism after leaving her Jewish faith for atheism. Most of us are familiar with Edith Stein, and so she immediately popped into my mind for pairing with Scully. Dare I say these were matches made in heaven? I crack myself up ... but I think there's some truth to it!

As we move from the heroines' stories to the lives of saints, we see how the cardinal virtues, strengthened by God's grace, led these women to holiness. We learn through these saints that we grow in virtue by practicing the tenets of our faith, too. (xiv)

And now for some book-launch fun, courtesy of Maria Johnson! Enter her social-media contest for a chance to win a Wonder Woman plush OR a T-shirt featuring a truly Catholic heroine.

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This post contains Amazon

This contribution is available at <http://franciscanmom.com/2017/09/08/on-barbs-bookshelf-super-girls-and-halos/>

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Feast of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary [at TASTE and SEE]

October 7 is a favorite day of mine. First, it's the Feast of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary. How awesome, in the true sense of the word, is that? I love the Rosary and continue to pray it every day.

Second, October 7 is the day I came back into the Catholic Church, at

[St. Benedict Abbey](#)

, Still River, MA, after being lost for many years in the secular world.

[The Sisters of Saint Benedict Center, Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary](#)

, Still River, MA, were instrumental in my return as well. That was in 1997. Today, October 7, 2017, is 20 years later, representing the 20th anniversary of my return! Yes, I am jumping up and down. God is good.



OTHER TIDBITS ABOUT THE ROSARY

The Rosary May Not Be In The Bible But...

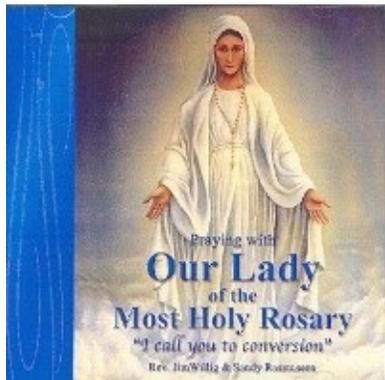


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It is beyond beneficial to pray the Rosary, not only for you, but for all those for whom you lift up in your intentions before using the beads. If you don't know the Rosary yet,

[here](#)

is one source of many to get you started.

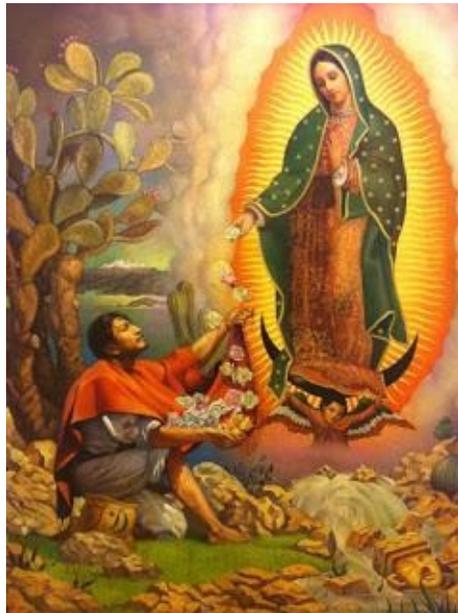


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Earlier this year,

[I went to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, Mexico](#)

. She is the Patroness of the Americas and the Patroness of the Unborn. While at the shrine, I was shown a wonderful Rosary in the store I entered. Each of the Our Fathers is a carved metal rose backed by a depiction of Our Lord's life. The crucifix is my favorite part. In the center is a little bubble. When you hold it up to the light, right up to your eye, Our Lady of Guadalupe appears! It's beautiful. And it's scented with a magnificent aroma.



~*~

RELATED POSTS [My Conversion Story](#) [Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary - Why 19? Fighting the Good Fight](#)

[A Woman In Support of An All-Male Priesthood](#) (go to the middle of p.32).

This was published on a previous anniversary. [Loving Those Rosary Beads](#) [The Rosary Army](#) [Happy Feast Day of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary](#) [Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine Trip Report](#) *Pray the Rosary.*

In JMJ+,

Kathleen

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Time for a Real Solution [at On the Road to Damascus]

In the wake of yet another tragic act of violence there has been the usual knee jerk reaction calling for more laws and more restrictions, more bans and more loss of freedoms concerning guns. The gun is to blame for the killing in Las Vegas. If we only had one more law this could have been avoided.

Chicago has the strictest gun control in this nation. Some of their laws even have been ruled as being unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States. The types of guns people use in these senseless acts are illegal altogether in Chicago. On paper, Chicago should be the safest place in this country. Yet, every year Chicago leads the nation in the numbers of murders and the numbers of people who are shot. Their crime is now spilling over to neighboring communities and they too are seeing a record number of murders. Obviously more legislation is not the answer to the problem.

Perhaps the solution is more incarceration. Maybe if we jail more criminals and keep them there longer these sorts of things wouldn't happen. The United States also leads the world in the number of people we incarcerate. It does not appear that building more jails and filling them with the unruly is the solution either. So what is the solution? Where do we start?

Society is broken. We have lost sight of what is good and true. We hold lies and impossibilities in higher regard. For example, we have institutions full of people we have locked away simply because they believe themselves to be something they are not. Mr. Jones thinks he is Abraham Lincoln so we have to institutionalize him for his own good and for the protection of the population. Yet, Bruce Jenner is heralded as a hero, given his own TV show, and made woman of the year for becoming Caitlyn. Mr. Jones is a danger, Bruce is a hero. Both believe themselves to be something they can never truly be.

Our society has gone completely off the rails. We idolize decadence and debauchery. We kill our children and call it a choice. We extend rights to places they were never intended to exist and take the same rights away from those they are intended to protect. We live in an age where everything perverse is

permissible and everything good is unfathomable. Nothing is forgiven.

If we want to rebuild this society to the greatness it once was we will have to begin by restoring our foundation. It makes no sense to fix a leaky roof when the crumbling foundation is about to bring the entire building crashing down.

Contrary to popular belief, the foundation of every society is the family, not the individual. As goes the family so goes the society. It should come as no surprise to anyone that our society is in shambles. We have been chipping away at the family for over fifty years now.

The women's liberation movement started the ball rolling by neutering the male. We have never had a feminist movement in this country. What we have had is an attempt to masculinize femininity. There has been a highly successful campaign to get women to believe that the only way they can be considered equal to a man is if they can say and do everything a man does. They try to shame women who embrace their maternal side to stay home and raise the next generation. We created the pill so women can have sex like men, without fear of getting pregnant, and then made abortion legal so they can kill the unwanted if they still did. These two things combined have done more to destroy our country than any enemy we have ever faced on the battlefield.

The "empowering" of women disenfranchised the men. There is no job a woman can't do better than a man, including being a father. With the male's role severely reduced in society his role as father was also reduced. Father's took a far backseat in contributing to the upbringing of his children. God made us male and female and bestowed upon us different characteristics. Both father and mother are vital to raising a well balanced child.

The glue that holds a family together is the marriage of the father and mother. This too has been under merciless attack for decades. Marriage began as solely a religious institution but state governments quickly got involved because of the importance of marriage and the family in the structure of society. Government used to recognize this and support the traditional marriage. We no longer consider traditional marriage as being the primary building block that forms the cornerstone of society. Marriage is now viewed as an individual right, not important to society. Marriage has gone from a life-long covenant to a dissoluble contract. The family has paid a great price for it. Blended families are now the norm. Fatherless families are not that far behind. The statistics of what happens to the children of fatherless families are staggering. It is rare for good things to

come from a family without a father as its head.

If we want to rebuild our society the first thing that has to happen is that fathers have to step up and do the job correctly. We have to restore the value of men and those men have to be the strong examples their children crave.

We have to realize that marriage isn't about love or what two consenting adults want to do to each other. Marriage is about procreating the next generation and to provide stable unity for those children to grow, thrive, and be loved in. Marriage is a vocation. It is not a right. A vocation is a calling from God. Not everyone is called to be married and no one is called to be in a nontraditional marriage. That is the devil at work in our lives.

With fathers being fathers and mothers being mothers who are committed in a life-long traditional marriage we can raise a well adjusted next generation who can start to right the ship. Until we fix our broken foundation we will just continue the slide into moral decay. The pendulum can only swing so far before it starts swinging the other way. I hope that we are almost at full amplitude.



This contribution is available at <http://damascusroadsojourner.blogspot.com/2017/10/time-for-real-solution.html>

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'Prayer is a luxury' typo or truth? [at Peace Garden Passage]



<https://pixabay.com/en/hands-open-candle-candlelight-1926414/>

I've had this thought for a while now, but only recently felt compelled to put it out there.

“Prayer is a luxury.”

Even as I thought that, I thought about another reality:

“Prayer is a necessity.”

I posted these thoughts side by side recently in a Facebook post: “Prayer is a luxury. Prayer is a necessity.” Just like that. Then I left to go about my day, hoping people would understand my meaning and see into its depth.

But when I returned later, it was apparent I'd confused people.

“I think you mean ‘prayer isn't a luxury,’” wrote one friend.

“I'd sure like to fix that typo,” said another, who apparently had been left with the weight of what she thought was a pretty serious error.

Only it wasn't an error at all. It had been quite intentional. I immediately began to feel sheepish that I'd not offered enough explanation, assuming people would read my mind. So I decided it deserved some rumination, to explain more fully what is, by all accounts when read rightly, a rather paradoxical statement.

I want to be clear.

Simply put, the juxtaposition meant exactly what I thought seemed obvious but obviously was not: Prayer *is* both luxury and necessity. It is, in essence, a luxurious necessity, and a necessary luxury. It's both, and more.

It would not be wrong to say what my friends thought I meant, that prayer is *not* a luxury, in the sense that we are dependent on our conversations with God, every day. Prayer is the way we stay in relationship with the One who gave us life. It is communing with our Beloved. Without prayer, we are essentially ignoring the One who loves us most in this world. No truly vital relationship thrives thus.

So prayer isn't superfluous. It is very necessary.

But I'd also contend, still, that it is also a luxury.

Let me drill down even more.

As my life has changed, and my schedule has allowed a little more time for intentional prayer, I've come to really appreciate that in order to have proper time to pray, I need prayer space. And in order to have that space, there must be time allotted for it — time not taken up with something else more urgent. And as this time has been given to me in larger doses during this season than in the past, it's occurred to me that having enough "free" time to devote to prayer is, in a very real sense, a luxury.

When I have this time, and can go deeper with God in this way, on a more regular basis, I am more at peace. Days that I don't have this time, peace more easily eludes.

Despite having more of this time, this luxury, there are days it's not there. Things come up, my family needs me, and the time to go deeply with God fades. Those days, the luxury doesn't seem to be offered, and I have to accept that. But

it only makes the prayer time on those days when it is all the more apparently a gift.

And again, I come back around to this: prayer is a luxury, especially in the sense that having enough time to really give it time is.

Certainly, I didn't feel this as much when I had five little kids. It's not that I didn't pray, but the deep absorption in prayer was hard to come by. I remember feeling extremely sad at Mass when my attention could not be sustained long enough to concentrate on the readings and homily. Though I wouldn't wish away my kids' existence, I yearned for the kind of soul food that was right before me, but that I could not easily access. In a way, I perceived those who could access this as at an advantage. They were in a season of luxury regarding prayer and being able to reflect deeply on spiritual matter.

And now that I'm closer to that, I have noticed the difference. The days I have enough time to pay close attention to God, to try to align myself with his will, to really reflect on his Word and try to apply it to my life, seem to be the best days.

But the mother working three jobs to make ends meet? Or a dad working a job so intense that he simply cannot make the time for God he would like, this is a suffering of sorts, and a lack. It's true that we can pray anytime, even when we don't have time. Indeed, our life can be a prayer. In that way, prayer isn't luxurious, it is the very thing we breathe. But being able to really dial down — that kind of prayer time that for many is exceedingly elusive — really does seem rare.

The kind of prayer I'm deeming a luxury is the kind the sisters at the Carmel of Mary Monastery in Wahpeton have at their disposal every day. Their prayer lives, you could say, are extremely luxurious, yet in every other way, their lives are very austere.

What I've discovered in having been given this luxury, at least for this particular season of my life, is that becoming aware of how much of a luxury it is, I am inclined to make that prayer be as much in the service of others as myself. The more I recognize the spaces for prayer that I have and utilize them, the more my prayer expands to include more than just what is contained in my small, nearby world.

Maybe that's why the sisters spend so much time praying for others. They

recognize not everyone has access to the luxury that is theirs every day, because of the sacrifices they have made, so their lives become an offering of prayer for others. It is beautiful, is it not?

There are times I recognize that when I am afforded this more luxurious prayer time, I am in a sense carrying others with me; others who are living a different kind of life, one more of survival, when the kind of prayer I'm able to indulge in at this phase of my life is simply not possible.

I know God hears their prayers just as clearly as he hears mine. Perhaps he pays even more attention to theirs. I don't know how long I'll be allowed the space I have now to devote to prayer. But I do see it as a gift, and I want to accept and use this gift while I'm able, and to use this time, as much as possible, to lighten the loads of others.

When my children were young, the Adoration chapel was an elusive thing. Right now, I have access to it, and it is an incredibly fruitful thing. But it's still a luxury.

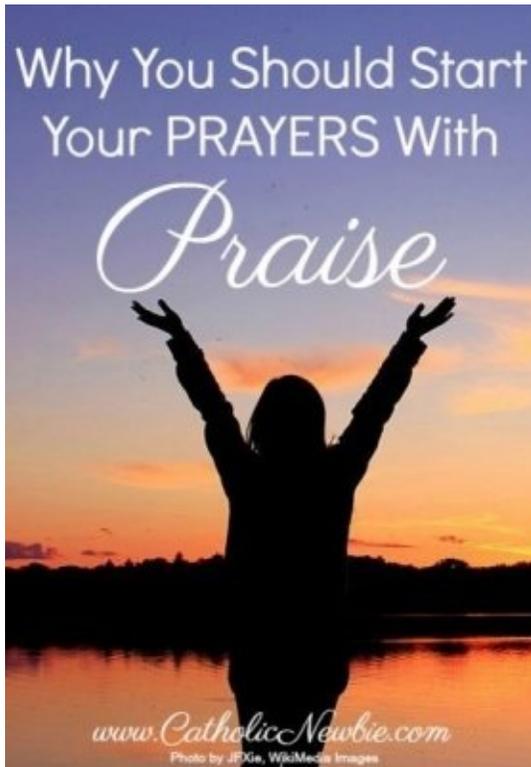
So, that's it. I've concluded that prayer is a luxury. The kind of prayer, anyway, that I thirst most of all for, and that I wish everyone had access to, and that I haven't always been able to habituate, and may not always be able to. I recognize I'm in a phase in my life of deeper prayer, yes, of luxurious prayer. I could always make more of this luxury, and I hope to. That is the challenge — to name it and then claim it.

A luxury. A necessity. Both...and....

Hopefully that explanation helps satisfy the concerns of those who thought I'd simply made an unfortunate typo. No matter, I'm grateful for this beautiful chance to spend quality time with my Lord, and hope that if you are grasping for more, it will be given you as well.

Fittingly, I'm heading to the Adoration chapel tonight. ***How might I pray for you?***

This contribution is available at <http://roxanesalonen.com/2017/09/prayer-is-a-luxury-typo-or-truth/>
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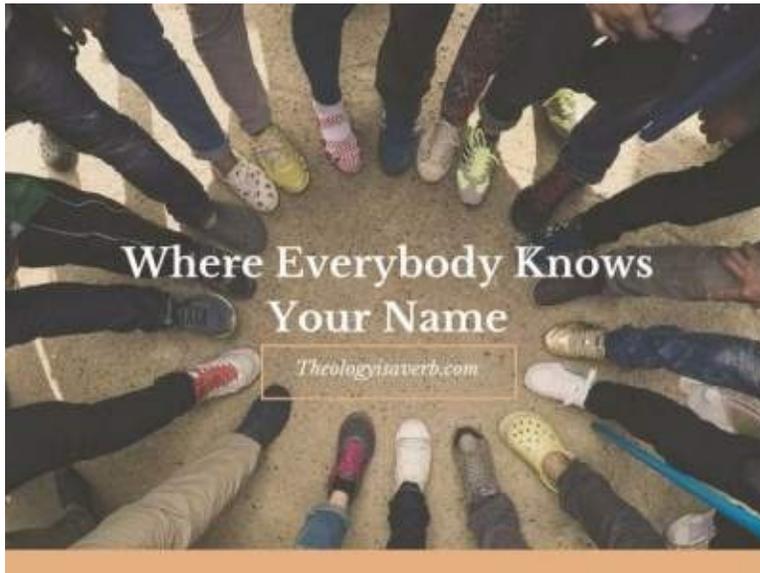
Did you know you should start your prayer with praise to God? This was news to me after a friend shared this insight during a recent RCIA class in which I was assisting. But it makes sense, doesn't it? Shouldn't we acknowledge who God is and thus who we are in relation before we start rattling off our list of requests in our **daily prayers**?

Where does this idea come from? Let me share what I've learned, because it has already made a **huge difference in my prayer**, and thus, my life.

Please note this post contains some

This contribution is available at <http://www.catholicnewbie.com/daily-prayers-praise/>
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Where Everybody Knows Your Name [at Theologyisaverb]



What is a church to be? Is it a place for the faithful who gather on a given Sunday, who come to offer up their private prayers and praise and then go their separate ways? Or rather, is it to be a home, a collective community who together in Christ is much stronger than its individual members? Throughout our life we witness numerous understandings of what it is to be church. Deep down we know and desire more for our time together and yet we settle for less.

As a young child some of my earliest memories are from my time spent in God's house, among those that both had a clear grasp of what it was to be church and those that clearly had no idea. In a small town of approximately 5,000 people my grandmother's church, though one of the largest, certainly wasn't without competition in this strongly church going community. So then, what was it that drew the faithful young and old on Sunday, and kept them returning throughout the week? Well, quite simply it was the way they embodied Christ and tangibly conveyed the reality of family.

Donning a handmade sundress and black patent shoes, I excitedly got ready to make the 30 minute drive to my see my grandma, attend church and enjoy lunch together afterwards. Walking in the doors, though not a member, I wasn't

together afterwards. Walking in the doors, though not a member, I wasn't considered a stranger but instead welcomed as family. Each man, woman, or child standing there wasn't doing so out of obligation but considered it a privilege to get to know each person that came in for worship that day. Each time was an inclusive acceptance of my presence, without judgement or expectation.

Contrast that with the church that I would more often attend in my own hometown at the tender age of 6. Significantly larger, it had become a numbers game with numerous cliques that would gather in different sections to discuss politics, events, and also one another. While my mother and I were members, we truly didn't feel as if we ever were. Rather than welcoming us in, as a divorced single parent, my mom suffered the judgmental stares and awkward silences. So while we came hoping for community what we experienced instead was far from it. Our Sunday experience became a time for us to privately pray and praise though surrounded by a multitude.

To varying degrees, you may have witnessed either of these examples. More often than not, we may attend church and glimpse snip-its of community wondering how to connect. Here, where the desired relationship is not immediately accessible we ourselves may have to reach out initially. Perhaps conscious of my own experience, I have made a point of introducing myself and my family when we attend Mass at a different church, even though I am just visiting. It isn't though I expect to be treated differently, but I am modeling what community should be for everyone.

This understanding of community even extends to our common interactions in the supermarket, gym, and local coffee shop. Keep in mind, your "Hello, how are you today?" might just lead to someone reconsidering returning to or feeling a part of church that Sunday. Just the other day, when picking up my morning brew, I was given such a gift of conversation with a parishioner whose face I thought I had seen but never met. Now I know his name is Alex... and it all started with "So good to see you again!".

Reflect:

As I look around my own parish, where could we be better representatives of the body of Christ? How am I extending a welcoming presence at church, and within my community?

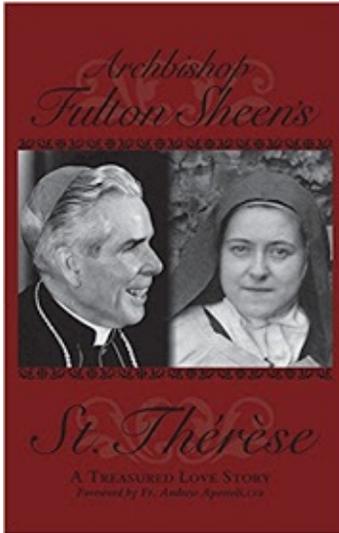
Peace,

Elizabeth

This contribution is available at <http://theologyisaverb.com/2017/09/11/where-everybody-knows-your-name/>
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A Writing Retreat with Ap. Fulton Sheen and St. Therese



This summer, my children were on a mission trip for a week, so I took the opportunity to have a home writing retreat (these are the best because I am a homebody at heart and the pets make it so very delightful). I wondered which saint would accompany me and after Sunday night's Mass, a friend slipped this book in my hand, telling me she needed it by next week since she wanted to give it to her son whom she was travelling to see. Imagine my delight when I saw the cover! I didn't have just one saint, but two of my favorites, who kept me company. Even if you've read Therese, Ap. Sheen brings new insights in this series of talks given in Dublin: [Archbishop Fulton Sheen on St. Therese: A Treasured Love Story](#).

It was a wonderful week. I finished polishing my contemporary YA and sent out queries, finished a proposal and began another one, thanks to encouragement from the saints. Michael and I enjoyed our quiet evenings together; it was fun to watch the fireworks at Smythe Park. Alas, I was sick again so I spent many hours in bed reading and praying and taking notes. Enjoy! If you wish to have all of them, shoot me an email or write in the comments and I'll be glad to share them all.

Chapter 1: A Saint for our Troubled Times

"The good lack all conviction while the worst are filled with passionate

intensity." ~ William Butler Yeats. How true it is. How are we to live in these troubled times? There is only one answer: we have to become saints! Ap. Sheen calls Therese the "greatest saint of modern times." Her Little Way is about integrating sanctity with what we are doing in our state in life—it may be on a farm, it may be a sick bed, in the office, home. Live it faithfully.

Chapter 2: On Real Saints

Ap. Sheen gave a lecture on hagiography (lives of the saints). In the old days, people wrote about the saints as if they were born saints. They only wrote the good things. And now, it's often the opposite, people only write about terrible things. Therese wrote her own--[Story of a Soul](#). She says, "Tell over and over again the story of God's mercies to me." Ap. Sheen says, "if you intend to be a saint start writing your own life now. Beware of dangers, of painting oneself holy.

"What's killing the world today is ordinariness. Flatness. Dullness. Want of fire. We can't be happy unless we're in love, and when we have perfect love, which is the love of God, then we are supremely happy... Live the life you have now, but make it holy. Start right where you are at."

Chapter 3: Virtues of Faith, Hope & Perseverance

How this chapter resonated with me. When we pray for special intentions and God says No or Not Yet, we are so terribly disappointed. But Scripture tells us to "wait on the Lord." Therese wanted to enter Carmel at 15. There were so many obstacles. She even went to the Holy Father. She was terribly disappointed. She offered herself to the Child Jesus as a plaything--a ball--and she felt like he'd poked a hole and left her in a corner. Ap. Sheen reminds us, "she did enter Carmel at 15 and today we ask for her to pray for us, not Pope Leo XIII, who had power over her!

"This is Love's Delay. The testing. Think of Abraham, Noah, Lazarus, the Syro-Phoenician woman who pleads with Jesus to save her daughter. She says, "even the dogs eat crumbs from the Master's table." So we have to be. Keep praying. Do not lose heart. All prayer is acknowledging our dependence."

Chapter 4: The Power of Intercession

Therese says, "I have lived for our Lord, I want to die for Him. This is my love, and I want to be with my Beloved." She said she wouldn't go to purgatory because there's nothing there to burn off. I love her confidence!!! "I will go straight to heaven! ... I will spend my heaven doing good on earth."

We have two great intercessors: our pleading Savior Jesus is the principal one and the Holy Spirit in our soul is the second. The Little Flower says, "me too, beside Mary." Ap. Sheen says, "we probably spend too much time praying for the dead, instead of praying to them... I have great confidence in her. Put her to work! Don't let her rest!"

Chapter 5: The Value of Suffering

St. Therese never looks to our Lord to be consoled. She's always looking to console Him. Ap. Sheen says, "She is far closer to the Truth than many theologians. She writes, "Since our Beloved has trodden the wine press alone, the wine which He gives to drink in our turn, let us not refuse to wear garments dyed with blood. Let us press out for Jesus a new wine which may slake His thirst."

"When Jesus says, "It is finished" He means My mission is accomplished. I have done all the Father has asked me to do. So if He had finished His sufferings, how could St. Therese say she has to console him? Ap. Sheen explains, "Our Lord's sufferings were finished in His physical Body, but His sufferings are not finished in the Mystical Body, the Church." Recall the conversion of St. Paul. Jesus says, "*I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.*" St. Paul understood this mystery very well. He says in his letter to Colossians 1:24 "*It is now my happiness to suffer for you. And this is my way of helping you to complete, in my poor human flesh, the full tale of Christ's afflictions still to be endured for the sake of His Body, which is the Church.*" Therese is thinking of His Passion still enduring in this world."

I wept reading this chapter because my heart was so much at peace that I need never worry about the people who are suffering so--Jesus is in their suffering whether they know it or not. I know He will take care of them, so I only need to ask for not mine, but Thy will be done.

Chapter 6: St. Therese and the Sword

Therese says, “O my Beloved, I understand to what combats You have destined me. It is not on the battlefield I shall fight. I am a prisoner of Your Love. Freely have I riveted the chain which unites me to You and separates me forever from the world. My sword is love...”

