



A journal for restless minds

MASKING THE TASTE

Or let hunger win the game

A POLEMIC UNWINDING

Ego praesidium

PRAY, BE NOT PROUD

Where the heart rests

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.

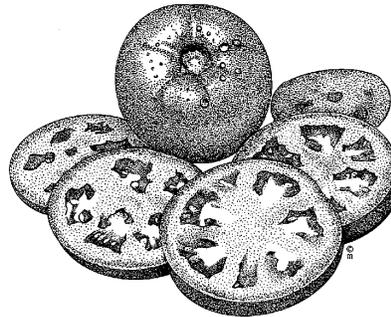
Each week Colloquī will contain articles on theology, philosophy, faith, religion, Catholicism, and much more.

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.

Masking The Taste

Or let hunger win the game

There are memories of a time when the world turned topsy-turvy: when rich turned poor in an instant, while the poor, never rich, stood somehow taller; when none owned more than empty pockets and worn out shoes to last a winter, all were equal, just the same.



We who have lived not three score and ten have never known such bleak privation; knowing not where or when but whether there would be some moment, better than the one before.

We complain and worry so, of nothing really, no surprise, of words in chalk upon a wall, and wonder how we will survive. Then memories of depressing times flash before us: when what to eat were sliced tomatoes, such vile disgusting things, whether fruit or vegetable matters not. The look, the taste, were simply more than any child should have

to stomach...and yet, the choice was to swallow, or, let hunger win the game.

Necessity bears its stamp on what solutions will resolve, and yet, leave it to childish genius to contrive sweet remedies. Should a teaspoon of sugar make the medicine go down, a cup of sugar, most assuredly, will mask the unpleasantness that awaits the palate. Four score the years have come and gone, yet sliced tomatoes, none the same, still lay covered beneath the sugar, out of habit, nothing more.

Childhood is but a memory, but the memory reminds the soul: life is filled with many choices, which choice we choose is ours to make, yet choose we must lest sliced tomatoes once again be forced upon us.

So it remains until today, for we must choose off the menu, choose between the vile and foul: choose one, choose one, then quickly swallow, or, let hunger win the game.

A Polemic Unwinding

Ego praesidium

Colloquī is the present infinitive of *colloquor*, Latin for *to talk, to discuss, or to converse*. Colloquī is for restless minds, minds that ache for the truth, the objective truth. As the name implies, each issue will offer food for thought, for discussion, and conversation. As it is written, “*Come now, let us reason together*” (Is 1:18) so together let us journey toward the One Source that is all Truth.

Twenty-two issues ago I closed the first article of the inaugural issue of Colloquī with those words. It was my intent then, as now, to provide positive informed instruction for Catholics to help them grow in their faith and love of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to share and inform accurately and faithfully what the Catholic Church and the magisterium teaches, and to add fuel to that fire, that unquenchable flame of the Holy Spirit that burns within each of us to spread the Good News. It was and is my diaconal ministry: Colloquī is ministry of service, a means to fulfil a portion of my diaconal promise to serve the people of God.

It was never my intent nor my desire to polemicize or exercise controversy, and yet, inexplicably—solely on my part—that is precisely what I have now done. Four issues ago, I wrote an article (Ecumenism Run Amok, No. 18) for which I deeply and with great sorrow regret. I apologize and

ask for your mercy and forgiveness as I have asked God for his.

Here and now, I will make no attempt to erase or ignore what was written, for it has been written and the damage has been wrought. Nothing I might say or do can undo the pain from such wounds inflicted. I can only hope to salve the wounds and the scars that I have so unjustly made.



There is both a solemn duty and a corresponding responsibility that I owe to those whom I have been called to serve. My duty is to faithfully proclaim, through word and deed, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and my responsibility is to do so with the utmost love, mercy, and compassion so as to never cause scandal to our Lord Jesus Christ, his Church, her apostolic successors, and to God. I take these duties and responsibilities with all due seriousness for they are all in his holy name.

Reus. Ego enim non praesidium defendere (I stand accused. I offer no defense for I cannot defend it.)

Although I cannot nor will I make any attempt to defend what I wrote, I must, in all good conscience, offer some reasoned explanation, attempt to unwind the polemic, and correct the errors which I so scandalously promoted.

To do so I must begin at the ending, for it was in the ending where the gravest injustice and greatest scandal was pronounced. I asked a question—which I will not repeat—which was intemperate, scandalous, disrespectful, unwarranted, and completely unjustifiable. Had I not asked it, the article would still have been polemical and errant in its content, but scandal would have been reduced or possibly eliminated. I asked it, I was wrong to do so, it was scandalous, it was most assuredly disrespectful of the Supreme Pontiff, and for all that, I sincerely and humbly pray, “*O God, be merciful to me a sinner.*”

As to the article as a whole, I most humbly submit to wretched failure on my part to adequately research and understand the situation in its fullness. Perhaps the most important criteria for any writer, but especially for Catholic theological writers and apologists is to always speak and write the truth through the narrow lens of Christ, his Church and her magisterium. That places great and serious demands upon anyone who wishes to

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inform or instruct or offer witness to the Word of God, demands that must be and can only be honestly met through diligent effort and strict attention to discovering the Truth.

