



Of Seeds and Flowers



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YOU NEVER READ ANYTHING LIKE HIS BEFORE !!

In July 2000, Israeli doctor Leonard Leibovici conducted a double-blind, randomized controlled trial involving 3,393 hospital patients, divided into a "control group" and an "intercession prayer" group. He set out to see whether prayer could have an effect on their condition. Prayer experiments are great examples of mind affecting matter at a distance. **But stay with me here, because everything is not always what it seems.**

Leibovici selected patients who had suffered sepsis (an infection) while hospitalized. He randomly designated half the patients to have prayers said for them, while the other half were not prayed for. He compared the results in three categories: *how long fever lasted, length of hospital stay, and how many died as a result of the infection.* STAY WITH ME.



The patients that were prayed-for benefited from an earlier decrease in fever and a shorter hospital stay; the difference in the number of deaths among the prayed-for and not-prayed-for groups was not statistically significant, although, still better, in the prayed-for group. That's a powerful demonstration of the importance and benefits of prayer. However, there's one additional element to this story that you should know. ***Did it strike you as slightly odd that in July 2000, a hospital would have more than 3,000 cases of infection at once?*** Was it a very poorly sterilized hospital, or was some kind of *contagion running rampant in the hospital?*

Actually, the people praying weren't praying for patients who were infected in the year 2000. Instead, not known to the people praying, they were actually praying for lists of people who had been in the hospital from 1990 to 1996-**four to ten years prior to the experiment.** *The prayed-for patients actually got better during the 1990's from the experiment conducted years later.* Let me say this another way: the patients who were prayed for in 2000 all showed measurable changes in health, but **those changes took effect years before.**

A statistical analysis of this experiment proved that these effects were **far beyond coincidence.** This clearly and scientifically demonstrates that our prayers can not only affect the present and future, but they **can actually affect our past as well.**

The quantum law (temporal mechanics) states that all potentials exist simultaneously. Our prayers can affect **all aspects of life, beyond both space and time.** - *the past, the present and the future.* However, when you REALLY think about it, **it is God's past, present and future, so why not?** In God there is no past, present or future just AN ETERNAL NOW. He is the Great I AM. GOD IS PURE BEING. Not WAS OR WILL BE BUT SIMPLY IS. **GOD IS THE REALITY THAT UPHOLDS ALL REALITY!!**

Just *think and believe* what true power your prayers have, to change your life, and other people's lives. PRAYER IS POWER. PRAYER CHANGES EVERYTHING! Your enemy will limit your prayer because he knows that your prayer will limit him.

If you only pray when you're in trouble...you're in trouble. Please join with millions of Americans praying for one minute each night at 9 PM Eastern for our leaders, our country to return to genuine Godly ways. Truth. Honesty. Kindness. Integrity. Character etc.. It is working!
"If you think you're too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito." Dalai Lama

VISION AND REALITY

Recently every household in the Diocese of Hartford received a letter from Archbishop Blair regarding the sexual abuse revelations in Pennsylvania. In his letter, in one paragraph, he wrote, "The anger and disillusionment of so many of our catholic people is only matched by my own, and that of the clergy as well. After all the massive effort that has been made since 2002 to rid the Church of this evil and to try to bring healing to the victim survivors, *how is it possible that we find ourselves confronting the same perception of the Church and of priests and bishops, as if nothing changed.*"

Further in his letter, and worth noting, was the fact that of the 300 Pennsylvania priests named in the scandal only 2 were involved in abuse in the past 10 years and these cases have been handled.

However, I got the feeling that the Archbishop was a bit irritated and quite frustrated by the fact that so much effort has been poured into trying to make the changes necessary to end this awful scandal and yet the general perception of the church is still so negative, so-untrustworthy.

I think that the bishops and priests that have truly done nothing wrong (and they are in the vast majority) are emotionally and spiritually exhausted having to put up with all of the bad publicity, the parishioners mistrust and anger, the wary and suspicious side-glances, the ongoing new revelations and subsequent fresh and legitimate outrage. All this said and understood, the abuse revelations have been buried for many decades deep, deep in a "mine of secrecy", in serious administrative misconduct by many bishops. The mine needs to be totally drained in its deepest darkest recesses, so pure healing, forgiving, compassionate light can penetrate all of the deepest tunnels and trust restored. *"It is difficult to suffer FOR the Church but impossible to suffer FROM the Church."* Georges Bernanos, "The Diary of a Country Priest".



Many bishops and priests who have done nothing to offend are tired of hearing that there is more junk in the mine but this is the nature of evil done and hidden for so long. For decades the bishops built their house on sand and you know what the Gospel says about houses built on sand. For many years the Catholic Church dealt only with the **SYMPTOMS (like most of our institutions today)** and not with the **CAUSES**. Unless you deal with the causes the symptoms will continue.

A man came to his doctor with a boil on his arm. The doctor looked at it and said, *"It's a boil, let's lance it."* The doctor lanced the boil; the man left happy. However, in three weeks the boil came back. He returned to the doctor and said, "Doc, the boil is back." The doctor replied, *"Yes it is, let's lance it again."* The doctor lanced the boil and the man went home.

Three weeks later and the boil was back so the man went to another doctor and explained the situation. The doctor said, "We have to find the cause of the boil; **lancing it only dealt with the symptoms.**" He examined the man's diet and recommended some serious changes. The man followed the doctor's advice and the boils never returned. He dealt with the **CAUSE NOT THE SYMPTOMS**. THE CHURCH OF THE 70'S, 80'S AND 90'S DEALT WITH A LOT OF SYMPTOMS BUT WITH FEW CAUSES.

