

FAITH AND REASON

The Journey of a Lifetime: We are each one of us on a journey in this world. Some people do not think of life in that way, but it is a fact, nonetheless. The physical journey through this world will vary with each person: an obvious fact of life. What is not so obvious is the journey through the mind, the emotions, the imagination, the memory. These are the journeys that can, and frequently do, become very difficult.

Let us now consider one such journey. "Lord, I am alone tonight, shrouded in grey, a prisoner within the walls of my room, ill at ease with myself, dry as an autumn leaf. And the dark voice within me surges: why are you here, ignored, abandoned? Others live in two's and three's and four's because they have engendered life. Why are you here, ridiculed by so many who think you're barren? A useless parasite in a world of struggle where the makers of justice are fighting at the barricades.

"You are not alone, says Jesus, because I am with you. Silent your dark voice. Be silent. Like you and with you I do not like the walls of your room, the walls around your body, and the walls around your life. You must fight them with all your strength. But never forget, despite the walls, your heart is huge and its source fertile.

When you try to love you can never be useless. Look at my Mother. She too was alone and ridiculed. I say to you, with me she saved the world. But she is your mother too. And if I am elsewhere, I am elsewhere for others, but I am here for you. "Here I am Lord, within my walls, my body, my life, buried seed and buried leaven. Here I am ready to flower where life has planted me. Why dream of other gardens? Nothing can grow in the unreality of dreams."

This verse was written by Fr Michel Quoist after his meeting with an elderly lady. Yet it could be applied to any man or woman, elderly or young, and, yes, even to teenagers in any one of the numerous difficult, troubling, demanding circumstances, in our world. A vocation, the vocation of this is a grace. Perhaps you are not satisfied with your life... because there is little or no sustained growth, in an orderly, progressive way. But then, life is not just a matter of growth... it is a journey. Your life is not just for business or pleasure either. You are a traveler, and the whole secret of a happy journey is to remember always that you are a traveler. Otherwise, you will find people, places, and things pulling at your heart.

It is easy to settle down with a particular state of mind, attitudes, values, goals, in a particular place, with particular people.

Then when life calls for change, we feel as if we have left our heart behind. Trying to settle down while we are being driven by the relentless hand of God, causes pain, unhappiness, and confusion. We are always in the process of becoming.

If we allow our attitudes, goals, overall plans, methods, to be such that they should not be changed, and then we interrupt God's process, God's plan, and the growth that would have emerged from it.

The drama of Israel began the day the people were freely and mysteriously chosen by God: "I shall be your God; you shall be my people". Thus began the journey of faith, a journey that would have its trials, its tests. Time and again they pleaded with God to be relieved with these trials. These tests. They complained at the door of success, because they did not know that God's tests are redemptive opportunities, his most liberating gifts. 'A faith without testing is useless. A testing without faith is hopeless.

Individuals, Christian communities, are born out of pain and develop through suffering. True and final fulfillment is a gift of God, it cannot be programmed, it cannot demand. It is not for mortals to command success, but to strive and never cease doing so.

When the human will understand what God is asking of us, and accepts it, then we will understand why Dante should say "In his will is our peace". The following verse found in the pocket of a dead confederate soldier expresses this truth so well! "I asked for health, that I might do greater things; I was given infirmity that I might do better things... I asked for riches, that I might be happy; I was given poverty that I might be wise..... I asked for strength that I might be independent; I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God... I asked for all things that I might enjoy life; I was given life that I might enjoy all things.... I got nothing I asked for, but everything I hoped for... Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered... I am, among all men, most richly blessed."... **Fr. William C. Mooney**

Know this: just as the wood of the ark saved the just from drowning, so too, by the mystery of His wooden Cross, does Christ, the Church's God and King, save us from drowning in the sea of this world. In the symbol of a thing made of wood He gave human beings a foreshadowing of both the judgment to come and the salvation of the just... **St. Augustine**

In the old days, people demanded 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' and to repay evil for evil. Patience was not yet on the earth, because faith was not on the earth either. Of course, impatience made full use of the opportunities the Law gave it. That was easy when the Lord and Master of patience was not here. But now that he has come and put the grace of faith together with patience, we are no longer allowed to attack someone even with a word—not even to call someone a fool without facing the danger of judgment. The Law found more than it lost when Christ said, 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 5:44-45). This most important commandment summarizes in a word the universal discipline of patience, since it does not allow us to do evil even to people who deserve it... **Tertullian**

HYMN: O Mary of all women, you are the chosen one, who, ancient prophets promised, would bear God's only Son; All Hebrew generations prepared the way to thee, that in your womb the God-man might come to set us free. O Mary, you embody all God taught to our race, for you are first and foremost In fullness of His grace; We praise this wondrous honor that you gave birth to Him who from you took humanity and saved us from our sin.

A Thought For the Day

Sunday	When you have free moments, go faithfully to prayer. The good God is waiting for you there.
Monday	The goodness of God is the highest object of prayer, and it reaches down to our lowest need.
Tuesday	The soul hungers for God, and nothing but God can satiate it.
Wednesday	Our perfection does not consist of doing extraordinary things, but to do the ordinary well.
Thursday	Cheerfulness prepares a glorious mind for all the noblest acts.
Friday	You change your life by changing your heart.
Saturday	There is nothing the devil fears so much, or so much tries to hinder, as prayer.

The Creator...is blessed forever: Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, praiseworthy and exalted above all forever. Blessed is your holy and glorious name, praiseworthy and exalted above all for all ages. Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory, praiseworthy and glorious above all forever. Blessed are you on the throne of your kingdom, praiseworthy and exalted above all forever. Blessed are you who look into the depths from your throne upon the cherubim, praiseworthy and exalted above all forever. Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven, praiseworthy and glorious forever. Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord, praise and exalt him above all forever.

My dear brothers and sisters not only is prayer very powerful; even more, it's of the utmost necessity for overcoming the enemies of our salvation. Look at all the saints: They weren't content with watching and fighting to overcome the enemies of their salvation and with keeping well away from all that could offer them temptation. They passed their whole lives in prayer, not only the day, but very often the whole night as well. Yes, my dear children, we watch over ourselves and all the motions of our hearts in vain, and in vain we avoid temptation, if we don't pray. If we don't continually resort to prayer, all our other ways will be of no use at all to us, and we'll be overcome. We won't find any sinner converted without turning to prayer. We won't find one persevering without depending heavily on prayer. Nor will we ever find a Christian who ends up damned whose downfall didn't begin with a lack of prayer... **St. John Vianney**

Whoever confesses his sins is already working with God. God indicts your sins; if you also indict them, you are joined with God. Man, and sinner are, so to speak, two realities: when you hear 'man' - this is what God has made; when you hear 'sinner' - this is what man himself has made. Destroy what you have made, so that God may save what he has made ... When you begin to abhor what you have made, it is then that your good works are beginning, since you are accusing yourself of your evil works. The beginning of good works is the confession of evil works. You do the truth and come to the light.. **The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1458**

In His Will is Our Peace
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