

FAITH AND REASON

The Good Shepherd: God seems so silent, so distant. It seems, that God does his utmost to remain silent, as if to suggest that he does not exist. Some people react to this silence by asserting that God does not exist! Others are scandalized by the evils all too common in our world. If God exists, why does evil exist? If God is a loving Father, why is there so much sorrow in my life? I asked, and I did not receive, I sought, and I did not find, I knocked, and the door did not open.

Fr Michel Quoist describes the human drama in a very explicit way: "The silence of God weighs on man like a dead weight. Even today I listened to the bitter complaints of some young people who feel the weight. I understand how they feel because I often feel that way myself. "Why are you hidden Lord? Why do you hide in this grey day where my work weighs on me like a punishment? Why do you hide in my untidy house where everything has to be put in place daily? Why do you hide in our worn-out love, love like stagnant water whose source has dried up? Why do you hide in this body that cries out to me? Why do you hide in the sickness of my body? Why do you hide in my human struggles, when I am fighting with and for my brothers? Why do you remain hidden, you who came to this earth, you who spoke so forcefully, you who wept so piteously? Why do you hide in the night - my obsession - the night that falls after sundown, the night flowing in my heart like approaching death? Why do you hide Lord, why? Speak to me, Lord. Dear Lord, why do you hide when I know you are there?"

The drama of each person's life must be viewed against the backdrop of Sacred History. Before the coming of Christ, the terms of the Covenant were well known, as were the promises of the Redeemer and the deliverance he would bring. Nevertheless, amidst the political and social instability of the period, unfaithfulness to God and his Covenant were widespread. The world was in the grip of paganism.

After the coming of Christ, it was basically the same, indeed in some situations, even worse. Consider the savage persecutions unleashed against the Church. The seemingly endless rows of crosses along the roadways, sometimes with hundreds of people hanging on them. Let us try to imagine how our forefathers in the faith, that, that "little flock" felt when Stephen had been publicly stoned to death, that James the Bishop of Jerusalem had been killed, and later Peter and Paul. Those days were long and dark... faith did not come easily to anyone. God seemed so distant..... so silent. And yet, the most endearing image of Jesus to our forefathers in the teeth of persecution, was the image of Jesus the Good Shepherd, whom they knew was with them in their struggles.

Divine Providence has never been, and could never be, a matter of fact! It is certainly not a vague promise that with the help of God, all will come to a good end. All things do not come to a good end: many things come to a bad end. When death clings to our crime-ridden cities, to our war-torn countries, then cruel and immoral people wield power, then hunger and persecution drives millions of helpless people from their homes and lands, When decaying cities rob people of their dignity we must believe, we must believe as did our forefathers facing the most savage persecution. That not even these tragedies can separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Do we know the Good Shepherd? If we do not know Christ as he lived among us, acted, and reacted and suffered among us, we risk not knowing him at all. for we cannot see him at the right hand of the Father, as we can see him in Palestine. And we shall end either in constructing our own Christ - image of our own attitudes, prejudices, dreams, deeds, or in having no Christ at all but a shadow and "Christ is God" is a statement not only about Christ but about God. In Christ Jesus we can see God in our nature, experiencing the things we have to experience, coping with situations we have to cope with. Thereby to know God as the most devout pagan cannot know him". When Saul of Tarsus was knocked to the ground and heard the words of Jesus "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me". Saul never forgot those words. That is why the key to understanding St Paul's theology is the truth that "the Risen, Glorified Lord lives in and through his Church" Christ is the life of his Church and He shares that life with us through the Ministry of his Priests - themselves "wounded healers" from our midst, in the Mass and the Sacraments. This is God's way to which nothing in this world can be compared!

We are created, called, not to give our lives to an idea, but to a person - God Incarnate, who is love itself, who came down to our level so as to bring us up to his level, to share with us his life and his love, in time and for all eternity...**Fr. William C. Mooney**

When you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you... provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise, who urges you to shed the masks of a false life, who reads in your heart the choices that others try to stifle, Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives.

God gives prayer growth precisely according to our degree of readiness for it. He forces no one. As we are more or less receptive, He bestows more or less depth of communion. In the same manner, five hundred people in a parish church all hear the same sound waves during the homily, but they profit from it exactly as they are or are not disposed for the message. Jesus taught the same truth in his parable of the sower: from the word of God some hearers yield nothing at all, while others yield thirty or sixty or a hundredfold... **Fr. Thomas Dubay**

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates... **Deuteronomy 6:5-9**

Only in Christ do we find real love, and the fullness of life. And so, I invite you today to look to Christ. When you wonder about the mystery of yourself, look to Christ who gives you the meaning of life. When you wonder what it means to be a mature person, look to Christ who is the fullness of humanity. And when you wonder about your role in the future of the world...look to Christ. Only in Christ will you fulfill your potential...as a citizen of the world community... **St. John Paul II**

A Thought For the Day

Sunday	Often blessings come in disturbing disguises.
Monday	Speak the truth in a million voices. It is silence that kills.
Tuesday	Luck is when an opportunity comes along, and you've prepared for it.
Wednesday	Every day, when your heart especially feels loneliness of life, pray.
Thursday	Great occasions for serving God come seldom, but little ones surround us daily.
Friday	Who gives you the day will give you also the things necessary for the day.
Saturday	A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul.

Prayer for Hope: Lord, let me take with me from this place, some fresh understanding of your love. So often I scourge myself with my past, with my guilt and lose all connection with you. I forget your love, your care, and I forget how to hope. My past has happened, and it is done. My future is something I must look to, either in fear, anxiety or in hope. So often the things I feared have never been as bad as I feared, or never happened at all. Even the bad things I have dealt with and have not gone under. We pass from one day to the next, absorbing the knocks we cannot avoid, and glad we did not know about them yesterday. So help me not to waste my time in fearing. Help me to live in hope. Hope that I might know happiness. How that I might know peace. How that I might know contentment. Hope that I might feel better about life. Hope that it all will be worthwhile. It is the hopeful people who keep going. Like children, like Saints. Help me to remember that the people I most like are the people who are hopeful about me, you Lord are the most hope filled of all.

The Blessed Mother's Grace: There are many of us who would not come to Our Lord, unless we had someone who knows our needs better than we know ourselves, and who will ask Our Lord for us. The role of Mary makes her acceptable to everyone. Those who at the marriage table did not need to know she was the Mother of the Son of God in order to receive the benefit of her Divine Son. But one thing is certain no one will ever call on her without being heard, nor without being fully led to her Divine Son, Jesus Christ, for whose sake she alone exists for whose sake she alone was made pure - and for whose sake she was given to us... **Bishop Fulton Sheen**

In His Will is Our Peace
Fr. William C. Mooney

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