

# FAITH AND REASON

**Veni Creator Spiritus:** Failure is a fact of life, an inescapable fact of life. Failure can be instructive or destructive. It can bring us down or build us up. It can make us or break us. It can be a stumbling block or a stepping stone.....we alone decide! Such realism can be very daunting, rather depressing. If we understand failure as something that must be understood and confronted within the realm of reason alone. The implications of failure are numerous and complex, expressing as they do the mystery of each individual life, in time and for eternity. Fr Hubert Van Zeller explores the mystery of failure in a most compelling way. "There will be frustration, but the Frustration will be of a kind that can be explained by love, and which will, therefore, not destroy but perfect. Without failure, the soul's experience of love is incomplete. It is the story of Job's crushing reversals, discouragement bordering on despair, the dawn of a new hope, and the birth of a new life. It is the theme paradox of the New Testament: the seed dying that it may live, the folly of the Cross being wiser than the wisdom of men, the weak being chosen to confound the strong, power being made perfect in weakness, the finality of the crucifixion preparing for the glory of the resurrection. The doctrine could not be stated in starker terms: If we want to save our lives we must lose them, in order to succeed we must fail. Nothing succeeds like Christian failure.

Clearly, this is God's plan unfolding and revealing itself, not our plan! But also our role in God's plan, in God's time. In this life, we walk in mystery.... in the twilight of mystery. Consider, for a few moments, that inanimate, gangly thing, that lifeless thing we call a glove. Immediately the latex glove comes to mind, which I have considerable difficulty getting my hand into..... A glove itself cannot do anything, but, put your hand into the glove and it can do many things. We are the glove, the Holy Spirit is the hand, we must make room for the Holy Spirit, and allow the Holy Spirit to work through us. It is never simply a matter of what we do for God, but what God wishes to do through us.

St Basil (330-379) in his Treatise on the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit is the source of all holiness, a spiritual light, and he offers his own light to every mind to help in its search for truth. The power of the Spirit fills the whole universe, but he gives himself only to those who are worthy, acting in each according to the measure of his faith. Like the sunshine which permeates the whole atmosphere over land and sea, and yet is enjoyed by each person as though it were for him alone, so the Spirit pours forth his grace in full measure, sufficient for all, and is present as though exclusively to everyone who can receive him. To all creatures that share in him he gives a delight limited only by their own nature, not by his ability to give." In other words, unless we are personally committed the wind of the Spirit cannot blow through us.

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit established the Church in power. The Apostles, guilt-ridden men, emerged from behind locked doors, without any fear, to bring Jesus and his message to the world. They had abandoned Jesus, now they "rejoiced that they might be found worthy to suffer for him".... and finally sacrificed their lives for him. That is the transforming power of the Holy Spirit..... and in the sharpest contrast. "Without the Holy Spirit, God is far off, Christ remains in the past, the Gospel is a dead letter, the Church merely an organization, authority domination, evangelization propaganda, worship superstition, the Christian ethic a slave morality. But in the Holy Spirit, the cosmos is lifted up and groans with the birth-pangs of the kingdom, the Risen Christ is present, the Gospel is power for living, the Church a sign of communion of the Holy Trinity, authority a liberating service, evangelism a Pentecost, the liturgy a memorial and anticipation, human action divine" (Patriarch Athenagoras) The Holy Spirit, living in the very heart of the Church, is the power behind everything the Church is and does, without whom the Church would be dead. In the Acts of the Apostles, a history of the early Church, written by St Luke as a companion to his Gospel - it is clearly evident that the Holy Spirit is the moving force behind everything the Church does, moving and guiding the Church and its leaders.

The Holy Spirit is also the power in our individual lives. A young Hindu and a young catholic were attending a seminar on Jesus Sermon on the Mount. They became friends very quickly. One day the Hindu said to the Catholic, "I know how Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" affected Mahatma Gandhi and influenced his life, but I fear Jesus' teaching is too difficult and too lofty for ordinary people". Toward the end of the seminar the young Hindi found the answer to his dilemma. Jesus' teaching is indeed lofty and difficult, but he overlooked Jesus promise to send the Holy Spirit who would empower us to live the message. So there it is, in all its simplicity: the gifts of the Holy Spirit are limited only by our nature, not by the Spirit's ability to give. Therefore, let us remove the obstacles, the roadblocks and refrain from getting in the Holy Spirit's way! **Fr. William C. Mooney**

