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Fr. Robert's Remarks



FR. ROBERT MANSFIELD, SSC
VICAR GENERAL

Greetings; the Lord be with you!

We are closely approaching our 2016 Synod at Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga and I, certainly, as always, look forward to our time together.

We are blessed to have with us this time, Bishop Rocco Florenza, who will join us in Mississauga after having been to Holy Trinity & St. Jude in Thunder Bay, ON for a Confirmation on the weekend just before the Synod. No doubt we shall have some photos from the Confirmation in Thunder Bay and also from the Synod generally, and from the Confirmation which will take place there, in our next issue of this newsletter.

About a week and a half ago, on September 4th, many were delighted to see Mother Theresa of Calcutta canonised by the Roman Catholic Church not only as a dramatic and shining example to us of what can happen when one allows Jesus control of one's life, but also as an intercessor for us. As I began this paragraph, the words of St. Paul in the 2nd lesson at Morning Prayer (Colossians 2. 26,27) this morning came to mind:

“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what



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Fr. Byron Woolcock, TDC: The Royal Road of the Holy Cross



FR. BYRON WOOLCOCK, TDC

There is no doubt that title will be familiar to all who read here. Indeed our good Fr. David and his Faithful People have been prayerfully studying “The Imitation of Christ” by Thomas ‘a Kempis, from which book this title is taken. September 14th is Holy Cross Day and September 17th is Stigmata of St. Francis.

In the recent past I found myself less eager to write on certain subjects, which previously I had tackled often, in both sermons and parish newsletters. Certainly The Holy Cross was one such subject and perhaps a slight goad, from that same lovely book again, has helped now. “Why, then, do you fear to take up the Cross, which is the road to the Kingdom? In the Cross is salvation; in the Cross is life; in the Cross is protection against our enemies; in the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness; in the Cross is strength of mind; in the Cross is joy of spirit; in the Cross is excellence of virtue; in the Cross is perfection of holiness.

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Fr. Byron Woolcock, TDC: The Royal Road of the Holy Cross

There is no salvation of soul, nor hope of eternal life, save in the Cross. Take up the Cross, therefore, and follow Jesus, (Matt. 16:24) and go forward into eternal life. (Matt. 25:46) Christ has gone before you, bearing His Cross; (John 19:17) He died for you on the Cross, that you also may bear your cross, and desire to die on the cross for Him. For if you die with Him, you will also live with Him. (Rom. 6:8) And if you share His sufferings, you will also share His glory.” (Note to friends, beyond the mountains yes, indeed, I read the rest of chapter 37 also!)

Atonement Theories:

You will be glad this may be the shortest subsection of any article attempted. We all know the varied Theological approaches to this aspect. For now, suffice to say here what the Nicene Creed professes clearly. Likewise other familiar words;

“NOW I REJOICE
IN MY
SUFFERINGS

We may not know, we cannot tell
What pains he had to bear,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

A bit more of this later on in this article.

FOR YOUR SAKE,

“What is Lacking...”

AND IN MY
FLESH I
COMPLETE
WHAT IS
LACKING IN
CHRIST’S
AFFLICTIONS
FOR THE SAKE
OF HIS BODY,
THAT IS THE
CHURCH”.
COL. 1:24

The full text, from Col. 1:24, begins a rich concept that will take more space here. “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is the Church”. (RSV) That text once gave me pause and indeed I have read a few commentators who, I believe, were so anxious to “clarify” this verse as to lose much of its “Catholic Richness”.

