

FAITH AND REASON

The Transfiguration: Jesus took Peter, James and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves, Mt Tabor, and he was transfigured before them. The Apostles dozed off and awoke to witness the transfiguration of Jesus; his clothes were dazzling white. Then Moses and Elijah appeared and were conversing with Jesus.

In Sacred Scripture, darkness is the symbol of evil: "The light came into the world and the darkness could not overcome it". "It is not against earthly powers, but the powers of darkness". "Judas went out, and it was night". Even in the natural order, darkness is not easy to contend with. Tromsø in Norway, North of the Arctic Circle, with its 40,000 inhabitants, live two months of each year without seeing the sun. In this Polar blackness, people become difficult to live with: they are edgy, sour, fretful, The entire city slows down: work capacity is reduced and there are complaints of tiredness. The mentally unstable easily slip over the edge into mental disturbance. Even emotionally healthy people feel restless, fearful, and become preoccupied with thoughts of death. Everyone longs for the light. It is not natural for people to live in perpetual darkness.

Spiritual or moral darkness which the world is presently experiencing is also very difficult to live with. The social turmoil we see across the world does not come from social causes alone. The serious spiritual decline and the moral collapse which it inevitably spawns, are one of the root causes. And since the Church lives in the world, it cannot go untouched by this upheaval. The life of the Church will be a mysterious blending of the joy of Holy Thursday and the darkness of Good Friday. The Church will know the fullness of joy when Jesus comes again at the Parousia - the Second Coming. In the meantime, the Church will, in one way or another, be affected by the joys and sorrows of this world.

The following verse, which express the spirit of Jesus, if taken seriously to heart will, I hope to inspire us to follow Jesus in loving trust. "When love beckons you follow him, though his ways are hard and steep. And when his wings enfold you yield to him, though the sword hidden in his pinions may wound you. And when he speaks to you believe in him, though his voice may shatter your dreams, as the north wind lays the garden waste. For even as love crowns you, so shall he crucify you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning. Even as he ascends to your height and caresses your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun, so shall he descend to your roots and shake them into the earth. Like sheaves of corn, he gathers you unto himself. He threshes you to make you naked. He sifts you to free you from your husks. He grinds you to whiteness. He kneads you until you are pliant; and then he assigns you to his sacred fire, that you may become sacred bread for God's sacred feast. All these things shall love do unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart, and in that knowledge become a fragment of life's heart".

The Saints took this to heart and thus became an example for all ages. St John Fisher was born in Beverley, Yorkshire, in 1459. He was educated at Cambridge. In 1497 he was appointed Confessor to Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII. He brought the world-famous Erasmus to Cambridge as Professor of Divinity and Greek. In 1504 he became Bishop of Rochester and Chancellor of Cambridge, in which capacity he tutored Prince Henry, who was to become King Henry VIII. (how about that) In 1527, he opposed the King's divorce proceedings against Catherine of Aragon. "He steadfastly resisted the encroachments of Henry on the Church. He refused to take the act of Succession, unlike the other Bishops, which acknowledged Henry and Anne as the legitimate heir to the throne. He was imprisoned in the Tower in April 1534. The next year Pope Paul III made him a Cardinal. Henry retaliated by beheading him within a month. Half an hour before his execution this dedicated scholar and Churchman opened the New Testament for the last time and his eyes fell on the following words from St John's Gospel:

"Eternal Life is this: to know you, the only true God, and him who you have sent, Jesus Christ. I have given you glory of earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. Do you now Father, give me glory at your side (17:3-5). Closing the book he observed, "There is enough learning in that to last me the rest of my life". St Gregory of Nyssa (c.395) brother of St Basil the Great, St Peter of Sebastea, St Macrina, and the Son of St Basil and St Emmelia, reveals the "simple secret" of the Saints. "We shall be blessed with clear vision if we keep our eyes fixed on Christ, for he, as St Paul teaches, is our head, and there is in him no shadow of evil. St Paul himself and all who have reached the same heights of sanctity had their eyes fixed on Christ, and so have all who live and move and have their being in him.

As no darkness can be seen by anyone surrounded by light, so no trivialities can capture the attention of anyone who has his eyes on Christ. The man who keeps his eyes upon the head and origin of the whole universe has them on virtue in all its perfection; he has them on truth, on justice, on immortality and on everything else that is good, for Christ is goodness itself....

Fr. William C. Mooney

No one who follows Me will ever walk in darkness (Jn 8:12). These words of our Lord counsel all to walk in His footsteps. If you want to see clearly and avoid blindness of heart, it is His virtues you must imitate. Make it your aim to meditate on the life of Jesus Christ. Christ's teachings surpass that of all the Saints. But to find this spiritual nourishment you must seek to have the Spirit of Christ. It is because we lack this Spirit that so often we listen to the Gospel without really hearing it. Those who fully understand Christ's words must labor to make their lives conform to His... **Thomas á Kempis**

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Even though the Disciples suffered persecution, they were filled with joy. One would have expected them to be depressed or angry or resentful. The very fact that they responded to persecution with joy is a sign that the Spirit was guiding their actions. We can use that same test with our own words and actions. **Rev. Jude Winkler**

Through the sacraments of Christian initiation, man receives the new life of Christ. Now we carry this life 'in earthen vessels', and it remains 'hidden with Christ in God'. We are still in our 'earthly tent', subject to suffering, illness, and death. This new life as a child of God can be weakened and even lost by sin. The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health, has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members. This is the purpose of the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick... **The Catechism of the Catholic Church**

A Thought For the Day

Sunday	Many are invited, but few are chosen...Matthew 22:14
Monday	Patience smooths away lots of difficulties.
Tuesday	True friends challenge us and help us to be faithful on our journey.
Wednesday	Because the truth of God is love, conversion to God is conversion to love.
Thursday	God has entrusted me with myself.
Friday	Put your heart aside. Duty comes first. But when fulfilling your duty, put your heart into it. It helps.
Saturday	The name of Jesus, pronounced with reverence and affection, has a kind of power to soften the heart.

There are two loves, the love of God and the love of the world. If the love of the world takes possession of you, there is no way for the love of God to enter into you. Let the love of the world take the second place and let the love of God dwell in you. Let the better love take over... **St. Augustine**

How great is the sweetness which a soul experiences, when, in the time of prayer, God, by a ray of his own light, shows to her his goodness and his mercies towards her, and particularly the love which Jesus Christ has borne to her in his passion! She feels her heart melting, and, as it were, dissolved through love. But in this life we do not see God as he really is. We see him, as it were, in the dark. 'We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face' (1 Cor. 13:12). Here below God is hidden from our view; we can see him only with the eyes of faith: how great shall be our happiness when the veil shall be raised, and we shall be permitted to behold God face to face! We shall then see his beauty, his greatness, his perfection, his amiableness, and his immense love for our souls... **St. Alphonsus Liguori**

Habits: 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; 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**

In His Will is Our Peace

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