Ap. Sheen reminds us Therese “is the patroness of the Propagation of Faith though she was never in mission lands. The deeper reason is that she’s a woman in love and she wanted her Beloved known all over the world. *I came not to bring peace, but the sword.* ~ Matt 10:34

“God hates peace in those who are destined for war! And we are destined for war, spiritual war. We’ve forgotten that we are in a combat. God stationed an angel with a flaming two-edged sword to keep our first parents from going back to eat of the Tree of Life and thus immortalize their evil. The only way we can ever get back into Paradise is by having that sword run into us. It’s flaming because it’s love. It’s two-edged because it cuts and it penetrates. It’s the sword that’s thrust inward to cut out all of our seven pall bearers of the soul—the pride and covetousness, lust, anger, envy, gluttony, and sloth.”

Chapter 7: On Our Relationship with God.

Ap. Sheen gives the example of pencil. “It’s totally subservient and obedient to my will. But if the pencil had a will of its own I couldn’t do anything with it. We do not give our human nature to God in such a way that He can use it totally and completely. We hold back!

“Worldly people will think Therese wasted her life in a monastery. But remember that in the divine order, some lives have to be wasted. Mary of Bethany wastes precious perfume over our Lord’s feet. David wasted the water brought to him at great sacrifice.

“We have to offer ourselves as pencils. Let Him write poetry. Let Him scribble.

What difference does it make? This is happiness.”

Jesus taught: *anyone who tries to save his life will lose it. But anyone who loses his life for My sake and for the Gospel's sake will find it.* ~ Mark 8:35

Chapter 8: On Fighting Satan

We need not fear the devil if we belong to God. St. Therese says, “I turn my back upon the adversary without ever looking him in the face. Then I am ready to run to Jesus and tell Him I am ready to shed every drop of blood in testimony of my belief that there is a heaven.”

Ap. Sheen shares Dr. Rollo May's psychological POV on the diabolical. It comes from the Greek *dia ballein* = tearing apart or rending asunder. Three manifestations: nudity, violence, and distraught minds. We see this in Matt 8:28-34 Jesus goes into the land of the Gadarenes, there's a young man possessed of the devil. He was naked, violent, and of a split mind. “My name is Legion, for we are many.”

Ap. Sheen reminds us that at the end of life's journey “you will see either the merciful Face of Christ or the tragic face of Satan. “Mine! Mine!” You are His. You will always be His. Fear not the battle. Why, you've already won!”

Chapter 9: Suffering for the Sake of Love

I love how Ap. Sheen explains this. “A friend says, I will pay your debt. This is a financial transference to take your burden upon himself. You see one boy carrying another. He's crippled. You ask, “Heavy?” But the boy answers, “No he is not heavy, he's my brother.” This is also transference.

“Jesus transferred to Himself 3 types of evil—physical (sickness, disease), mental suffering, moral sufferings (guilt)... Our Lord is the model of our spiritual life. He took upon Himself our physical illnesses so that we would not complain but bear them patiently. He took upon Himself all of our mental sufferings so that we would never be discouraged, for He went into the dark for us, Himself alone. He took upon Himself our moral guilt.

"We are guilty of the death of Christ and when Christ is raised from the dead gloriously on Easter Sunday, we who are guilty of His death can say, "See? See? He's alive! I'm free!" That's the complete transference of guilt to Himself and the conquest of it by His Resurrection. This is the heart and soul of Christianity.

"The Little Flower took upon herself the physical, mental and moral ills of the world. She desired to be a victim. Therese says, "To offer oneself as a victim to Divine Love is not to offer oneself to sweetness and to consolation but to every bitterness, for love lives only by sacrifice. And the more a soul wills to be surrendered to Love, the more must she be surrendered to sacrifice."

"As Christians, we are to continue the work of Christ. Pray and transfer the pain of others to yourself. St. Paul says, no man dies alone. No man lives alone. Your prayers will save souls. Remember the paralytic. He didn't ask for anything. But the Lord forgave his sins and healed him. Why? Because of the prayers of the four men.

Chapter 10: St. Therese, Humility and the way of the Child

St. Therese says, "To remain little is to recognize our nothingness."

Phil 2:7 Let your bearing toward one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus. For the Divine Nature was His from the first yet He did not think to snatch at equality with God. But He made Himself nothing; nothing, assuming the nature of a slave.

Satan tried to make himself God.

Ap. Sheen explains, "What is the secret of humility? To become nothing. Nothing. Never to stress our own powers, our own wealth, our own gifts, but to recognize they all come from God. We are bidden to become empty, to become nothing, so He can fill us, work in us. There's the emptiness of the Grand Canyon; it is sterile and produces nothing. Emptiness of a flute, which if you breathe through, you can pipe a tune." **Chapter 11: St. Therese, Sin and Mercy**

Ap. Sheen makes me laugh. He writes, "Today's world we deny human guilt and sin. It used to be that only we Catholics who believed in the Immaculate Conception. Today most people in the world believe they were immaculately

conceived, for they deny such a thing as sin or guilt.

“Two escapes from human guilt. 1. People say they are sick, so no penitents, only patients. 2. We rationalize our sin. We argue. Remember Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

“We are all sinners. How are sins forgiven? *Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.* 2 Heb 9:22 Why? Because sin is in the blood. So blood has to be poured out. Sin is such a serious offense that it takes the blood of someone to block out its terrible burden.

“The Little Flower was a great theologian. She invoked the Blood of Christ. She says, “The Precious Blood of Jesus I poured on souls. My victory is always to run away from evil. But for the conversion of souls, there must be the sight of the Precious Blood flowing from our Lord’s Wounds. And this is to be the cordial bond that will heal off their sins.””

Ap. Sheen then takes us through Scripture, from Genesis through the Gospel of John, so beautifully to show how the shedding of blood is the foundation for the expiation of sins. The old and the new testaments are seamless.

"This is our faith. Every time you go to confession and a priest raises his hand in absolution over your sins, the Blood of Christ is dripping from his fingers. When you receive Communion, you are receiving the Body and Blood of Christ.



"Invoke the Blood of Christ after your sin. This is the basis of forgiveness. When we do not invoke the Blood of Christ to have our sins forgiven, we begin to shed one another’s blood.

This contribution is available at <http://vijayabodach.blogspot.com/2017/09/a-writing-retreat-with-ap-fulton-sheen.html>
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Tuesday, September 19, 2017

His Mother Pleads: Put Him in the Centers of Our Churches and Our Hearts [at Harvesting The Fruits of Contemplation]



Jesus is surrounded today by an emptiness, which has been brought about especially by you priests who, in your apostolic activity, often go about uselessly and very much on the periphery, going after things that are less important and more secondary forgetting that the center of your priestly day should be *here*, before the tabernacle, where Jesus is present and is kept especially for you.

He is also surrounded by the indifference of many of my children, who live as if He were not there and, when they enter church for liturgical functions, are not aware of His divine and Real Presence in your midst. Often Jesus in the Eucharist is placed in some isolated corner whereas He should be placed in the center of the church and He should be placed at the center of your ecclesial gatherings, because the church is His temple which has been built first for Him and then for You.

(Blessed Mother to Father Stefano Gobbi from *To the Priests: Our Lady's Beloved Sons*)

This contribution is available at
<http://harvestingthefruitsofcontemplation.blogspot.com/2017/09/eucharistic-reflection-his-mother.html>
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St. Therese on love and unbelief [at Catholic Deacon]

Tomorrow is the liturgical memorial of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the Little Flower. Since tomorrow is a Sunday, her feast day will not be formally observed. This is just fine. Our weekly celebration of the Lord's resurrection ought to take precedence over saints' feasts. After all, were it not for Christ's resurrection, there would be no saints. By honoring the Little Flower today, I do not want to short-change St. Jerome, whose liturgical memorial is today.

Jerome is perhaps best known for translating the books that together constitute what we now call the Bible from their original languages into Latin. While certainly given to asceticism and the pursuit of holiness, Jerome was also known for his temper and irascibility. Perhaps anticipating the future world of social media, he once averred: "It is idle to play the lyre for an ass."

We don't use this term much anymore, but historically saints have a

cultus

, a cult. In this context, "cult" refers to a substantial group of people who venerate a person they consider to be holy. Other than being a martyr, how someone traditionally became a saint was by being venerated by people from their local church after their death. These days, at least in the Catholic Church, sainthood is pursued

via

a bureaucratic and juridical process that smacks of what the German sociologist Max Weber called "the routinization of charisma." A great example is Oscar Romero, who has only achieved the canonical status of "blessed," the step just before being raised to the altar as a saint. Despite this, there is no doubt in the minds of millions of Salvadorans and other people worldwide, myself included, that he is a saint. Another example of this is Venerable Matt Talbot, who has worked many miracles of recovery among people who suffer from alcohol and drug addiction. Along with Romero and Matt Talbot, there are other saints of (relatively) modern vintage who can rightly be said to have cults. St. Thérèse is certainly one of them. Another modern saint with a cult is Padre Pio, St. Pio of Pietrelcina. Of course, Mother Teresa, St. Teresa Kalkata, also has a cult.

FREDERICKA. OF COURSE, MOTHER TERESA, ST. TERESA KOIKATA, ALSO HAS A CULT.

To give you some idea of the widespread devotion to the Little Flower and that her intercession works in just the way she hoped it would at the time of her passing, I will be self-referential enough to point you an article I wrote seven years ago for the English language version of

Il Sussidiario

:"

[St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Little Flower and Édith Piaf, Little Sparrow.](#)

In his autobiography,

[*The Seven Story Mountain*](#)

, Thomas Merton described his encounter with the little one from Lisieux (in for a penny, in for a pound- my initial contribution on the collaborative blog

[*The Boy Monk*](#)

this week was

["Thomas Merton and Me"](#)

).



Drawing heavily on Thomas Nevin's book

[*The Last Years of Saint Thérèse: Doubt and Darkness, 1895-1897*](#)

, which is a must-read for anyone devoted to the Little Flower, Tomáš Halík, in his own book,

[Patience with God: The Story of Zacchaeus Continuing In Us](#)

, noted that Mother Agnes (Thérèse's sister, Pauline), who held the final conversations with Thérèse just before her death and who edited (really censored) the Little Flower's works and words, (mis)construed Thérèse's mental state (in much the same way St Teresa of Kolkata's was misdiagnosed by one of her spiritual directors). The misconstrual was the result of trying to stuff her saintly sister's experience into the pre-existing categories of Carmelite spirituality. We may owe a debt of gratitude to Mother Agnes. Without her censorship of her sister's spoken words and editing of some of what she wrote, there's a fairly good chance Thérèse would not have canonized, at least when she was. As a result of her efforts, Halík contends, Pauline Martin "failed to grasp what was truly original, new, and unique about Thérèse of Lisieux. something that, understandably, is absent in the case of both the 'great Theresa' of Avila and John of the Cross" (28). Pointing to Thérèse's principle: "to accept even the strangest thoughts" for the love of God.

For Thérèse, the strangest of these thoughts was that there were not only atheists but conscientious ones. Previously she considered atheists to be thinking, speaking, and acting in bad faith, people who "contradicted their own convictions." This should sound familiar because it is the starting point of many Christians today, especially those who fancy themselves as something called an "apologist." Jesus himself revealed to her that there really were people who lived conscientiously without faith. He showed her atheism was not just an illusion, or, worse yet, always a "sinful self-delusion," which then caused the "atheist" to deceive others. What confirmed this for her was her own experience of unbelief, of atheism, as she lay dying. As a result of this, she came to see "unbelievers as her brothers," as her companions, that is, those with whom she "sits at the same table and eats the same bread" (29). It is here where Halík is worth quoting at length:

Unlike them, she is aware of the *bitterness* of this bread, because, unlike them, she has known the joy of God's closeness (even though the memory of it now only deepens her pain), whereas people indifferent to God are generally quite unaware of the burden and tragedy of their situation. In fact, it is only thanks to her previous experience of faith that she is able to experience in depth the real drama of abandonment by God, as well as discover and experience the hidden face of atheism, which many accept with such casual matter-of-factness (29)

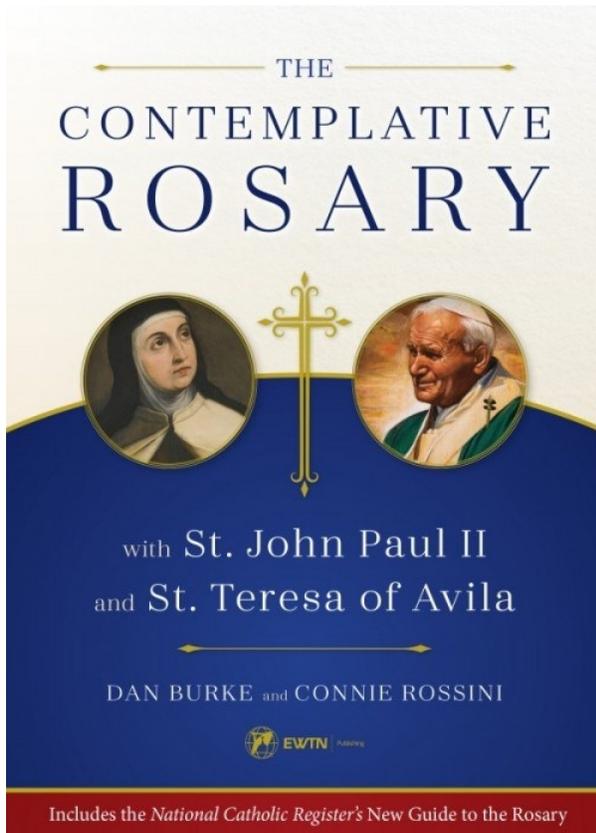
St. Thérèse, pray for us in our unbelief- that we may break bread with you and so many unexpected others at the table of the kingdom.

This contribution is available at <http://scottdodge.blogspot.com/2017/09/st-therese-on-love-and-unbelief.html>

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Praying The Contemplative Rosary [at Contemplative Homeschool]



A couple of years ago I mentioned that I was co-writing a book with Dan Burke of the National Catholic Register, the Avila Institute, and SpiritualDirection.com. It is finally published! *The Contemplative Rosary* just became available. You can find it in paperback and ebook formats at [Sophia Institute Press](#). It is also available at online retailers and should be at your local bookstore soon. If you don't see it there, ask the owner to order it.

Contemplation explained to beginners and children

I am really excited about this book, because it brings teaching about contemplation to everyone: those who are absolute beginners in prayer and those who have only ever prayed vocal prayer, as well as those who are practiced in mental prayer. My new column in *The Catholic Voice*, "Conversation with

God,” has the same aim. You can read the first two articles [here](#) and [here](#).

Even your teenagers can benefit from this simple way of speaking about the deep things of God. My two oldest sons will be reading my columns and *The Contemplative Rosary* as part of their education. My 11-year-old son has already made use of some of the meditations during our family Rosary. My youngest, who is 6, can use the beautiful paintings to help him think about Jesus and Mary while we pray.

If you don't already pray the family Rosary daily, this year, the 100th anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima, is a great time to start. We used to pray the Rosary as a family just on Sundays (although my husband and I prayed it together the other six days). At the start of this year, we began praying it all together nightly. My kids know how much the world needs their prayers and Mary's intercession.

A preparation for contemplation

The Contemplative Rosary combines Pope St. John Paul II's teaching on the Rosary with St. Teresa of Avila's teaching on vocal prayer. Yes, vocal prayer. In *The Way of Perfection* St. Teresa spends several chapters teaching her nuns how to pray the Our Father well. She writes:

“I know there are many people who practise vocal prayer in the manner already described and are raised by God to the higher kind of contemplation without having had any hand in this themselves or even knowing how it has happened” (*The Way of Perfection*, Ch. 30).

In *The Interior Castle*, she says:

“As far as I can understand, the gate by which to enter this castle is prayer and meditation. I do not allude more to mental than to vocal prayer, for if it is prayer at all, the mind must take part in it. If a person neither considers to Whom he is addressing himself, what he asks, nor what he is who ventures to speak to God, although his lips may utter many words, I do not call it prayer. Sometimes, indeed, one may pray devoutly without making all these considerations through having practised them at other times. The custom of speaking to God Almighty as freely as with a slave—caring nothing whether the words are suitable or not, but simply saying the first thing that comes to

mind from being learnt by rote by frequent repetition—cannot be called prayer: God grant that no Christian may address Him in this manner” (*The Interior Castle* 1,9).

Some of you may remember when [I returned to “spiritual kindergarten”](#) a while back, practicing saying just one Hail Mary with attention. Sometimes when we have formed bad habits in prayer, we need to go back to something very simple. Saying even the simplest prayer with loving attention is an invaluable preparation for infused contemplation.

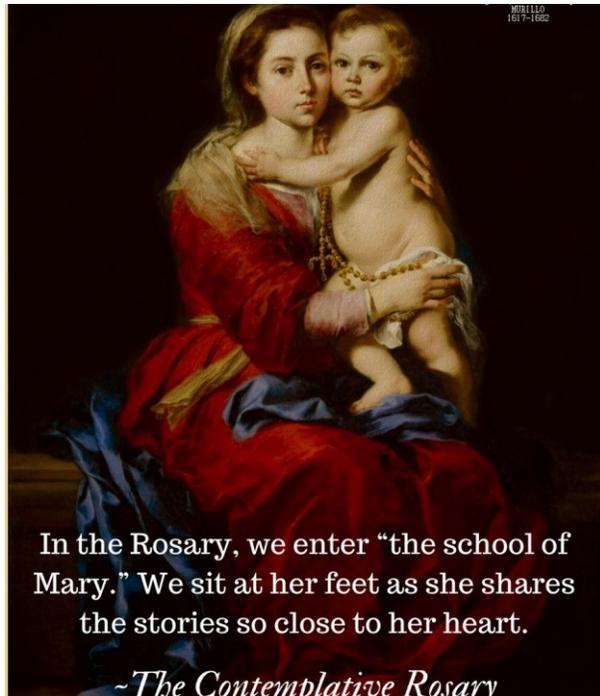
The school of Mary

Pope John Paul II wrote an encyclical [On the Most Holy Rosary \(Rosarium Virginis Mariae\)](#) 15 years ago on October 16 to celebrate the opening of the Year of the Rosary. So for those who love the Rosary, next month marks a double anniversary. If you haven’t read the encyclical, or haven’t done so for many years, I encourage you to read and ponder it. It will move your heart to love Mary and her Son more than ever.

One of my favorite quotes from the encyclical is this:

“With the Rosary, the Christian people *sits at the school of Mary* and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer” (*RVM* 1).

That images goes straight to my heart as a homeschool mom. Imagine Mary sitting in a rocking chair with a flock of children (us) surrounding her. She tells her children stories. What stories? The ones she “pondered in her heart,” the ones she shared with St. Luke when he was writing his Gospel. She invites us into her meditations on the “great things” the Lord has done for her and for all of us through her divine Son.



Helps for praying the Rosary

I love beauty. I love beautiful art. I was blessed to be able to search for 20 sacred paintings to include in the book, one for each mystery. I chose paintings that draw you to adore Jesus in the mysteries, rather than just admire the artist. Many of them I can hardly look at without being moved at once to pray. Almost all are by Spanish Baroque artists, particularly Murillo. The Crucifixion by Velazquez is unparalleled, in my opinion.

Each mystery also has 7 meditations that you can use to keep your mind fixed on Christ. We use the [clausular method that Dan Burke has written about elsewhere](#).

Those of you who have used the National Catholic Register's Rosary booklet (published shortly after the encyclical) will recognize the method and perhaps a few of the meditations. We updated, refined, and added to them.

I really believe this book will bless you and your families. And if you buy the [ebook](#), you can easily carry it with you everywhere.

Discounts, in-person talks, radio, and TV

Dan Burke and I recorded an episode of Divine Intimacy Radio with hostess Melissa Elson discussing *The Contemplative Rosary*. It will air next Tuesday, October 3. You can listen at [SpiritualDirection.com](#) or on [iTunes](#).

On Sunday, October 22, I will speak and sign books after the 9:30 AM Mass at St. Peter Church in Omaha during coffee and donuts.

On October 29, Dan will appear on [Bookmark with Doug Keck](#).

If you are close to Omaha or the Twin Cities, I'd love to come and speak at you parish, prayer group, or bookstore. Email me at crossini4774 at comcast dot net

Finally, since the Feast of St. Therese of Lisieux is coming up on Sunday (October 1), I'm offering the ebook of *Trusting God with St. Therese* for \$.99 at [Barnes and Noble](#) and [iTunes](#) from September 29 through October 6. You may also find a discount at other online retailers, including those catering to customers in other countries. This sale only runs once a year, so if you haven't read it yet, now is the time.

Please note that I can no longer run the \$.99 sale at Amazon. If you tell Amazon you saw my book for \$.99 elsewhere, they may drop the price of their own accord.

May the Lord bless you and your family as we move into the Marian (and very Carmelite) month of October.

Connie Rossini

Here is the link to [The Contemplative Rosary](#) again.

This contribution is available at <http://contemplativehomeschool.com/2017/09/28/praying-the-contemplative-rosary/>
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Mary of All Graces [at Grace to Paint]



6×8" oil paint on primed canvas sheet; use 'comment' below to inquire.

Sometimes I just enjoy the plain, hewn face.

This contribution is available at <http://www.gracetopaint.com/2017/09/26/mary-of-all-graces/>
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Mother of God Who Dries Tears [at Pauca Verba]



Forgive us, O Lady

for seating you on a throne

when you'd more likely prefer

the simplicity of your Nazareth home,

where you'd sing songs to your Golden Boy

and bounce him on your knee.

You know, we're always looking for some new way

to express our affection for the two of you.

But I notice as well you hold a tear-drying napkin,

the final swipe at

the guilt we bear -
the frozen, past moments,
which your son wipes away.

Father Stephen Morris

This contribution is available at <http://paucaverba.blogspot.com/2017/09/mother-of-god-who-driestears.html>
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The Fatal Flaw: Thoughts on the Anti-Francis Rebellion [at If I Might Interject]

The critics of Pope Francis unrelentingly tell us that he is promoting confusion and error in the Church through either malice or incompetence. They point to certain quotes popularized in the media and unfavorably contrast it with previous Catholic teaching as “proof” of their charge that the Pope contradicts what the Church has always taught. The problem is, when one reads these quotes and previous documents in context, we see that neither justify the critics’ interpretation. Once we recognize this, we see the fatal flaw in the anti-Francis rebellion—that the critics are assuming as true what they have to prove (the *begging the question* fallacy) and that the texts they cite as “proof” prove nothing at all.

These critics remind me of the anti-Catholic fundamentalists I have encountered over the years. They quote Scripture against the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church but are unaware that Church and Scripture are not in conflict. Sometimes it is a case of not properly understanding Scripture. Sometimes it is a case of ignorance about what the Church teaches. But in both cases, what they call the “plain sense of Scripture” is nothing more than what they *think* it means.

The same is true of the anti-Francis Catholics. They think, “Who am I to judge?” means an approval of homosexual behavior. They think, “Rabbit Catholics” proves contempt for large families. They think that speaking about compassion for refugees is a deliberate condemnation of the Trump administration. They think that calling for confessors to investigate the level of consent present in the divorced and remarried Catholic is permission for all of them to receive the Eucharist. None of their accusations are true. But these critics who repeat them refuse to consider the possibility of their making an error.

I think these critics indict themselves (see John 9:41) when they say that the Pope is “unclear” or “needs to clarify.” That’s an admission of their interpreting Church teaching or what the Pope said. But, if one realizes that it is a matter of interpretation, that person has an obligation to see if the perceived conflict is a matter of individual misinterpretation. That means looking at how the Church herself understands the teachings—not how individuals or groups understand it [†] That means we look to the shepherds of the Church, not the preferred

[7]. That means we look to the shepherds of the Church, not the pretentious website which is notorious for hostility to the Pope. If we don't find an answer immediately, that doesn't mean the accuser proved his point. We have to keep searching, trusting that the Church has an answer even if we don't know it [8].

The problem with the *Amoris Lætitia* attacks is, as I see it, that certain Catholics have lost sight of (or never learned) the three requirements for mortal sin: Grave Matter, Full Knowledge, and Sufficient Consent. If one of these is lacking, the sin is not mortal—though it remains a serious matter needing correction. The critics I encountered personally focus on grave matter (which nobody denies) and point out that no Catholic should have total ignorance that it is a sin. But they overlook that some *sinner*s may have wound up in their situation without wanting to defy the Church. The Church has recognized this with the alcoholic and the sexual compulsive who want to stop their sins but keep getting dragged back in because of defective consent. The Church has [recognized the plight](#) of the Catholic whose spouse insists on using contraception against their own will. The individual has still done serious wrong, but is trying to oppose it (a lack of sufficient consent) and needs the help of the Church in finding an escape from what seems like an impossible situation.

Instead, these critics assume that the Pope is ignoring the words of Our Lord about divorce and remarriage being adultery. They ignore that the confessor has long had the obligation of determining culpability and that this can change (without denying the objective evil) depending on the individual sinner. Pope Francis did not “open the floodgates.” He reminded confessors to investigate the culpability in every case, rather than automatically assume that the penitent deliberately willed to reject the Church with a full understanding as to what it meant.

The fact that the critics have never, to my knowledge, acknowledged this aspect of moral theology is a sign of the fatal flaw in their rebellion. They focus on what they *think* the Pope means, while begging the question in assuming that the Pope is either heretical or incompetent. Since they assume but do not prove [9] that the Pope promotes error, they view the quotes through a distorted lens. The person who does not start with accepting their assumption will not accept the quotes as proving the point.

