



A journal for restless minds

## SUNDAY RISING

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## DEACON'S DINER

*Food for a restless mind*

Colloquī is a Deacon's Corner weekly journal. Its mission and purpose: to encourage serious discussion, to promote reasoned debate, and to provide serious content for those who hope to find their own pathway to God.

Each week Colloquī will contain articles on theology, philosophy, faith, religion, Catholicism, and much more.

Be forewarned! Articles may and often will contain fuel for controversy, but always with the express intent to seek the Truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help us God.

## Sunday Rising

*Out of sight, out of mind*

There is a certain truth in the proverb: *"Out of sight, out of mind"* which speaks implicitly of our relationship with God. Although we *know of* him we cannot *know* him for we do not see him and thus what we do not see is, by our nature, relegated to those things which obtain little of our attention.

What inevitably follows is a bit of logic slight-of-hand that generally goes something like this: *"I know that God is everywhere and that he is always with me. Since he is always with me I can pray to him whenever and wherever I want; like when I'm walking through the woods, or in the desert, or on the beach, at a game, anywhere and anytime. So, there really isn't any reason or purpose for me to go to church. Church is boring and I don't get anything out of it anyway, so why bother. I'd just as soon talk to God on my own, in my own time and place."*



What a marvelous idea! And to a point, I'm sure God would welcome the conversation. After all, how would you feel if the only time anyone paid you any mind at all was one hour a week on Sunday. So by all means, pray and talk to God wherever and whenever you have the opportunity to do so. But...talking yourself out of going to church would be a huge mistake. Here's why:

The reason we go to church has nothing to do with us. Church isn't entertainment, we don't go to be entertained or to watch as we do a football or baseball game. We go to do homage and worship to God. We go to give God our prayers and petitions, our hope and fidelity, our promises and above all else, our love.

What we so often forget is that, as in life, the more we give the more we will receive. The more we give to God, the more we will receive from him. We may not see God but we ought not forget God or give him little more than an occasional passing thought. Give him your all.

## Enslaving The Mind

*In mindless pursuit of Pokémon*

Seldom will you, dear reader, find within these few pages anything that should or ought to be construed as political partisanship. That is a personal admission of neither indifference nor ignorance of the body politic; for *au contraire*, I hold grave concerns for where the winds should blow across our fair and blessed land. Which side of the divide I gravitate some may assume, but only God and I know what others may their self presume.

The reason for my abstinence rests solely with my firm belief that nothing good may come of partisan persuasion; only grief and the bitter bite of anger will be the result of it, which will with little doubt, carve wounds far too deep and ragged to quickly heal. What will be written from time to time in this brief mention will be some issue which has perhaps for want of diligence or indifference been left unattended or found wanting in its characterization or importance.

Grave issues are before us; issues which should alarm us, both for now and when. Yet we act as if we care not or dare not care to look beyond the surface for fear of what dark terror awaits us there. We would rather take our cue from someone else for that requires no thought or effort to discern what may be the truer measure of it.

It is a fearsome thing to lose one's mind but it would be worse by far, if by total disregard, we were to simply give the mind away. Yet give it away is precisely what we have, with eagerness and aplomb, accomplished.

We have become a people far too complacent, content to leave unpleasant things for others to digest and summarize while we but while away the hours in mindless pursuit of Pokémon. We have become addicted to the pursuit of happiness without concern nor hope of ever acquiring it.



Collectively we have offered up our minds, demanding that our minds be filled with what, those who tell us that they *know* far more than we, choose for us to know. We dare not look behind the curtain for we might find the truth reclining there.

Dare I say it, yet I must, for it must be said, now before the hour has left us beyond redemption. We do not know the truth, we have no want to

know of it, and thus we enslave ourselves by our deliberate ignorance of what the truth would reveal. Jesus said to those who believed in him, "*If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*"<sup>1</sup> We cry for freedom's sake even as we secure the chains of slavery upon our minds.

In my youth I was keenly aware of the truth as I knew it. Everything was black or white; there were no shades of gray. My brother, ten and a half months my junior, was much of the same mind although invariably some 180 degrees from my own and thus quite obviously not of the right mind.

Rightness or wrongness were never at issue for each believed in the absolute verity of his position, while truly neither had a leg upon which to stand. Truth, real truth, never had the opportunity to appear or prevail for we were equally as stubborn and determined in what we knew to be '*the truth.*' More often than not the matter was settled by the intervention of our father who could stop words in mid-air with nothing more than a stare (we knew it as the evil eye.) Words that had been outward bound were instantly sucked like a vacuum back into the offending orifice, never to be spoken again.

