

FAITH AND REASON

Love the Lord your God: The origin of the Jewish religion takes the mind back more than a thousand years B.C. The three great centers of religion at that time were Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India. The religion of these three cultures was polytheistic and myths abounded. Much of this religion was based on fear. The gods had to be won over by prayers, offerings, otherwise misfortune would be their lot. An ancient clay tablet found in Mesopotamia expresses this explicitly and clearly: "O that the god or goddess, known or unknown, would be pacified! O that the god who is angry with me would be pacified! O that the goddess who is angry with me would be pacified! The sin which I have committed I know not, my mistakes I know not".

The people of Israel trace their origin back to Abraham who came from Ur of the Chaldees in Mesopotamia, which he left under God's command to go the Promised Land - the land of Canaan, later called Israel. The centuries passed and the descendants of Abraham migrated to Egypt, which at that time was ruled by the Hyksos Dynasty.

The Hyksos were Asiatic shepherd kings who began to invade Egypt in 1720 B.C and continued to come in waves for some years. The Hyksos constituted the 15th and 16th Dynasties in Egypt. They were expelled in 1580 by the Kings of the 18th Theban Dynasty. After the expulsion of the Hyksos the fortunes of Abraham's descendants took a "nose dive". The Book of Exodus tells us of the life of Moses, his meetings with God on Mt Sinai, his being sent to Pharaoh Ramses II with the admonition "Let my people go". Their deliverance from Egypt across the Red Sea is, to this day, regarded as the supreme example of God's loving care. This motley group of tribes became a people at Mt Sinai "I shall be your God". God made a covenant with his people, gave them a law, worship, destiny. Eventually they settle in the land of Canaan. The challenge remained always before them - to become worthy of the vocation they had been given by God.

By the time of Our Lord's birth the contrast between the Jewish religion and the various pagan religions was wider than ever - light years apart. The nations that comprised the Roman Empire had begun to borrow gods from one another. Hundreds of gods and goddesses were worshipped with all kinds of cruel and immoral rituals, in all sorts of temples and shrines.

The Jewish people refused to bow before pagan gods, even in the midst of the most savage persecution. Their faith in the one, true God remained unshaken. The Israelites did not think of God in an abstract, philosophical way: God was not an idea to be analyzed and discussed: God was a person to be known, loved, and worshipped. Thus, the great commandment God; proclaimed in Deuteronomy 6:2-6 and proclaimed by God Incarnate In Mark 12 was no mere commandment, for it expressed a way of life upon which their identity was based: "I shall be your God, you shall be my people". This covenant of God with his people was not just a pact, a treaty. It was a loving relationship of God with his people.... it was described as a marriage bond. Which expressed the deeply intimate character of this relationship. Jesus - God Incarnate, by his coming as Man, by his life, passion, death, resurrection, by his sending the Holy Spirit, and by establishing his Church which would lead mankind to the Parousia, thereby fulfilled the law and the Prophets. The Church emerged out of the Old Testament as quietly as the dawn emerged from the darkness of night. The Church comes with the same message, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus explicitly states that "On these two commands the whole Law is based and the Prophets as well. A basic understanding of our faith will reveal how true this is.

However, there is something else which, if known, would enable us to understand the value, the importance, the necessity, of these two great commands, and indeed, that life is incomplete without them. That, something else is the basic principles on which our civilization depends Right and wrong are inherent in human life." The whole notion of reward and punishment, praise, blame, is an elementary notion born in us, otherwise how could it ever have gotten into us? It is possible to mistake a right action for a wrong one and vice versa. However, if right and wrong do does not exist it would have been impossible for us to suppose that they did. The human mind does not have the power to create such fantasies for itself!

The art of living requires living by a rule of conduct. It is this that gives zest and interest to life. Of course, we have to make a living, but so do the beasts of the earth, they too have to struggle to survive. Man is an intellectual creature and, as such, he is meant to have a fuller life than the animals. He has a personality to form: a personality of which he, under God is the architect. Man must therefore have laws outside himself and higher than himself to which he must conform his conduct. One may go further and say that all art requires an ideal, an ideal which the artist wishes to translate into reality. The art of living also requires ideals which the individual person must translate into reality - into his own personality Jesus, God Incarnate, sets before us the great ideal of love. Love, therefore, is not simply something we do - because we can do loving things for the wrong reason, in the wrong spirit.

