

FAITH AND REASON

The Journey of a Lifetime: We are each one of us on a journey through 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. "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 barren? 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, 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 I say to you, with me she saved the world. She too was alone and ridiculed. But she is your mother too, and you are my sister. 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 every individual person, is a grace. It is a call from God to a specific way of life. 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 from these trials and 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, and it cannot be demanded. 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... **Fr. William c. Mooney**

When You Are Old: When you are old and grey and full of sleep, and nodding by the fire, take down this book, And slowly read, and dream of the soft look. Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep; How many loved your moments of glad grace, And loved your beauty with love false or true, But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you, And loved the sorrows of your changing face; And bending down beside the glowing bars, Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled And paced upon the mountains overhead And hid his face amid a crowd of stars... **W B Yeats**

To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything He has given us - and He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense grace from Him. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, and is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful person knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference... **Thomas Merton**

The humble, simple souls, who are little enough to see the bigness of God in the littleness of a Babe, are therefore the only ones who will ever understand the reason of His visitation. He came to this poor earth of ours to carry on an exchange; to say to us, as only the Good God could say: 'you give me your humanity, and I will give you my Divinity; you give me your time, and I will give you My eternity; you give me your broken heart, and I will give you Love; you give me your nothingness, and I will give you My all... **Bishop Fulton J. Sheen**

A Thought For the Day

Sunday	In the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone.
Monday	Pride makes us artificial, and humility makes us real.
Tuesday	Happiness is not a matter of intensity but of balance, order, rhythm, and harmony.
Wednesday	Perhaps I am stronger than I think.
Thursday	Constantly choose rather to want less, than to have more.
Friday	Nothing whatever pertaining to godliness and real holiness can be accomplished without grace.
Saturday	God is more truly imagined than expressed, and He exists more truly than He is imagined.

The human soul, by its very nature, is endowed with the faculty of knowing God and the capacity for loving Him. The intelligence of the soul, transporting itself above all that is created and finite, has power to raise itself even to the contemplation of that Being who alone is uncreated and infinite, who is the source of all good and all perfection; it is able to form of Him an idea that is clear and accurate and indelible. The will of the soul is made to love this sovereign Good, which the understanding presents to it. The desires of the soul, which no created object can ever satisfy, and which reach far beyond the limits of this life, tend necessarily toward a Good that is supreme, eternal, and infinite, and which alone can content the soul and make it happy... **Fr. Jean Nicholas Grou**

We trust ourselves to a doctor because we suppose he knows his business. He orders an operation which involves cutting away part of our body and we accept it. We are grateful to him and pay him a large fee because we judge he would not act as he does unless the remedy were necessary, and we must rely on his skill. Yet we are unwilling to treat God in the same way! It looks as if we do not trust His wisdom and are afraid He cannot do His job properly. We allow ourselves to be operated on by a man who may easily make a mistake—a mistake which may cost us our life—and protest when God sets to work on us. If we could see all He sees we would unhesitatingly wish all He wishes... **Fr. Jean Baptiste Saint-Jure**

I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him. That which is, already has been that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by. Ecclesiastes 3:14-15

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

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