Time and retrospection ought to have a profound effect upon childish minds as St. Paul tells us: "*When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a*

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man, I put aside childish things"<sup>2</sup> but too often we simply refuse to grow beyond our childhood. We enjoy the childish games, the nonchalance of having never to think of tomorrow, of living in the moment, and chasing endlessly after rainbows and sunbeams. We want to live forever in Neverland with Peter Pan and the lost boys, unwilling or incapable of ever growing up.

**W**hat offends the reasoned adult mind is the incessant whining and temper tantrums that are on constant display by those long past their childhood. Age it would appear is not a factor; we are confronted by this childish behavior from toddler all the way to well beyond knowing better. There is neither rhyme nor reason for such childishness; whether purpose or accident has caused this incapacity to think beyond want or need is but a question yet unanswered.

And it is annoying, lacking for any possibility of resolution or cessation. One cannot reason with the irrational or unreasonable. The current popularity of timeout notwithstanding, sometimes a good spanking is what should prove both appropriate and necessary.

What is perhaps most perplexing is how so many in possession of more than a modicum of brain cells and education have developed PPS (Peter Pan Syndrome.) Similar in many ways to the various forms of dementia, those with PPS live far from reality in a constant state of blissful denial, completely unaware of what is going on around them. They neither care nor bother to

be informed—they can however cite with great detail meaningless minutiae on any team or player for whom they have come to idolize or watch endless hours of mind-numbing drivel masquerading as entertainment. Never do they desire to know of more serious matters because that would disturb their finely tuned feelings of equanimity and awaken them to the harsher realities of truth.

Stupefied, they stumble through each day alternatively mumbling and shouting thoughtless nothings to no one in particular—in truth no one cares to discover what nonsense they may at any given moment regurgitate. It matters not what cause or side they would support—even as they lean heavily on one another to stay upright and conscious—for they seldom possess a mind sufficient to understand what they are supposing to propose and oppose.

**G**reat minds are fading fast away; we are diminished by the absence of the reasoned mind and what could yet be born of it. It is a loss too grievous to contemplate. What Mind must be, that we exist, and yet we laugh such thought away. For God and man are but imagined and thus inconsequential to the play before us.

We have succumbed to a pathos of hopelessness and despair and like Macbeth, we are want to desperately declare:

*"Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time, and all our yesterdays have lighted fools*

*the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more: it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."*<sup>3</sup>

**T**hose who live but for the day, who care for nothing but their want, will wound us with their vacant vote, but a brief moment more, and then will quickly learn of their demise at the hand which they did choose to favor without mental exercise. Holding fast to what they know—no matter the size of it—they will not yield to reason or to truth, for they know what they know not, and that is assuredly all but the end of it.

It is the effort we oppose, the necessity to consume and then digest what fuels the mind beyond mere sustenance. Therein lies the gravest sin: the abdication of the soul to mental laxity and moral decrepitude. What remains within us seldom borrows from the good for *"The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones."*<sup>4</sup> Sadly, we no longer subscribe to the premise that *"whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve"*<sup>5</sup> for beyond all doubt we have lost our minds.

Perhaps the current battle is in question, yet the war rages unabated for whom would win the mind of man. It is a contest of the will, fought, not with weapons made of steel, but with far stronger substance, wrought not by the hands of man but forged by the hand of God.

1. John 8: 31-32.

2. 1 Cor 13:11.

3. William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene V.

4. William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*.

5. Napoleon Hill, *Think and Grow Rich*.

## The Fire Within

*Setting the earth on fire*

**W**ould that those who report the news and those who offer commentary find it necessary to provide us with the truth, unvarnished and unstained by the fickle brush of bias and disdain. Too often the meaning or intent of the oratory or the written word conflicts with 'modern sensibilities' resulting in a spin far different from what was intended.

Imagine Jesus in the here and now. What commentary would his words provoke? Would we hear what he said without objection or denunciation? Let us spend a few minutes imagining what 'experts', those ubiquitous so-called talking heads, might have to say about Jesus.