But instead of trying to prove the point, many argue that whoever refuses to accept the contested assumption is “blind” or a heretic themselves. The argument runs something like this:

Critic: The Pope is a heretic because he doesn't follow Church teaching.

Me: I think your interpretation of Church teaching is wrong because of X, Y, and Z.

Critic: Then you're also a heretic or blind to the reality.

Me: How does that make me blind or a heretic?

Critic: Because you don't follow Church teaching.

The point is, the critic ignores the fact that we challenge his own interpretation, not Church teaching. The critic assumes that a right thinking Catholic will think the same way he does. If someone—even the Pope—does not accept that interpretation, it is “proof” of his being in error.

This is the fatal flaw: The critic errs in interpretation but assumes they are not in error. As long as the Church does not follow what they think the teaching *should* mean, they see it as “proof” that the Church errs and needs correction. But our opposition to the critics is based on the fact that neither have the authority nor the training [∞] to properly interpret the Church teaching against the Pope and bishops they disagree with.

At this point, I think we must realize that these individuals need our prayers, that they realize that they are making a shipwreck of their faith and need to stop thinking of things as the true faith vs. the Pope.

[†] For example, some critics condemn *Amoris Lætitia* on the grounds that certain bishops have implemented a “come to the Eucharist if you feel called” policy. But that policy runs counter to the actual text of the Exhortation which tells bishops and confessors to investigate individual cases. People forget that throughout history some bishops and theologians have misrepresented Church teaching to avoid changing wrong behavior. One of the more infamous examples of this were the bishops from the American South before and during the Civil War who portrayed the Papal condemnation of slavery as only a condemnation of slave *trafficking* from Africa—which the South didn't do anyway.

[§] As a personal example, during my years at Steubenville, I was doing a paper on the writings of Charles Curran. One of his arguments for changing Church teaching on contraception was that the Church had changed teaching before on moneylending—once forbidding it and later permitting it. I thought his argument

sounded false, but I could not find an answer to his argument. Ten years later, I discovered the actual encyclical. In it, Pope Benedict XIV called for an investigation into whether there was a difference between investment and lending to people in need. The condemnation of *usury* remained unchanged. Curran's argument was false.

[¶] The whole flaw of this fallacy is that one uses the point that needs proof as “proof” itself of the point. But, if the point is not proven as true, then anything used as “evidence” under that assumption is only valid if the point is first proven.

[∞] I am referring to the typical social media critic here, not the cardinals who made what I think is a problematic response. Any rebuke of them, I leave to the Holy Father, and do not presume the right to do so myself.

This contribution is available at <http://www.ifimightinterject.com/2017/09/the-fatal-flaw-thoughts-on-anti-francis.html>
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A Mother's Embrace [at The Frank Friar]

An Encounter in Africa

I was six months into my Peace Corps service and I arrived in a new city on the coast of The Gambia. I was not feeling well and had a large amount of homesickness plaguing my heart. Along with the illnesses, I was in a Muslim country and there were few Catholic Churches around, but thankfully, my new town had one on its outskirts. However, the problem was that there was not always a priest available. Now, the parish had a 4-foot wall all around it with one main access point for the people to enter through. As you walked in through the gate, there was a shrine to Our Lady, just to the right of the entrance.

Before, people greeted anyone, each person went over to greet and say hello to the Virgin Mary. In the Gambian culture to greet someone was of the utmost importance, to not do so is to offend not just one person, but her or his entire family. Knowing this custom and seeing the behavior of the local Gambian people, my mind was amazed at the honor Mary was given in their culture.

An Unknown Mother

Before one Sunday communion service, my heart was saddened greatly, and I longed for home and a sense of the familiar. As I walked through the entrance gate, I went over and greeted Mary, and as I turned there was a little old lady standing next to me and at that moment she turned to face me. She had deep eyes that could pierce a soul coupled with a large gentle smile. She stuck out her hands and embraced me through a hug. As I bent down to fully embrace her in return and she whispered to me, "It is ok, you are home now." To say I wept would have been an understatement. After the embrace and her words, she grabbed my hand and lead me into the church.

Mary, Our Mother

I am sad to admit this, but until that moment I never knew how important a mother was to a person's life, let alone my own. I knew that woman, saw me as a son in need, and she was there for me. It is by and through this experience that I formed a relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through this embrace in

Africa that I now understand the power behind the words of St. Therese ***“It is true that Our Lady is Queen of Heaven and earth, but at the same time she is more Mother than Queen.”*** Christ gave us His mother! A mother always strives to strengthen and keep her family together. As a Carmelite, I am given the grace to wear her brown scapular every day. The scapular is a sign of her motherly presence and motherly touch. The strands of the scapular that wrap around the neck are the arms by which Mary always embraces a Carmelite, to help them remain open to her Son, who was also held in her very arms as a child.

Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Carmel, Pray for Us.

This contribution is available at <http://thefrankfriar.com/2017/09/29/virgin-mary/>
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God Will Show Up Big Time [at Epiphanies of Beauty]

“Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.” [Romans 1:20](#)

Our house is situated near a smallish man-made lake. The back of the house has a room that is comprised of nearly all windows and each one of them provides a stellar view of the small, man-made “mud pit,” as some local residents like to call it. In the heat of the day, this room can be rather suffocating, as the windows act as a greenhouse and intensify the afternoon heat and sun to nearly unbearable levels. The ceiling fan, if flicked on, reflects the sunlight off the blades and gives a headache with the pulsating, reflecting light across the floor, the couch, and anything else situated between the fan and the floor; including any book you might be reading. But the room is a perfect place to bookend your day, mornings especially are a thing of wonder.

God shows up in the sunrise

The entire house sits caddy corner to East, so that if you enter this sunroom, position yourself just so, and time it just right, you can watch the sun rise over the lake. Each morning, without fail, it first throws it’s orangey pink rays across the sky and then proceeds to cast them carelessly over the water. Here, the ripples catch and hold each sparkle for just a moment before haphazardly letting go in favor of that next ray of light.



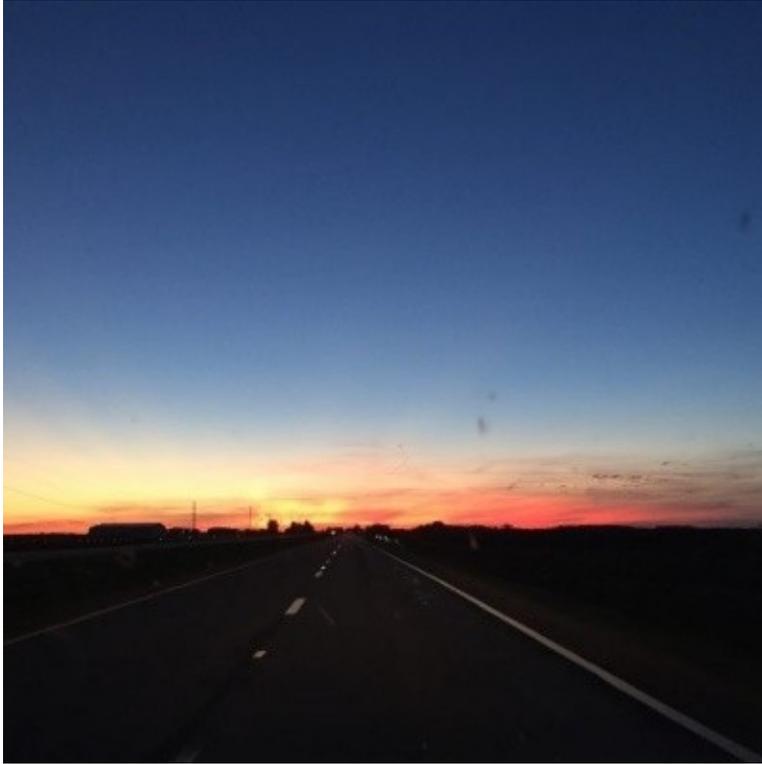
Sunrise

I try to arrive on time each day so as not to miss it.

You might be tempted to think it's obvious that the sun comes up daily, without fail, and that there true miracle would happen if the sun didn't rise one morning; if I was a witness to the darkness, instead. But I find myself on the side of the children, and of Chesterton,

“Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, “Do it again”; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, “Do it again” to the sun; and every evening, “Do it again” to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we.”

If you can't wake up early enough to watch the sun, you could position yourself the other direction, that is, to face West, and watch it sink away.



A sunset

Not that you have to be someone who delights in nature at all. I have heard some people say they never see God in the sunrise. That they just don't "get it." Perhaps these people see Him elsewhere.

Man is made in the image of God

I have arrived at the hospital three times in my life with nothing but a bulging belly and a lot of pain. There had been promise that life was developing within me, and to be sure I felt it. At first I felt the slight flutterings move across my stomach, and then later, the distinct foot pushing outward. Usually the life within sought more room with a foot shoved up into my ribs – the space between each bone empty and therefore a perfect place to rest 5 small toes. At least that's what it felt like.

I would arrive at the hospital with only my husband, but we never left alone, at least not those times. Thank God. I left each of the three times on those visits to the hospital with a new little person; completely tiny and yet so very much larger than life. It's a mystery, life is, from its creation, its incubation, the birthing, and then consequent tending, all the way to the end. The breath of God sustaining it

– sustaining me – now and forever.

God comes to us in the Eucharist

And this wouldn't be a Catholic blog if I didn't mention – first and foremost – the arrival of God, in the appearance of bread and wine, each Mass. Again and again. Sunday of course, at the weekly obligation. But also each Mass daily, repeated endlessly throughout the world. Here we see it best.

God shows up big time.

Of course, in each of these moments, God comes in the quiet. The sunrise, the everyday moments of life, the Mass – to experience each one of these you need to quiet and still yourself against the noise. Cardinal Sarah wrote an entire [book](#) about it.

Which is why I don't understand – and you won't find me visiting – the local microphone toting Catholic celebrities. “God will show up big time,” they promise. But I'm suspicious of the earthshaking noise and the fire of exuberance. He didn't come to Elijah in either an earthquake or a fire. He came to Elijah in a still quiet breeze.

And He comes to me – in the most humbling and personal encounter – in the Eucharist.



Find God here. He shows up big time.

We need – I need – to get down to the hard business of listening to the still quiet breeze of the voice of God, of His love. We don't need to go searching for it, it's already there in the quiet of our heart's desire, in the rare still moments in which we stop to listen and not merely conjure.

Conjuring didn't work for Dorothy, when she left Kansas to find her happiness in the dream of Oz, and it won't work for us either. "If I ever go looking for my heart's desire again, I won't look any further than my own back yard." She warns us. "Because if it isn't there, I never really lost it to begin with."

This contribution is available at <http://www.epiphaniesofbeauty.com/god-will-show-up-big-time/>
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OSAS by any other name, is still an error [at Washed, Sanctified and Justified]

Anti-Catholic says:

I've already answered question. I do not believe in OSAS.

Actually, you haven't addressed my point. Feel free to drop it if you feel badgered. But this is the point I'm making. The Pentecostal or Evangelical supposed denial of OSAS is simply a different version of the same doctrine. Why?

1. Correct me if I'm wrong, but you believe that you were saved by your faith ALONE.. Because you said, "To have true faith is to be saved." Is that correct?
2. Now, if a person has true faith, according to you, can that person fall away?
3. Also, you know the day you were saved and the hour you were saved and you do not believe that you, personally, can ever fall away. Am I correct?

I believe I know the answer to those questions. But correct me if I'm wrong.

You believe you have true faith.

Therefore, you believe you are saved.

Therefore, you believe you will not fall away.

If that's what you believe, then you believe in OSAS.

If you do not believe that, then I have to admit that I have been wrong in this discussion. And I remain baffled by your statement that the parable of the sheep and goats can be viewed through the lens of faith alone. Because the only lens ever presented to me by a Protestant, Evangelical or otherwise, has been, OSAS. The sheep were saved because they were always saved. The goats were condemned because they didn't have true faith.

Correct me if I'm wrong.

Quote:

this My pastor and other spiritual leaders will be held accountable for how they have lead me and what they have taught me. Therefore, I should respect, honor, and obey their godly counsel.

Wow! That is a first. The response is virtually the same as that I would receive from a Catholic.

Quote:

There is nothing about confession in this verse.

Except for this part. The verse in question, Heb 13:17, is a description of what occurs in the Sacrament of Confession.

1. We submit to our Priest.
2. We confess to them our sins because we acknowledge that they watch over our souls.
3. They give an account of our sins to God when they pray for God to forgive our sins.
4. We obey their command when they give us the penance which we must do in

order to make satisfaction for our sins. Its all there in a very concise manner. Protestants don't recognize it because they have dumped the Traditions of Jesus Christ which are the basis of the New Testament.

Sincerely,

De Maria

This contribution is available at <http://washedsanctifiedandjustified.blogspot.com/2017/09/osas-by-any-other-name-is-still-error.html>
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Jesus As Our Model for Encountering Others [at Creon Dios!]

We opened the year of Adult Faith Formation at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Minneapolis this morning with the first of a seven session series on *Creating a Culture of Encounter*. I had the enjoyable task of kicking off the series.

I opened by briefly talking about what we mean by a “culture of encounter” and why we picked the theme for the year. I then focused for the bulk of the session on what we learn from the Gospels about encounter. Specifically, what do we learn about how we encounter others from the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ encounters with others?

During my talk, I suggested five lessons we learn from Jesus about encounter, each of which would make a great deal of difference to how we encounter others if we took the lessons to heart. For each I shared some Gospel passages that illustrate the lesson. With the hope that it might provoke some useful meditation for you, in summary form, here are the five lessons I shared in my talk, along with the scripture passages I referenced for illustrative purposes and the questions we might ask ourselves.

Lesson 1: Jesus models compassion first, without regard to whether it is earned.

Illustration: Jesus encounter with Zacchaeus the tax collector

Question for reflection: Can I offer love and compassion without regard to whether it is deserved? Can I make the first move, giving the other an opportunity to respond with grace.

Lesson 2: Jesus models speaking the truth with love.

Illustration: Jesus’ encounters with the woman caught in adultery and with the Samaritan Woman at the well.

Question for reflection: Can I find ways to encourage others in a more positive fashion? Do I lead with their shortcomings or begin with connection?

Lesson 3: Jesus models acceptance of what the other is capable of giving

Lesson 3: Jesus models acceptance of what the other is capable of giving.

Illustration: Jesus' encounter with the rich young man and with Peter at the beach at the end of John's Gospel.

Question for reflection: Do I accept what others are able to offer or do I create unreasonable expectations of others and then resent when they don't meet my expectations?

Lesson 4: Jesus models an openness to learning from others.

Illustration: Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman who asks him to heal her daughter.

Question for reflection: Am I open to allowing others to expand my understanding? Or do I think I already have all of the answers?

Lesson 5: Jesus shows us that true encounter means opening ourselves to vulnerability.

Illustration: Jesus' crying at the death of Lazarus; Jesus asking his apostles to be with him in the garden.

Question for reflection: Am I willing to show vulnerability before others? Or do I feel the need to hide behind a mask of strength?

This contribution is available at <http://susanjoan.wordpress.com/2017/09/17/jesus-as-our-model-for-encountering-others/>
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Blessed Babbler: Notker of Saint Gall (c. 840-912) [at God-Haunted Lunatic]



“For although I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge.”

~ [St. Paul](#)

“N-O-T-K-E-R,” my wife spelled out to me. “Ever heard of him?”

Nope – football maybe? Some obscure character from Shakespeare?

“Saint,” she said.

Nancy was scrambling to contact all the confirmands for our parish’s upcoming Confirmation Mass: Nailing down details about attire and arrival, times and seating arrangements, and, of course, Confirmation names.

“Apparently he’s the patron of stutterers.”

I’m guessing if you’re of a certain age (my age, that is), you can’t hear the word “stutterer” without immediately thinking of Bachman-Turner Overdrive. “B-b-b-baby, you just ain’t seen n-n-nothin’ yet,” – arguably the most famous stammer in modern history. The funny thing is that the 1974 song was a really an elaborate prank. Randy Bachman wrote it for his brother, Gary, who had a speech impediment, and the recording itself was meant for Gary alone – it wasn’t supposed to wind up on an album or the airwaves.

Of course, it did – and it went soaring to the top of the charts. In fact, it turned out to be BTO's only #1 hit. "When it was all over, to realize that I could have a million-seller and a number one record without sitting down with mental giants...you really can't," Randy Bachman [commented later](#). "The magic is out of your hands."

Magic indeed – a top hit featuring a sputtering lead singer was a charmed feat.

It turns out that Bl. Notker was able to accomplish tremendous feats himself despite his own speaking problems – which earned him the nickname "Balbulus." Born to a prominent family, Notker was educated by the monks of [Saint Gall Abbey](#) in Switzerland. Eventually Notker took the habit himself and ended up serving his monastic brethren as librarian, guest master, chronicler, and, yes, teacher.

But there's more. It appears that the humble Notker had a knack for Latin meter and verse, and he not only edited a collection of liturgical [Sequences](#) in use at that time, he also added a number of his own – like maybe 40 of them or more. He wrote hymns, he wrote biographies, and he is believed to be the author of the [Gesta Caroli Mani](#) ("The Deeds of Charles the Great"), a landmark anecdotal and didactic profile of the Emperor Charlemagne in verse. The monastic biographer at St. Gall's, Ekkehard IV, [characterized Notker](#) as "delicate of body but not of mind, stuttering of tongue but not of intellect, pushing boldly forward in things Divine, a vessel of the Holy Spirit without equal in his time."

The monk's stutter, in other words, didn't prevent him from conveying the Word. That's good news for those among us who do struggle with verbal communication – no laughing matter despite BTO's musical jest.

It's also good news for those who serve as lay readers at Mass. I don't know about you, but it seems like I'm prone to falter whenever I stand at the lectern – despite being otherwise largely falter-free.

I'm reminded of the movie "[The King's Speech](#)" (2010) about the rise of the stuttering Prince Albert to the British throne and his rhetorical challenges as King George VI. There's a where the King (Colin Firth) confronts his impudent speech coach, Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush), in Westminster Abbey. "I have a right to heard!" the monarch shouts in fury. "I have a voice!"

"Yes, you do," replies Logue – and so do we.

Those of us who approach the ambo to proclaim the Word of God should take heart; King George's declaration should be our own. When we receive a mandate to serve as lectors at Mass, we're given a voice – and there's even, to paraphrase Randy Bachman, a bit a grace that's out of our hands.

A quick Google check turns up St. Bede the Venerable as the most popular patron of lectors, with [St. Pollio](#), a Roman martyr, a close second. For me, I'll be invoking the name of Bl. Notker the next time I take up the lectionary. I'll flounder; I'll misspeak; I'll hem and haw. But I'll trust that, despite my faults, grace will attend my voice, and God's Word will be heard.

This contribution is available at <http://godhauntedlunatic.wordpress.com/2017/09/17/blessed-babbler-notker-of-saint-gall-c-840-912/>
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The Pope that Saved the Church and Christendom. The story of St. Pius V. [at It Makes Sense to Me]

IT MAKES SENSE TO ME



By Larry Peterson

October is the month of the Holy Rosary. During the month we might also acknowledge the person known as the Pope of the Rosary, Pope St. Pius V.

In 1517,

[Martin Luther](#)

, a Catholic priest, posted his

[95 Theses](#)

on the door of a church in Wittenberg, Germany. Within the Catholic world, a great theological revolt ensued. This revolt spread throughout Europe and it was focused on many of the practices taking place within the church at the time, such as the selling of indulgences, papal authority, and

[Transubstantiation](#)

. This "revolt" is more commonly known as the

[Protestant Reformation](#)

The Catholic Church did not begin to confront the Reformation seriously until Pope Paul III convened the Council of Trent in the year 1545. This was to be a mammoth undertaking as virtually all church doctrines had been challenged by the Reformation including the

[Real Presence](#)

and the validity of the sacraments.

The Council did not adjourn until 1563, eighteen years after its inception. A period of 46 years had elapsed since the 95-Theses were first posted. But the final pronouncements of the Council had yet to be enacted and sealed as doctrinal law. Three years after the Council adjourned Michael Cardinal Ghislieri was elected to the papacy. He took the name of Pope Pius V.

Pope Pius V was a devout priest who found his strength in Christ crucified. He also held a deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. His first acts as pontiff were to give approval to the changes instituted by the Council of Trent and immediately implement the reforms set forth.

Pope Pius V codified the

[Tridentine Mass](#)

(Latin Mass) as the primary Mass for the Roman Church, He authorized a revised breviary and a new Roman Catechism and Missal. He approved the Council's teachings that Christ is present in both the consecrated bread and the consecrated wine. The Mass was defined as a TRUE sacrifice and he approved doctrinal statements on the sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony. He also affirmed church teachings on Purgatory and indulgences. He would quickly have much more to do. The Turks of the Ottoman Empire were determined to conquer Europe and Rome.

Deeply devoted to our Lady, Pope Pius V, issued a document in 1569 called a Papal Bull . This document was called,

[Consueverunt Romani Pontifices \(On the Rosary\)](#)

and it set in place the permanent format for the Rosary, the same which is used today. This is the same Rosary that our Lady presented to St. Dominic in 1214.

The greatest challenge at the time to the papacy of Pius V and to the Catholic Church was the Ottoman Empire. Pius V understood the intense desire of the Muslim Turks to conquer the entire Mediterranean area. Just as it is today,

Jihad,

had been declared by the Muslim imams and Pope Pius V knew full well this was spiritual war about to be waged.

Pope Pius called together the Christian nations of Europe and formed them into what became known as the Holy League. Both Protestants and Catholics from different nations came together under the guidance of Pope Pius V to fight back against the Ottoman Turks. Pope Pius asked all Catholics to pray the Rosary asking for our Lady's intercession when the battle ensued.

And so it was that on October 7, 1571, the Battle of Lepanto, took place. As the Pope and thousands of his followers prayed the Rosary the Battle of Lepanto began. Under the military leadership of Don Juan of Austria, the Christian fleet won a resounding victory over the more powerful Ottoman Turks. This battle literally saved Christendom and western civilization. Pope Pius V declared that from that day on, the day would be called The Feast Day of Our Lady of Victory. Today it is called The Feast Day of Our Lady of the Rosary.

The papacy of Pope Pius V lasted a mere six years. During his reign, he led the forces of "good against the forces of "evil" literally saving Christianity throughout Europe. He gave all credit to our Blessed Mother and today she bears the title of Our Lady of the Rosary.

Pope Pius V also set in place the

[Holy Sacrifice of the Mass](#)

which was unchanged for over 400 years (until Vatican II). established the doctrines of Transubstantiation and the Real Presence, restored discipline in seminaries, republished the Roman Breviary and the Roman Missal. He was canonized a saint on May 22, 1712 by Pope Clement XI. How honored he must be to be called the Pope of the Holy Rosary.

Pope St. Pius V please pray for us.

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The National Anthem and The Universal Call to Holiness [at Quiet Consecration]

On September 25, 2017 Eric Reid of the San Francisco Forty Niners wrote a thoughtful and intelligent piece explaining the history of the 'Take a Knee' movement currently getting lots of press.

I read it, and I was impressed because the motives behind his suggestion to Colin Kaepernick reveal a man of Faith, a man of dignity and a man of Grace.

The characteristics I just described seem to be sadly lacking in today's world. The words "dignity" or "grace" cannot be applied to the current President of the United States, though his right to express himself is just as sacred to me as the right of Mr. Reid to express himself.

I am the daughter of a WW2 Combat Vet who went to war (illegally) at the age of 16. He did not do so to fight for freedom and democracy as much as he did to escape an abusive, poverty stricken life in Texas. He fought with bravery and honor in the same way 90% of our soldiers, sailors and marines fight when thrust into combat, and it damaged him in ways we cannot fathom. It affected his wives, his children and ultimately his grandchildren. The mistakes made by him as a father have been repeated. Those mistakes were a direct result of both the ugliness of his childhood and the ugliness of war.

I am the aunt of a War on Terror Combat Vet. I said goodbye to an idealistic sheepdog of a boy and what has returned is a solemn, sad, uncertain of the existence of God, young man who has to watch how he walks in the world. He saw and did things I have never seen or done. I pray for him every day. My prayer is that he returns to Holy Mother Church to find the healing of his soul and spirit.

I am the child of immigrants, a second generation American on my mother's side. However, through my father I have roots that go WAAAAAAY back in this country - and I am a descendant of the First Peoples' here.

I am former Law Enforcement. I did not carry a weapon; rather, I was non-sworn personnel and supervised Records, Warrants and Central Identification for

a large county in my home state. My service to the Officers in the Field was to make sure the Graveyard shift always had a pot of fresh coffee and a place for them to 'drop by'. They did, on a regular basis. They were able to talk with me, share what was going on in their hearts and make totally inappropriate jokes and remarks without any judgement from me. If I found out they were Catholic, I would talk about the healing power of The Sacraments. I received two phone calls during my five years with the department from wives thanking me because their husbands had started going to Mass with them again. I still hear from them today.

This last summer I registered two families of Iraqi Catholics with our Parish School. Both of them had smuggled their documents out pinned to the inside of their clothing, next to their bodies. When I apologized to them for the wait to be registered, both said a variation of "Are you kidding? No one is throwing bombs at us. We are fine".

I share this because I want to be perfectly clear that I do not agree that every shooting of an 'unarmed Black man' was a case of murder under the color of authority. I share this about me because you must understand that, like Eric Reid, I love my country and am willing to die for The Eucharist. I share this with you because people like me and Mr. Reid are often looked at like the Enemy when we actually take the time to try and articulate our thoughts and feelings. We live our Faith to the best of our ability and it is not so much about race or politics as it is about wanting to stand in front of Jesus at the end of time and be able to look at Him and say, "I tried my best to live Your Teachings, Lord."