As was the custom of many of the Clergy, my Father obtained a Lenten book in 1952 entitled “Jesus and the Resurrection” by H.A. Williams. Here I found a very helpful commentary on our Colossians verse, and much more. “When, therefore by means of His self-renunciation to the death Our Lord was raised to newness of life, there was raised up a new kind of social unity. As He gave His life to men and women, and they were gathered up into Him, the Christ became a corporate personality whose character and identity were shared by a great and increasing multitude of people. Yet this did not involve a loss of His distinct individuality. On the contrary it is precisely by reason of His granting Himself to others in this way that He is the unique and only Lord at whose name every knee shall bow.” (pg. 91) That quote, like the whole book, has been a great help to me (obviously flowing into Baptismal and Eucharistic themes also) and, hopefully, also dovetails into what this present Article attempts to express. Fr. Williams also points out, in an important footnote, the failure to realize the paradox he expresses; “has led to controversy between Protestants and Catholics about ‘the Crown Rights of the Redeemer’...”. The footnote reads; “Christ’s unique Kingship is exercised by the bestowal of Himself to His Church. His distinct individuality consists not in His exclusive possession of what other people cannot have but in His unique bestowal of what nobody else can give (!) Can He not therefore give e.g. prevailing power to the

Fr. Byron Woolcock, TDC: The Royal Road of the Holy Cross

prayers of the Saints* or redemptive significance to their sufferings”? You will recognize these thoughts carry on in a current from St. Paul’s Colossians verse (perhaps enlightened by his Damascus road meeting with Jesus, “Whom you are persecuting!”)

Suffering In Community

The previous thoughts, I am sure, touch each of us as “living members of His Mystical Body”. Recently I had been reading of the “Me Generation” loss of any true sense of Community. This spoke of social and political ramifications but mostly again sheds light on our united Way of The Cross, pain and suffering of all kinds. I believe St. Mother Theresa, whose canonization takes place as I write, who loved so much and so many, expressed this loss of Community and Com-Passion beautifully; (How much our sad world needs Mothers!)

The Greatest Evil in the World

“Many today are starving for ordinary bread. But there is another kind of hunger—the hunger to be wanted, to be loved to be recognized.

Nakedness too is not just the want of clothes, but also about loss of dignity, purity, and self-respect. And homelessness is not just want of a house; there is the homelessness of being rejected, of being unwanted in a throwaway society. The biggest disease in the world today is the feeling of being unwanted and uncared for. The greatest evil in the world today is lack of love, the terrible indifference towards one’s neighbour.”

Another person greatly admired but, for me, a bit harder to understand, Fr. Hans Urs von Balthasar expresses yet another (related) facet of the diamond of truth contained in the Holy Cross; “The first thing the Cross does is cross out the world’s word by a Wholly-Other Word, a Word that the world does not want to hear at any price. For the world wants to live and rise again before it dies, while the love of Christ wants to die in order to rise again in the form of God on the other side of death, indeed IN death.” (Hans Urs von Balthasar, **Love Alone is Credible**)

* (Especially, of course, Our Lady of Sorrows, when He bequeathed her to us as our Mother, from that same Holy Cross.)

The Victorious Cross

“I confess the Cross because I know the Resurrection.” (St. Cyril of Jerusalem)

At our house, we still enjoy daily a classical music station from Toronto via Cobourg. Often I hear the lovely strains of Albert Katelbey’s “In a Monastery Garden”. Of course I always think of “better days” at S.S.J.E. in Bracebridge. There each little cross in the graveyard reads “Jesu Mercy” and on the Chapels’ outer wall was the great Christus Rex.

Earlier we touched on the subject of Atonement theories. One of these, Divine reconciliation or satisfaction is also traced to St. Anselm of Canterbury and, further

“I CONFESS THE
CROSS
BECAUSE I
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RESURRECTION”
(ST. CYRIL OF
JERUSALEM)