OR- can you imagine what a mother would feel like if her husband, the father of her children, was abusing the children, grandchildren, and great- grandchildren in the family? How long do you think it would take to restore trust, respect and affection in that marriage, family? -IF EVER, for some members of the family!

The pain that is being endured by so many of the innocent clergy can be offered up for the thousands of victims and their families and alienated church-goers. This is not self inflicted pain that often goes nowhere but is true suffering for THE KINGDOM OF GOD and it is truly a spiritual and redemptive pain.

The Catholic Church is in the same situation not unlike an unfaithful spouse in marriage. In that broken marriage TRUST, RESPECT AND AFFECTION have been lost and they cannot be **regained freely**. **TRUST, RESPECT AND AFFECTION ARE ALL EARNED** and when lost they must be **RE-EARNED**. For some people, they can NEVER be restored.

It is going to take many, many believable, generous acts of trust and respect before many Catholic's will again

trust, respect and give affection to the institution, and the bishops again.

Maybe it is time for the Church to make a generous and impressive gesture like putting families back into some rectories. -married priests!! There are already over 100 former Episcopal priests with their families now serving in Catholic parishes in the U.S.. Seven Popes were married, 13 Popes were sons of Popes and other clergy. For 11 centuries this is the way it was in the Catholic Church. And after the celibacy laws of 1139, 6 Popes had illegitimate children. Having married priests, maybe parishioners would say, **"It looks like you really are serious about regaining trust and changing the culture in the Church?"** At present, there are about 25,000 married Catholic priests in the U.S. alone. -100,000 world-wide. Celibate and married priests working side-by-side. **What a beautiful picture!!**

Please, please don't let this or any other scandal get in the way of your relationship with God, with Jesus, your Brother, Lord and Savior, with the love of the Holy Spirit, with your personal prayer life, with God's word in the Scriptures, with the Eucharist, your faith in God, with your beautiful heart that God loves so dearly. **NONE of that has changed!**

Angry, hurt, disillusioned YES! But don't let your anger go inside and become a permanent state of life. ANGER TURNED INWARD OFTEN BECOMES DEPRESSION and decisions made in depression are often regretted later in life.

All dioceses in the United States have established Review Boards, Children and Adult Training programs, background checks on all employees etc.etc. -ALL DISCOVERY AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURES. - VERY, VERY NECESSARY AND GOOD! **INFORMATION AND REFORMATION, HOWEVER, ARE NOT TRANSFORMATION!**

The ultimate solution to the sexual abuse problem lies not in lawyers, courts, grand juries, training programs, -as necessary as they are- but in a **serious spiritual transformation of lives based on committed Gospel living and deep, sustained daily contemplative prayer accompanied by**, I might recommend, a biennial thirty day retreat for ALL CLERGY. **Celibacy for the Kingdom of God** takes much prayer to be faithful to that vocation.

Also, to be recommended is genuine attendance and involvement by the bishops and clergy with all of the renewal programs going on in the Catholic Church: Cursillo, Charismatic Renewal, weekly prayer groups, Centering Prayer Groups, ACTS, Emmaus Program, Marriage Encounter etc.. Bishops are pastors, shepherds and they must always have some manure on their shoes. No more excuses that these programs are just for a certain group of the faithful, not my 'cup of tea', "not my way of spirituality" "Some people like that sort of thing", etc. etc..

TRANSFORMED PEOPLE, TRANSFORM PEOPLE!! Renew the hearts of the leaders and **you WILL renew the hearts of the faithful! THIS IS AN INDISPUTABLE PRINCIPLE!**

Perhaps the words of the great Italian spiritual writer, Carlo Carretto, offer some COMFORT:

"How much I must criticize you, my church and yet how much I love you! You have made me suffer more than anyone and yet I owe more to you than to anyone. I should like to see you destroyed and yet I need your presence. You have given me much scandal and yet you alone have made me understand holiness. Never in this world have I seen anything more compromised, more false, yet never have I touched anything more pure, more generous and more beautiful."

It is a tough time. In all of bad history, there comes a time of light and freedom and truth. It will come here too. Let's hasten the day. Let's pray for each other. As someone said to me recently, "They will have to throw me out of the Church! I'm staying and going to be a part of the change."

It might be stormy now but it can't rain forever. Deus vincit omnia! God conquers all!

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SPEAKING SOFTLY

This was one of John Kennedy's favorite stories: An old man owned a big and beautiful estate. He loved sitting on his front porch and enjoy the huge oak trees that lined the long road that led to his home.

One day a terrible storm came and destroyed about 6 or 8 of the trees closest to the mansion. He called in his gardener and asked him to replace the lost trees. His gardener replied, "Sir, the trees that were felled in the storm took hundreds of years to grow. You wouldn't be able to enjoy them."



The old man responded firmly but gently, **"Then plant them this afternoon."**

We have to plant the trees *today* under which our children will one day sit.

Someone wrote recently -I can't remember where- but my brain did a "double take" and then my head said, "Think about it"! -and HARD!! The words were: "America is a country that pretends to care for its children." Could that be true?? And, "How do we NOT care?"

Mosa Tree

There is tree in Japan called the Mosa tree. During its first five years it will only grow about 8 inches, no matter how much loving care you give it. Then, at one unpredictable moment, it decides to grow and in 6 weeks it grows to a height of 90 to 100 feet. "What is the tree doing during those first five years", I used to ask my students. Sooner or later, someone gets it. "The tree is growing a strong root system to be able to support and sustain such a height."

Five years, just roots. Like all students, like all Christians we are constantly putting down roots and growing at the same time. One of the keys to growth is what the holy people call "*Lectio Divina*" or spiritual reading. -certainly, the Bible, especially the New Testament, and especially the gospels. Five, ten or fifteen minutes a day. -Making roots!!

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