

# FAITH AND REASON

**Faith Pure and Simple:** "Discretion warns us against wasted effort: but for the coward all effort is wasted effort. Discretion shows us where effort is wasted and when it is obligatory. Laziness flees from all risk. Discretion flees from useless risk but urges us on to take the risks that faith and the grace of God demand of us. For when Jesus said the Kingdom of heaven was to be won by violence, He meant that it could only be bought at the price of certain risks. Sooner or later, if we follow Christ we have to risk everything in order to gain everything. We have to gamble on the invisible and risk all that we may see and taste and feel. But we know that the risk is worth it because there is nothing more insecure than the transient world. For this world as we see it is passing away (1 Cor 7). Without courage we can never attain true simplicity. Cowardice keeps us double minded, hesitating between God and the world. In this hesitation there is no true faith... faith in an invisible God. We are never certain, because we never quite give in to the authority of an invisible God. This hesitation is the death of hope. He never let go of those visible supports which, we well know, must someday surely fail us. And this hesitation makes true prayer impossible. It never quite dares to ask for anything. If it asks, it is so uncertain of being heard, that the very act of asking, it seeks by human prudence to construct a make-shift answer. In that, what is the use of praying, if at the very moment of prayer, we have so little confidence in God that we are busy planning our to our prayer. Fr. Thomas Merton accurately describes the plight of a vast and ever-growing number of people in the modern world. They do not understand life as an unfolding mystery which intimately involves them in a unique individual person. Therefore, since life is static, whatever upsets the "status quo" annoys them, at times quite intensely. They seek a certainty in human affairs that could be aptly described as "mathematical", which of course is impossible. Whatever happens must be in accordance with their attitudes and their values. No relationship with God or man could survive such an entrenched mentality. In Isaiah 7:10... the people demand a sign, but Ahaz refuses to ask God for one: "House of Israel is it not enough for you to weary men, must you also weary my God. Therefore, the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and you shall name him Immanuel". The sign given was one which would test their faith. We hear these words fulfilled in the Gospel (Lk 1:26-38), the Annunciation of the good news to Mary.

The appearance of the angel, with its message from God must have been riveting. Who is she, a peasant girl, that an angel of God should appear before her? Who is she to bear the Savior God promised to Israel? Why should this great blessing, and burden, come into her humble life? Unlike Zechariah, however, Mary believes, for her question of the angel is not.. "How will I know?" but "How can this be?" Mary has already accepted the truth of the angel's message. What enabled this young girl of 15 to accept the message of the angel? Trust..... Trust..... which is so lacking in our world. I think immediately of the words of the Book of Wisdom: "Those who trust in Him shall understand truth and the faithful shall abide with Him in love"... Loving Trust!

The faith of Mary is so different to the faith that falls prey to the spirit of the world as outlined by Fr Merton. By her loving trust Mary becomes the "Handmaid of the Lord" and by that very fact also the handmaid of hope, of love, of truth. The Roman Orator Cicero said, "Where there is life there is hope", but, what is life if there is no hope? What is life if there is no love? What is life if there is no truth? What is life, what is hope, what is love, what is truth, if there is not that loving trust which alone can sustain them?.... What is to become of them?... How will they survive the tides of this world?

Pope Paul VI gives us a very appropriate conclusion to our reflection: "Faith is blessedness, not astounding illusion, not mythical fictions, not surreptitious consolation; but authentic happiness. The happiness of truth, the happiness of fullness, the happiness of divine life, made possible for some marvelous human participation. Not mortification of thought, not hindrance of scientific research, not useless weight for the slenderness of modern spiritual style; but light, but voice, but discovery that broadens the mind and makes life and the world understandable; happiness of supreme knowledge, once again the happiness of knowing the truth"... **Fr. William C. Mooney**

**Prayer for peace:** Forgive us for the war, Lord. Lord Jesus, son of God, have mercy on us sinners. Lord Jesus, born under the bombs of Kyiv, have mercy on us. Lord Jesus, dead in the arms of a mother in Kharkiv, have mercy on us. Lord Jesus, in the 20-year-olds sent to the frontline, have mercy on us. Lord Jesus, who continues to see hands armed with weapons under the shadow of the cross, forgive us, Lord. Forgive us if, not content with the nails with which we pierced your hand, we continue to drink from the blood of the dead torn apart by weapons. Forgive us if these hands that you had created to protect have been turned into instruments of death. Forgive us, Lord, if we continue to kill our brother. Forgive us, Lord, if we continue to kill our brother, if we continue like Cain to take the stones from our field to kill Abel. Forgive us if we go out of our way to justify cruelty, if, in our pain, we legitimize the cruelty of our actions. Forgive us the war, Lord. Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, we implore you to stop the hand of Cain, enlighten our conscience, let not our will be done, do not abandon us to our own doing. Stop us, Lord, stop us, and when you have stopped the hand of Cain, take care of him also. He is our brother. O Lord, stop the violence. Stop us, Lord. Amen. **Pope Francis**