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afield, other versions in Roman, Protestant and even Anglican and Orthodox contexts. Basically this says that “by virtue of his sinless life, complete obedience to God and death by crucifixion Christ paid in full the terrible debt owed for Adam’s fall and all humanity’s transgressions, thereby reconciling with the Father those who believe in him”. (The Melody of Faith. Theology in an Orthodox Key. Vigen Guroian pg. 94). Other than the legalistic language Vigen also sees this Theology of the Cross as basically flawed because; “...if one presses the logic of this contemporary piety of the Cross, the resurrection (although it may be a comforting epilogue to the Gospel narrative) becomes unnecessary, for on Holy Friday, Jesus accomplished all that was needed in order that mankind might inherit eternal life.” (pg. 94) Yes, most certainly, sincere Christians affirm Jesus’ bodily resurrection but “many also fail to recall the ancient Christian conviction that the Resurrection—not the Crucifixion—completes the purpose of the Incarnation.” (pg. 94) Finally, Vigen summarizes, in tune with my attempts here written, this quote; “...Christ as a man offered the spotless sacrifice to the Father, not intending to bring the Father some juridical equivalent”...but to endow us through our union with Him, the power of becoming ourselves a spotless sacrifice so that we too might be able to entre with Him into the Father’s presence”. (pg. 96) That latter thought of self-offering is in tune with St. Paul’s bidding to offer ourselves which, as you know, we indeed do in the Eucharist. (pg. 85 BCP)

You may be thinking that one way we are saved from “unbalanced or incomplete Theology” is by the Divine Liturgy. The example of self-offering has been mentioned above. I for one, am very happy that the words following...”Wherefore, O father, Lord of Heaven and Earth...” (pg. 82) were added in the 1962 B.C.P. revision. Likewise in such places as The Litany the prayerful pleadings in the middle of page 31, BCP, contain a healthy balance of the complete Gospel of The Holy Cross.

Pray Without Ceasing

Hopefully this “quantity of quotes” here gathered draws us all into deeper prayer for one another, for all who suffer in any way and for The Whole Church. Perhaps I’ve used this glorious quote before from Fr. Pat McNulty of Madonna House, Combermere, who fell asleep in Jesus earlier this year. I believe his great love for the Sacred Heart inspired these words. “We approach the fullness of our union with Christ on earth when we begin to realize that in Christ we too are those who are like us in our own pain right now. And in Christ we can cry out as them before the Father, right now, as we are! Not for them—that’s caring. Not with them—that’s compassion. But as them—that’s Love.” (I Live Now, Not I) Why do I get the feeling that quote seems to summarize all else I have attempted to express here?!

May The Peace of Christ, Crucified, Risen and King Forever be with you.

Fr. Byron, T.D.C.

(Emphasis mine throughout)



“AND IN CHRIST
WE CAN CRY OUT
AS THEM BEFORE
THE FATHER, RIGHT
NOW, AS WE ARE!
NOT FOR THEM—
THAT’S CARING.
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LOVE.”
FR. PAT MCNULTY

Bonnie's Reflections: High Noon



MRS. BONNIE IVEY

When the Jews of Jesus' earthly lifetime travelled from Galilee south to Jerusalem, they often detoured around Samaria. They despised the Samaritans as half-Jews, their religion as a cult. Particularly offensive was the Samaritans' claim that Mount Gerizim was the only place to worship God legitimately. The Samaritans in turn disdained the scriptures so carefully studied by the Jews, recognizing only the five books of Moses (Genesis through to Deuteronomy) as authentic. The Jews were wrong, they said, to have built their Temple in Jerusalem.

Jesus did not avoid Samaria, and went there on several occasions.

One particular day, John tells us in his gospel, Jesus "had to" travel to Samaria. This phrase means that he had a divine appointment to be there. He and his disciples arrived at the town of Sychar, near Mount Gerizim. Sending the others into town to buy supplies, Jesus sat down beside Jacob's well. This was a landmark, an ancient well seven feet across, and very deep.