I do not 'hate' Donald Trump. I do not 'hate' Hilary Clinton. I can't. I am a Catholic. I am called to Holiness and the nature of Holiness is to try to be Like Christ...and to see others as another Jesus. That means ALL OTHERS, including the people who wear hoods and would march me, Eric and those who do not fit their idea of human, into ovens. I have to love my enemy. I do not have to capitulate to them and I must resist them but I must also LOVE them as God loves them.

This is a long blog post - I know most of you will not read the entire post. I know that some of you will decide I am simply another big mouth bleeding heart liberal.

Let me tell you - I am not....

What I am is a Catholic.

And I stand with Eric - and kneel before my Creator.

By ERIC REID

SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

In early 2016, I began paying attention to reports about the incredible number of unarmed black people being killed by the police. The posts on social media deeply disturbed me, but one in particular brought me to tears: the killing of Alton Sterling in my hometown Baton Rouge, La. This could have happened to any of my family members who still live in the area. I felt furious, hurt and hopeless. I wanted to do something, but didn't know what or how to do it. All I knew for sure is that I wanted it to be as respectful as possible.

A few weeks later, during preseason, my teammate Colin Kaepernick chose to sit on the bench during the national anthem to protest police brutality. To be honest, I didn't notice at the time, and neither did the news media. It wasn't until after our third preseason game on Aug. 26, 2016, that his protest gained national attention, and the backlash against him began.

That's when my faith moved me to take action. I looked to James 2:17, which states, "Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." I knew I needed to stand up for what is right.

I approached Colin the Saturday before our next game to discuss how I could get involved with the cause but also how we could make a more powerful and positive impact on the social justice movement. We spoke at length about many of the issues that face our community, including systemic oppression against people of color, police brutality and the criminal justice system. We also discussed how we could use our platform, provided to us by being professional athletes in the N.F.L., to speak for those who are voiceless.

After hours of careful consideration, and even a visit from Nate Boyer, a retired Green Beret and former N.F.L. player, we came to the conclusion that we should kneel, rather than sit, the next day during the anthem as a peaceful protest. We chose to kneel because it's a respectful gesture. I remember thinking our posture was like a flag flown at half-mast to mark a tragedy.

It baffles me that our protest is still being misconstrued as disrespectful to the country, flag and military personnel. We chose it because it's exactly the opposite. It has always been my understanding that the brave men and women who fought and died for our country did so to ensure that we could live in a fair and free society, which includes the right to speak out in protest.

It should go without saying that I love my country and I'm proud to be an American. But, to quote James Baldwin, "exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually."

I can't find words that appropriately express how heartbroken I am to see the constant smears against Colin, a person who helped start the movement with only the very best of intentions. We are talking about a man who helped to orchestrate a commercial planeful of food and supplies for famine-stricken Somalia. A man who has invested his time and money into needy communities here at home. A man I am proud to call my brother, who should be celebrated for his courage to seek change on important issues. Instead, to this day, he is unemployed and portrayed as a radical un-American who wants to divide our country.

Anybody who has a basic knowledge of football knows that his unemployment has nothing to do with his performance on the field. It's a shame that the league has turned its back on a man who has done only good. I am aware that my involvement in this movement means that my career may face the same outcome as Colin's. But to quote the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "A time comes when silence is betrayal." And I choose not to betray those who are being oppressed.

I have too often seen our efforts belittled with statements like "He should have listened to the officer," after watching an unarmed black person get shot, or "There is no such thing as white privilege" and "Racism ended years ago." We know that racism and white privilege are both very much alive today.

And it's disheartening and infuriating that President Trump has referred to us with slurs but the neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, Va., as "very fine people." His remarks are a clear attempt to deepen the rift that we've tried so hard to mend.

I am nevertheless encouraged to see my colleagues and other public figures respond to the president's remarks with solidarity with us. It is paramount that we take control of the story behind our movement, which is that we seek

equality for all Americans, no matter their race or gender.

What we need now is numbers. Some people acknowledge the issues we face yet remain silent bystanders. Not only do we need more of our fellow black and brown Americans to stand with us, but also people of other races.

I refuse to be one of those people who watches injustices yet does nothing. I want to be a man my children and children's children can be proud of, someone who faced adversity and tried to make a positive impact on the world, a person who, 50 years from now, is remembered for standing for what was right, even though it was not the popular or easy choice.

This contribution is available at <http://quietconsecration.blogspot.com/2017/09/the-national-anthem-and-universal-call.html>
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House Money [at With Us Still]

There's no feeling quite like that of unmerited grace.

Say, for instance, hearing your name called as the prize winner in a skills contest...when you know for certain you're simply not all that skillful.



The final group finishes up at 18...

Such was the case the other day as we wrapped up the golf league season with our Finale event. Two teams battled for the coveted Championship Cup...but the rest of us were out on the course mostly for fun – and the chance to win a little cash for *'low score,' 'longest drive' or 'closest to the pin.'*

I enjoyed great fellowship throughout the afternoon. And it's a good thing, because my game seemed to have already gone south for the winter. Every stroke, every hole presented a challenge – and I didn't really give 'par' much of a scare at any point in the round. Such was the context for the tee shot I landed on the green on #4: Eligible for the *'closest-to-the-pin'* competition... but a *loooong* way from home. With at least half the league still playing behind me, I didn't expect the shot to stand up.



House money

But wonder of wonders, my mediocre effort managed to fend off all rivals...and put me in position for a modest prize. So, to borrow a sentiment from the Psalmist...

*Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.*



Wrapping up the final round of the season...

Much more valuable than the cash, though, was the camaraderie I experienced during the round – and indeed, throughout the season. ‘*League*’ is a lot like ‘*community*’ to me...a place where I am known, and accepted, even though I bring a fair amount of baggage to the weekly proceedings. No one in this motley crew approaches perfection...neither as golfers, nor as human beings...and yet, somehow it works. Week after week. Season after season.

Standing ‘round the 18th green as we cheered the last groups to come in, it occurred to me that there is grace in this community. Grace conveyed by the whole. After all, you can’t very well have a league of one.

But this grace sometimes comes with a *cost*: Our willingness...my willingness... to forgive offenses and to accept imperfection.

How many times does this challenge occur? Stick around the league long

enough, you realize that the formula Jesus proposes [in this Sunday's gospel](#) is pretty much on track:

Peter approached Jesus and asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times."

But here's the thing: If we're each called to forgive that often...there's a decent chance we also need to be forgiven just as frequently.

Jesus seems to be telling us: Forgiveness is the currency that makes community work. And if you think about it, it's really 'house money'. We haven't necessarily earned it. The grace to forgive comes ultimately from the One Who is Love.

Maybe that's what St. Paul has in mind when he encourages us to imagine ourselves in an entirely new way:

*None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself.
For if we live, we live for the Lord...*



Yes, marvelous lessons in ‘community’ can be learned even here...

Let us pause now...to recall that we are in the presence of the Holy & Merciful One.

IHS

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What I Learned from a Panhandler [at Boldly Catholic]

[Homeless-woman-on-streets \(2\)](#)

He had been on that corner numerous times, cardboard sign in hand, forlorn look on his face.

Too many times previously, I had just driven by with nary a look.

On this day, I was on the Harley and the light caught me such that I was stopped right next to him. We glanced at each other and quickly looked away, only to glance one more time and then hold our gaze.

I slipped the bike into neutral so I could go hands free and reached for my wallet. At that move, he smiled and came closer. I asked him his name. He said it was Chianti... I guessed like the wine... not sure... I told him my name and handed him some money. He thanked me profusely and we exchanged fist bumps in time for the light to turn green. I kicked the Street Glide into gear and took off, catching him in the side mirror giving me a huge toothy grin.

We've since had numerous conversations, all while waiting on the traffic light, all on the same corner, all on different days since that first day now weeks ago.

I've learned that few take the time to chat with him, much less look him in the eye. I've learned he wants to get an IT degree. I've learned he's got a hugely grateful attitude. I've learned what I knew in my heart all along, what my faith teaches me is the basis of so much of Christian teaching.

Chianti is a human being, created in the image of God and filled with worth and dignity.

All of which leads me to [this Russ Saltzman piece](#) chronicling his own encounter with a homeless person, a piece I stumbled over his morning.

Russ, today a Roman Catholic, was then a dean of the Great Plains Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church when he wrote what you'll

read in part below:

When I remember that Blue Ridge panhandler, I always end up thinking of Lazarus and the rich man. The story is a very disturbing parable. Jesus tells us almost nothing about either man. There is none of the information we like to have when deciding when or even whether to hand a dollar to someone.

Jesus doesn't say, for example, if Lazarus was deserving or lazy, drug-addicted or clean, mentally ill and off his medication, or a good guy just down on his luck. Jesus doesn't even say if he was a disabled veteran. We don't know if Lazarus was persistently confrontational, belligerently cornering the rich man every morning, or if he just lay at the gate annoyingly mute. We're not told anything. All we know is that he was at the gate, sick and hungry.

As for Dives (Latin for rich , the name tradition has given the rich man), we know even less. We have nothing on which to assess the judgment made against him. Did he invite his friends over to laugh and point? Did he have his biggest and toughest servant try to chase Lazarus away? Was he a cold man, heartless, habitually avoiding eye contact, or merely so inured to the sight of beggars that Lazarus never registered in his mind? Did he mutter about the neighborhood going to hell every time he stepped around Lazarus?

We know only that Dives ate sumptuously and dressed well, and that Lazarus was hungry and sick, with no one but dogs to bathe his lesions. That is all we are told of the two men and that, Jesus seems to say, is all we need to know.

Their judgment at death is predictably unnerving: Lazarus to the lap of Father Abraham to be indulged like a child; Dives to hell.

Is there nothing else we can know about the two men, nothing about them to account for the parable's outcome? As it turns out, yes.

Read [the entire piece](#) and ask yourself honestly if you were moved in any way to think differently about the panhandler in the street. I hope you were.

Carry on.

This contribution is available at <http://www.boldlycatholic.com/2017/09/what-i-learned-from-a-panhandler.html>
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Continuing Education [at A Catholic Mom climbing the Pillars]

Taking a course with Notre Dame called, Christian Doctrine for Catechists. It's a basic course that starts in the beginning of belief, basically and we are in the second week of our studies. It has been very interesting so far and I am very enlightened by the other students in the course. We are from all different places in the US, we are old, young, teachers, speakers, and bloggers in charge of the next generation or bringing in new Catholics each year through RCIA, me...just hanging out to renew my certification as a master catechist. So, the education and experiences that we are sharing is really great.

One of the students talked about how a priest explained the necessity of scripture when teaching the doctrine of the Catholic Church as a piece of fruit. Normally one would think the fruit's sole purpose was for nutrition and taste, but actually it is to protect the pit. Scripture, in the same way, serves to

protect

the truths that must be "broken open" and discerned. The fruit is to protect the pit, not to feed or be food...it is to protect the pit for the extension and furthering of the fruit for generations to come. The scriptures help preserve the doctrines in the same way for future generations to come.

Probably each one of us knows someone who either firmly does not believe in God, or is struggling with it in some way or another. The one thing we Christians want to do is share in our joy of believing and having faith. We can plant seeds by being kind, inviting them to a Mass or church function, or just answering questions when asked. What we cannot do is tease, chide, or coerse a person into believing and accepting what we believe. We just cannot do that...it never works. There is one thing that gives me hope for these beautiful and struggling souls. They, like me, have been created by God, so they have God within them, in their very core, God lives and loves them. God is love and so they have been made by and with love, they too are holy love.



So, it is not for us to judge whether one is redeemed and saved, because if we know that they have God's love in them, then, I feel that God will work in them and they will be loved as we all are.

This contribution is available at
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Our Yes; Our No [at bukas palad]



Year A / Ordinary Time / Week 26 / Sunday

Readings: Ezekiel 18.25-28 / Responsorial Psalm: 24.4bc-5, 6-7, 8-9 (R/v 18a) /
Philippians 2.1-11 / Matthew 21.28-32

Sisters and brothers, have you ever you made a promise but did not keep it?

I did during my training to be a hospital chaplain in New York City one summer. Part of my chaplaincy involved caring for Catholic patients in the surgical ward. Mario was a patient I always visited. He was out of intensive care and recovering well from a heart by-pass operation. He was looking forward to going home to family. Our conversations were lively. He was buoyant: he had a new lease of life; the future was promising. I got to know his wife and children. One morning, his bed was empty. He had died unexpectedly. His family was grieving. They asked me to do the last rites for Mario.

I promised Mario and his family that I would always be there for them in

hospital. Now, I struggled; the last rites are for the dying, not the dead. I did not know what to do next. I found myself in a NATO momentâ€”no action, talk only.

Todayâ€™s gospel parable is about two sons whose father asked them to work in the vineyard. One said he would not but he did. The other said he would, but he did not.

The world is Godâ€™s vineyard. He invites us to build his kingdom. This involves caring for one another and Creation and to bring them back to God, better. Many of us want to do this work for God. Â

Some of us talk a lot about what must be done. They identify and analyse problems. They call attention to the social ills we face and divide us: poverty and hunger, discrimination and oppression, injustice and inequality. Others take action. They challenge the systems and structures behind these problems. They work on solutions to make things better. They act to do good.

Whether we are doers or talkers, **Jesus uses todayâ€™s parable to challenge us to look out for others and their interests, and care for them.** The first son looked beyond the narrow mindedness of his own wants to help his father. Jesus wants us to live like this: focussing ourselves on others. Paul echoes Jesus in the second reading: â€œhumbly regard others as more important than yourselves, look not at your interests, but also of others.â€” No action, talk only is how the second son lives; he exists on empty promises. **For Jesus, we must act, not just talk.**

For Pope Francis, this is how priests ought to live: stop pontificating from the pulpit about life and faith and enter into the living realities of peopleâ€™s life and faith, whether ordered or messy. We priests will only make a real difference when we live with â€”the smell of the sheepâ€™, he challenges. You can tell

when we have shepherded well, can't you? We will smell of you. If you proclaim that we do love one another, shouldn't you be smelling like this too?

The father asked his sons to work in the vineyard. One of them did; the other did not. Which of the two sons are we like in our daily life?

Aren't we the second son when we say "Lord, Lord. Yes, yes. Sure, sure" to look good, only to then not do or disappear?

Aren't we also the first son when we reply "Ah, no, thanks, I don't think so. Leave me alone." Then at the eleventh hour, we turn around and change our minds, after having wasted time and energy being angry, procrastinating, doubting and obstructing God.

Often times, however, we are more like the second son because our hearts can be hard and closed. This can be especially so when we relate to God. We want things our way. We want God to meet us half way.

Jesus warned the chief priests and elders about having hard hearts. They prevent one from entering God's kingdom. The tax collectors and prostitutes will enter because they have opened their hearts to God. Are our hearts opened or closed?

The first son opened his heart because he changed his mind. His action wins God's favour. Saying "yes, Lord" but doing nothing, does not.

Every change is difficult. Particularly when it has to do with our values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. **Yet change is necessary for the conversion of our lives, from our ways to God ways.** Change helps us to live better Christian lives. This is why Jesus keeps exhorting us to convert our hearts. Only when we do, will we see and receive what God has in store for us.

Take the struggle we all have about coming to Mass, from time to time. It's too early. It's too late. My son has football training. My wife has to market. We need family time. I am travelling. I'm tired. It's ok, God understands. There is always this and that reason. "Yes, coming" we say to our parents and to God. But we sometimes never turn up

Yet God keeps inviting us to come and see, come and abide, come and follow, come. Why?

Because the Eucharist allows us to be our truest selves by doing the most human thing before God. Give thanks. Eucharist is Greek for thanksgiving. To come and give thanks is to actualise our God-given power to be human.

Because the Eucharist also empowers us. It is our source of strength and the wellspring for us to serve. "Do this in memory of me," Jesus said at the Last Supper and we recall it at every Mass. What we do in Jesus' memory is to make our lives like his: we live to serve, even if it means laying down our lives.

Because the Eucharist transforms us to become the Body of Christ. "Behold what you are, become what you receive" (St Augustine). Jesus is God's daily bread, broken for us to live. In communion, we come bread broken so that others can have life to the full.

We can easily forfeit all the goodness described above that God wishes for us, if we say “eyes” with our lips and do nothing. But if we change our minds by going against our wants, we will open ourselves to God. Then, something divine happens.Â

Our hard hearts will be gracefully broken. God’s grace will make them big and generous. So big and generous that we can more wholeheartedly receive all of what Jesus has in store for us. His fullness of life. His boundless love. The totality of Himself.Â

Then, we will know the love of God as Jesus knows the love of God. Then, we will love one another as Jesus loves us, in the love of God. Then, we will remain in Jesus as he remains in God.

Our hearts will be transformed when we practice Christ-like humility.Â This is Paul’s invitation in our second reading: “Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus”. Jesus’ attitude is humility. Its form in Jesus is the self-emptying Paul describes: Jesus took on human form, even to the point of death on a cross, though he himself was one with God.Â

We cannot change our minds and open our hearts unless our daily routine in life and faith is one of self-emptying for God.Â **Only when self-emptying is our constant everyday habit of Christian living will we find ourselves turning more and more towards God.** This is what conversion is all about, and the salvation the Lord promises in the first reading: “But if he turns from the wickedness he has committed,Â he does what is right and just, he shall preserve his life.”

Sisters and brothers, we might be breaking our promises, not because we cannot

keep them or we know not what to do, but because we have yet to open ourselves more to God who calls us to do his will faithfully.

Is it time to change our minds, open our hearts, and turn ourselves more to God?

Preached at Church of the Transfiguration and St Ignatius Church

photo: the bridgemaker.com (Internet)

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Is there a person/group that you have a prejudice against or whom you have stereotyped? Will you overcome that prejudice today? [at A JESUIT'S BLOG]

Our text for today contains the Parable of The Good Samaritan. This is a parable that is found only in the Gospel of Luke, and the context in Luke is the question that is asked by a lawyer regarding eternal life.

In Matthew and Luke, the lawyer is hostile (not so in Mark), because the question is asked to “test” Jesus. While in Matthew (22:34-40) and Mark (12:28-31) the question is about the greatest commandment, and Jesus answers the question quoting from Deuteronomy and Leviticus, in Luke, Jesus asks the lawyer a counter question and gets him (the lawyer) to answer. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (Love of God) was part of the “Shema” (the prayer to “Hear”), repeated twice each day, but it had not been linked to Leviticus 19:18 (Love of neighbour) as it is here.

Since it is the lawyer who answers, Jesus responds with a commendation (“You have answered right; do this, and you will live.”) Though the lawyer was forced to answer and cede the upper hand, he does not give up, but asks a question over which there was some controversy – “Who is my neighbour?” In his response to this question, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan.

This parable has often been interpreted as one in which Jesus is telling us that those in need are our neighbours, or that it has an anticlerical edge, in which Jesus is showing up the priestly class by mentioning priest and Levite as not reaching out to the one in need. If these were the meanings, then there would be

no need to make the third person that passed by that way, a Samaritan. The third person could have been a lay Jew. The reason why the third person is a Samaritan is because Jesus wanted the lawyer who was a Jew, to go beyond the narrow definition of neighbour, to go beyond his prejudice, his bias, and his stereotyping.

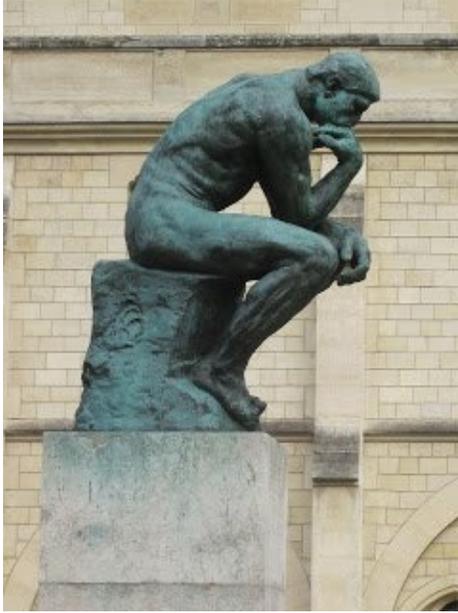
When Israel was split into kingdoms after the death of Solomon in around 922 BCE, the North (named Israel which had its capital at Samaria) and the South (Judah which had its capital as Jerusalem), it became the target for its neighbours, because its strength was divide. In 722 BCE, the Assyrians captured Israel and its capital Samaria and took as their wives and concubines Israeli women. The children by that union were known as Samaritans and till the time of Jesus were regarded as inferior and outcasts by their former Jewish brothers (and sisters). Jesus is thus asking the Jew (the lawyer) if he can get rid of his negative way of looking at the Samaritan, and regard him also as neighbour. It is interesting that at the end of the parable, Jesus overturns the lawyer's question. Jesus asks, "Who was neighbour to the one who fell among robbers?" whereas the lawyers question was "Who is my neighbour?" The Samaritan is indeed, neighbour.

We often look at people with tainted glasses or a prejudiced vision. We tend to categorise them and place them in neat compartments based on their backgrounds. This attitude leads to stereotyping people and not being able to see them as they are. Albert Einstein said this about a prejudice, "It is easier to disintegrate an atom than a prejudice".

This contribution is available at <http://errolsj.blogspot.in/2017/10/monday-october-9-2017-is-there.html>

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More on Thinking [at Walking the Path]



THINKING

I have always thought of myself as a thinker. I analyze and analyze many of the decisions that I need to make, at times researching possible answers or outcomes to the point of being somewhat obsessed with trying to control the outcome.

Thinking things is good at times especially when being impulsive might be quite harmful to others. I even like to think that I am discerning using a theological term.

Yet despite this I find that most of the time my thoughts are not God's thoughts (

[IS 55:8](#)

). I take myself to Thomas Merton's famous prayer of seeking God's will in which he says, "

Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following Your will does not mean that I am actually doing so."

REFLECTING

Recently I have been spending time reading Gerard Hughes' book, "God, Where Are You?" As he describes his journey to the Jesuit priesthood from his childhood days he often finds that what he thought was God's will was actually himself creating his idea of what God wanted. He recounts on numerous occasions plunging into what at the time seemed as service to God in his various activities throughout his life, only to find that it was mostly about him and his desire to feed his ego. Reflecting on these memories was key in his increasing realization that God was not just about the Catholic Church or his own desires, but was universal in ways that he never comprehended. Encouraged by Hughes' writing I began to take my own journey.

Yes, God's thoughts are not my thoughts nor or His will necessarily reflective on I think it to be. We hear in not only Isaiah, but also in the Responsorial Psalm and in the Gospel of God's ways. Just reminiscing on my most recent years, I have found that many of my actions that I considered were holy and at the time might have been, later became more about me being recognized as being a good Catholic and promoting the good of the Church.

WORKING FOR WHO?

And what about others. I labor hard in the vineyard of life and what to be rewarded with just pay and find myself slighted when others might receive recognition for their hard work. I become envious ([MT 20:15](#)) and then resentful. How is this person recognized and not me. There is always a lesson and find that most of the time it is about humility. Can I serve God in this manner? At times I feel the need to retreat, reflect and pray for the desire to better serve.

Ultimately it comes down to the fact that I am not God, nor do I know what God's plan is for me or for others. Pretending to do so only causes myself emotional anguish and pain for those around me. However, I take solace in the fact that I am not idly standing in the vineyard waiting for something to happen, as I prefer work. I don't always agree with the outcome or wages that God provides, but there is an acceptance that in the long run, it is better for me.

Thomas Merton from Thoughts in Solitude 1956
My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that
I think I am following Your will does not mean that I am
actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please You
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that, if I do this, You will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore I will trust You always though I may seem to be lost
and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for You are ever with me,
and You will never leave me to face my perils alone.

This contribution is available at <http://walkingthepathtoholiness.blogspot.com/2017/09/more-on-thinking.html>
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The Enemy of My Enemy [at The Contemplative Catholic Convert]

“The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

The ancient proverb, dating from the 4th century BC, counsels that two opposing groups ought to work together against a common enemy. I thought of that proverb as I read this morning through Luke 9. The vignette begins as verse 49:

“John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us.” But Jesus said to him, “Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.”

It continues in the next verse:

“When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But He turned and rebuked them”

I stopped reading as the Holy Spirit made what is for me a clear connection:

Protestant! – Satan is our enemy, not your Catholic brother and sister.

Catholic! – Satan is our enemy, not your Protestant brother and sister.

Do we really think it matters to Jesus whether we are traveling toward Rome or not, so long as we are walking toward Jesus? Can He not take care of His own? And do we really think it’s okay with Jesus that one group calls fire down to consume the other? Or is St. John wrong when he wrote: *If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. (1 John 4:20)*

Is ANY Christian among us listening or watching the nightly newscasts?!

As the enemy of all Christians stokes the fires of anti-Christ hatred in this country and across the globe, the level of animosity between Christian groups is nothing less than demonic inspired and fueled.

Protestants and Catholics, Listen up! Don't miss this point. Satan hates each of you EQUALLY.

Before it's too late, and the conflagration engulfs towns and communities not yet touched by Satan's hatred for all Christians – regardless of label -- remember: “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

Look back for a moment at that text in Luke's gospel. How did our mutual Lord respond to St. John's comment? *“Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us.”*

“Jesus said to him, “Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.”

This contribution is available at <http://thecontemplativecatholicconvert.blogspot.com/2017/09/the-enemy-of-my-enemy.html>

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The Beginning of the End [at The Wayward Catholic]

September 24, 2017

Is this the beginning of the end? I am beginning to think it could be.

