

Of Seeds and Flowers

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DAILY LIFE OR NOTHING

The following story is inspired by a chapter in C. S. Lewis's "The Great Divorce".

A man is given a tour of heaven, guided by one of the great archangels who stands before the God. He sees many wonderful sights. Perhaps the most wonderful of all occurs when he walks with the archangel down a beautiful mountain path leading into a lovely valley. With clarity of vision, he sees, on the other side of the valley, a magnificent sight.

Slowly coming down the valley, there is a huge procession of rejoicing people. At the head of the procession, he sees many angels singing and doing cartwheels in the air and filling the valley with their glorious singing. To his amazement, they are followed by Adam and Eve, who in turn are followed by the rejoicing patriarchs, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and their spouses.

Then, singing and dancing with lutes and harps, come the great prophets of the Old Testament. Then the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. St. Paul is dancing hand in hand with St. Stephen. Then follows the great doctors and fathers, Jerome, Basil, Augustine, and Gregory the Great. Also present are the saints of the Middle Ages, Bernard, Francis, Clare, and Dominic, followed by more recent holy men and women such as Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Ignatius of Loyola, Maria Goretti, and Therese of Lisieux. Then comes a mighty archangel speaking with a voice that shatters the oak trees: *"My ways are not your ways," says the Lord. "As far as the heavens are from the earth, so far are my ways from your ways."*

Our traveler stands still in astonishment at this marvelous spectacle. Finally, he sees the reason for it all. Coming down the mountainside at the very end are four of the greatest angels of the heavenly host carrying on their shoulders a golden chair in which is seated a woman of great beauty. He turns to his angelic guide. Thinking that surely this woman must be the Blessed Mother of God, he barely manages to gasp out his question. "Is that... is that?" The angel laughs and replies, "No, no, that's Molly Schultz! You wouldn't know her. She lived in the very poor section of your city. She was a scrubwoman, but she loved much. She is one of the Great Ones here."



Holiness is in our DAILY LIFE, or it is not at all. Remember how people were so surprised that Jesus came from Joseph, a simple carpenter, and Mary, a simple lady in a simple village and that Jesus did nothing spectacular in the village for 30 years. Clearly, emphatically, Jesus taught us that our goodness, our holiness resides in

For me to be a saint
means to be myself.

Thomas Merton

how we live in all the demands, the "ups and downs", of our daily lives. The dishes, toilets, dusting, garden, shopping, laundry, job, children etc. etc. are the raw material of holiness.

"Be present to the present and you will discover GOD'S PRESENCE." Richard Rohr

As I get older, I realize more and more, that your actual day to day life is the place in which you must pursue holiness. Your real life, not the life you wish you had or the person you wish you were. -whether that be smarter, stronger more beautiful. NO COMPARISONS. Take yourself as you are. It is the only you that you have. Merton

The ultimate goal is to integrate your prayer life and your daily life. That said, pray the best you can; live the best you can; help the best you can. God loves you just the way you are. God is the only one who ***KNOWS*** YOU COMPLETELY AND STILL SAYS "I LOVE YOU UNCONDITIONALLY". In God's good time your prayer and openness to the Spirit will lead you to slowly, gently, deepen the relationship that God wants for YOU. Give God something to do! He always has time for YOU!

"God comes to you disguised as YOUR LIFE."

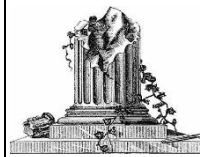


A disciple once asked the Wiseman, ***"What can I do to find enlightenment?"*** (Grace, God)

The Wiseman responded: ***"You can do no more to find enlightenment than you can to make the sun rise tomorrow."***

The disciple questioned: ***"Then why did you give me all these prayers to say and fasts to keep and other spiritual disciplines?"***

Wiseman: ***"To prepare you for the moment when enlightenment (God, grace) comes!"***



Sometimes, even a rose needs to be reminded of its beauty. ***"Lord, help me to believe the truth about myself; no matter how beautiful it IS!!"***



Have you ever wondered about the wonderful things that never happened in your life because you were not prepared to receive them?

How do you prepare?