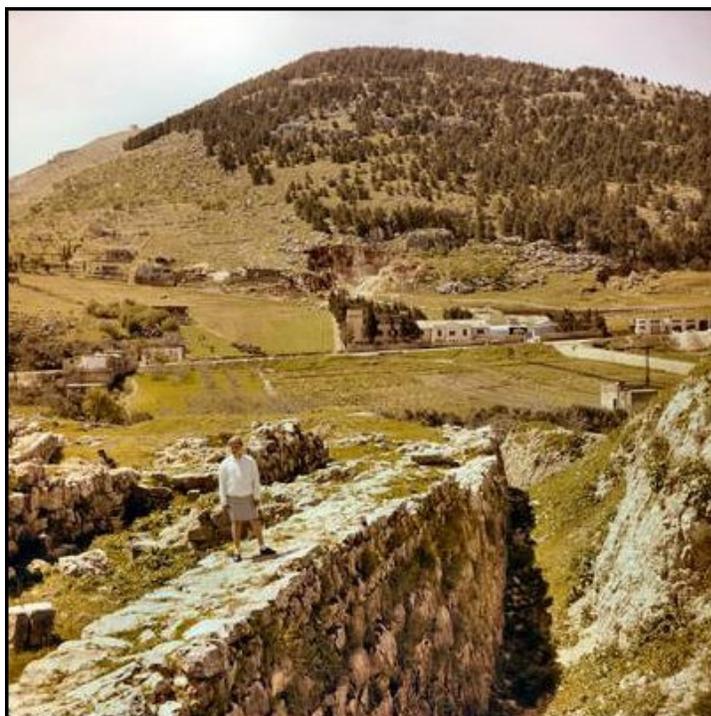
It was noon. It was hot. Jesus was tired; John describes him as "beat".

At this unlikely hour, a Samaritan woman arrives. Women usually come in the cool of evening, greeting friends and sharing news. She is alone. As she is drawing up water from the depths, Jesus asks her to give him a drink. She is surprised. A Jew asking a Samaritan, a woman and a stranger, for a drink? Jews think even the dishes used by Samaritans are ceremonially unclean. She asks him, calling him "Sir", about this.

"If you knew the gift (literally "free gift") of God, and who asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." He is speaking of a new, eternal life here, but she is literal-minded. She believes he is talking about ordinary water which needs to be fetched every day. Abandoning this approach, Jesus asks her to fetch her husband. She replies, "I have no husband." Jesus knows she is not telling the whole truth, and he calls her on it. The bit about "no husband" is true, for she has a live-in boyfriend now, after a series of defunct marriages. Five. (John 4:18)

One can imagine her long stunned silence.

We don't know the circumstances of her life. Did some of her husbands die? Was she barren: divorced because she had provided no children? Had she made disastrous mistakes in agreeing to marry one or more deeply flawed men? Had she moved in with the latest partner to avoid a life of poverty or even prostitution? Did everyone in Sy-



MOUNT GERAZIM

Bonnie's Reflections: High Noon

char gossip about her? We don't know, but Jesus knows, and she knows that he knows – all of it.

“Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.” She takes this opportunity to ask this prophet about that which sets them apart. Which is the correct place to worship God: Mount Zion, or Mount Gerizim? It is odd that she accepts him as a prophet, a man sent by God, who speaks spiritual truth. Samaritans did not believe in prophets. They only had Moses. Yet Moses had foretold a Messiah, “a prophet like unto me.” (Deut. 18:15)

Jesus begins to teach her that it isn't a question of this or that mountain. True worship is not a matter of externals, but comes from within, from a person's spirit. God is looking for people who will worship in this way, in spirit and in truth. No longer thinking in a literal way, the woman expresses her desire to know more. “Messiah, when he comes, will explain everything,” she adds.

“I AM he, that is speaking to you,” replies Jesus. He uses the form of the words “I am” that is part of the name of God. This is one of just a few times in which he will reveal that he is the Messiah. When the Jews hear it, they will accuse him of blasphemy.

The disciples arrive with food and the conversation ends at his point. The woman hurries back to town, leaving her water jug by the well. The disciples are curious, but hesitate to ask Jesus to explain his unusual action of speaking privately to this woman. They offer him food but he has no need. Doing the will of the Father he says, has refreshed him.