Look around at the world today. This week alone there was another devastating hurricane and earthquake. There is a legitimate chance that we could find ourselves in a nuclear war, a true war to end all wars, and with it the world as we know it.

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. – [Mt: 24:36](#)

I understand that we don't know when the end will come. But all the signs seem to be there.

Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. – [Luke 21:10](#)

Is it too late to turn this around? I guess if we are looking forward to getting to Heaven we might say “Let it happen” but are you sure you will get to Heaven? Are you ready to take the chance that you may be going to Hell instead? Even if you will eventually go to Heaven you still need to spend some time in Purgatory, and wouldn't it be better if you spend as little time there as possible?

I know I'm not ready. I still have a lot of work to do. Not that I won't accept the final judgement that is handed out to me, I accept responsibility for my actions and my sins, but I'm still working on improving every day. In other words, I am trying to live with the end in mind.

How about you?

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Confessions of a Twentieth-Century Pilgrim

For September's Open Book link-up, I offer *Confessions of a Twentieth-Century Pilgrim* by Malcolm Muggeridge (Harper & Row, 1988).

This month, it's back to my personal library to pick up this short treat for the first time in many years. It's not a full-dress autobiography (see *Chronicles of Wasted Time* for that). Instead, *Confessions* is a brief survey of the phases in journalist Malcolm Muggeridge's life, each a stage on what he recognizes as his pilgrimage. He was late in life, 79 years of age, when he was received into the Catholic Church. In *Confessions*, he looks back at the uneven route he took to get there.

I have always felt myself to be a stranger here on earth, aware that our home is elsewhere. Now, nearing the end of my pilgrimage, I have found a resting place in the Catholic Church from where I can see the Heavenly Gates built into Jerusalem's Wall more clearly than from anywhere else, albeit if only through a glass darkly.

Each phase of life gets a chapter – The Boy, The Journalist, The Soldier, and so on, sketched with a lifelong journalist's deft touch. I knew before I picked up the book how it was going to end; Muggeridge was a celebrity whose conversion made news. The heart of *Confessions* lies in the way he describes what led to that conversion: the steps and missteps and unlikely occurrences in his life.

He gives credit to Mother Teresa, whom he met in the course of a documentary project that remains his best-known work, at least in the United States (*Something Beautiful for God*). She gave a nudge, and left the rest to time and God's grace. In her, Muggeridge's lifelong skepticism met its match.

The younger Muggeridge would have been astounded to know where that would lead: "It was the Catholic Church's firm stand against contraception and abortion which finally made me decide to become Catholic." That was a countercultural claim, even thirty-odd years ago, particularly from a worldly man.

Despite such blunt declarations, *Confessions* is full of warmth and humor. I love his insight into what he calls "The Steeple and The Gargoyle." Since reading this

for the first time, I've never looked at a photo of an old church in the quite the way I did before.

This assumption that a sense of humour and a Christian faith are incompatible is totally mistaken....

The true function of humour is to express in terms of the grotesque the immense disparity between human aspiration and human performance. Mysticism expresses the same disparity in terms of the sublime. Hence the close connection between clowns and mystics; hence, too, the juxtaposition on the great medieval cathedrals of steeples reaching up into the Cloud of Unknowing, and gargoyles grinning malevolently down at our dear earth and all its foolishness. Laughter and mystical ecstasy, that is to say, both derive from an awareness, in the one case hilarious, in the other ecstatic, of how wide is the chasm between Time and Eternity, between us and our Creator.

Let us then, while, as we should, revering the steeples, remember the gargoyles, also, in their way, purveyors of God's Word, and be thankful that, when the Gates of Heaven swing open, as they do from time to time, mixed with the celestial music there is the unmistakable sound of celestial laughter.

This #OpenBook linkup is hosted by [My Scribbler's Heart](#) and [CatholicMom.com](#).

This contribution is available at <http://ellenkolb.com/2017/09/07/openbook-muggeridge/>
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Petulant Children Seeking Patience [at Catholic Stand]

“The virtue of patience is the one which most assures us of perfection.” -St. Francis de Sales

Patience, where have you gone? I’m trying so hard to find you as this dear little one settles down for a nap, but his incessant whimpering for ‘mama’ is difficult to ignore. All of my tried and true tactics go unanswered. Enduring silence, insistent shushing, and ceaseless waiting have failed. Even the Gregorian chant that puts the nine-year-old to sleep – albeit happily – is not having the desired effect.

In desperation, I await the even breathing that announces slumber, but it does not come. So I sit here, silently, and write out my frustration. Head pounding I begin typing, knowing my favorite method of venting will eventually win out. The serene beauty of chant keeps me company and beckons me to find my sought after serenity – and patience. And so I wait.

“If there be a true way that leads to the Everlasting Kingdom, it is most certainly that of suffering, patiently endured.” -St. Colette

The Patience of God

God, how often would we, your creatures have the same effect on your Eternal patience? We continually whimper, whine, and moan about our slightest earthly afflictions even as we fail to give notice or gratitude for all that is right in our world. Our blessings are as numerous as the stars in the sky, yet one disappointment brings out the petulant child in us. Our demands are endless.

How wonderful are your works, your daily gifts to our lives! We live in the splendor of your Love, enveloped in the peace and the hope of our Eternal Goal! Yet, too often, we present eyes that do not see – ears that do not hear. Your Word is always available to us. The miraculous Presence of You in the Holy Eucharist is patiently waiting for us – there at all hours of the day and night.

Saints' lives blaze the Way as models of the holiness to which we should aspire. Your Ear is at the ready, awaiting our every petition with Divine Patience.

That you become not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience shall inherit the promises. [Hebrews 6:12](#)

Our Own Good

The little souls put into our care by the Creator have no concept of what is necessary for their well being. A refreshing nap is for their own good. As the wiser, more experienced caretakers of these little ones, we are responsible for their oversight. In the same way, our souls thirst for the refreshment of spiritual respite. God our Father knows what we need, although at times our resistance is equally strong as that of children. Patience teaches us to listen to His Word and to learn that, in charity, the Father has only our good in mind.

In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but because he hath first loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. [1 John 4:10](#)

Patience Rewarded

Finally, then, solace comes. A slightly hiccuping, steady breath of this dear child of Yours rewards my involuntary patience. He is quiet – fuzzy blanket firmly grasped by tiny, dimpled hands – in peaceful slumber. As he has found his rest, so have I found my peace. Ever the wisest of Fathers, you have seen fit to teach me, your wayward child.

Thank you, Heavenly Father. You are there, always, offering security and consolation. Your whisper beckons us to let go and allow you to guide us on our life's journey. Even as we persist in our childish demands, yours is the epitome of patience. We pray you teach us by your example. May our ears hear your call and our eyes see your Truth.

For this day, the momentary tedium has been overcome. The storm has passed and sanctuary found. All is well with my soul, once again. Amen and alleluia!

“Patience is the companion of wisdom.” -St. Augustine

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"Raving Politics" [at A Catholic Citizen in America]

Quite a few parts of the Bible don't talk about forgiveness. But quite a few do, and they're not just in the New Testament.

This morning's second reading doesn't mention forgiveness directly, but the verse right after it does.

They all say why forgiving is a good idea.

It's enlightened self-interest, in the long run:

“Wrath and anger, these also are abominations,
yet a sinner holds on to them.

“The vengeful will face the Lord's vengeance;
indeed he remembers their sins in detail.
Forgive your neighbor the wrong done to you;
then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven.
Does anyone nourish anger against another
and expect healing from the LORD?”
([Sirach 27:30–28:3](#))

“Why then do you judge your brother? Or you, why do you look down on your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God;”
([Romans 14:10](#))

“Then Peter approaching asked him, ‘Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?’”
([Matthew 18:21](#))



The parable of the unforgiving servant starts after Matthew 18:22.¹

Our Lord seems to like parables.²

Two millennia after Jesus was here, some details take a little explaining. Folks in 21st century Minnesota don't live and work quite like the Apostles did. That's one reason I appreciate footnotes.

Forgiving "seventy seven times" is probably a reference to [Genesis 4:24](#), where Lamach talks about vengeance.

It doesn't mean if I forgive 77 times I can stay angry the 78th time. A [footnote](#) to Matthew 18:22 says it means I should forgive an unlimited number of times.

I think that makes sense. But it's not easy. Not for me.

Doing What I Can

It's easier now than it was. That's partly, I think, because I'm older and may have learned a bit along the way.

Getting neural glitches treated helps, too. A lot. ([July 7, 2017](#); [July 2, 2017](#))

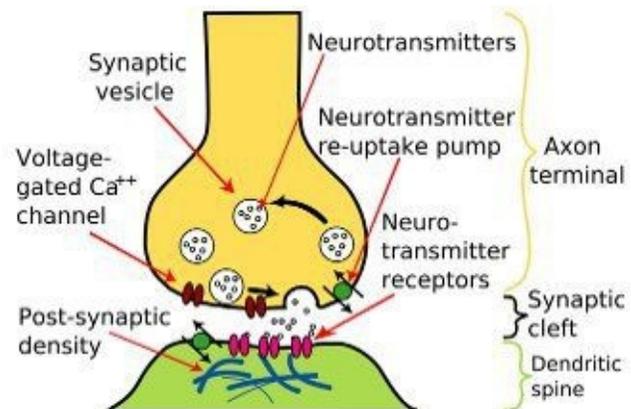
That's made managing my emotions easier. Possible, sometimes.

I'm a very emotional man.

That hasn't changed, although it seems like they're less extreme these days. Maybe because thinking is easier now. Faster, too. That helps me head off runaway feelings.

There's nothing wrong with emotions. They're a normal part of being human. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, [1762–1770](#))

Feelings aren't good or bad by themselves. Love, joy, fear, anger: they're all useful. (Catechism, [1765](#))



What matters is how I use them. Ideally, I'd always love what's good, fear what's bad, and think before acting. (Catechism, [1765–1770](#))

I don't live in an ideal world, and I'm not perfect. Nothing unusual there. I don't always do what's right. But I can try. ([April 23, 2017](#); [October 5, 2016](#))

That includes forgiving others. And myself, and that's another topic.

Remembering Love

There's a little truth to the “forgive and forget” motto. But it falls well short of telling the whole story.

I can't perfectly forget when something bad has been done to me. Not if I knew about it, and the harm was serious enough.

That doesn't bother me.

Even if I could, I think “forgetting” would be a bad idea. The same situation might happen again.

We're called to holiness, not gullibility.

Truth matters. So does justice. (Catechism, [1807](#), [2468](#))

I'm quite sure that ignoring either would not be prudent.

Forgiveness doesn't mean pretending that something harmful is okay. Like I said, truth and justice matter.

So does love.

I should love God. I should also love others: **all** others, no exceptions. ([Matthew 5:43–44](#), [22:36–40](#); [Mark 12:28–31](#); [Luke 6:31](#) [10:25–27](#), [29–37](#); Catechism, [1789](#))



“Love” isn’t “approval.” I should be able to love someone **and** see something they do as a bad idea. ([November 21, 2016](#); [October 28, 2016](#); [September 11, 2016](#))

Seeing some of what I do as a bad idea matters, too. I’m still working on that.

Outrage and Politics

I don’t know why folks get so upset over politics. Maybe it’s at least partly an outraged sense of justice.

That isn’t an entirely bad thing. Like I said, justice is important.

However, what I see in some online communities is not good.

For starters, I’m quite sure that no American president has been the antichrist. ([November 29, 2016](#))

Maybe some really believed it. That doesn’t make them right.

Other folks, with different views, hurl other insults. That’s nothing new.

Details change. Attitudes? Not so much.

“Nazi” and “fascist” may be on their way out. “White supremacist” seems to be a popular label this year.

There really are fascists and white supremacists.

But not agreeing with me doesn’t make someone the antichrist or a fascist. Again, ‘really believing’ doesn’t make something true.

[Nazism](#) isn’t entirely gone. But the movement is pretty much history. The attitude that race, sex, or belief make one bunch better than anyone else? That’s



still around, sadly.

Using “fascist” or “white supremacist” to express anger doesn’t make sense. Not to me. Particularly when the labels aren’t accurate.

I’d better explain that.

I care about justice.

Caring about justice won’t let me ignore politics.

But I don’t see a point in hurling insults at folks who aren’t just like me.

That probably wouldn’t make me seem reasonable. Yet more topics.

Politics and Perspective



Part of my job is knowing and loving God, and encouraging others to do the same. ([Matthew 28:19–20](#); Catechism, [1–3](#))

Learning about this wonder-filled universe and appreciating God’s work seems reasonable. ([Sirach 17:1–14](#); Catechism, [283](#), [341](#))

I think putting current events in perspective makes sense too.

“Many a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after many a vanish’d face,

“Many a planet by many a sun may roll with a dust of a vanish’d race.

“Raving politics, never at rest—as this poor earth’s pale history runs,—
“What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam of a million million of
suns?...”

(“[Vastness](#),” Tennyson, via Bartleby.com)

What I say and how I act matter.

So does taking the long view:

¹ September 17, 2017, readings:

² Telling stories to make a point:

This contribution is available at <http://brendans-island.com/catholic-citizen/raving-politics/>
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The Trouble With The World is Me



In his book, *Small is Beautiful*, Schumacher said, “Although people go on crying out for solutions, they become angry when they are told that the restoration of society must come from within and not from without.” The evil that we read about daily in our newspapers or see on our television screens is but the outward projection of the

evil that is firstly conceived and spawned within the human heart and mind. That is why, when she was asked how to combat the woes of the world, St Catherine of Siena said, “The trouble with the world is me.”

It is all too easy to blame God, or ask why he does not prevent evil when it tears our lives apart, or the lives of the innocent for whom we can do nothing but offer sympathy. But the truth of the matter is that God is at all times poised to possess anyone who is open to receive the love that only he can give. It is this love that brings the profound inner peace that Jesus promised on the night before he died, so that it can be shared with the world that will always be at war without it. However, love cannot be forced on anyone who does not freely choose to receive it. If we are eaten up with hatred or jealousy, or possessed by pride or prejudice, it is we, not God who are responsible for destroying the peace and harmony that he wants to bring to the world through us.

St Catherine of Siena saw so clearly what she should do to enable God to make her into the greatest politician for peace in her time. She went into the ‘inner room’ to give prolonged periods of time to prayer, to enable the love of God to purify her of all the evil that could prevent her receiving the peace that she was able to share with the world around her.

When St John said, “God is Love” (1 John 4:8), he was not trying to give a definition of what love is in itself, as a philosopher would do. He was describing in his own language that God is loving us continually. The teaching of the great saints and mystics is that this love was sent out by God through Jesus on the first Pentecost day, and this love will continue to be sent out upon us to the end of time. We can only receive it into us if we continually turn and open our hearts to allow it in, or as St Peter put it, “repent”. The great Mystic Angela of Foligno who was a mother before she became a nun, said that prayer is the “School of Divine Love”, the *Schola Divini Amoris*. Why? Because it is in prayer that we continually practise loving or repenting. As many times as we turn away from distractions and temptations and turn back to God, we are exercising the muscles of our hearts to enable acts of loving to become a habit of loving. This enables God’s love, his Holy Spirit, to enter into our spirit as it reaches out to him.

In prayer then, our spirit becomes like a lightning conductor that can become the means through which the Holy Spirit can enter into our hearts. The more regularly and the more persistently we pray, the quicker we are changed. Firstly, our hearts are changed and then the rest of us. Once purified, our hearts become

the medium or the means through which every part of our body and soul becomes infiltrated by divine love. While Jesus was on earth we see this process taking place in his spiritual life, though his heart was never tainted with sin. Now Jesus is in heaven sending the love that he received down upon and into us, so that what was once done in him can be done in us too. He wants it to be done in all of us. But only those of us who freely choose to open ourselves to his love can receive it. Love cannot be forced. Not even God's love can be forced on those who do not choose to receive it.

St Teresa of Avila said that far from preventing us from praying, we cannot actually pray without distractions. As we turn away from them we are in fact practising saying 'no' to self and 'yes' to God. We are learning how to love by practising selflessness. This means that as we try to turn and open ourselves to him, in that very action he opens himself to us to fill us with his love. That is why St Francis of Assisi said that it is in giving that we receive.

Prayer then is the place where we freely choose to receive God's love despite the unwanted thoughts, fantasies and daydreams that try to distract us from receiving it. It is by daily trying to raise the mind and heart to God in prayer, by giving our time to be there, and then our energy to keep trying to turn to him, that God gives us the only love that can transform us into the image and likeness of Jesus through whom that love reaches out to possess us. That is why St Teresa of Avila said, "There is only one way to perfection and that is to pray. If anyone points in a different direction then they are deceiving you." In prayer, as we daily try to love by acting selflessly over and over again, the love of God penetrates and then possesses us more and more. With love all things are possible; with God's love everything is possible, even the impossible (Matthew 19:26). That is why all the books I have ever written are about how to pray from first beginnings to the heights of the Transforming Union

For those who are ready to accept this truth and are prepared to restructure their daily lives to make time for prayer, they will slowly but surely be transformed by the love that only God can give. Different forms and methods of prayer are only means to help keep turning to God in prayer. What helps one person might not help another; what helps us at one time in our lives might not help us at another. There is no perfect means of personal prayer, only different means to help different people at different times to keep doing the one thing necessary that St Peter told us to do at the very beginning; to keep repenting, keep turning and opening our hearts to the only one who can enthral us and make us new.

The message is so simple that it needs the simplicity of the child to see what cynics can only scoff at. We are not helpless; we can do something to combat the evil that we see in the world around us, if we are only prepared to go like St Catherine into the 'inner room'. It is here that we can seriously turn to the only One who can first bring to us what he would bring to the world that he now chooses to serve through us. It is only in this way that his kingdom, or his rule of love may reign where bitterness and hatred ruled before.

This contribution is available at <http://www.davidtorkington.com/the-trouble-with-the-world-is-me/>
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The Making of a Disciple: An Overview [at Bartimaeus' Quiet Place]



“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?” (Jn.14:26-28)

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I think it is very important that we have a clear understanding of what it means to be a “Disciple of Jesus Christ”. It is important, because it is in God’s purpose that all believers in Christ be aware of and understand, His call to enter into a discipleship relationship in Jesus His Son. In order to do so I believe that we must first understand what Jesus meant when He used the term “disciple”. I say this because if we really feel called to a true discipleship relationship with Jesus, that is where we have to start.

In general, the term “to be a disciple” meant and still means is to submit to being taught through a specific discipline. In Aramaic, it referred to the training/discipline you receive as an apprentice, where you learn by observing and doing what your master/teacher does.

What does it really mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

All Christian believers are expected to be “disciples” in that our lives should model the Love that motivated Jesus in every respect. If practiced according to New Testament scripture, it is not based on our effort to be good and loving, but the process whereby the Holy Spirit works in us to “conform us to the image of Christ” (Rom.8:29) so that our becoming is the result of His indwelling presence in us. It is a process that begins when we yoke ourselves to Christ so that He can do the Father’s works through us! But it requires a decision on our part, a decision beyond accepting the free gift of salvation in Jesus as savior.

Discipleship involves a Transformation

The Holy Spirit can only begin His work in us to conform us to the image of Christ, when we explicitly and freely yield to Him for that purpose. This decision involving the giving of ourselves for this purpose is very emphatically stated in Paul’s Letter to the Romans:



“I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Rom. 12:1-2)

God uses our offering of ourselves to mold us in to the image of Christ so that that point on in our lives, the Spirit of Jesus will be manifested in us and through us! This is what is meant when Paul states: ***“For whom he did foreknow, he***

also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom:8-29)

Now, we know from the Gospels that Jesus said He never did anything of His own will but according to the will of the Father, He also said that He only did what He saw the Father doing and said what the Father told Him to say. If He healed the sick and cast out demons, it was because He was accomplishing the Father’s purposes for Him in His ministry to others.



So too, if we are being conformed to Jesus, the process will involve being His apprentices (disciples) and yielding ourselves fully to the Holy Spirit so He can work in us and through us in doing nothing but what the Father wants us to do in fulfilling His purposes for us. In doing so we have to follow Him in the Spirit, die to our own self-will, carrying our cross of self-denial daily in order to truly be a disciple of Jesus, in the way that Jesus used the term.

We enter this level of discipleship only when we willingly, out of Love, offer ourselves as a living sacrifice (Rom.12:1), emptying ourselves of our own self-will so that He may Increase in us as His Will is done through us! The purpose of a disciple, then, is not so much “bringing people to Christ” but rather “bringing Christ to people” by letting His Kingdom of Love manifest through us.

Many are Called but Few are Chosen

I think we are all aware that in today’s world, we apply the term “disciple” or “discipleship” in a much looser framework. Many Christians use the term in alluding to their service in the church. We use this term to describe the time we give to ministry, even when we are usually serving our own ambitions by doing religious work for Him rather than listening and doing what He really wants to

do through us.

Others, like myself use the term “disciple” as a synonym to “believer” (although I have now, personally, relented from doing so). Even in the New testament, apart from Jesus’ declarations, we see the term used with a variety of connotations in reference to believers. For instance Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are referred to as “disciples” in John’s Gospel, even though they did not actually follow Jesus and did not declare themselves openly because “they were afraid of the Jews”.

I point this out because I just want to make it clear that the term “discipleship” that will be under discussion in this posting is with regard to what Jesus originally meant by the term, not what it later came to mean. The scripture quoted in the header is an example of what Jesus meant by a “disciple”.

The first hurdle we have to cross in coming to a clear understanding is that, while all disciples are believers, not all believers are disciples. A believer receives the free gift of salvation and reconciliation with the Father at the cost of Jesus’ giving of His life for us when he/she accepts Jesus as their personal Savior and repents of their sins in a sincere conversion and subsequent baptism. However, although the new believer also receives a calling to be a disciple of Christ as part of the graces at baptism, not all believers respond to the call to discipleship – essentially, to yield to the Holy Spirit to conform us to Christ and be yoked to Him so as to be His partners in bringing forth the Kingdom.

All believers are called to discipleship but not all, for a variety of reasons, respond to the call. The main reason being, that we are not taught clearly about what discipleship really entails and so we mainly follow traditional thinking that the call to discipleship is merely the call to full time ministry, which is not the case at all, it is a call to yield full control of our lives to Jesus so that HE may continue HIS service to humanity through us!

Discipleship is a Life Consecrated to Jesus

Besides receiving their calling as adopted sons of the Father, all Christians are also called to be disciples. However accepting this call is left as a free choice to every believer. To be a disciple is not compulsory to receiving salvation or adoption as children of God.

It is a free choice because it must be a decision that is made out of the deepest

love for God. A decision to yield oneself entirely to Him so that He, and He alone, may reign in us! A decision to give up our right to ourselves so that God Himself, through His Spirit, can work in us and through us to accomplish his purpose for us in this world! And His purpose for us in this world is to bring His Kingdom into manifestation through His Love which he has poured into us by His Holy Spirit! It is volunteering to be a worker in His Harvest regardless of the cost.

The purpose (or calling) of a disciple is to be a stand-in for Jesus and act in Jesus' name and in His Spirit to continue Jesus' ministry to the world – that is, to proclaim and LIVE the Good news of the Kingdom with signs following and to make disciples. This is called the Great Commission. It is the call for workers for the Harvest. But, contrary to popular opinion, it is not necessarily a call to full time ministry – one can fulfill this calling as whatever state in life you currently are. The Spirit of Jesus in you will then lead you to where He wants you – and it may be in the very same state where you received your calling or He may tell you to go into full time ministry. But it must be His call not yours.

Most of our religious traditions emphasize that “the Great Commission” is for all Christians, presuming that all Christians have accepted their call to discipleship. In reality, however most Christians, don't even realize that discipleship does not automatically ensue from our baptism. Living in discipleship means accepting being Yoked to Christ so He can live in you and through you.

You cannot freely make that decision until you are fully aware of the cost of that decision in that you are surrendering control of your life and placing it in Jesus' hands. It is a decision to walk by the spirit and not by the flesh. It is a decision to yield to the Holy Spirit to form us into the Image of Christ and empower us for His Service. It is a decision to be empowered by the Holy Spirit with ALL the Spiritual Gifts that are needed to accomplish the task we are assigned. We cannot just pick and choose those gifts we are comfortable with or exercise those gifts wherever we want – we have to follow the leading of the Spirit of God in all that we say or do. Everything we say or do must be the Father's will and not our own.

It must be stated that many of our religious traditions do make the conditions for discipleship VERY clear to those who choose to be ordained or enter into the consecrated religious Life. However, there is need to also reach out to us lay

people so that it is clearly understood that a discipleship relationship with Jesus is available to ALL Christians not just the ordained, religious or ministerial staff.



And the entry point to this “unofficial” type of discipleship for lay people is through prayer. Not just the superficial type of supplication prayer most lay people are accustomed to but a spiritually intimate, contemplative, mode of prayer such as the “Lectio Divina” mentioned in my previous posting. Without an intimate prayer life, it would be extremely difficult to discern the Fathers directives for your life and His specific will for those to whom you are ministering. You need to Hear His Voice in order to Obey!

This type of discipleship may be entered wherever you are in your life – it begins with a sincere prayer of repentance and a re-dedication of your life from that point on to the Lord! The Lord can use you as a disciple wherever you are. He can use you as a husband and father, He can use you as a wife and mother, He can use you as a single person and as a student still in school!