**Love is the most necessary of all virtues.** Love in the person who preaches the word of God is like fire in a musket. If a person were to throw a bullet with his hands, he would hardly make a dent in anything; but if the person takes the same bullet and ignites some gunpowder behind it, it can kill. It is much the same with the word of God. If it is spoken by someone who is filled with the fire of charity- the fire of love of God and neighbor- it will work wonders... **St. Anthony Mary Claret**

**No matter how lowly a person may be:** Will he seek his way through the Scriptures with the staff of faith in his hand. Will he hold that staff and search out his way with it. Will he have the holy, ancient teachers of the Church as his guide as well. Will he make his way with good intentions and a lowly heart. Will he use reason and refuse no good learning. Will he call on God for wisdom, grace, and help that he may keep his way and follow his good guides, Then he will never fall into danger, but he will wade through surely and well And he will come to the end of his journey at the place for which he was searching... **St Thomas More**

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

**Sunday** Live simply so that others may simply live.

**Monday** It is not he who begins well who is perfect. It is he who ends well who is approved by God.

**Tuesday** I asked you and you would not listen; I asked my God and He did listen.

**Wednesday** Mercy is the greatest attribute of God.

**Thursday** Whenever you are given a cross, be sure to embrace it with humility and gratitude.

**Friday** There is no cross to bear that Christ has not already borne for us and does not now bear with us.

**Saturday** God does not accept doctrines apart from good works, nor are works when divorced from Godly doctrines accepted by God.

**The Lukewarm Soul is Like a Snail:** A lukewarm soul is not yet quite dead in the eyes of God, because the faith, the hope and the charity that are its spiritual life are not altogether extinct. But it is a faith without zeal, a hope without resolution, and a charity without passion. Nothing touches this kind of soul: it hears the word of God at Mass, yes. But it often finds the Scriptures boring, listening with difficulty, more of less by habit, like someone who thinks that he knows enough about it and does enough of what he should. Any prayers that are a bit long are distasteful to the lukewarm soul. This soul is so full of whatever it has just been doing or what it is going to do next, its boredom is so great, that this poor unfortunate person is almost in agony. It is still alive spiritually, but it is not capable of doing anything to gain heaven. For the last twenty years such a soul has been filled with good intentions without doing anything at all to correct its habits. It is like someone who is envious of anyone on top of the world yet unwilling to lift a foot to try to get there himself. The lukewarm soul would not want to renounce eternal blessings for those of the world yet does not wish either to leave the world or go to heaven. If it can just manage to pass its time without crosses or difficulties, it would never ask to leave this world at all. The lukewarm soul is like a turtle or a snail. It moves only by dragging itself along the ground, and you can see it is getting from place to place with great difficulty. The love of God which it feels deep down within itself is like a tiny spark of fire hidden under a heap of ashes... **St John Vianney (Cure of Ars)**

**St. Therese's prayer for priests:** *O Jesus, keep them all close to your heart.* O Jesus, I pray for your faithful and fervent priests; for your unfaithful and tepid priests; for your priests laboring at home or abroad in distant mission fields; for your tempted priests; for your lonely and desolate priests; for your young priests; for your dying priests; for the souls of your priests in Purgatory. But above all, I recommend to you the priests dearest to me: the priest who baptized me; the priests who've absolved me from my sins; the priests at whose Masses I've assisted and who've given me Your Body and Blood in Holy Communion; the priests who've taught and instructed me; all the priests to whom I am indebted in any other way, especially O Jesus, keep them all close to your heart, and bless them abundantly in time and in eternity. **Amen**

***As all men are touched by God's love, so all are also touched by the desire for His intimacy. No one escapes this longing; we are all kings in exile, miserable without the Infinite.*** Bl. Fulton Sheen

In His Will is Our Peace  
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