As we just heard Luke report, this man Jesus has been telling his disciples: "I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!"<sup>1</sup> Clearly incendiary remarks, no doubt intended to incite his followers, calling on them to burn the world to the ground while they chant "Burn, baby, burn!" It must be quite obvious to anyone with even the slightest bit of intelligence that what we have here is a radical fanatic, harboring a Messiah complex, with apocalyptic delusions. Wouldn't you agree, Rabbi?

Of course. Of course. As you most certainly will recall, we heard him also state very clearly "Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division."<sup>2</sup> What else can we believe than that here we

have a madman who intends to create chaos and widespread destruction wherever, whenever, and however he can.

He must be stopped at all costs. But what is the government doing about this man? Nothing! They are ignoring the problem I tell you. They won't even identify him for what he is a *radical fanatic*! I say, "Crucify him"<sup>3</sup> and the problem goes away.

His disciples are weak and afraid. They will quickly scatter to the four winds. But we must eradicate this scourge, we absolutely must, and quickly if you don't mind my saying.



I certainly won't disagree with your candid and expert analysis there, Rabbi.

What thoughts do you have on this man Jesus, Saul of Tarsus? Do you agree that he represents an existential threat to our national security?

**T**hank you kind sir for including me in this discussion today. There can be no doubt that this Jesus fellow is a *radical fanatic* but I would argue that he is no Jew since he seems bent on converting the

entire world, both unsuspecting and naïve Jews, who are Yahweh's chosen people, and pagan Gentiles, whom Yahweh has clearly rejected as unworthy of his divine covenant. Clearly, he is a bigot who hates the Jewish people.

I would like to suggest that perhaps a better identifier for this man might be *radical Christian fanatic*. No need to taint the faith of Yahweh's Chosen People with his apostasy.

**F**urthermore, this man, this fanatic actually believes himself to be the Son of Man, equal to Yahweh in all his glory. It is blasphemy I tell you, blasphemy! I am completely in agreement with the Rabbi: "Crucify him!" It will certainly be good riddance and none too soon, in my considered opinion.

Imagine encouraging division within the family! Father against son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother and even getting the in-laws to go against one another. Insanity, pure insanity! And dangerous. If this so-called religion were to catch on there would be no end, no end I tell you, to the divisiveness and chaos it would most assuredly produce.

You raise some excellent points there, Saul. Families should take extreme caution whenever their children are outside their homes. Children are especially susceptible to this kind of radical propaganda. It is difficult to imagine just how traumatic it would be to suddenly lose a loved one to such a cult. I simply can't imagine the pain and agony of losing a child.

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**O**ur final guest today may present us with a completely different point of view, one that may shed some light on this radical and his cult of fanatics.

Indeed, Simon, son of Jonah, is one of the twelve first chosen by Jesus, and supposedly has been tapped to lead this band of heretics and their disreputable rabble.

From what I have been able to discover, Simon was a fisherman by trade, as were a number of the other twelve, and fell under the influence of this radical fanatic so much that he simply walked away from his obligations, including his family, when he heard Jesus simply say *"Follow me."*<sup>4</sup> It has been reported that his family is now in desperate financial straits, but obviously the man has no compassion or honor or shame.

Simply unbelievable if you ask me, but then why don't we ask the man himself. So, Simon, or should we call you Simon Peter or Peter, what do you have to say about this cult and this radical Christian fanatic Jesus?

Thank you for having me on your show. Simon Peter or Peter, either is fine with me, and Jesus didn't ask me to follow him, nor did I walk away from my family and obligations, we are doing quite well, thank you, and I trust your viewers will recognize your comments as completely false and unfounded. Again, there appears to be no end to the lies and urban myths created by those who would like to destroy Jesus and silence his message. His enemies will use every trick in the book to

do so including denigrating and ruining the reputations of his disciples.

I also find it amazing how quickly what Jesus has said is taken so completely out of context, distorted and twisted, almost beyond recognition. Certainly no one in authority is comfortable with what he preaches because he preaches not of an angry, demanding God but of a loving God, a God who loves all peoples, not just a chosen few. But please don't misunderstand me, when Jesus speaks of God he speaks of the one God, the God who is known by the Hebrews as Yahweh. There is no other God. The only distinction that Jesus makes is that God is not just about retribution and punishment, God is very much a God of unlimited love.

Jesus calls for peace throughout the world and wants us to love God and to love our neighbors, Jews and Gentiles, as we love ourselves. And that is precisely what has the temple leaders and government officials squirming on their thrones. They see their positions and their livelihoods in jeopardy if Jesus succeeds in bringing all peoples to the God who loves.