Jesus speaks to the disciples about the fields ripe for harvest. He means souls, ready to accept and acknowledge God, and receive the living water. One plants the seed of faith, he explains, and another is there when that faith has grown ripe. Moses, it seems, has planted seeds of faith in the village of Sychar. For here come the villagers, led by the woman. She has brought her neighbours out to meet this Jew at the well. “He told me everything I ever did! Could this be the Messiah?” These Samaritans are ready for Jesus. They ask, literally “keep on asking”, him to stay in the village with them. And for two days, he does stay. At the end of this visit, a villager says to the woman that at first they believed only because of her testimony. “Now we have heard for ourselves, and we know this man really is the Saviour of the world.” (John 4:42)

One striking thing about the beginning of Jesus' relationship with the Samaritan woman is that he asks her to give him something. Right away he establishes that he does not look down on her. She is a person with something to offer, not just a member of a group that is “other”, someone to be considered as deficient.

Another remarkable thing is that God has very long-term plans for those he is calling, whether individuals or nations. One plants and another comes in time for harvest. We don't need to think our efforts at evangelism must mean getting someone to make a decision to accept Jesus before today is over. It really is not all up to you, or me.

This man Jesus really is the saviour of the world.



“AND OTHER
SHEEP I HAVE,
WHICH ARE NOT
OF THIS FOLD:
THEM ALSO I
MUST BRING,
AND THEY
SHALL HEAR MY
VOICE; AND
THERE SHALL
BE ONE FOLD,
AND ONE
SHEPHERD.”
JOHN 10:16

The Rev. Vernon Staley: The Christian Way (continued)

The Rev. Vernon
Staley

Daily Prayers

Pour out your hearts before Him.

Three Forms of Daily Prayers are given here. You should use the Form which best meets your needs, and which helps you most. You may vary your Daily Prayers from time to time; and you may add prayers of your own, speaking to God out of your heart. Before you kneel down, pause a moment, and remember God's Presence.

FIRST FORM.

Morning.

✠ IN the Name of the Father, and of -I the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Bow down Thine ear, O God, and hear me.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Which was, and is, and is to come.

Come, Holy Ghost, and fill the heart of Thy servant, and help me to pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

OUR Father Which art in heaven . . .

O MY God, I believe in Thee; help me to believe more firmly.

O my God, I hope in Thee; help me to hope more securely.

O my God, I love Thee; help me to love more warmly.

O my God, I grieve that I have sinned against Thee; make me to grieve more truly.

O LORD, our heavenly Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, Who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; defend us in the same with Thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by Thy governance, to do always that is righteous in Thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or,

GRANT to us, Lord, the spirit to think and do this day such things as be rightful; that we who cannot do anything that is good without Thee, may by Thee be enabled to live according to Thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O LORD, to Thy Fatherly love and care I commend my parents, brothers, sisters, relations, and friends : keep them in peace and safety, fur Christ's sake. Amen.

✠ IN the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I go forth to my daily work; may He guide, defend and bless me. Amen.

“BOW DOWN

THINE EAR, O

GOD, AND HEAR

ME.”

The Rev. Vernon Staley: The Christian Way

Evening.

✠ IN the Name of Jesus Christ.

Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost : As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

May my evening prayer ascend up unto. Thee, O Lord: And may Thy mercy descend upon me.

OUR Father Which art in heaven . . .

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty . . .

LIGHTEN OUR
DARKNESS, WE
BESEECH
THEE, O LORD;
...

Examine your conscience, as to how you-have passed the day; asking yourself, What have I done wrong in thought . . . in word . . . in deed . . . ? What sin is most upon my mind? What sin do I most often fall into? Have I so fallen today? Then confess your sins to God in your own simple words, and add,

O MOST Merciful Lord, grant to me pardon and peace, that, being cleansed from all my sins, I may serve Thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

LIGHTEN our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord; and by Thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of Thy only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.

✠ IN the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I lay me down to rest; may He bless, save, and defend me, and all I love . . ., and bring me and them to everlasting life; And may the souls of the faithful departed . . . through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

SECOND FORM.

For Morning and) Evening.

✠ IN the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Lord, teach me to pray.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory:
Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high.

Glory be to God the Father, Who hath made me, and all the world:
Glory be to God the Son, Who hath redeemed me, and all mankind:
Glory be to God the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Rev. Vernon Staley: The Christian Way

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

OUR Father Which art in heaven . . .

