

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, and 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 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".

Saints took this to heart and thus became an example for all ages. St John Fisher was born in Beverly, Yorkshire, in 1459. He was educated at Cambridge. In 1497 he was appointed Confessor to Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII. Fisher 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 Boleyn as the legitimate heir to the throne. He was imprisoned in the Tower in April 1534. The next year the Pope 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." 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 Sebaste, St Marina, and the Son of St Basil and St Emelia, 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**

Almsgiving: Almsgiving is giving money, material goods, or doing works of charity for others by giving of our **TIME**. In almsgiving we give to others what God has already giving to us. When we give to others we are showing that we, as Baptized Christians, are bringing the love of Jesus Christ to a broken world. We give **FAITH** to those in doubt; we give **HOPE** to those in despair; and we give the **LOVE** of Jesus to those who live in hatred. There are many ways that we can **GIVE** alms—pray and ask God how he wants you to **GIVE**!

Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor. The Lord, who overcame the deceptions of the Tempter during the forty days in the desert, shows us the path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need. **Pope Francis**

Dear Lord, help me to spread your fragrance wherever I go. Flood my soul with your spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of yours. Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel your presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me, but only you, O Lord! Stay with me and then I will begin to shine as you do; so to shine as to be a light to others. The light, O Lord, will be all from you; none of it will be mine. It will be you shining on others through me. Let me thus praise you in the way which you love best, by shining on those around me. Let me preach to you without preaching, not by words but by example, by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what I do, the evident fullness of the love my heart bears to you. **Amen... John Henry Newman**

A Letter to an Absent Friend: My dear friend, you are the kind of person whose absence is too unbearable to be borne bravely. I am depressed at not being able to see you, but the sadness gives its own peculiar satisfaction. If I cannot help rejoicing when you are near, how can I avoid being sad when you are far away? It would be dreadful if I could do that. My only joy in your absence is that I am able to avoid being lonely. My consolation now is in embracing my sadness ... **St Augustine**

A Thought For the Day

Sunday	Give up negativism... be positive.
Monday	Give up anger... be more patient.
Tuesday	Give up pettiness... become mature.
Wednesday	Give up gloom... enjoy the beauty that is all around you.
Thursday	Give up jealousy... pray for trust.
Friday	Give up gossiping... control your tongue.
Saturday	Give up on sin... turn to virtue.

It is undoubtedly true that each of us, men and women, irresponsible and thoughtless as we often are, hold within our hands the happiness and sorrows of others. We cannot help it or escape from it. The power is in us inalienably almost from birth to death—in us, because we are persons—and we are responsible for the use we make of it. Indeed, so mysterious is this power that the very presence of a person who does not realize his responsibility is often the source of the keenest pain of all... The failure to exercise the power to give happiness to others is not merely negative in its results; it is the source of the most positive suffering of all. Thus, there is no escape from the responsibility involved in the possession of this power. Not to use it where it is due is to destroy all happiness. Strange power, indeed, to be committed to such weak and unworthy hands; yet there could be but one thing worse: that none could interfere with the joys and sorrows of others. We might envy their happiness and pity their sorrows, but we could not help them. It would be a world of isolated individuals wrapped in inviolable selfishness; each must take care of himself, and the world must go its way... **Fr. Basil W. Maturin**

The Charcoal Fire: From night to night, in cold and fright, stood I near charcoal fire, and warming there, did curse and swear, and show myself a liar. "Are you not he from Galilee, the friend of Him all meek?" The cock did crow. "I do not know The man of whom you speak." But then He turned, and in me burned A flame lit from His gaze. At which I wept for oaths unkept and all my lukewarm days. When He was tried, Him I denied and failed to pass the test. Though promised I with Him to die, should fail Him all the rest. Filled with regrets and empty nets, I turned to former hire. But when dawn came, He spoke my name, while burned the charcoal fire. Now at the shore, He asks once more if I will be His friend and on the sands, with pierced hands, gives me His sheep to tend... **Fr. Timothy J.**

Draper

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

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