**N**ow as for his latest remarks, which once again his opponents have taken completely out of context, if you had been following and listening to Jesus from the beginning you would understand that burning the earth to the ground is as absurd an idea as filthy pigs flying. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Jesus has told us many times that he has come to show us a *"more excel-*

*lent way"*<sup>5</sup> to live. If that is what defines a radical then so be it, but I certainly don't believe that is how you are wanting to use it. His sole purpose on earth is to offer himself up for our salvation, not just for Jews but for all of God's creatures, including the Gentiles.

**J**esus came to challenge us, to incite us, if you like, to spread the Good News of God's love throughout the world. That is what he meant when he said that he had come to set the earth on fire: to ignite our hearts with love for God and to light in them a blazing fire of love for one another.

Naturally, while he wants all of God's children to come to him, he understands that there will be those who will resist or even deny both he and his message. That is why he so readily admits that his presence and message will inevitably cause division.

He forces no one to believe in him or to follow him. All who wish to follow him must freely deny themselves and take up their own burdens each day. And that gentlemen is the fire that Jesus has come to ignite—the fire of love—and it will no doubt spread over all the earth. Amen.



Homily for  
20th Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle C  
Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10  
Hebrews 12:1-4  
Luke 12:49-53

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1. Lk 12:49.  
2. Lk 12:51.  
3. Lk 23:21.  
4. Lk 9:23.  
5. 1 Cor 12:31.

## You Shall Not Kill

### *Ignoring the fifth*

**R**eading an article concerning the legacy of Justice Antonin Scalia and the ramifications that will inevitably ensue from whomever is chosen to replace him caused serious reflection on my part these past few weeks, specifically with respect to the current and future direction of jurisprudence in America. I am neither an attorney nor jurist—although I did manage to take Business Law three times in college—so I will offer no legal advice or counsel here.

Justice Antonin Scalia was by all measures a legal force of nature: A deeply religious Catholic whose principles of jurisprudence have inspired countless others to follow the law as he did so magnificently. One of the chief principles upon which he based his decisions was *“that the law, whether statutes or the Constitution itself, must be applied according to its text. In other words, judges should not apply the law based on what is good policy or what they suppose Congress may have intended (but did not express) in passing legislation. In addition, Justice Scalia believed that the words of the law should be understood as they were understood by the people when the law was enacted....There are some who believe that the meanings of words change over time, untethered from any objective measure.”*<sup>1</sup>

Justice Scalia had an *“unwavering respect for the idea of popular government. Laws, including the Constitution,*

*receive their legitimacy from the people. The Constitution is not an autonomously evolving document that spins out new ‘rights’ and obligations to which the people have not given their consent. Rather than discovering new rights in the Constitution, judges should respect the constitutional prerogative of the people to pass laws through their representative legislatures, limited by the restraints imposed by the Constitution—which was itself ratified by popular means.”*



**H**e also firmly held to the *“conviction that the rights actually guaranteed in the Constitution should be tenaciously defended, from the right of free speech to the rights of criminal defendants. ... In short, Justice Scalia rejected the judicial activism of inventing law while embracing judicial engagement by ensuring that the limits on government are strictly enforced.”*

I deeply admired Justice Scalia for his deep Catholic faith and the principles of law for which he so brilliantly championed.

I could not help but think of Justice Scalia upon recalling a recent conversation I had with someone very close to me. What initiated the conversation was my mention of the public admonishment by the bishop of Roanoke, Virginia directed to Democratic Vice-presidential nominee Tim Kaine, who claims to be a faithful Catholic while being an outspoken advocate for a woman’s right to choose abortion, same-sex marriage, and other positions clearly at odds with Church teaching.

**T**he response I received was two-fold: The Catholic Church needs to change and become more current with the times and *“while I personally oppose abortion, I have no right to deny others their right to have an abortion.”*

Without entering into further debate on current Church teachings, I asked whether abortion should be considered killing of an unborn human being and received an equivocal *“maybe”* in response.

*“If abortion is, as in fact it is, killing of an unborn human life,”* I then asked, *“how can you support such murder?”* to which the response was to completely ignore my question and repeat *“I have no right to deny others their right to have an abortion.”* Obviously, this conversation was effectively over before it began.

What is tragic is the false innocence assumed by those who do not condone abortion for themselves yet refuse to argue against it. It is more than tragic; it is most likely criminal.