He will lead you and guide you using the circumstances of your life, because He will be your partner in the circumstances of your life or, rather, you will be His partner as He works in you and through you! But you have to let Him In! You have to ask to be YOKED to Him! And you have to put the Word of God into action in your life and the lives of those around you, so that you too, like Jesus can say: ***“The Spirit of the Lord is Upon me , because he has appointed me to proclaim the Good News ..”*** (Luke 4:18) through the life you will then live in His Name!

This how you become Jesus’ apprentice – because that is what true discipleship entails!

Here are the major principles to remember:

<> *The Word of God*

— Jesus is the WORD so if you are to Live like Jesus you have to live out the Word in your life!

— The study and meditation on God's Word is the Foundation on which the Holy Spirit will build...

— It must be an integral part of your life as a disciple – HIS WORD is a lamp unto our feet a light unto our path!

— The Word is the most powerful defense and offense we have against the powers of darkness,. It is the Sword of the Spirit that you will need to put off these forces that will come against you when you make your decision.

<> *Prayer*

— Prayer is essential to discipleship – but it is only part of the process

— It is through Prayer that we explicitly yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit so that He may conform us to the image of Christ,

— It enables s a deep spirit-to-spirit dialogue with our Teacher to enable us to understand the WORD of God, and the Father's Will and His purposes for us so that we can be His instrument in bringing forth the Kingdom through our lives.

— It provides us the spiritual basis and strength we need to persevere in the faith of our calling.

— It provides us the spiritual insight and empowerment we need to put the Word full into practice.

<> *Discipleship*

— Discipleship is apprenticeship – and apprenticeship involves taking action in faith.

— Apprenticeship goes beyond merely learning the principles of the Kingdom and discerning the Fathers will...it is the living out of those principles in our lives so that the Kingdom will be made manifest through us as the Spirit leads;

—Acting on principles of the Kingdom of the Kingdom is not following a lot of religious rules or projects – it is an emptying out of ourselves so that God can fill us with His Spirit and work in us and through us;

— It is NOT us doing something for God BUT letting God do something through us.

—When we thus yield ourselves to the Spirit everything we do or say will always be within the moral code established by God because the Spirit of Jesus in us will NEVER do something outside the Father's will.

— If we do not put the principles of the kingdom into practice through the Spirit that is in us, we cannot bear fruit for the Kingdom and all our effort at growing spiritually will be for naught.

— If we attempt to take action to carry out the Kingdom principles on our own we will utterly fail – for our walk must be in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

<> ***Spiritual Sustenance and Restoration***

— In order to sustain us as we “let His Kingdom Come” we also need Our “Daily Bread” – His Body and Blood as presented to us in Holy Communion. If possible, received on a daily basis.

— As Jesus told His Disciples: – “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; or my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.” (Jn. 6:53-56)

— And since we ought not partake unless we are in a repentant state (1 Cor. 11:23-27)), we also need the: graces offered in the Sacrament (ordinance) of Reconciliation.

<> ***The Challenge***

The Challenge, for those who sense the Lord is calling them and whose spirit has been incited by this article, is to come to the point of making a decision in faith and carrying out that decision in their lives. To that end the next article will deal with the specific items that we all face in stepping out into a discipleship relationship with Jesus, namely:

relationship with Jesus, namely ...

— Assessing the Cost

— Making the Decision (and the commitment)

— Living out our discipleship within the circumstances of our lives with humility, perseverance and faith.

In going forward only remember this... ***“Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.” (1Cor. 1:26-31)***

Praised Be His Holy Name!!

May the Lord Bless you all and may His Spirit enable you to respond to His call!

Your brother and fellow pilgrim in Christ Jesus... Bartimaeus

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This contribution is available at <http://quietplace4prayer.wordpress.com/2017/10/08/s-the-making-of-a-disciple-an-overview/>
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Roll With It [at Shifting My Perspective]

In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith... may prove to be for praise, glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:6-7



My kids aren't very good at accepting disappointment. It's probably because I used to try and keep life easy for them, fun and trouble-free.

They're older now. Like change, disappointment is one of those constants in life: it will always be there. If I don't succeed in teaching them how to deal with it now, they're going to struggle as adults.

I'm big into [code words](#) and catch phrases. Once I've taught my kids a big life-lesson, a catch phrase is a quick verbal reminder when they backslide. I've been searching for one for overcoming disappointment for a while now. I finally found it when commemorating the events of 9/11.

I was reflecting on the heroics of the passengers and crew on board the hijacked United Airlines Flight 93. Through cell phone calls, they learned the fate of the other three airplanes hijacked that morning. They quickly deduced that their plane was being used to further the terrorist plot. Consequently, they fought back, causing the plane to crash into a field in Pennsylvania, rather than its

intended target: possibly the White House, the U.S. Capitol, Camp David, or a nuclear power plant. Right before they took action, one of the passengers, Todd Beamer, was heard over an open phone line saying, “Let’s roll.”

Instead of being paralyzed with fear or devastation, the passengers and crew rose above. They took the absolute worst situation and used it to save lives. They became the glimmer of hope we all needed on that tragic, tragic day. I believe it is their actions that have inspired others to take heroic action against terrorists across the globe.

In tribute to them, I made our catch phrase for overcoming disappointment: “Roll with it.” Although the disappointments my kids face don’t even rate when compared to Flight 93, it is a great reminder that there isn’t a problem where good can’t be found.

If my kids surrender to any difficulty, just sit and wallow in it, they’ll never see or find that good. Instead, they need to take whatever comes their way and make the best of it, find the silver lining, make lemonade out of lemons, etc.

I have to practice rolling with it too. Worry is what trips me up the most. But the same rule applies: if I don’t look for the good in the midst of the worrisome situation, and just wallow in it, I get trapped in a spiral of anxiety. There is absolutely no benefit in that spiral at all.

You can be sure the crew and passengers aboard Flight 93 were worried, downright scared; but that didn’t stop them from moving forward. It was in the moving forward that hope was restored: for them, in making a difference in the world; for us, in highlighting that good can overcome evil.

I don’t ever want my kids to be in such a high-stakes position as the people aboard that flight; and I certainly don’t need them to be heroes on such a grand scale. All I want is for them to grow through, and beyond any and all setbacks that come their way. With the reminder of “Roll with it,” and all that it stands for, hopefully they’ll become more resilient people, and heroes over the problems in their own lives.

Questions For Reflection:

**** Have I taught my children how to work through disappointment and setbacks?***

**** Do I apply the same rules to myself?***

This contribution is available at <http://shiftingmyperspective.com/2017/09/28/roll-with-it/>
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Reassurance [at Bible Meditations]



“The Lord rules over the deep waters; he rules as king forever.” (Psalm 29: 10)

Although I got good grades all through school, in the real world, nobody asks or cares if I made the honor roll. What matters is how I act in the situation at hand.

In real life, there isn't always time to reflect or reason out how to respond to an irate client, a sudden calamity, or a child's question as she races for the school bus. Sometimes we have to trust our instincts. That can be scary for those of us who like to study the manual before making decisions. So often there is no manual.

Then, too, feelings come up that our brains can't always get a handle on. So much goes on beneath the surface. If I can't reason out what's going on beneath the conscious level, how can I know what my inner self is up to? What a relief to know that God rules over the deep waters of my heart.

When I start my morning with prayer and meditation, I surrender my whole self—not just my mind—to be under God's guidance and protection. As I go

through the day, even if I forget about God in the heat of the moment, I can rest assured that He won't forget about me. Some things are too deep for my rational mind, but God is never in over His head.

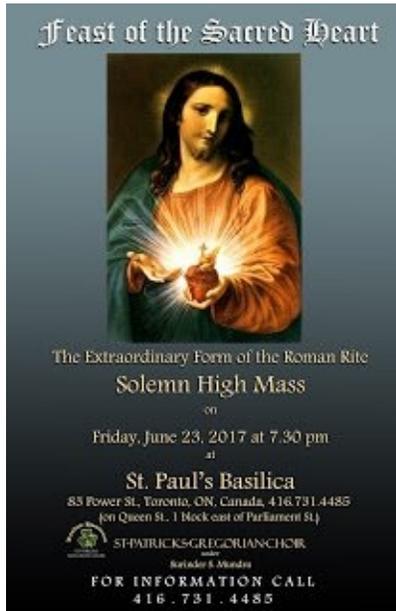
Prayer: Lord, rule over the deep waters of my heart.

Reflection for sharing: What reassurance comes from knowing that God is in charge?

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Report: Solemn Latin Mass for the Feast of the Sacred Heart [at Servimus unum Deum]



Note: Please read my blog's disclaimer

[here](#)

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Hello Everyone,

Despite my tardiness in the release of this report, between my full time job, home duties, weekend appointments, and the tiredness of full adulthood, this author once again is pleased to report on a Latin Mass offering that happened in our diocese, that occurred this summer, on the Friday evening of, June 23, 2017 at 730pm E.S.T. Once again, the St. Patrick's Gregorian Choir (herein SPGC) started their year of offerings, with another Solemn Latin Mass for their usual offering of the Feast of the Sacred Heart in the Latin Mass calendar.

In spite of some highly jealous and racist individuals doing the works of the

Devil, in the form of harassment of the choir or detraction of the offerings held by SPGC, the Lord once again triumphed and through the protection of St. Michael the Archangel, their offering went ahead as planned.

Pre-Mass Preparations

Written confirmation of the site, with instructions for operations the day of, was submitted by either the pastor of the Basilica, or administrative staff, a week and a half before this offering of the Mass.

Due to the extremely busy work lives of professional choirmaster, Surinder S. Mundra, as: professional organist for parishes in the Archdiocese of Toronto, the St. Patrick's 5pm Saturday Vigil in the Novus Ordo with Latin Propers and Responses (and following practices for the SPGC weekly,) ,

[the Mississauga Children`s Choir,](#)

and personal assistant, apprentice conductor, and pianist/harpsicordist for the

[Toronto Concert Orchestra](#)

, spearheaded by Maestro Kerry Straton; as well as that of the Master of Ceremonies, Surinder's brother, Paul, for the altar servers, a practice was not be able to be arranged on short notice.

However, on a positive note, all servers involved were veterans, having served at least one or more Latin Masses in other Masses organized by SPGC

, or offerings by other lay organizations that do not reflect the goals and aims of this blog, or Latin Mass parishes. We were working with an experienced crowd at the serving end of things.

In addition, this author stepped up a bit in leadership for some extra preparation, by sending all servers involved some YouTube videos, including one commonly sent to servers in past, exactly for the Feast of the Sacred heart.

Let me also state positively, that because of the growth overall of the Latin Mass in our Archdiocese

.....

, it is not surprising that every server who aided in this sacred liturgy was experienced enough to have served one or more roles in a Solemn level Latin Mass. Clearly enough offerings have been made available over time in Toronto (or its out-skirts), via the parishes, or other lay initiatives/choirs, or certain priests, that a number of young men now display competency in our diocese. While review and re-training is always a benefit to every acolyte,

that enough young men are now of decent competency really speaks for itself in the progress that has been made over these last several years, that there IS A DEMAND FOR IT AMONG YOUNG CATHOLICS, with even more room for growth and for new bodies to join in, with veteran young men for those new servers to have as reference

.

The SPGC has played a central part in this process with its offerings, in the introduction of a number of young men (including an aspiring applicant to the seminary,) to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, including serving in that Form.

In light of the absence of a pre-Mass practice, all acolytes were to arrive earlier than normal, 1.5 hours prior to the Mass versus the normal 1 hour prior, for a run-through of the roles, and any decisions made by the MC in terms of places, positioning, assigning of specific tasks in the Mass, etc. (... while there are guidelines and the Fortescue Book, certain tasks can be assigned to other servers practically which does not invalidate the Latin Mass.)

However, the men for the clergy roles DID receive training from our M.C.

As one of the bright signs that the Latin Mass is growing

in this, the 10th year since Benedict XVI released Summorum Pontificum,

we had two new men step up to the roles of Deacon and Sub-deacon, who have never done so before.

To quote prominent internet priest and Latin Mass/Traditionalist 'encyclopedia,' Fr. John Zuhlsdorf, we rebuild the Church and the Liturgy, "brick by brick."

The deacon role was done by a permanent deacon in the Archdiocese of Toronto in a central region parish. As for the sub-deacon role, a layman

Toronto in a central region parish. His for the sub-deacon role, a layman embarking on the path to seminary (that aspiring applicant,) who was with myself and others in choir at the

[St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica, Solemn Latin Mass in 2016 for Christ the King](#)

, stepped up, and was allowed to do so under the provision for "Straw" sub-deacon (Note "hardcore" Traditionalists: while certain communications have been passed around, there has not been one "silver bullet" declaration from Ecclesia Dei that reconciles the Straw Subdeacon position with modern seminary formation and clerical/sub-clerical position, with post-Vatican II practices, since the removal of the minor orders in the 70's.)

Both of these men have never been in a position of the clergy roles for a Latin Mass, and were new to the roles, so it was clearly a sign of the ``New Evangelization`` to have them here. Deo Gratias!

Day of The Mass

The setup of the Mass went up without a problem as the SPGC came fully prepared with all the necessary altar ware and linens, needed for the Latin Mass. They prepared the altar properly, efficiently, and with the speed of the 5th inning clean-up in a Major League Baseball game.

All clergy and servers arrived promptly before the Mass, went over necessary points with a little fine tuning for our clergy members chanting via the M.C. and the Choirmaster, and with excellent sacristan help from the Basilica`s lead sacristan, a gentle and radiant soul by the name of Catherine, we were off and away to do the Latin Mass.

Despite the new-ness of our non-Celebrant clergy, and some nerves sadly on my part as Acolyte 1, we nonetheless bought the Latin Mass of Ages once again to the Basilica of St. Paul. Our men in the new clergy roles, did their absolute best, and actually did a decent job when chanting their necessary parts. Thankfully, our celebrant, Fr. Russell Ashe, veteran to the Latin Mass circuit and holy and reverent priest, who does all offerings in the Archdiocese of Toronto without political slant or a preference for only those who are ``professional,`` led the way as our Celebrant and was, with our MC, a great leader to our novice clergy members.

As per the usual structure of these reports, allow this author to share pre-Mass photos of the setup of the altar for the TLM:



A zoomed out view of the main Sanctuary, to highlight the incredible artwork and mural of the Last Supper in the main space. Some more setup of a couple of items for the altar were to come.



The credence table with the (makeshift) Book of Epistles for the non-Gospel reading, Chalice in veil and with humeral veil, cruets with water and wine, and lavabo bowl and manutergium.



The altar set up with the Missale Romanum 1962, and in a much better light.

As for homily notes, as usual in my reports, Fr. Ashe's Homily, was, between my nerves and his British accent, unfortunately, missed for the most part by this author. It was a little hard to piece together. All I can say is this:

- Fr. did open his homily, speaking about the current state of the world, and while it is NOT the absolute end of the world, he did mention that there is a general feeling of woe and despair, one that ever more speaks to the necessity of devotion to the Sacred Heart today. **[Editorial Note: I would go even as far as to say that despair exists within our Church, with laypeople disparaging priests and bishops, and even against the Holy Father himself, such as the recent Filial "Correctio" by some 60+ odd Catholic lay scholars, clergy, and the head of the non-Canonical and Francis-hating SSPX "Bishop" Fellay. This is reminiscent of the Devil's "non-serviam" to God, and a complete dismissal of the Mark of the Church that is Holy. Matthew 16:18 anyone?]**
- Fr. Did do a brief history lesson on the development of the Sacred Heart, starting back from the 13th century with St., leading up to the establishment of the current practice of the 9 First Fridays thanks to St. Mary Margaret Alacoque, and the publishing of the [Papal pre-Vatican II encyclical, Haurietas Aquas, by Pius XII.](#)
- Fr did end on a note of entrusting ourselves to the Sacred Heart via this practice, which incorporates the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist in the Mass, but stating that it is by practicing these Sacraments (even outside of First Fridays) that will unite us to the Sacred Heart.

Regardless, despite all the roadblocks that the Devil loves to throw at those who do the Lord's work, especially in doing the Latin Mass, with many temptations

of the evils, prejudices, and dark hearts of men, our Lord allowed His Sacred Heart to shower the Love of the Holy Mass in the hearts of at least 120 attendees, give or take 20, to quote a choir member.

As for those attending, I saw a number of our frequent attendees, some friends of old, a couple of fellow brothers/sisters of Christ (including a fellow brother of the Knights of Columbus,) and even recently new acquaintances. Of note, a handful of young men alone, or with a friend/family were in attendance! Perhaps even, maybe a few were members from the new Juventutem Toronto Chapter that opened up last year? It's these poignant notes, not: surging numbers, fancy titles, logos, prominence/"Professionalism," etc. that the radicals value ever so much, that count when it comes to the Holy Mass. That those who attend the Latin Mass, do so out of Love for our Lord, and that His Sacred heart, the love it exemplifies, **be given to others, including fellow Catholics within the Latin Mass, and the "Novus Ordo" church, to the fallen on the peripheries**, to paraphrase our current Pontiff, Pope Francis.

May you have enjoyed another report from Servimus Unum Deum, of the offerings of the SPGC. The next offering of the SPGC, will be the following: **Feast of Christ the King (in the Extraordinary Form Calendar), on Sunday, October 29th, 2017. This mass will likely have a start time of 3pm, location To Be Determined in the Archdiocese of Toronto.**

Pax Tibi Christi, Julian Barkin.

This contribution is available at <http://torontotlmserving.blogspot.ca/2017/10/report-solemn-latin-mass-for-feast-of.html>
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Saint Gabriel Lalemant - Last but not Least of the Canadian Martyrs [at The Koala Mom]

Saint Gabriel Lalemant was the last of the eight Canadian martyrs to arrive in New France. He served for the shortest amount of time and was martyred with Saint Jean de Brebeuf.

Saint
Gabriel
Lalemant:

*Last but not least of
the Canadian
Martyrs*

Saint Gabriel Lalemant was born in Paris on October 10, 1610. His uncle Charles Lalemant was the first Jesuit superior in New France. Charles was also the friend and priest of explorer Samuel de Champlain. Another uncle, Jerome Lalemant, was a Jesuit priest who served as a missionary to the Huron, established the order of donnes, and wrote many of the *Jesuit Relations*.

Thus it seems only natural that Gabriel should follow his uncles into the Order. He became a Jesuit at the age of twenty. Along with the usual vows of a Jesuit, Gabriel also “added a fourth vow to devote his life to the Indians” (John J. Wynne). [Historian Angus McDougall](#) notes that Gabriel’s mother must have been extremely devout. Five of her six children entered the religious life and she herself, after her children had left home, became a nun. Gabriel’s life can thus inspire us as moms to keep praying for our children and their vocations.

Saint Gabriel Lalemant Arrives in New France

Gabriel was ordained as a priest in 1638, after eight years of study. He taught for several years, before and after his ordination, at various Jesuit colleges. He also served as a chaplain for a year at the college of La Fleche, “owing to weak health” (Wynne). His desire to serve the Indians like his uncles was granted in 1646 when he sailed to New France to join his uncle Jerome, who had arrived there in 1645 to oversee the Canadian missions.

Just a month after Fr. Lalemant’s arrival, [Fr. Isaac Jogues](#) and his assistant, [Jean de la Lande](#), were martyred by the Iroquois. This was an indication of what Fr. Lalemant could expect as a missionary to the Huron. George Anderson records that “Jesuits and Hurons alike were well aware of the danger posed by their hostile neighbors to the north who periodically swept down to make devastating raids.”

Fr. Lalemant spent two years serving in Quebec itself. A fellow missionary noted that Fr. Lalemant was “a man of extremely frail constitution” (McDougall). Likely his uncle tried to keep him from the more strenuous postings. In August 1648, Fr. Lalemant traveled with several other priests into Huronia. He stayed in the mission station at Ste. Marie, studying the Huron language. He was apparently an excellent student who made rapid progress.

Saint Gabriel Lalemant is Martvred

In February 1649, Fr. Lalemant joined [Fr. Jean de Brebeuf](#), replacing [Fr. Noel Chabanel](#), who went on to another village. Wynne notes that Fr. Lalemant was “a profound theologian” who was “fond of teaching children and candidates for baptism.”

Barely a month later, the Iroquois burned St. Ignatius, one of the villages established by the Jesuit missionaries. News of this attack quickly reached the nearby St. Louis, where Fr. Brebeuf and Fr. Lalemant were serving. Many of the Huron fled St. Louis. The priests remained with the warriors who had chosen to defend their village against the Iroquois.

The Iroquois burned St. Louis and killed many of its residents, but took the priests back to St. Ignatius. There, both priests were tied to stakes and tortured. Anderson says, “The Iroquois’ special vehemence was directed toward de Brebeuf, whom they had long known by his name of Echon, *the strong one*.” Fr. Lalemant witnessed Fr. Brebeuf’s death on March 17 before enduring further torture himself. He was killed early the next day.

The End of the Jesuit Mission in Huronia

After the Iroquois withdrew, Fr. Ragueneau, the superior at Ste. Marie, sent men to recover the priests’ bodies. In the *Relations*, he says that his men “found there a spectacle of horror,—the remains of cruelty itself; or rather the relics of the love of God, which alone triumphs in the death of martyrs” (quoted in Wynne). Ragueneau noted further that “they could easily and without sin have put their lives in safety, if they had not been filled with love for God rather than for themselves.”

Then, with the Huron dispersed and the Iroquois still a threat, the Jesuits reluctantly dismantled the mission at Ste. Marie and retreated themselves. They burned Ste. Marie to prevent its use by the Iroquois. Then they accompanied some of the Huron leaders to an island in Lake Huron. Since the 1950s, archaeologists have excavated Ste. Marie and reconstructed what the missions would have been like during the Jesuits’ work in New France in the 1600s.

Gabriel Lalemant was canonized in 1930, with the other seven Canadian Martyrs in the [Catholic saints list](#). Their feast day is celebrated on September 26 in

Canada.

Saint Gabriel, pray that I may inspire my children to a life of holiness and service as your mother did. Pray that I might instruct them well in the doctrines of our faith. Amen.



This contribution is available at <http://thekoalamom.com/2017/10/saint-gabriel-lalemant/>
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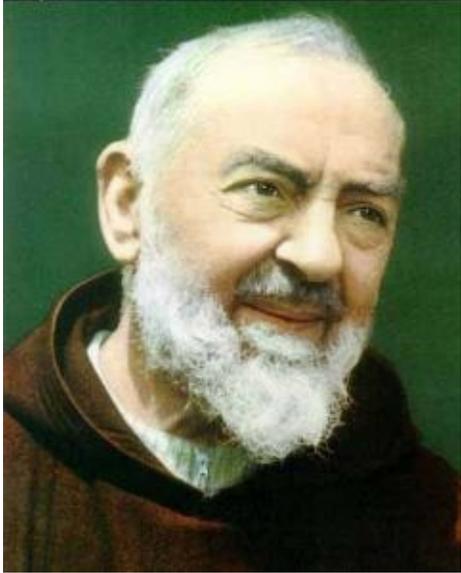
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12 Quotes from the Great Saint of Pietrelcina

Today in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church, we celebrate the memorial of the Great Saint of Pietrelcina, otherwise known as Padre Pio. If you are not familiar with this amazing 20th century Catholic Saint and Franciscan, I would encourage you to [read up on him](#) and learn as much as you can. He is one of my favorites and a favorite of many Catholics I know.

So since it is his day in the liturgical calendar, I wanted to provide you with some pretty amazing things he said this side of Heaven. I would encourage you to read them, memorize them, and/or pray with them. Many are just one sentence, but there is so much in just a few words. Here are 12 quotes from the Great Saint of Pietrelcina –

1. “Do not undertake any course of action, not even the most lowly and insignificant, without first offering it to God.”
2. “Every Christian who is a true imitator and follower of the Nazarene can and must call himself a second Christ and show forth most clearly in his life the entire image of Christ. Oh, if only all Christians were to live up to their vocation, this very land of exile would be changed into paradise.”
3. “Our body is like a jackass that must be beaten, but just a little, otherwise it will throw us to the ground, and refuse to carry us.”
4. “Prayer is the best weapon we have; it is a key that opens God’s heart. You must speak to Jesus, not only with your lips, but also with your heart; actually, on certain occasions, you should speak with only your heart.”
5. “Do not ever lose heart when the tempest rages; place all your trust in the Heart of the most gentle Jesus. Pray and I might add, devoutly pester the divine Heart.”



6. “As long as there remains a drop of blood in our body, there will be a struggle between right and wrong.”
7. “In all that you do, always be humble, guarding jealously the purity of your heart and the purity of your body; these are the two wings which will raise to God and make us almost divine.”
8. “Satan fears and trembles before humble souls.”
9. “It is difficult to become a saint. Difficult, but not impossible. The road to perfection is long, as long as one’s lifetime. Along the way, consolation becomes rest; but as soon as your strength is restored, you must diligently get up and resume the trip.”
10. “Be content to obey, which is never a small thing for the soul who has chosen God as his portion, and resign yourself to be for now a small hive bee to make honey.”
11. “At all times, try to conform to the will of God in everything that you do, and have no fear. This conformity is the surest way to Heaven.”
12. “Let us become saints so that having been together on earth, we may be together in Heaven.”

