

Easter 5A - 2023

He wanted to be a dropout:

It was 1950. The old cardinal of Naples was in his office and seated before him was a young priest who was asking for permission to become a drop-out. He wanted to live on the streets of Naples with the alley boys. The old Cardinal could not take it in. He knew what life was in Naples: 200,000 out of work; young boys hanging on the streets because their parents were without work and could not feed them. They lived by stealing, peddling stolen goods, begging and black marketeering. They slept on the streets and were like wild cats and dodged the police. This young priest, Mario Borelli, wanted to help them, give them a roof over their heads, bread and a bit of human warmth. That the cardinal could understand. But why must the priest become a drop-out himself? Mario knew exactly why: "If I go to these boys as a priest they will spit in my face. They are fearfully distrustful."

The cardinal considered. "Give me ten days to think it over." After ten days he approved. Mario went on the streets, an old cap back to front on his head, in ragged clothes, a cigarette end in the corner of his mouth. He begged, collected cigarette butts and became a vagrant. Gradually he won the hearts of those youngsters. Soon he was even the head of the gang. When he found a primitive shelter, his youth went with him. They weren't able to do otherwise -they were drawn to him. Mario had something irresistible about him. They had no word for it because it was something they had never before experienced. How could they know that **word was love?** — Perhaps we can now better understand why God became man. He wanted to be one with us to show us the way and save us, "God-with-us," that is Jesus, the Way to the Father. (Pierre Lefevre, *quoted by Fr. Botelho*). (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

Many "dwelling places" in the Father's house:

The following story gives insight into God's mysterious ways and how we are led into "the many dwelling places" in the Father's house (cf. Ginger Lloyd, "More than Coincidence" in *Guideposts*, April 2013, p. 49). Ever since my husband, Ricardo, lost his job and we lost our home, I'd said the same prayer every day, "Lord, help us find an apartment. Lots of light, warm and homey, a new kitchen, a clean fully tiled room. Outdoor space, like a balcony would be nice, but asking way too much. A decent place would do." Ricardo didn't believe in prayer. But he didn't have any other answers. We were renting part of a rundown house in Rockford, Illinois, not ideal conditions to raise our eight-year-old son. It was dark and cramped, the floors cold and bare. The kitchen appliances were constantly breaking down and there was no

storage for our things. The shared bathroom was filthy. But there was nothing else in the area that we could afford. Then I found mouse droppings and roaches. I'd had it. Walking back from doing errands one day, dreading returning to our squalid little space, I cried, "Lord, we can't live like this! Where is the apartment I've been praying for?"

Turn here and go up two blocks. The voice popped into my head so suddenly, so strongly, I didn't question the thought. I turned and walked. At the end of the second block, the voice spoke again: *Turn right and go up three more blocks.* I obeyed. The house I came to was nothing special. But the urgent voice commanded me: *Walk up to the door. Ask about the apartment.* What apartment? I didn't see a "For Rent" sign. But I'd come this far. I knocked and a young woman answered. "Do you know where I can find an apartment for rent?" I blurted. Her eyes widened. "How did you know? We didn't even list it yet." From inside, her husband asked who was at the door. "Someone about the apartment", she said. The man appeared puzzled but offered to show it to me.

Light cascaded through the windows and across the carpeted floor. Brand new appliances gleamed in the kitchen. There were plenty of closets. The tile in the bathroom sparkled. "How much is the rent?" I asked tentatively. "How much can you afford?" the man asked. I told him, "That'll do."

Ricardo couldn't believe it - "You found it how?"- I told him about the voice, the commands, how the apartment had every detail I'd prayed for. With each thing I mentioned, the expression on his face shifted, from disbelief to a dawning belief - especially when I added, "Actually, it has more than I asked for. There's even a balcony." (Ginger Lloyd). (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

You Know Your Master Is There

There is a story told of a dying man who asked his Christian doctor to tell him something about the place to which he was going. As the doctor fumbled for a reply, he heard a scratching at the door, and he had his answer.

"Do you hear that?" he asked his patient. "It's my dog. I left him downstairs, but he has grown impatient, and has come up and hears my voice.

He has no notion what is inside this door, but he knows that I am here.

Isn't it the same with you? You don't know what lies beyond the Door, but you know that your Master is there."

(by Alan Carr from *Biblical Facts about a Place Called Heaven*)