O MY God, I believe that Thou art one God in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: and I believe that God the Son was made man, and died for me upon the cross. Do Thou increase my faith.

O my God, I hope in Thy goodness, and in the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, for pardon of my sins, and for everlasting life. Do Thou strengthen my hope.

O my God, I desire to love Thee first, and above all things, and for Thy sake to love my neighbour as myself. Do Thou quicken my love.

O my God, most pure and holy, make me to hate my past sins, and give me grace never more to offend Thee.

MOST merciful God, of Thy goodness keep us from all things that may hurt us ; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully do such things as please Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

✠ THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with me and all I love . . . evermore. Amen.

Continued next month



Fr. Robert's Remarks

is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Yesterday was the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; today, September 15th, is that of the Octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also commemorated the Seven Sorrows of Mary.

H. Richard Niebuhr, in *The Kingdom of God in America* (1937), criticized the liberal social gospel of his day with the devastating comment that its message was, "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."

The Blessed Virgin Mary is one who was at the foot of the Cross with the Holy Women and St. John. Knowing that Christ was in her, like the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother Teresa spent much time at the foot of the Cross—the crucifix at her neck was not just a decoration”

The words from Colossians seem totally appropriate to the day and to Mother Teresa, perhaps, precisely because the Lesson from Colossians was not a special choice for this feast, but simply the ordinary reading for the Thursday after Trinity 16. By a

“CHRIST IN
YOU, THE
HOPE OF
GLORY.”

COLOSSIANS 2.27

Fr. Robert's Remarks

wonderful “coincidence” the words I quoted seemed totally appropriate not only to Mary, but also to Saint Teresa and to every other Christian as well.

Mother Teresa’s life was an encouragement to know the living Jesus in the ordinariness of life. Among many things, she said, “Don’t search for Jesus in far lands; He is not there. He is close to you; He is in you” and “We can do small things with great love.”

In September 1946 while *en route* by train to Darjeeling for an annual retreat, Mother Teresa had a mystical encounter with Christ. In this encounter, she believed that Jesus had urged her to give up everything and follow Him into the slums to serve Him in the poorest of the poor. His invitation to her was to "Come be my light, I cannot go alone — they don't know me, so they don't want me. Go amongst them, carry me with you into them..." The next year she heard Jesus said to her, "I want Indian nuns, victims of My love, who would be Mary and Martha, who would be so very united to Me as to radiate My love on souls. I want free nuns covered with My poverty of the Cross. ... You will dress in simple Indian clothes or rather like My Mother dressed - simple and poor. ... Your sari will become holy because it will be My symbol."

Simplicity, love, poverty of the Cross.

Something else that Mother Teresa said was, “Don’t wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person.”

Mother Teresa’s attitude reminds me a lot of the servant of God, Catherine de Heuck Doherty’s *Little Mandate* for the Madonna House Apostolate:

Arise – go! Sell all you possess.

Give it directly, personally to the poor.

Take up My cross (their cross) and follow Me,

going to the poor, being poor,

being one of them, one of Me.

Little – be always little! Be simple, poor, childlike.

Preach the Gospel with your life – without compromise!

Listen to the Spirit. He will lead you.

Do little things exceedingly well for love of Me.

Love...love...love, never counting the cost.

Go into the marketplace and stay with Me.

Pray, fast. Pray always, fast.

Be hidden. Be a light to your neighbour’s feet.

Go without fears into the depths of men’s hearts. I shall be with you.

Pray always. I will be your rest.

“WE CAN DO
SMALL THINGS
WITH GREAT
LOVE.”
MOTHER TERESA

Fr. Robert's Remarks

Simplicity, love, poverty of the cross.

There was a story told of Margaret Mead, the anthropologist who had been to, I believe, Nepal. She worked in a village where there was a wonderful sense of community. No one had very much materially, but they were a community of care; they truly were not poor, only impecunious. Some years later in a city in India she met one of the men from that village. She described how he had become very poor. He not only had nothing material; he no longer had any community.