Prayer of Pope Saint John Paul II to Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Teach us, we pray, humility of heart, so that we may be counted among the little ones of the Gospel to whom the Father promised to reveal the mysteries of His Kingdom. Help us to pray without ceasing, certain that God knows what we need even before we ask Him. Obtain for us the eyes of faith that will help us recognize in the poor and suffering, the very face of Jesus. Sustain us in the hour of trouble and trial and, if we fall, let us experience the joy of the sacrament of forgiveness. Grant us your tender devotion to Mary, mother of Jesus and our Mother. Accompany us on our earthly pilgrimage toward the blessed Homeland, where we too, hope to arrive to contemplate forever the Glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina...Pray for Us

Sources:

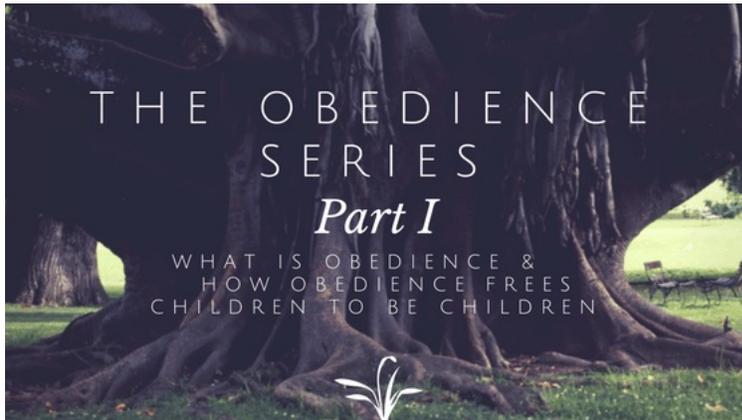
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What Is Obedience & How Obedience Frees Children to Be Children



Isn't obedience kind of repressive and controlling? Doesn't it imply a lack of critical thinking, creativity, and independence? Isn't obedience why horrific events like the Holocaust happened?

In short; no, no, and no.

Obedience is the most misunderstood and undervalued virtue in our culture.

In the moment, it is not particularly fun. In the words of a certain 3 year old I know particularly well, when asked why he wouldn't just *listen* already:

“Because I don't *like* to follow constructions.” (imagine the crossed arms and foot stomp for full effect)

Join the club, little man. Most of us do not enjoy following the “constructions” of others, particularly when they run counter to our own desires. Obedience is somewhat different from other virtues in this respect. Most people *want* to love, *want* to be hopeful, *want* to see justice. In our human weakness, we fail at these things, but we still desire them. Obedience, we desire less.

What Is Obedience?

Let's start with what it isn't. Obedience isn't:

- Acting thoughtlessly.
- Blindly complying with any given instruction.
- Not thinking for ourselves.
- Doing things that are wrong, immoral, or unethical because someone told us to.

Obedience *is*:

- Respecting the people who are in a valid position of authority over us.
- Keeping the rules.
- Doing what is right and just *even when it means sacrificing our own desires*.

When we obey people who are in a valid position of authority over us- like parents, coaches, bosses, bishops, and teachers- we practice aligning our will with God's will.

Obedience looks like a child who comes home at the time his parents told her to be home, the football player who executes the plays identified by the coach, and an employee who completes a task in the way his boss directed.

The question that always follows is, "But what about authority figures who instruct their subordinates/charges to do something that is wrong?" The short answer is, directives to act immorally or unethically or which cause harm do not fall under the virtue of obedience. No one is obligated to do something wrong, to hurt others, or allow themselves to be hurt in the name of obedience. The long answer is, we'll talk more about this question in Part III.

Obedience Allows Children to Be Children

Obedience is crucial for our overall growth in virtue, and particularly so for children. It is not oppressive, repressive, or controlling. Obedience is actually liberating.

Kelly quotes [author Laura Berquist](#) on obedience and it's relationship to prudence:

Aristotle, in the [Nicomachean Ethics](#), teaches that prudence is the cardinal virtue. It is prudence that makes it possible to do the right thing in the right place at the right time. An action that is courageous in one instance may be

rash or foolish in another, because the time and place are not right. Prudence puts the actions in the right order.

Children are not capable of prudence. Of the virtues, prudence most of all requires experience. To know that now is the time to speak up, and now is the time to keep silent, is something one learns by doing and observing. To be able to determine that in this case the virtuous action is to stay home and work on a project, but in that case the virtuous action is to leave the project and go to the talk, requires experience and reflection on that experience. Children don't have experience. But their parents do.

For children obedience takes the place of prudence and that is why it is so central to their training. By obedience children participate in the prudence of their parents.

In other words, small children lack the wisdom and experience to reflect on the proper course of action in a given situation, and obedience is the vehicle for participating in their parents' wisdom and experience.

It was the general practice at a particular school where I taught to allow kids to walk through the hallways not in line, just sort of moving as a pack. This drove me insane, but since it was a part of the school culture I ignored my own inclinations on the how-children-should-travel-through-the-school subject. These were good kids from good families, so generally speaking, the only issue was that they got a little loud sometimes.

On the day of my first fire drill at this school, students straggled out of the building, repeatedly got out of line, continued to talk, moved away from their class, etc. I was furious.

“Get in line! Stop talking! Stay put! Be quiet! No, do not move over there!”

Here's the thing, though. Kids don't have the prudence to understand the demands of subtly different situations. They know the fire drill is a drill, and they don't actually expect the school to catch on fire, so who cares? If they can chat and roam any other time they're walking down the hallway, why not now? If they aren't ever expected to follow adult instructions immediately, why now?

Life is complicated. Adults are responsible for the discernment of different situations and how to behave in a given situation. Ambiguity, waffling, and

inconsistency don't work for kids. A six year-old is simply not capable of saying to themselves, "You know, this is a fire drill. We are practicing for what to do should a terrible emergency occur. Therefore, I better behave as if this is the real deal, because I don't actually know and in a real fire, I would need to be attentive to the adult in charge of me."

This kind of reflectiveness and self-mastery have to develop over many years and through a lot of practice. We allow kids to develop these skills when we tell them what the right thing to do is, not when we endanger them by letting them roam aimlessly (literally as well as figuratively).

Obviously, the number of topics on which the adult in authority is going to be giving explicit instructions decreases with age. You might let your teenager experience the natural consequences of staying up too late, but not your preschooler who can't connect, "I didn't go to bed 12 hours ago when I should have," with "and now I am cranky and generally miserable." Instead, you just put them to bed.

While you let the teenager find out about staying up too late the hard way, you don't let them find out about texting and driving the hard way. Because the consequences are so grave as to demand that your prudence as an adult take precedent. And how do children participate in prudence? Through obedience.

Requiring the obedience of children in our care allows them to be children. It protects them from negative consequences they can't yet foresee or be responsible for.

While I've talked mostly about children here, these same principles apply to adults.

In the army, a soldier is required to obey orders from his superiors because they have a broader view of the situation and more military experience. The consequence of disobedience is the endangerment and death of other soldiers.

In a workplace, employees are required to comply with their supervisor's instructions. Failure to do so means that the organization will be unstable, inefficient, and lacking focus.

Obedience is the virtue necessary for any group to function, to serve its purpose, and to protect its most vulnerable members, while allowing them

to grow in wisdom and knowledge.

In the next two posts in this series, I'll talk about:

Obedience Is Not the Enemy of Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Problem Solving

and

Obedience Is Not the Cause of Historical Atrocities

This contribution is available at <http://www.julia-harrell.com/2017/09/25/the-virtue-of-obedience-series-what-is-obedience/>
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Please, talk to me about love, Mommy, Daddy. [at In the Breaking of the Bread]

“Please, talk to me about love, Mommy, Daddy.”

Notes from a conference in French “S’il-vous-plaît, parlez-moi d’amour” given at the Diocese’s offices March 29th, 2017 by Inès Pélissié du Rausas, a mother who has [written books](#) on how parents can form their children well at the various stages of their development in ways appropriate to each age to understand and live well their human sexuality.

Inès advocates precocious but progressive education of children with tenderness by their parents in contrast to the intrusion of culture and society which, truthfully, is erroneous, violent, and damaging, all too often ruining or at the very least hurting our children’s innocence and ability to appreciate all the beauty, truth, and goodness of the gift of life entrusted to them by God and their own great dignity and that of others.

As lionesses are so ferocious in defending their young; so too should we be as parents to defend and form our children regarding their vocation, their calling to eternal life, which is at stake, and the spiritual strength God offers us with Marriage and family life. Let us think not only of our own children, but also of the children of others and of the poor. We need to rediscover or to acquire for the first time our spinal column, our backbone, and stand up for our children, for our family, for our Marriage, for others, for the poor, for the Church, for humanity, and for God.

With the Holy Spirit we have at hand an infinite variety of new solutions to age old problems created when people – motivated by so many hidden goals driving them – tamper with our children and seek to “play around” with their innocent, vulnerable, trusting and hearts.

No one must play around with our children’s hearts!

There are 3 lobbies and “outside interests” putting considerable pressure everywhere and all the time on our children, and particularly on what the marketing strategists call “pre-adolescents”. In reality, there is no such thing as a pre-adolescent unless it is in the interest of someone to target children in the “latency stage” in view of influencing them in advance of becoming adolescents. The latency stage is what children live from the age of 6 until puberty, when in principle all sexual things don’t interest them or are even repugnant to them. In other words, there are interests out there addressing our children in the latency stage as though they were already adolescents, or potential adolescents, or children wanting to become adolescents. These interests threaten to interrupt the safety of the latency stage as they prematurely stimulate the imagination of children and, in so doing, to damage their innocence.

Tactic # 1.

Under the pretext of taking the defense of freedoms / liberties and equality, such as, for example, the fight against AIDS, all manner of misinformation and outright lies are propagated, always with the overhanging threat of severe reprisals upon anyone who might dare to oppose this tactic in real life and time.

Tactic # 2.

Consider all the frantic activity around pornography – such as with the considerable pressure on parents to provide their young children with an I-Pad, or I-Phone, or Laptop, or their equivalent – to sever the safety ties of young children to their parents and make them free to “roam” and be led astray by any number of “wolves” in sheep’s clothing presented to them in any number of creative and cleverly disguised ways.

All pornographic voices and images and words speak of prostitution – none of them speak of love, not of true love, nor of divine love – but always of pleasure, greed, power, and domination. Solicitation to draw children into various forms of prostitution of their bodies as pleasure objects and to treat others not as persons but as pleasure objects often takes violent forms but is always aggressive with dangerous consequences.

The person of the child is hurt, damaged, within their very self, but they also become dangerous for others by being conditioned to believe that they are incapable of mastering or restraining their own impulses.

SOLUTION

We must do all we can to protect our children against these attacks and form them to learn to avoid such animal and predatory behaviors as are portrayed and promoted by pornography in all its forms. What is hopeful is that with children we can always repair any damage, and they can always learn and grow. With a child we can always love and begin afresh.

Tactic # 3.

We have all become painfully aware of and familiar with the latest new ideology which aggressively seeks to impose on young and vulnerable children and adolescents and even young adults a burden to select their own gender, as if our gender were an “à la carte” activity for human beings. Gender ideology negates human sex and gender by replacing male and female with homosexual and heterosexual, M - F with H - H.

This new ideology seeks to replace the individuality and complementarity of our human nature as designed by God with pleonasm – that is, with what is the same as, with redundancy – favoring what is the same as me, rejecting what is different from me. It is the destruction of the richness of complementarity for the sake of the identical.

SOLUTION

We must avoid using any other terms than those given to us by God – male and female – and simply say that I am woman, or I am man, girl or boy. The term “heterosexual” was coined by a German who wanted to promote homosexual activity in the 18

th

/19

th

century. He used from the Greek “heteros” which means different and “sexue” or in Latin “sexus” which means separate or different. In other words, the term is redundant, saying the same thing twice. It’s a clever trick to annihilate the final purpose of our human sexuality – which is life and union for life and stability in Marriage and family life – and replace it with individuals seeking after their own pleasure.

In the Creator’s plan for our happiness, the finality of our human sexuality is union and fecundity, life and family. These other “interests” want to promote “sex ed” – that is, education to sexual practices that it is claimed “everyone wants” and how to practice them providing safety and protection from sexually transmitted infections and diseases. However, there is never any question or concern in “sex ed” to protect the person in all that we are and can be.

Such “sex ed” ignores and tramples the meaning and beauty of the human body as well as the body’s union to relationship, marriage, children, and family, and the truth that we all want to be loved. All the “dirty” content damages the child’s heart by presenting a perversion of human sexuality. The solution is to reach the child’s heart by treating with the truth, love, beauty, and life, which is good news, and “different from what you have seen”, what is presented out there in the world, in culture, and in the various media of mass and social communication.

SUMMARY

The pre-adolescent or rather the child in the latency and innocent stage is “beaten up or mugged” by publicity which treats him like an adolescent when he isn’t one yet.

First we have to present love as beautiful before we can treat what is dirty, false, violent, etc. We only have to look at video clips that turn various scenarios into pornography. Porn is to be avoided by everyone in all of its forms, because this garbage expresses itself in the heart and hardens it. The world of “hot” folks is actually glacial... cold... without real love which builds the other up without exploiting him or her.

7 to 8 years old is the age of reason which introduces a new form of stability for the child who leaves infancy behind.

6 or 7 to 12 is the latency period during which a form of modesty awakens and manifests itself in different ways. From now on the child wants to bathe alone, now having a greater awareness of himself, of his body.

As a result the boy displays a kind of repugnance for everything sexual and even for marks of affection for members of the opposite sex.

The young girl for her part may begin to keep an intimate diary which must be protected from her brothers.

In any case parents must gently open their child to others during this period during which both girls and boys are inclined to close in on themselves.

In the west for the past 100 years puberty has been advancing and showing itself younger; without doubt due to pollution and the increased presence of estrogen in the environment due to the pill and other sources which end up in the waters and the soils and, as a result, in the food chain.

THE CHILD IN THE LATENCY STAGE

Paradox # 1.

The child is really connected but very alone. He has a great need to be loved. Parents should ask themselves, “Does my child know that I love him?” Even in the culture we see evidence of this unavoidable truth as, for example, in the “Harry Potter” series of novels we see from beginning to end the conviction that “evil can do nothing against the sacrificial love of a mother.”

Our children need to be absolutely loved by their parents, no matter the conditions. In addition there is the even greater good that they are wanted and loved by God. Let’s do what we must so that they can bathe in the love of God.

Paradox # 2.

During this latency stage the child puts forward “me by myself” but for all that we continue to deliberately accompany, congratulate, and surround him with our love, perhaps a little more discretely, but just as truly and personally, despite the new “distance”.

Paradox # 3. External autonomy versus interior liberty – The child now becomes more competent in getting around and doing things, but going about taking care of his own needs by himself requires maturity, more than he is

likely to have at this age. His incomplete maturity requires a degree of support that varies from one child to another. Parents need to observe and realize that during this latency stage the child cannot yet be really mature or entirely autonomous.

Here lies the great challenge for the parent who is too busy and tired: to recharge his strength and energy for the good of the child in his suffering, pain, and shadows. The challenge is all the greater for the parent still living with his own sufferings, pain, and shadows; which he must manage privately in order to continue providing the emotional education of the child. This emotional education of the child becomes all the more difficult in view of the child's own interior states. At this level, what the parent is going through can make him more compassionate to the states through which his child is passing, and this same compassion can allow the parent to sufficiently forget himself to attend to his child's needs.

In the matter of emotional education in his human nature and sexuality, the child has the right to see, to hear, and to know his parents' love story, and thus, his origins. It doesn't matter if one of the parents and spouses is no longer around. The remaining parent must put aside all recrimination he may feel against his ex-spouse; because the child has both the right and the need to know about his origins in the love that his parents had for one another, and hence, for him their child.

EMOTIONAL AND SEXUAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN BEFORE ADOLESCENCE

The emotional and sexual education of our children needs to happen before they enter into adolescence, and it can begin as soon as they ask questions that remotely or closely touch all that has to do with their origin or sexuality. This education of the child by their parent must always be done with great tenderness and affection; for this is the most faithful expression of the truth about love which gives life not only at the beginning but which continues to give life all during life. Given the human and cultural situation in which we currently live, parents need reference points in order to effectively embark on the emotional and sexual education of their children.

Reference point # 1.

Human love is lived in the world of

human persons

. Human beings are not things, not animals, not machines, not toys, but persons. We, human beings, we are a living network of body, soul, spirit, mind, and heart. So we're not talking about a model of animal instinct as in wild or domesticated beasts. We are not human beasts, but rather human persons. This is why we absolutely reject all forms of pornography, of prostitution, or of perverted sexuality which, in every case, showcases instinctual, impulsive, and therefore, animal behaviors and activities.

Reference point # 2.

Your body – is you – it is not a thing which belongs to you, but **you are your body** at the same time that you are also your soul, your spirit, your mind, and your heart, which all together form the person that you are. So what your body lives, you live it too. That is why all behaviors which deform the human person and human sexuality by whatever pornographic expression – such as submission to concupiscence or instinctive behaviors such as fellatio and others – are a disruption of your dignity.

Serial or repeated sexual relations harden the heart which becomes incapable of truly loving or being loved; which brings deep suffering of isolation and interior cold. Having recourse to pornography causes the person with a hard heart no longer to believe in real love or even in life. Such a person may either be swallowed up in the impulse to suicide or may seek an escape in the artificial option of “no sex” or refusing to identify with any gender: “I am neither male nor female, neither man nor woman”.

Reference point # 3.

Faced with all this pollution of ideas, of propaganda, and of interior states, what do we say to our children? **“I am made to love... I have a heart.”** The parent can and must soak the heart of their child in love and the child will himself or herself recognize “garbage” assertions. In

the same way that one must wax well with many repetitions a piece of furniture made from high quality wood to protect it from stains; so must parents must “wax well” their children’s hearts, spirits, minds, and souls. The “layers” of wax are so many intimate moments of complicity with their child as they entertain all sorts of assertions about love – about their parents’ love but also about God’s love – of which he, the child, is the product and of which he continues to be the object, and of which he is also now becoming the subject, capable of loving in his turn in a disinterested fashion with a sacrificial love.

VOCABULARY EVOCATIVE AND FORMATIVE TO THE VOCATION TO LOVE

The mommy’s tummy, the mommy’s uterus is a

safe cradle

for the baby right next to the mommy’s heart where the baby hears his mommy’s heart, and together they make the music of two hearts beating together.

How will the baby come out of mommy’s tummy? The baby will come out by

a little path reserved for life and for love

, reserved for the baby to live, and also reserved for love and therefore for the daddy.

The vagina of the mommy is

made only for life and for love

.

The anus is for something else, to let the body get rid of garbage.

The channel for pee is also for getting rid of garbage, even if it seems to be the same channel for two different things, it is only part of it which is shared, but by only one thing at a time.

THE TIDAL WAVE OF INNOCENT CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

How did the baby get into mommy's tummy?

Path of love # 1.

The baby entered into mommy's tummy by the same special path that the baby will take to come out on his birthday. It is the little path reserved for life and for love, for the heart.

Path of love # 2.

Daddy and Mommy love each other and tell each other, but it isn't enough – just like when you are glad to see me and give me a hug – so Daddy and Mommy give each other a special hug.

Path of love # 3.

When the heart of the daddy and the mommy are full of love; then the daddy's heart is also full of love and he is able to give all his love to the mommy. The Daddy's rod gently lifts up and is able to enter into the mommy's path which is reserved for life and for love.

Path of love # 4.

Then there is a crowning of their love... there is great joy in their united hearts and bodies, and it is from this love that the child begins to exist in the mommy's tummy.

The education of our children belongs to our right and our duty to think and to speak. Various ideologies try to intimidate us and reduce us to silence, but it is more essentially our right and our duty to speak more precisely to our children who, for their part, have both the right and the need to know the whole truth about their life and their origin, their human nature, and their human sexuality. Adolescents now observe the dichotomy among the various voices demanding their attention and allegiance; so we must approach them with a much more precise language.

Approach # 1. Confronted by all the voices speaking of human sexuality, with adolescents we need to **talk all the more precisely**, because they have a greater need to understand more concretely.

Approach # 2. We must also speak to them of the **interior battle** and of **self mastery**; that as human persons we have a great capacity for self-control, but we must exercise it, and that our self mastery grows with time and practice, and that the love of God is the source of our interior strength. It is God who

loves us first and who draws us to love Him, to love others, and to love ourselves.

Approach # 3. It is good and necessary for us to elicit in **the child** – and eventually **the adolescent** – **admiration** for the perfection of love. Loving is like having a good voice. To sing well one must see and know the partition well. The lyrics and notes of the partition are: respect for the other, fidelity to the other, tenderness towards the other, and paying attention to the expectations of the other.

Approach # 4. **Homophilia** – at the beginning of adolescence youth find reassurance in their peers and can feel all kinds of emotions towards their peers, but there is nothing sexual about it. However today the culture (which for decades has been manipulated by those with strategic agendas to change society's attitudes) so the culture tries to sexualize the other. Unfortunately, this sexualization of the other renders more difficult any ordinary true and disinterested friendship without any sexual overtones.

Approach # 5. One must certainly not listen to voices that advocate “trying everything” in terms of sexual activity, because we have a “body memory” which even after a single act colors everything that follows. That is why outside of the loving relationship of one man and one woman in a committed, permanent, exclusive, and faithful union, such as in marriage, all sexual activity conditions the human heart on a path of egoism and the quest for personal pleasure; which hardens the human heart and makes true love all the more difficult.

Approach # 6. A youth can become aware of a “dragger” or homosexual predator trying to impose on him or her. This youth must understand – this is absolutely essential – that “feeling” something is not “consenting”. The youth, like any human person, remains ever free to ask himself, “What do I want?” and “Is this good or not?” the “No!” of which I am

capable in my conscience protects me in order to one day be able to say a beautiful “Yes!” to the person that I will choose to love and who will love me in return.

Approach # 7. The young adolescent woman like the young adult woman can find herself temporarily in the condition of “homo femini” or fear of male sexuality because of its violent portrayal in pornography. She must learn from her parents that it isn’t really like that in a loving relationship between human persons.

Parents, have many gratuitous moments sitting down face to face with your child. See the relationship of befriending when the fox meets the little prince. We must approach gently, and that takes time. For boys, it’s better by the father; but if not, the mother must do it. For example, the mother can say to him, “Your father and I want to tell you...”

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF CHILDREN

Original sin consists in man and woman turning away from their relationship with God the Creator to prefer making up their own life, their own reality, their own universe, their own definition of human life and of good and evil. There is nothing more painful in our human condition than this isolation from God, who is not only our origin in love but also our destiny.

That is why it is essential for parents to introduce their child to God. However, we cannot give what we do not already possess. Still, with God, it is never too late. So, the simple realization by parents that there is somewhere within them some sort of desire to give their children what is best can already open within them the gateway to all that is “beyond”. These are the opportunities in real time, in the present moment, to give their children the “sacraments” or knowledge of

God, or prayer, or spirituality, or faith.

The heart of the Judeo-Christian Tradition is clearly that the God who is good and loving, the Creator of the Universe, wants to have a relationship of friendship and love with every human person. God, who is infinitely rich, wants to give us everything, but all the obstacles that exist are within us... the “gates” within us are not always open, or else they are not always open wide.

BAPTISM – At Baptism God the Holy Trinity engenders within the human person a “family relationship” of adoption introducing the person – even a newborn baby – into the heart of the relationship of communion already existing from all eternity and which “defines” the divine being we call God and whose nature Jesus has revealed as a “communion of divine persons in a single divine being”. The life that exists in God in perfect love and perfect harmony begins to “flow” or “vibrate” in us, and we begin to “live in God”. As for everything else regarding our human life on Earth, this new life “in God” must be cultivated, first by our parents and godparents, but gradually by the free and motivated participation of the child himself or herself.

CONFIRMATION – Whether it is the day after its birth or at 11 / 12 years old, at its confirmation or chrismation the child receives a new “effusion” or “outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God” as the apostles and 100 or so other disciples received as they gathered around the Mother of Jesus in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is ever at work to infuse his gifts: piety for greater respect for the works of God, especially man and woman, girl / boy; and all the other spiritual gifts for the person and the charisms for the good of others and the Church. Parents can and must help their child to see himself or herself as loved by God and that they receive themselves from God in love. Their gender – female or male / man or woman – was given to them at their conception and will ever manifest itself and develop.

HOLY COMMUNION – as the mother gives of her blood / milk in nursing her

baby at the maternal breast, so does Jesus – risen from the dead and Son of God – give of himself as spiritual food to communicants, giving us in holy communion a veritable “transfusion” of the divine life He possesses with his Father and the Holy Spirit. Our sharing in the divine life of love which is in God and in which we are initiated through Baptism is not yet “permanent” on this Earth, but it will only be permanent in Heaven when we will have accomplished our life and mission.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK – As He did in Palestine, Jesus continues to heal the sick and wounded while forgiving sins and driving out evil spirits who at various times torment the baptised.

PENANCE – RECONCILIATION –

Jesus allows us to meet Him face to face as He did when He walked the Earth through the representatives He gives himself and whom He sends us in the persons of his priests

(HOLY ORDERS)

.

MARRIAGE – To those who believe in Him and who put their trust in Him Jesus vouches that their love will reflect his faithful and sacrificial love for his Church, his Beloved, the body of all his assembled faithful disciples.

P.S.: Genesis portrays God’s creation of humans as man **and** woman in original innocence. Sin divided us into man **or** woman. Patriarchy is domination **by** man. Feminism reduces us to **neither** man **nor** woman. Gender ideology seeks to **neutralize** our innate human gender as woman or man by replacing our identity with the illusion of a “choice”. For its part, the “gay” culture and homosexual “lobby” prey on young children before puberty and young adolescents who are

likely to be experiencing temporary “Homophilia” as they develop, in a deliberate strategy to impose their ideology on them precisely when they are most vulnerable. Their objective is to have the young “fall” and identify themselves as “gay” or “lesbian” and, in effect, **deny** and **abandon** their great dignity as girl or boy, woman or man, in accord with the gender with which they were endowed at their conception. The good news is that Jesus Christ our Lord restores lost innocence and our capacity for the reciprocal gift of self for which our gender as man or woman empowers us, and which is God’s gift to us to enable us to live our human life and love in the image and likeness of God the Holy Trinity.

