

# FAITH AND REASON

**I can do all things in him who strengthens me:** We have met the person with an amazing ability to understand human nature in other people. The depth of their understanding, the scope of their sensitivity, is remarkable. It is worthwhile to look for the source of such ability. How did the poet Keats attain such an understanding of life, its joy, its sorrows, its hope, its dreams? Such depth of understanding is all the more remarkable when one considers that all he saw of life was consumption, the interior of a pharmacy, and an early death. How did the Bronte Sisters acquire such a profound understanding of human nature, living, as they did, in a remote Yorkshire Village? How did William Shakespeare come to such an understanding of all the shades of humanity that that he wrote about with such eloquence and accuracy? How did St Paul measure every beat of the human heart, and touch every nerve? This depth of understanding is not the result of going places and meeting people, nor does come from education or cultural enrichment or experience, all of which are of considerable importance... This depth of understanding does not come from without, it comes from within... Each and every one of us has one thing in common - human nature! If we understand human nature in ourselves, and to the degree that we do, we will by that very fact understand it in others.

This understanding of human nature in self and in others, must not simply remain at the level of awareness, it must lead to action. We must strive to be the unique person God created us to be. Then we will understand, with St Paul, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me. The glory of God is man fully alive" (St Irenaeus)

In the 1960's Richard Bach published a book entitled *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. Millions of copies were sold around the world because it dealt with a deep human experience common to us all. Johnathan spent his time flying in circles, chasing after fishing boats, to scramble for the leftovers that were thrown overboard. One day Jonathan listened to that longing within himself and is no longer content to go on fighting for food. To the dismay of all the other gulls, he goes off by himself, away from others. When Jonathan sees the wear and tear that accompanies such a fast lifestyle, he is tempted to return to the simple life of a gull, just like all the other gulls, that would be easier. But Jonathan knew that he could never be just one of the flock of gulls again. That something within him, that restlessness, that longing, led him to understand that he could never again be just one of the flock, one of the crowd.

Those content to be just one of the crowd will never become what God has destined them to be. Unique individuals that we are, with our God-given destiny, must step away from the crowd, when our intuition, our instincts, our deepest feelings, ... Grace, clearly indicate "This I must do". We must, in other words, carve out our destiny. This metamorphosis will require change, much change. Let us remember the encouraging words of Cardinal Newman: To change is to grow and to have changed much is to have grown much". It must, never be a matter of change for the sake of change. It must be change that we may grow to fulfill our eternal destiny.

Many refuse to do this and consequently drift with the forces and tides of the world. It is worth noting the following insights: "From a psychiatric point of view the repression of this spiritual birth is the real pathology of our age" (Dr. Viktor Frankl). "About one-third of my cases are not suffering from any clinically definably neurosis, but from the senselessness and aimlessness of their lives." (Dr. Carl Jung).

The Poet Tennyson was walking among the flowers in a beautiful garden. A friend who accompanied him said, "You speak so often of Jesus. Will you tell me what Jesus really means to you"? Tennyson stopped, thought for a moment, then pointing down at a beautiful flower said, "What the sun is to that flower, Jesus Christ is to my soul" This is what it is all about - a living relationship with the Lord in and through his body the Church, a relationship that does, not depend on what people do or do not do. "I live now. Not I, but Christ lives in me" "I can so all things in him who strengthens me" ... **A meditation by Fr. William C. Mooney**

**Ancient Irish Hymn:** Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art. Thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light. Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word; I ever with thee, and thou with me, Lord. Born of thy love, thy child may I be, thou in me dwelling and I one with thee. Be thou my buckler, my sword for the fight. Be thou my dignity, thou my delight, thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tow'r. Raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my Pow'r. Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise; thou mine inheritance, now and always. Thou and thou only, first in my heart, Ruler of heaven, my treasure thou art. "True Light of heaven, when vict'ry is won may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun! Heart of my heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

**Get used to lifting your heart to God,** in acts of thanksgiving, many times a day. Because he gives you this and that. Because you have been despised. Because you haven't what you need or because you have. Because he made his Mother so beautiful, his Mother who is also your Mother. Because he created the sun and the moon and this animal and that plant. Because he made that man eloquent and you, he left tongue-tied... Thank him for everything, because everything is good...**Saint Josemaría Escrivá**

**My God, Sweetness beyond words**, make bitter all the carnal comfort that draws me from love of the eternal and lures me to its evil self by the sight of some delightful good in the present. Let it not overcome me, my God. Let not flesh and blood conquer me. Let not the world and its brief glory deceive me, nor the devil trip me by his craftiness. Give me courage to resist, patience to endure, and constancy to persevere. Give me the soothing unction of Your spirit rather than all the consolations of the world, and in place of carnal love, infuse into me the love of Your name... **Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ**

**Normal food is less strong than man, it serves him**, is taken into man's body to be assimilated and to build it up. But this special food, the Eucharist, is above man and stronger than man. Consequently, the whole process involved is reversed: the man who eats this bread is assimilated by it, taken into it; he is fused into this bread and becomes bread, like Christ himself. "Though many, we are one body, for we are one bread." The result of this insight is quite clear: Eucharist is never merely an event a deux, a dialogue between Christ and me. The goal of eucharistic communion is a total recasting of a person's life, breaking up a man's whole "I" and creating a new "We" ... **Pope Benedict XVI, Behold The Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology**

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

<b>Sunday</b>	Duty does not have to be dull. Love can make it beautiful and fill it with life
<b>Monday</b>	Great morning prayer is like marinating in the Holy Spirit.
<b>Tuesday</b>	The answer to anxiety is the adoration of Christ.
<b>Wednesday</b>	Be a rebel; fight the devil!
<b>Thursday</b>	Who struggles more than those who strive to overcome themselves?
<b>Friday</b>	The greatest kindness one can render to any man is leading him to truth.
<b>Saturday</b>	Faith doesn't get you out of trouble, it gets you through it.

**To have Faith in Christ means**, of course, trying to do all that He says. There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus, if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him. But trying in a new way, a less worried way. Not doing these things in order to be saved, but because He has begun to save you already. Not hoping to get to Heaven as a reward for your actions, but inevitably wanting to act in a certain way because a first faint gleam of Heaven is already inside you... **C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity**

#### **The beauty of the Most High King:**

Happy, indeed, is the one permitted to share in this Sacred Banquet, to hold fast with all the feelings of the heart to him...

Whose beauty all the blessed hosts unceasingly admire;

Whose love moves us to love;

Whose contemplation refreshes us;

Whose generosity satisfies us;

Whose sweetness fills and overflows us;

Whose remembrance pleasantly brings light;

Whose fragrance will revive the dead;

Whose glorious vision will bless the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, because the vision of him is the splendor of everlasting glory, the radiance of everlasting light, the mirror without tarnish.

Look into the mirror every day, and continually examine your face in it, so that in this way you may beautify yourself completely inwardly and outwardly, clothed and covered in robes of many colors. Adorn yourself with the flowers and garments of all the virtues as is proper for a son or daughter of the Most High God..... **St Clare of Assisi**

**In His Will is Our Peace**

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