Mead described it with sadness in a way that confirms Mother Teresa's remark that "The most terrible poverty is loneliness and the feeling of being unloved." This description is a devastating commentary on our present culture. We have so many opportunities to reach out—person to person—and carry the very presence of Jesus into the communities around us, almost without leaving home.

I am sure that the mention of her name brings some thought to mind for most people.

"Some people come into your life as blessing. Some come in your life as lessons."—St. Teresa's words, not mine.

Above, I used the word "attitude" with respect to Mother Teresa. Recently, I renewed an old acquaintance and while he remains anonymous, I do have his permission to share his note to me. He wrote, in part, "God dealing w/me showing the error of my attitudes that I am doing 'His work' my way which is not to do it of course." (ed. *as written*)

I was impressed by the honesty of his note and the acknowledgement that to do God's work in our own way is not to accomplish God's will at all.

I was intrigued by his use of the phrase, "error of my attitudes" rather than the "error of my ways". To accept the need for an attitude adjustment is nothing other than to accept the need for repentance and to allow God to show us what he wants.

What a contrast to, say, the attitude displayed in the lyrics of the song, *I Did It My Way*, made famous by Frank Sinatra.

What my correspondent wrote convicted me because I was overdue for an attitude adjustment—a renewal of my repentance. He re-entered my life not as a lesson to be learned, but as a blessing! A blessing for which I offer thanks.

I close for this month with a brief, simple, yet profound, prayer of St. Teresa of Calcutta, "I ask for the grace to become a saint."

Until next month, God bless!



"SOME PEOPLE
COME INTO YOUR
LIFE AS BLESSING.
SOME COME IN
YOUR LIFE AS LES-
SONS."
—ST. TERESA OF
CALCUTTA

St. Bernard of Clairvaux: On Loving God (Serialised)



ST. BERNARD OF
CLAIRVAUX

1090–20/08/1153

Chapter III. What greater incentives Christians have, more than the heathen, to love God

The faithful know how much need they have of Jesus and Him crucified; but though they wonder and rejoice at the ineffable love made manifest in Him, they are not daunted at having no more than their own poor souls to give in return for such great and condescending charity. They love all the more, because they know themselves to be loved so exceedingly; but to whom little is given the same loveth little (Luke 7:47). Neither Jew nor pagan feels the pangs of love as doth the Church, which saith, 'Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love' (Cant. 2:5). She beholds King Solomon, with the crown

wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals; she sees the Sole-begotten of the Father bearing the heavy burden of His Cross; she sees the Lord of all power and might bruised and spat upon, the Author of life and glory transfixed with nails, smitten by the lance, overwhelmed with mockery, and at last laying down His precious life for His friends. Contemplating this the sword of love pierces through her own soul also and she cried aloud, 'Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love.' The fruits which the Spouse gathers from the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden of her Beloved, are pomegranates (Cant. 4:13), borrowing their taste from the Bread of heaven, and their color from the Blood of Christ. She sees death dying and its author overthrown: she beholds captivity led captive from hell to earth, from earth to heaven, so 'that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth' (Phil. 2:10). The earth under the ancient curse brought forth thorns and thistles; but now the Church beholds it laughing with flowers and restored by the grace of a new benediction. Mindful of the verse, 'My heart danceth for joy, and in my song will I praise Him', she refreshes herself with the fruits of His Passion which she gathers from the Tree of the Cross, and with the flowers of His Resurrection whose fragrance invites the frequent visits of her Spouse.

Then it is that He exclaims, 'Behold thou art fair, My beloved, yea pleasant: also our bed is green' (Cant. 1:16). She shows her desire for His coming and whence she hopes to obtain it; not because of her own merits but because of the flowers of that field which God hath blessed. Christ who willed to be conceived and brought up in Nazareth, that is, the town of branches, delights in such blossoms. Pleased by such heavenly fragrance the bridegroom rejoices to revisit the heart's chamber when He finds it adorned with fruits and decked with flowers--that is, meditating on the mystery of His Passion or on the glory of His Resurrection.