1. is reading the Scriptures especially the New Testament Gospels, and regularly reading a spiritual book. IF YOU DON'T READ YOU DIE!! You will never change your life until you change what you DO DAILY! I remember a couple of college graduates saying on graduation day, "I am never going to read another book." I thought: You will be obsolete in 10 years - and they were! Do read something for your heart!!!
2. is PRAYER: Prayer helps you to realize the REALITY in which you are swimming!! Prayer and love are like bread: They have to be made fresh daily. You are what you eat: you are what you pray! Transformed people, transform people!! Too busy to pray, YOU are too BUSY!!



Keep your eye on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Asbury University in Kentucky. These events look exactly like the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the late 1960's. By and large the Catholic Bishops and clergy ignored or rejected this spectacular gift of the Spirit', in the 1970's -80's and 90's, and maybe God is now trying people who will accept His gifts- evangelical Protestants. It is now spreading to other colleges here and abroad. People are hungry for God who is the ultimate answer to these terrible times and the Holy Spirit is answering.

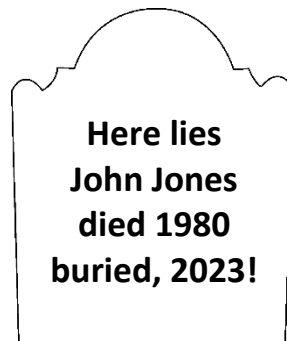
VISION AND REALITY

In an article entitled "This Present Darkness" Franklin Graham writes: *"As we begin 2023, the world we live in seems to be imploding. Senseless violence is rampant across the United States. Anti-God agendas that once hid in the darkness are now proudly out in the open, demanding acceptance. Nations are being overcome by socialism, removing God from anything and everything in the public square. And if you think things are bad, just wait -they'll get worse. That's not being pessimistic, it's just a realistic grasp of the increasingly sinful, wicked and lawless state in which we find ourselves."*

"I believe there aren't five people in the world that see reality as it is."

Thomas Merton, Trappist Monk.

Are you one of them?



*God grant me the Serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change,
the Courage to change
the things that I can,
and the Wisdom
to know the difference.*

Going against foundational Christian doctrines, as ALL secular research shows, (God really knew what He was doing) leads to significant increases in depression, anxiety, familial tensions, substance abuse, suicidal contemplation. Secular studies also show that a life lived with solid Christian moral standards helps people flourish. There is no right way to do the wrong thing! Truth ALONE frees! Too many young people and older people are looking for CUSTOMISED RELIGION. It doesn't exist.

If the Catholic Church had ordained married men and women deacons in the early nineteen seventies -put some families in the rectories- the Church would have become more believable and looked like (appearances are everything!) it was truly serious about fixing things- and would have come through the sexual crisis with much more credibility - and money!



The Hartford Courant newspaper reported today that there are 3500 Catholic parishes in the U.S. without a resident Catholic priest. Is celibacy truly more important than Eucharist? - or a resident priest? The bishops think so. Ask the parishioners of the 3500 parishes that were closed. We now have over 125 Episcopal priests, turned Catholic, living in rectories with their families, serving in Catholic parishes. ***“Without the priest, there is no eucharist, and without the Eucharist there is no church.”*** Catholic Transcript, paper for the Diocese of Hartford.

The second-largest religious group in America is now “former Catholics”.

Thinking about all the church problems swirling around us reminded me of a true story about an elite country club in a Detroit suburb where most of the members were largely automobile moguls. The club’s food featured an awful tasting creamed spinach that resembled the gruel in Oliver Twist. Only the club’s board could change the menu and by the time a member ascended to the board, he had gotten used to the creamed spinach - and thus, nothing changes!!



Too often, old men, who are supposed to be trusted with wisdom, make old and tired and safe decisions, and don’t make the difficult decisions necessary for GENUINE CHANGE. False change (knee-jerk, popular, with it change), ultimately causes future problems. *“Where there is no wisdom, the people perish.”* Proverbs

Financially, it is getting more and more difficult to publish “Of Seeds and Flowers”. Any contributions you can make will be greatly appreciated.

We are now getting 16k YouTube views on our Mary’s Field podcasts every month. Tune in!!

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