**The most deadly poison of our time is indifference. And this happens although the praise of God should know no limits. Let us strive, therefore, to praise him to the greatest extent of our powers... St. Maximilian Kolbe**

**I worry some of you still have not really met Jesus**—one to one—you and Jesus alone. We may spend time in the chapel—but have you seen with the eyes of your soul how He looks at you with love? Do you really know the living Jesus—not from books but from being with Him in your heart? Have you heard the loving words He speaks to you? Ask for the grace; He is longing to give it. Until you can hear Jesus in the silence of your own heart, you will not be able to hear Him saying ‘I Thirst’ in the hearts of the poor. Never give up this daily intimate contact with Jesus as the real living person—not just the idea... **Saint Mother Teresa**

**Let me hear in the morning of thy steadfast love**, for in thee I put my trust. Teach me the way I should go, for to thee I lift up my soul. Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies! I have fled to thee for refuge! Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God! Let thy good spirit lead me on a level path! For thy name’s sake, O Lord, preserve my life! In thy righteousness bring me out of trouble! And in thy steadfast love cut off my enemies, and destroy all my adversaries, for I am thy servant... **Psalms 143: 8-12**

**St Anthony's prayer for Wisdom:** Oh, Light of the World, Infinite God, Father of Eternity, giver of Wisdom and Knowledge, and ineffable dispenser of every Spiritual Grace; who knowest all things before they are made, who makest the darkness and the light; put forth Thy hand and touch my mouth and make it as a sharp sword to utter eloquently Thy Words. Make my tongue, Oh Lord, as a chosen arrow, to declare faithfully Thy Wonders. Put Thy Spirit, Oh Lord, in my heart, that I may perceive; in my soul, that I may retain; and in my conscience, that I may meditate. Do thou lovingly, holily, mercifully, clemently, and gently inspire me with Thy Grace. Do Thou teach, guide, and strengthen the comings in and goings out of my senses and my thoughts. And let Thy discipline instruct me even to the end, and the Counsel of the Most High help me through Thy Infinite Wisdom and Mercy, **Amen**

#### **A Thought For the Day**

<b>Sunday</b>	Every divine action begins from the Father, proceeds through the Son, and is completed in the Holy Spirit.
<b>Monday</b>	Faith does not quench desire but inflames it.
<b>Tuesday</b>	Be at peace with your own soul, then heaven and earth will be at peace with you.
<b>Wednesday</b>	At the end of our life we shall be judged by charity.
<b>Thursday</b>	The dress of the body should not discredit the good of the soul.
<b>Friday</b>	The greatest kindness one can render to any man consists in leading him from error to truth.
<b>Saturday</b>	Ask the beasts and they will teach you the beauty of this earth.

**We will never be free of trials and temptations** as long as our earthly life lasts. For Job has said: “Is not the life of human beings on earth a drudgery?” (Job 7:1). Therefore, we should always be on our guard against temptations, always praying that our enemy, the devil, ‘who never sleeps but constantly looks for someone to devour.’ (1 Pet 5:8), will not catch us off guard. No one in this world is so perfect or holy as not to have temptations sometimes. We can never be entirely free from them. Sometimes these temptations can be very severe and troublesome, but if we resist them, they will be very useful to us; for by experiencing them we are humbled, cleansed, and instructed. All the Saints endured tribulations and temptations and profited from them, while those who did not resist and overcome them fell away and were lost. There is no place so holy or remote where you will not meet with temptation, nor is there anyone completely free from it in this life; for in our body, we bear the wounds of sin and the weakness of our human nature in which we are born... **Thomas á Kempis**

**My God**, you know infinitely better than I how little I love you. I would not love you at all except for your grace. It is your grace that has opened the eyes of my mind and enabled them to see your glory. It is your grace that has touched my heart and brought upon it the influence of what is so wonderfully beautiful and fair ... O my God, whatever is nearer to me than you, things of this earth, and things more naturally pleasing to me, will be sure to interrupt the sight of you, unless your grace interferes. Keep my eyes, my ears, my heart from any such miserable tyranny. Break my bonds—raise my heart. Keep my whole being fixed on you. Let me never lose sight of you; and, while I gaze on you, let my love of you grow more and more everyday... **St. John Henry Cardinal Newman**

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

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