The tokens of the Passion we recognize as the fruitage of the ages of the past, appearing in the fullness of time during the reign of sin and death (Gal. 4:4). But it is the glory of the Resurrection, in the new springtime of regenerating grace, that the fresh flowers of the later age come forth, whose fruit shall be given without measure at the general resurrection, when time shall be no more. And so it is written, 'The winter is

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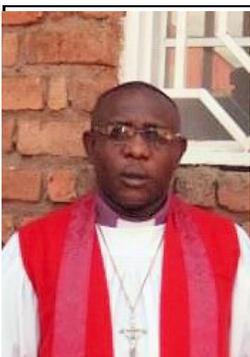
St. Bernard of Clairvaux: On Loving God

past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth' (Cant. 2:11ff); signifying that summer has come back with Him who dissolves icy death into the spring of a new life and says, 'Behold, I make all things new' (Rev. 21:5). His Body sown in the grave has blossomed in the Resurrection (I Cor. 15:42); and in like manner our valleys and fields which were barren or frozen, as if dead, glow with reviving life and warmth.

The Father of Christ who makes all things new, is well pleased with the freshness of those flowers and fruits, and the beauty of the field which breathes forth such heavenly fragrance; and He says in benediction, 'See, the smell of My Son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed' (Gen. 27:27). Blessed to overflowing, indeed, since of His fullness have all we received (John 1:16). But the Bride may come when she pleases and gather flowers and fruits therewith to adorn the inmost recesses of her conscience; that the Bridegroom when He cometh may find the chamber of her heart redolent with perfume.

So it behoves us, if we would have Christ for a frequent guest, to fill our hearts with faithful meditations on the mercy He showed in dying for us, and on His mighty power in rising again from the dead. To this David testified when he sang, 'God spake once, and twice I have also heard the same; that power belongeth unto God; and that Thou, Lord, art merciful (Ps. 62:11f). And surely there is proof enough and to spare in that Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification, and ascended into heaven that He might protect us from on high, and sent the Holy Spirit for our comfort. Hereafter He will come again for the consummation of our bliss. In His Death He displayed His mercy, in His Resurrection His power; both combine to manifest His glory.

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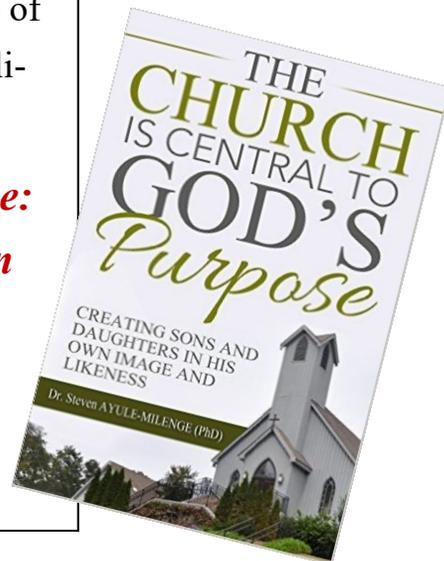
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St. Bernard of Clairvaux: On Loving God

The Bride desires to be stayed with flagons and comforted with apples, because she knows how easily the warmth of love can languish and grow cold; but such helps are only until she has entered into the bride chamber. There she will receive His long-desired caresses even as she sighs, 'His left hand is under my head and His right hand doth embrace me' (Cant. 2:6). Then she will perceive how far the embrace of the right hand excels all sweetness, and that the left hand with which He at first caressed her cannot be compared to it. She will understand what she has heard: 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing' (John 6:63). She will prove what she hath read: 'My memorial is sweeter than honey, and mine inheritance than the honey-comb' (Ecclus. 24:20). What is written elsewhere, 'The memorial of Thine abundant kindness shall be showed' (Ps. 145:7), refers doubtless to those of whom the Psalmist had said just before: 'One generation shall praise Thy works unto another and declare Thy power' (Ps. 145:4). Among us on the earth there is His memory; but in the Kingdom of heaven His very Presence. That Presence is the joy of those who have already attained to beatitude; the memory is the comfort of us who are still wayfarers, journeying towards the Fatherland.



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