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**R**efusing to oppose abortion or euthanasia or any other form of killing of another human being is nothing less than the aiding and abetting in the killing of innocent human life. Unfortunately, our current judicial system disagrees, at least in some significant ways.

Be that as it may, there is a higher court which holds a decidedly different view: The Supreme Court of God. His fifth (sixth for non-Catholics) commandment states without equivocation that “*You shall not kill.*”

The Ten Commandments were given to Moses by God with the explicit instructions that these were carved in stone and that all men (and women) were to diligently observe them. They applied to all human beings, all those living creatures created in the image and likeness of God. God did not add an except in the case of the unborn or the elderly or the sick or the weak or the stupid or the lame. He kept it simple and to the point: YOU SHALL NOT KILL...period, end of commandment.

Yet, much as the judicial activists who sit on the U. S. Supreme Court, Catholics and Christians alike have made themselves quite comfortable with ignoring the fifth (or sixth) commandment—whether it is out of mere convenience or to soothe their consciences, I dare not venture a guess.

Now to be perfectly fair, they don’t completely ignore it, they simply modify or update it, adding words that are not and never have been a part of God’s commandment. And they do this so as to bend the law ra-

ther than to break it. It’s easier on the conscience that way.

Here I will return to the principles of law which Justice Scalia held so dear: that the law must be applied according to its text and that the law must be understood as it was understood by the people when the law was enacted.

The law consists of four words: You shall not kill. Clear, concise, unambiguous, and its meaning remains precisely the same today as it did when God carved them in stone.

If this law were the product of men then the people would have the right to amend it by appending exceptions to it. But God is the author of this law and no man or woman has either the right or the authority to alter or abolish it.

**O**nly God can change his law and there is absolutely no evidence that he is or has been inclined to do so. Which means that the law as written must stand, unabridged and unchanged. There are no exceptions. Those who would ignore it or add exceptions to it do so at the peril of their immortal soul.

Whether considering the laws and the Constitution of the U.S. or the Laws written by God, we owe it to ourselves and those who will come after us to live by the rule of law laid down by man and those ordained by God. Abortion kills. We simply cannot turn a blind eye to that.

1. Scott Pruitt, Attorney General, State of Oklahoma, *The Next Supreme Court Justice*, Imprimus, Hillsdale College, July/August 2016, Volume 45, Number 7/8.

## Deacon’s Diner

*Food for a restless mind*

**F**or those restless minds that hunger and thirst for more. Each week this space will offer a menu of interesting and provocative titles, written by Catholic authors, in addition to those referenced in the articles, for you to feed your restless mind.



### BOOKS

**Disorientation:** How to Go to College Without Losing Your Mind  
*Edited by John Zmirak*  
Ascension Press  
December 21, 2010, 188 pages.

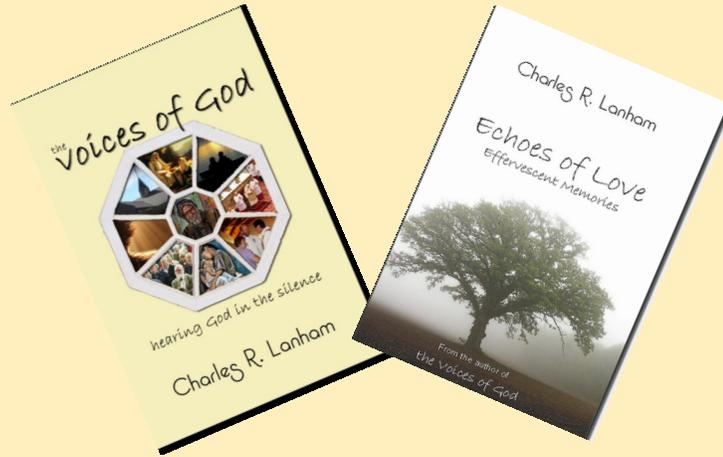
**Old Errors and New Labels**  
*Fulton J. Sheen*  
Alba House  
(1931) May 30, 2007, 222 pages.

**City Of God**  
*Saint Augustine*  
Doubleday  
February 1958, 551 pages.

### PERIODICALS

**First Things**  
Institute on Religion and Public Life  
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Books are available on **Amazon.com** or from the author's web site at:

**deaconscorner.org**

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Each issue of **Colloquī** can be viewed or downloaded from

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