These notes were taken from a conference given March 29th, 2017 at the offices of the Archdiocese of Montreal by Inès Pélissié du Rausas with added thoughts by me. Her book containing a much more complete and detailed explanation of her instructions to parents is entitled:

“S’il te plait, parle-moi de l’amour ! »

It is available from Amazon in [France](#) at this link: <https://www.amazon.fr/Sil-te-pla%C3%A9t-parle-moi-lamour/dp/2351170059>
or at [Amazon.ca](#) at: https://www.amazon.ca/Sil-plait-maman-parle-moi-lamour/dp/2351170644/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1492705376&sr=8-1-fkmr0&keywords=S%27il+te+pla%C3%A9t%2C+parle-moi+de+l%27amour+%21%2C+In%C3%A8s+P%C3%A9lissi%C3%A9+du+Ra

This contribution is available at <http://fathergilles.blogspot.ca/2017/04/please-talk-to-me-about-love-mommy-daddy.html>
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Forgiving until the 12th of Never [at Gentle Reign]



When we get to gospel pericopes like the one today, we really need to put on our discernment caps. The author of 2nd Timothy says, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work." Today, we'd want to add, "but not all of scripture is equally useful, probably including 2 Timothy 1."

It's the problem we run into between Jesus's admonition to forgive "seventy-seven times" when it rubs up against that parable in which the master forgives once, but not twice—a problem

at least

if we are not attuned to parables, and the fact that the master is

not

God, and that Jesus probably did

not

add the ending to the parable, which refutes the more shocking (and therefore probably more true) admonition to forgive always.

At any rate, seventy-seven, as Jesus uses it, is not a "rational" number, one that he expected Peter to keep a count of. It might refer, by contrast, to Lamech's (the thrice-great grandson of Cain, in Genesis 4:17-26) boast about the violent revenge which he embraces: "If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech

seventy-seven times." Footnote in the NABRE says that the language is exactly the same. But Jesus is using the number in contrast to Lamech's, and he means something like we would mean when we say "a kajillion times" or "eleventy infinity" or "until the twelfth of never." It's not a number. It means "always," "without number." And Jesus would not teach this to us unless it were his own way of life, and unless he believed that his Father acted the same way.

So how do we read this parable that begins with forgiveness but ends with retribution and violence? First, it's important to understand that what we read when we read any part of the bible is not something dictated mystically to an author and then infallibly transmitted and translated into every language for every ear. We are reading the last edited version of one manuscript, one among several, and one that has been edited over many years, decades, even (centuries, in the case of some of the Hebrew scriptures). During that time, the text has passed through different understandings of Christianity, different historical circumstances, prejudices, and even belief about Christ. As the years passed through the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the gospel spread through the



Mediterranean region, there was some "push back" on the radical gospel of Jesus, on forgiveness, enemy love, and equality in the kingdom, and there was pushback on the radical Pauline doctrines as well, as regards his preaching about slavery, hierarchy, the equality of genders, and even "victory," one of the pillars of Roman civil religion. It is the "normalcy of Roman culture" encroaching on the message of the gospel, along with, occasionally, anti-Jewish rhetoric in the wake of the destruction of the temple and the "poaching" of Gentile converts by Paul, that contributed to this shift in the rhetoric of the gospel and the later letters attributed to Paul. As Dominic Crossan has it in

How to Read the Bible and Still Be a Christian,

...Paul was saying that just as Christ was executed and was thereby dead by Rome, so Christians were baptized and thereby dead to Rome. They were dead, specifically, to Rome's four supreme values of patriarchy, slavery, hierarchy, and victory— especially violent victory on which those other three values depended.

Crossan, John Dominic. [*How to Read the Bible and Still Be a Christian: Struggling with Divine Violence from Genesis Through Revelation*](#) (p. 206). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.

So there are those secular influences on the gospel, what Crossan calls a rhythm of assertion and subversion: Paul and Jesus make radical assertions about God, but people, already "infected" by the deep influence of culture and empire, almost without realizing it, dilute and subvert that message as it is passed on, in a kind of game of "revelation telephone."

There is also the nature of parables that we need to contend with. Unless we're warned from this, we tend to see parables not as parables but as allegories. In this case, we would see the servant being forgiven as, say, someone who offended us, and the master as God. So that person who "done us wrong" gets it in the end, because someone, maybe an angel, will rat him out to God and God will torture that person for all eternity. But the story is

not

an allegory. It's a parable, a much more complex kind of fable, and furthermore, it is in all probability edited and transformed from what Jesus originally told. Let's see what can be made of what we have before us. One thought comes to mind in the light of last week's instruction about how to live in the community of Christ. Fraternal correction demands that we go to the offender, one-on-one, and if necessary, in a group, to point out the fault and seek repentance and redress. But in this story, the fellow slaves immediately go to the highest authority and want, what? Justice? Now the whole story into which we've bought, a story of a master's mercy and the forgiveness of debt, is turned upside down. The other servants have, in effect, acted like the first servant did: they see "sin" and demand punishment. Now, as Bernard Brandon Scott says in his book

[*Hear Then the Parable*](#)

, (p. 278):

By bringing vengeance on the servant, the fellow servants (and the hearer) have left their own situation in jeopardy. The demand for "like for like," for apparent justice, has left them exposed. If a king can take back his forgiveness, who is safe?

Interestingly, Scott also sees in the parable another lure for Jewish listeners in the punishment rendered upon the first servant which included the imprisonment of his family. This would have given the original Jewish hearers a sense of outrage and superiority over Greek "justice," because this would not be allowed in Jewish legal settlements. Even more surprise, then, when the master's overturns his own merciful ruling; even more chaos is unleashed upon the world.

The psalm this weekend says what we know to be true, what we trust to be true for everyone, what has been true from the beginning: "The Lord is kind and merciful." In my setting from

Do Not Fear to Hope

published by OCP, I opted for James Montgomery's beautiful metric paraphrase in the verses:

You will not always chide,
You will with patience wait,
Your wrath is ever slow to rise, and ready to abate.
You pardon all our sins,
Prolong our feeble breath,
And heal our infirmities, and ransom us from death.

I think we need to hear Sunday's gospel in the context of Matthew's (and Jesus's) great teaching about life in the reign of God, the Sermon on the Mount. It is there that we find the Lord's Prayer, with its words that we pray together as a family across space and time, "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." Driving that prayer home, Jesus admonishes us to "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you," not because it's easy, but because it's

natural

, it's what God has created us to do and be, in God's own image and likeness,

because God "lets the rain fall and the sun shine on good and bad alike." Most convincing of all is the actual practice of Jesus, once we get past what Crossan calls the "subversion" of Jesus's non-violent message in certain passages of Matthew that are self-contradictory to the teaching of the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. In the end, he forgave all of his enemies and his friends who betrayed him. When he was raised from the dead, there was not a movement toward vengeance or retribution or even an icy "I told you so." The "Forgiving Victim" comes back among us still vulnerable, still encouraging us to love, giving us a mission to preach repentance (i.e., "turning around" from the empire of violence toward the empire of God) to all nations.

My experience of the forgiveness of others, both in my greatest failings and in those who have taught me to see, acknowledge, and adjust my behavior for character flaws and learned habits of aggression that might help me compensate for inadequacy and fear, have begun to teach me compassion, to slow down, to not internalize other people's hostility but to try to understand it. Forgiveness teaches forgiveness. It empowers forgiveness, just as all loving actions and behaviors empower love in the recipient. Forgiveness and love are acts of creation, and so are acts of God. They are what we are made for. Nothing should keep us from mindfulness of love and forgiveness, not even a few bible verses that might imply something to the contrary.

What we're singing Sunday at St. Anne in Barrington:

Gathering: Change Our Hearts (we have to get ready to hear this today!)

Penitential Rite (Kendzia)

Psalm 103: The Lord Is Kind (we'll use my setting and Jeanne Cotter's at different masses)

Gospel Acclamation: Mass of St. Aidan

Presentation of Gifts: Be Perfect

Eucharistic Acclamations: Mass of Joy and Peace (Alonso)

Lamb of God: Mass of St. Aidan

Communion: Faithful Family ("Ubi Caritas" verses, reinforcing our Paschal repertoire)

recession,

Recessional: We Are Called

This contribution is available at <http://rorycooney.blogspot.com/2017/09/forgiving-until-12th-of-never-a24o.html>

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Friday Five [at Mere Observations]

It's been six months since I last wrote. It may be another six before I do again.

These five prayers represent things or events that I have and will continue to pray about.

Natural disasters and their aftermath. A son about to leave for his second deployment overseas. Vocation and employment. My children. Peace.

These are prayers I found in [Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers](#) and [Manual of Prayers](#). Both from my bookshelves. Neither collecting dust.

The excerpts prior to each prayer are quotes that I've been saving from articles read prior to my six-month absence. They don't always "work" with each prayer subject, but they'll do. Until the next time:

An Old Gaelic Blessing

May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face. May the rains fall softly upon your fields. Until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

[*Manual of Prayers*, page 296]



— 1 —

“God’s first language is silence.” In commenting on this beautiful, rich insight of Saint John of the Cross, Thomas Keating, in his work *Invitation to Love*, writes: “Everything else is a poor translation. In order to understand this language, we

must learn to be silent and to rest in God.”

It is time to rediscover the true order of priorities. It is time to put God back at the center of our concerns, at the center of our actions and of our life: the only place that He should occupy. Thus, our Christian journey will be able to gravitate around this Rock, take shape in the light of the faith and be nourished in prayer, which is a moment of silent, intimate encounter in which a human being stands face to face with God to adore Him and to express his filial love for Him.

[[Source](#)]



Houston Police SWAT officer Daryl Hudeck carries Catherine Pham and her 13-month-old son Aiden after rescuing them from their home surrounded by floodwaters from Tropical Storm Harvey Sunday, Aug. 27, 2017, in Houston. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip)

Prayer for Protection During a Storm

*Loving God, maker of heaven and earth,
protect us in your love and mercy.
Send the Spirit of Jesus to be with us,
to still our fears and give us confidence.*

*In the stormy waters,
Jesus reassured his disciples by his presence,*

*calmed the storm, and strengthened their faith.
Guard us from harm during this storm
and renew our faith to serve you faithfully.
Give us the courage to face all difficulties
and the wisdom to see the ways
your Spirit binds us together
in mutual assistance.*

*With confidence we make our prayer
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

[*Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*, page 334]

— 2 —

Young man, be not forgetful of prayer. Every time you pray, if your prayer is sincere, there will be new feeling and new meaning in it, which will give you fresh courage, and you will understand that prayer is an education.

Remember, too, every day, and whenever you can, repeat to yourself, ‘Lord, have mercy on all who appear before Thee today.’ For every hour and every moment thousands of men leave life on this earth, and their souls appear before God. And how many of them depart in solitude, unknown, sad, dejected that no one mourns for them or even knows whether they have lived or not! And behold, from the other end of the earth perhaps, your prayer for their rest will rise up to God though you knew them not nor they you. How touching it must be to a soul standing in dread before the Lord to feel at that instant that, for him too, there is one to pray, that there is a fellow creature left on earth to love him too! And God will look on you both more graciously, for if you have had so much pity on him, how much will He have pity Who is infinitely more loving and merciful than you! And He will forgive him for your sake.” (*The Brothers Karamazov*, book 6, chapter 3 (g) – *Conversations of Fr Zossima: Of prayer, of love, and of contact with the other worlds*)

[[Source](#)]

A Prayer for One’s Vocation in Life

Lord, make me a better person: more considerate towards others, more honest with myself, more faithful to you. Help me to find my true vocation in life and

grant that through it I may find happiness myself and bring happiness to others. Grant Lord, that those whom you call to enter priesthood or religious life may have the generosity to answer your call, so that those who need your help may always find it. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

[*Manual of Prayers*, page 302]

— 3 —

How often the grieving have said, “I never told him how much I loved him.” But if they did love, it would have shown; it did not need to be advertised. The words, perhaps, should not have been omitted; yet words are just words, whether uttered or printed in books. They might be words of fire and power – “winged words” in the Homeric vernacular – or mere formalities. Some are crucial; most are unnecessary. Often, silence says more than words.

[[Source](#)]



Blessing Before Leaving Home for Deployment

(excerpt)

O God, you led your servant Abraham from his home and guarded him in all his wanderings.

Guide this servant of yours, my son Nolan.

Be a refuge on the journey, shade in the heat, shelter in the storm, rest in weariness,

protection in trouble, and a strong staff in danger.

For all our days together, we give you thanks:

bind us together now, even though we may be far apart.

*May your peace rest upon this house,
and may it go with your servant always.*

*Grant this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

[*Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*, page 285]

Image .

— 4 —

When we're able to put aside our hang-ups about rejection and tell people honestly how much they mean to us and how thankful we are for them, it can entirely change a relationship. We no longer experience the world as separate individuals but in solidarity, mutually experiencing our bond together as a source of strength. If a relationship with a friend or family members seems uninspired, bland, or dispirited, perhaps it has something to do with you and me. A few simple honest words of appreciation can set things on a whole new course.

[[Source](#)]

Prayer for Strength

*God,
we pray for our young people,
growing up in an unsteady and confusing world.
Show them that your ways give more life
than the ways of the world,
and that following you is better
than chasing after selfish goals.
Help them to take failure,
not as a measure of their worth,
but as a chance for a new start.
Give them strength to hold their faith in you,
and to keep alive their joy in your creation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

[*Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*, page 197]

— 5 —

Our world has become very noisy. The hurry has sped up. The distractions have multiplied, the blare has increased, and everywhere I look is advertising. Even books scroll by on monitors, backlit and shining in one's eyes. And the eyes, all around, seem elsewhere. Man, without God, scurries towards a Hell he cannot begin to imagine.

Imagination itself has been “put to work,” selling things.

[\[Source\]](#)

Prayer for Peace: To Mary, the Light of Hope

*Immaculate Heart of Mary,
help us to conquer the menace of evil,
which so easily takes root in the hearts of the people of today,
and whose immeasurable effects
already weigh down upon our modern world
and seem to block the paths towards the future.*

*From famine and war, deliver us.
From nuclear war, from incalculable self-destruction, from every kind of war,
deliver us.
From sins against human life from its very beginning, deliver us.
From hatred and from the demeaning of the dignity of the children of God,
deliver us.
From every kind of injustice in the life of society, both national and
international, deliver us.
From readiness to trample on the commandments of God, deliver us.
From attempts to stifle in human hearts the very truth of God, deliver us.
From the loss of awareness of good and evil, deliver us.
From sins against the Holy Spirit, deliver us.*

*Accept, O Mother of Christ,
this cry laden with the sufferings of all individual human beings,
laden with the sufferings of whole societies.
Help us with the power of the Holy Spirit to conquer all sin:
individual sin and the “sin of the world”*

*sin in all its manifestations.
Let there be revealed once more in the history of the world
the infinite saving power of the redemption:
the power of merciful love.*

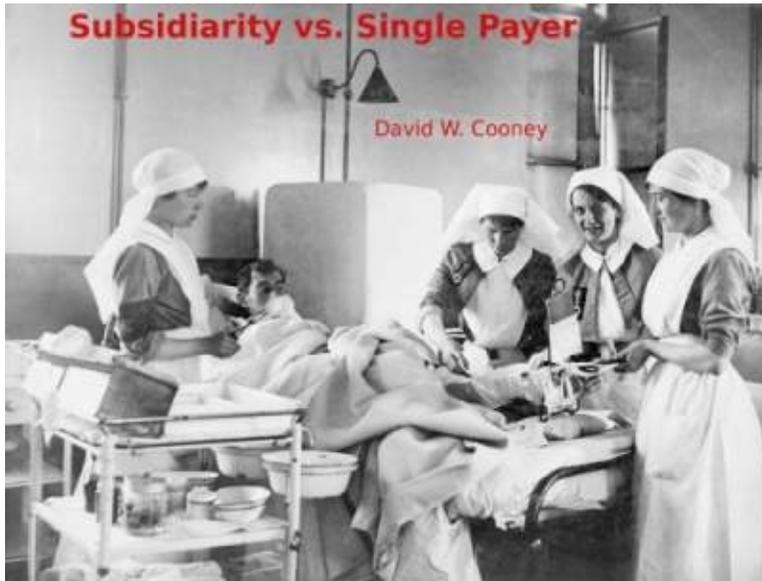
*May it put a stop to evil.
May it transform consciences.
May your Immaculate Heart reveal for all the light of hope.
Amen.*

[*Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*, pages 375-76]

This contribution is available at <http://jeffwalker.wordpress.com/2017/09/15/friday-five-volume-120/>
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Subsidiarity vs. Single Payer 2 [at Practical Distributism]



Unfortunately, the circumstances of life prevented me from addressing Jack Quirk's

[response](#)

to my

[previous article](#)

on this topic before now. Given the amount of time, I considered moving on to other topics, but there were several points he claimed that I think really need to be addressed. Therefore, with apologies to our readers, and to Mr. Quirk and his readers, here is the much delayed response.

To begin with, we must remember that Mr. Quirk and I are in agreement on the validity of and necessity of the Church's teaching on subsidiarity. The issue of this exchange has been on the application of that teaching to today's society in terms of assisting those who need help in acquiring necessary health care services.

Subsidiarity and Competence vs. Federalism and Jurisdiction

This is the dichotomy Mr. Quirk has tried to establish for us, but he also defines subsidiarity as defining the relationship between the State and subordinate groups, “that is, groups that are part of the private sector.” It seems as though Mr. Quirk goes straight from the highest level of government to the private sector with nothing in between. He seems to equate the mere existence of multiple levels of government with federalism, and I think this is an error.

To begin with, we must go beyond the mere dictionary definition of federalism as a political system in which power is divided between a central authority and “constituent political units.” If this definition were truly complete, then feudalism could be considered a federalist system, which is nonsense. History clearly shows that political systems with more or less divided powers existed long before the idea of federalism came to being. What is missing from the standard definition, because it appears to be assumed, is the acceptance of Lockean political philosophy. This is the true heart of federalism and the true dividing line between federalism and subsidiarity. Subsidiarity is part of a philosophical view that stands in opposition to Lockean political philosophy, not on the grounds of how political power is divided, but on the grounds of the source and nature of political power itself.

Mr. Quirk claims that subsidiarity “is nowhere articulated to set standards for the relations between governments in a federal system.” This is true, but only because subsidiarity and federalism have contradicting views about the nature of government authority. Federalism didn't exist when the principles of subsidiarity were formulated, so those principles don't specifically address a federal system. They do, however address political systems that include multiple layers of government. After all, division of political authority existed in the feudal age and during the Catholic monarchies of the High Middle Ages, and the Church certainly posited the application of subsidiarity to those political systems. Therefore the dichotomy presented by Mr. Quirk is wrong. The issue isn't between competence and jurisdiction. These are actually complementary features of subsidiarity. The division between subsidiarity and federalism actually lies in the philosophical foundations that separate the two ideas.

While the above is the basis of my previous statements that we can discuss jurisdiction without necessarily discussing federalism, we also have to understand that any attempt to implement subsidiarity in our society today means that we have to start with the federalist system under which we are

means that we have to start with the federalist system under which we are currently governed. We cannot simply expect that everyone will accept subsidiarity as a substitute for federalism over night. However, the fact that subsidiarity can apply to a system of government with power divided among different levels of government means that we can work to change our currently federalist system to be more consistent with subsidiarity.

Jurisdiction and Competence as Complementary Ideas

Many people would consider jurisdiction as an exclusively political concept, however that is also based on the prevalent view of our Lockean federalist society. An older view is that jurisdiction exists both in the political and private realms of society. Parents establish the laws of the family. When the guilds existed, they were private sector institutions that established legally enforceable business laws. Churches establish the religious laws. City government (whatever its form) establishes the laws of the local community. State government establishes the laws of the greater community, if you will, the community of communities. Unlike federalism, subsidiarity is based on the idea that the jurisdiction of these various levels of society is based on human nature, the nature of each level and the societal need for which the level has come into existence.

When families live in community, no one family has any natural authority over the members of another family. However, the common good necessitates some level of authority to deal with the issues that arise when families live in community. How fast should people be allowed to drive in residential areas where children are likely to be playing outside? No single family has the natural authority to dictate the answer to this question to the other families of the same community. The existence of the community necessitates an authority with the jurisdiction to address community issues. The existence of the community and its necessary government is also a part of human nature and not a merely social construct. Neither the form of the authority or the means of selecting who exercises it matter. What matters is that human nature makes the authority necessary and subsidiarity defines that authority's limits according to its nature rather than the federalist idea of authority being granted by its constituent members. Subsidiarity certainly does not require the multiple levels of government we currently have, but it is just as certain that it is not incompatible with their existence and it absolutely can and must be applied to them if they do exist.

Competence is a concept which is much more tricky to address because it must be presumed. Those who hold positions of jurisdictional authority, both in the public and private arenas, must be presumed to have the necessary competence to exercise that authority. This is similar to the concept of those accused with crimes being presumed innocent until proven guilty. In order for society to work, parents must be presumed as competent to head their families, the leaders of private organizations must be presumed competent to do their jobs, and government officials must be presumed competent to govern.

Mr. Quirk maintains that the principle of subsidiarity is based on competence and not jurisdiction. He has not convinced me. I maintain that competence as he has applied it to the principle of subsidiarity is not based on proven ability, but must be presumed based on jurisdiction. This is necessary for any type of society to function. Jurisdiction is not strictly limited to political government. Within the framework of subsidiarity it also applies to private areas of society. Subsidiarity is the just method of determining what authority rests with the all the different orders of society.

When May a Higher Order Legitimately Override a Lower Order?

The statement of Mr. Quirk's which I found most interesting had to do with this question. He wrote, "If the children in a family are being severely abused in some manner, the State intervenes when it is discovered, and this often results in the termination of parental rights." He seems to view this as somehow demonstrating that the implementation of a state run single payer health care system is compatible with the principle of subsidiarity. I must admit that I am baffled by this because I just don't see how the one demonstrates the other.

The example provided is one of criminal activity. In this case, the action of the state is not justified on the grounds of subsidiarity, but on the fact that the parents, by their criminal act toward their children, have forfeited their natural rights over their children. To equate subsidiarity with this is not comparing "apples to apples." It isn't even comparing apples to fruit. It is more like comparing apples to C-4. It just doesn't work because the state's action in these cases is just like that of putting someone in prison for other crimes; it is based on the idea that those who commit crimes against society forfeit rights they have within that society

because of their criminal acts

. Not having the means to pay for needed health care services is not a criminal act and should not be treated like one or even equated to one.

Another case where a higher order of society may legitimately override the authority of a lower order is, as Mr. Quirk pointed out, when the lower order refuses to act. I would also add to this those cases where the presumed competence is proven to be absent. However, as I pointed out in the previous article, justice demands that this usurpation of authority be temporary. It is an assistance rendered, but part of that assistance must include helping the lower order of society to resume its natural role in the matter, at which time the higher order must withdraw. In other words, the principle of subsidiarity requires that the higher order not only assist with the situation, but also offer any necessary assistance to reestablish the rightful role of the lower order.

Another aspect of this is that these may never be blanket acts. Whether we are discussing providing disaster relief, food assistance, or assisting with covering health care costs, these acts of assistance must be done on a case by case basis in order to protect the natural rights and order of society. Higher orders do have the right, and indeed the moral obligation to step in when necessary, but only when necessary and only as far as necessary. They also have the moral obligation to assist the lower orders to resume their natural function and authority, and to step back out as soon as they practically can.

Subsidiarity vs. Single Payer

I admit that we live in times and circumstances where many people need government assistance with accessing health care. I even admit that there are areas where the federal government may need to step in to assist with correcting this situation. However, a single-payer system, as I have seen it presented, represents nothing less than the highest level of government overriding the authority and ability of lower orders of our society from providing assistance and from deciding how best to address the issues. This overriding of natural authority extends to the family itself. Mr. Quirk points out that subsidiarity allows the family to choose the best method or option, but that is precisely what proponents of a single-payer system would deny them – the choice of which method or option for covering health care costs is best for their own family.

The principle of subsidiarity and the teaching of the Church are clear; it is an act of grave injustice to assign to a higher order of society responsibilities and functions that can and rightfully should be fulfilled by a lower order. Accessing

health care and assisting those who need help accessing health care can be achieved by lower orders of our society than the federal government. If I were to accept Mr. Quirk's position, I don't see how it wouldn't also justify establishing other one-size-fits-all federal solutions for societal issues we currently face today. Nearly every argument he made to justify a single payer system for covering the costs of health care would also apply to covering the cost for food and housing -

not just for those in need, but for everyone!

That is what is being proposed for health care costs.

What I have outlined as being compatible with subsidiarity isn't perfect, but neither is any single-payer system. I also don't believe any single-payer system to be the best option. Even if we can presently justify federal assistance, the principle of subsidiarity and the teaching of the Church are clear that this assistance needs to be both in specific cases of need and temporary. Single-payer is proposed as a permanent solution to the entire question of accessing any health care service, run at the highest level of government. To me, it is a case of the "absent or insufficient recognition" of the initiative and capabilities of the lower orders of society, and the Church teaches that this undermines the principle of subsidiarity. Based on this, I still conclude that we not only can, but must argue against this type of system on the basis of subsidiarity.

This contribution is available at <http://practicaldistributism.blogspot.com/2017/09/subsidiarity-vs-single-payer-2.html>

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