Love is most of all something we become in our deepest personality - that is reality... **Fr. William C. Mooney**

"The Eucharist is the secret of my day. It gives strength and meaning to all my activities of service to the Church and to the world." Saint John Paul II

Our Lady of Knock: I come to Thee, my Mother, to lay before Thy feet, My fears, my hopes, my longings, my bitter hours and sweet. O take them Mother Mary, and place them by God's throne, Your hands will give them value, they're worthless on their own. As I kneel before you, speak to your Son for me, Though poor and small my offering, I know 'tis dear to thee. For you your Son at Cana, changed water into wine, The needs of bride and bridegroom, were small compared to mine. And so, my Mother Mary, I lay before Thy feet, My fears, my hopes, my longings, my bitter hours and sweat.

Heal me Lord: Lord, hear me.... Lord, anoint me with Your Divine Spirit... Inflammé my heart with the fire of Your Love... Flood my being with Your Majestic Presence... Please attend the call of my soul... Lord, forgive me all my offences... Purify me and heal me of all the resentments that I may have contracted in my ignorance... Forgive me for all the times that I have despised You when I have sinned and haven't felt any remorse... Deign to fill me with the gift of Forgiveness so that at this moment I can forgive all the people that have offended me, and that I can send my love to them and so that they forgive me too... Lord heal my self-inflicted wounds for lack of pardon and understanding for my brothers... Heal me Lord... Purify my soul so that I can feel that I have no resentments against anyone or against myself or against You... Fill me with Your Peace... Saturate my being with Your Divine Love, to undo the walls of pride and selfishness... Teach me to love You and others as I have never loved before... Transform me into a sun of Eternal Love to light up all hearts with rays of love... Heal me Lord... Fill me with Your Light... Fill me with Your Love... Fill me with Your Peace... **Amen**

In confession occurs the breakthrough of the Cross. The root of all sin is pride, superbia. I want to be my own law, I have a right to myself, my hatred and my desires, my life and my death. The mind and flesh of man are set on fire by pride; for it is precisely in his wickedness that man wants to be as God. Confession in the presence of a brother is the profoundest kind of humiliation. It hurts, it cuts a man down, it is a dreadful blow to pride...In the deep mental and physical pain of humiliation before a brother - which means, before God - we experience the Cross of Jesus as our rescue and salvation. The old man dies, but it is God who has conquered him. Now we share in the resurrection of Christ and eternal life... **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

A Thought for the Day

Sunday	When you see reverence lacking in the Church be the example of reverence and holiness.
Monday	Genuine love is demanding, but its beauty lies precisely in the demands it makes.
Tuesday	Act today in such a way that you need not blush tomorrow.
Wednesday	Something being challenging doesn't make it impossible.
Thursday	What we need is a cup of understanding, a barrel of love, and an ocean of patience.
Friday	I have made a pact with my tongue, not to speak when my heart is disturbed.
Saturday	Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary.

Anyone who knows he is loved is in turn prompted to love. It is the Lord himself, who loved us first, who asks us to place at the center of our lives love for him and for the people he has loved. It is especially adolescents and young people, who feel within them the pressing call to love, who need to be freed from the widespread prejudice that Christianity, with its commandments and prohibitions, sets too many obstacles in the path of the joy of love and, in particular prevents people from fully enjoying the happiness that men and women find in their love for one another... **Pope Benedict XVI**

Holiness must have a philosophical and theological foundation, namely, Divine truth; otherwise, it is sentimentality and emotionalism. Many would say later on, 'We want religion, but no creeds.' This is like saying we want healing, but no science of medicine; music, but no rules of music; history, but no documents. Religion is indeed a life, but it grows out of truth, not away from it. It has been said it makes no difference what you believe, it all depends on how you act. This is psychological nonsense, for a man acts out of his beliefs. Our Lord placed truth or belief in Him first; then came sanctification and good deeds. But here truth was not a vague ideal, but a Person. Truth was now lovable, because only a Person is lovable. Sanctity becomes the response the heart makes to Divine truth and its unlimited mercy to humanity. **Fulton J. Sheen, Life of Christ**

In His Will is Our Peace

Fr. William C. Mooney

Spiritual Direction and Confession

Email: Fr.WCmooney@gmail.com

Appointments: (904) 824-6625

Follow on Facebook: [Faith and Reason](#)

Instagram: [faith_and_reason](#)