

# FAITH AND REASON

**We Reap What We Sow:** The Mountain People is a disturbing book about a vanishing African Tribe. As one reads the book a question arises. Does the Ik tribe contain a lesson for us in the Western World? Given the very different circumstances, many would say "most likely". This conclusion would seem, at least, on the surface, to be correct. That may be true!

Driven from their hunting grounds, the Ik tribe is barely surviving. They have, in such extreme circumstances, become totally selfish: each for self to the total exclusion of others. Food is so scarce that the young people steal from the elderly and weak members of the tribe. The weak, the sick, the elderly are ignored and left to die. Love, kindness, simply cease to exist.

The Author of the Mountain People, Colin Turnbull, sees a parallel between what has happened to the Ik tribe and what is happening to society in the Western World. Like the Ik tribe, has to a considerable degree adopted a philosophy of selfish individualism: self-interest has become a powerful force. The Author ends his book on a chilling note: He asks, is the plight of the Ik tribe a preview of our own future in the Western World?

The Western World is in the grip of an ever-deepening moral and spiritual darkness, which is the direct result of such selfishness. Fr Michel Quoist describes the situation in a riveting style: "With utopian stars in their eyes, people allowed a world to evolve without God; or deliberately sought such a world. Intoxicated with vaulting pride they imagine that the building of the world had nothing to do with God, that it was theirs and theirs alone. This is indeed a recipe for chaos. Towers of Babel of societies and civilizations which begin in the crazy hope of building a world of peace and justice once and for all and deteriorate into total confusion, if not bloodbaths. The anguish sets in: so does the madness of those who are shattered and no longer know how to pick up the pieces and put themselves together again into upright human beings."

Man without standards, without proper principles of behavior, man with his eyes to the ground, has proven again and again, in every time and place, that he can be lower than the beasts, sunk in ignorance, morally blind, living a life devoid of meaning. It is said that the human person is the only animal that laughs and weeps. And indeed, he should, for he is the only being who can decide to accept or reject the meaning of his life.

We who have the power to choose, must bear in mind that every event has its consequences: every considerate, dignified act renders people and nations prosperous, every senseless, unjust, selfish, unrealistic act, destroys them, every decision, every action, continues to its intrinsic end. It is the result of what was and prepares for that which is to come.

Consequences of present decisions and actions seldom rebound on the heads of those responsible, but on later generations, refusal to accept this fact of life indicates a bland indifference to, of a callous disregard for the welfare of future generations. The defense of human rights, however vigorously and eloquently that may be done, will not save us, if we overlook the fact that these basis human rights depend ultimately on the Christian concept of man and his relationship with his Creator, on which this country was established. People in positions of leadership, across the world, please note I do not say leaders, but people in positions of leadership, which a different matter entirely - in politics, the Courts, the Media, education, are moving away from Christian moral standards. As they do so, they are not moving into an alternative moral system, but into a moral vacuum - anything goes - whatever is fashionable in a given period.

I will conclude with the words of the Polish Poet Juliusz Slowacki, which we and our leaders I pray will adopt: "Humbly I kneel, to rise up a strong worker for God. When I arise, my voice will be the voice of the Lord. My cry will be the cry of the whole homeland"... **Fr. William C. Mooney**

**The Power of Confession:** People talk about Christianity having burdened people with guilt and having tried to use this as a lever to oppress them. Well, of course, such a misuse of guilt feelings may occur. But it is worse to extinguish the capacity for recognizing, because man then becomes inwardly hardened and sick. Just think a stage further, to an intensified form of the inability to recognize guilt... The capacity to recognize guilt can be tolerated, and properly developed, whenever there is al so healing. And healing, in turn, can only exist where there is absolution. Psychotherapy can indeed do a great deal to help us perceive defective conditions in the psychical structure, and to help us put them right, but it cannot overcome guilt. At that point it has passed beyond the limits of its capabilities, and that is why it so often fails. Only the sacrament, the authority from God, can truly overcome guilt. We must admit in any case that in our individualistic age it has become enormously difficult for people to cross the threshold of personal confession. But where the spirit of faith is leading us, then it can learn anew. Above all because this is not an admission of guilt before men, but before God, and because it ends with the word of forgiveness and perhaps al so with advice that will help us to overcome the after-effects of Guilt. **(Pope Benedict XVI)**

**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**

**Habits are being formed** here under the pressure of temptation and difficulty that unfold in perfect form and beauty when the soul that has developed these habits passes into its true home. Those very temptations that made it so difficult to persevere were really the means of developing these powers. The spirit of prayer and worship grew on; hampered and oppressed by the distractions of life, it fought its way in spite of them and thus gained strength; and then, when all these were removed, it opened out unhindered in its perfect growth. Now, there is one fundamental principle of the spiritual life that has to be learned and practiced here, mostly with suffering, often with the very keenest suffering, although so closely associated with it that it almost seems a necessary part of it, is indeed only accidental, and one day will altogether cease, while the grace that has been fought for and developed in so much agony will live on forever, and be the delight of the soul through eternity... **Fr. Basil Maturin**

#### A Thought For the Day

<b>Sunday</b>	To grow tall spiritually, a man must first learn to kneel.
<b>Monday</b>	Love has to hurt to be true. It hurt Jesus to live us.
<b>Tuesday</b>	To welcome the weakest, helping them on their journey, is a sign of civilization.
<b>Wednesday</b>	In nature we hear the speech of God.
<b>Thursday</b>	The highest values are priceless.
<b>Friday</b>	A little of the oil of courtesy will save a lot of friction.
<b>Saturday</b>	Nothing dies quicker than a new idea in a closed mind.

**I do not wish the soul to consider her sins**, either in general or in particular, without also remembering the Blood and the broadness of My mercy, for fear that otherwise she should be brought to confusion. And together with confusion would come the Devil, who has caused it, under color of contrition and displeasure of sin, and so she would arrive at eternal damnation, not only on account of her confusion, but also through the despair which would come to her, because she did not seize the arm of My mercy. This is one of the subtle devices with which the Devil deludes my servants, and, in order to escape from his deceit, and to be pleasing to Me, you must enlarge your hearts and affections in My boundless mercy, with true humility. Thou knowest that the pride of the devil cannot resist the humble mind, nor can any confusion of spirit be greater than the broadness of my good mercy, if the soul will only truly hope therein...**St. Catherine Of Siena**

**Gods will:** While St. Teresa was well acquainted with methods of meditation and wished her young nuns to be instructed in them, she emphatically insisted that the primary need for beginners is not to find the ideal method but to do God's will from moment to moment throughout the day—which is probably the last thing the beginner thinks is primary. Her thought is strong and unambiguous: 'The whole aim of any person who is beginning prayer—and don't forget this, because it is very important—should be that he work and prepare himself with determination and every effort to bring his will in conformity with God's will'. She then adds that 'it is the person who lives in more perfect conformity who will receive more from the Lord and be more advanced on this road of prayer.'... **Fr. Thomas Dubay**

**This bread is bread** before the words of the Sacrament. But when the words of Christ come to it, it is the body of Christ ... Before the words of Christ, it is a cup full of wine and water. When the words of Christ become operative, the blood which has redeemed the people is caused to be there... **St. Ambrose**

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

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