In writing the article I must confess I allowed my emotions and distress to override my reason. I knew better, but in my zeal to write the wrong which I then perceived, I lost any and all objectivity and let my heart overrule my head.

I believed at the time that I was writing from authentic sources, which, as I have subsequently become aware, while perhaps “*authentic*,” were less than objective or honest in their presentation of the facts and the truth. And to be fully and completely honest, I must admit to having been of a mind whereby I had so biased my own thoughts so as to be incapable and unwilling to attempt any determination of the truth.

Such disregard was and is quite plainly irresponsible and again, I humbly submit my regret and sorrow.

The truth, of what I so arrogantly disregarded, is of far greater import and deserves far greater space than current pages can hold, but I will begin this week to bring the truth to light without polemic exercise or undeserved bias.

Let us begin then with this irrefutable fact: “*In his address at a private audience with the delegation from the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany on 24 January 2011, Pope Benedict emphasized that on this occasion Lutherans and Catholics would have the*

opportunity ‘to celebrate throughout the world a common ecumenical commemoration, to grapple at the world level with fundamental issues’ and to do this not ‘in the form of a triumphant celebration, but as a common profession of faith in the One Triune God, in common obedience to Our Lord and to his Word.’”¹

The above is but a small part of a much larger speech that was presented to the Council meeting of the Lutheran World Federation by Cardinal Kurt Koch. In it Cardinal Koch explains much of the current Lutheran and Catholic progress that has been made, including two extremely important and enlightening documents.

“From Conflict To Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017” which provides a well-constructed overview of the past 500 hundred years and the differences, but also the many agreements that both share in common. It is a marvelous read and I highly recommend it for those who truly wish to be informed.

The second document is fundamental to the first: “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church.

There will be more next week.

1. Cardinal Kurt Koch, “*From Conflict to Communion*” *Principles and Possibilities for the ongoing ecumenical process.*

2. From Conflict to Communion, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/lutheran-fed-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_2013_dal-conflitto-alla-comunione_en.html.

3. Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_cath-luth-joint-declaration_en.html.

Deacon’s Diner

Food for a restless mind

For 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

Faith Comes From What Is Heard
Lawrence Feingold
Emmaus Academic
July 8, 2016, 756 pages.

Practical Theology
Peter Kreeft
Ignatius Press
November 28, 2014, 400 pages.

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

PERIODICALS

First Things
Institute on Religion and Public Life
Editor: R. R. Reno
Ten Issues per year.
www.firstthings.com

Touchstone
A Journal of Mere Christianity
Editor: James M. Kushiner
Bi-Monthly.
www.touchstonemag.com

Catholic Answers Magazine
Share the Faith, Defend the Faith
Editor: Tim Ryland
Bi-Monthly.
www.catholic.com

Pray, Be Not Proud

Where the heart rests

What do we hear, what thoughts invade our minds, what imagery appears when we encounter the poetic wisdom found within the pages of Sirach. We hear these words:

*The one who serves
God willingly is heard;
his petition reaches the heavens.
The prayer of the lowly
pierces the clouds;
it does not rest till it reaches its goal,
nor will it withdraw
till the Most High responds,
judges justly and affirms the right,
and the Lord will not delay.*

Two songs sing to us: one of petition and prayer and the other of lowly circumstance and humility. They are songs written indelibly upon the soul and every creature knows the tune. Yet for many such gentle notes are lost, far beyond their hearing for they listen to the torrid beating of the heart, stifling the whispered voice of God. For the god they worship cares not for the soul but for the random pleasure met by any careless passing thought.

Two men, we are told, find themselves together in prayer, yet only by mere circumstance do they encounter one another; for no purpose other than to plead their case before their God.

One, a Pharisee, prays pompously and impiously, filled with pride and eager to boast of his own righteousness, priding himself on being better

than “the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like” that tax collector nearby. Here we have a man who is, by all accounts, a man of God, one who adheres to the strictest moral code, religiously follows and obeys all of the ancient Law, and yet abides the gravest sin of all, pride.



Elsewhere in Sirach we read: “The beginning of pride is man’s stubbornness in withdrawing his heart from his Maker; for pride is the reservoir of sin, a source which runs over with vice; because of it God sends unheard-of afflictions and brings men to utter ruin. The thrones of the arrogant God overturns and establishes the lowly in their stead. The roots of the proud God plucks up, to plant the humble in their place. He breaks down their stem to the level of the ground, then digs their roots from the earth. The traces of the proud God sweeps away and

effaces the memory of them from the earth.”¹

But what is pride? How grave a matter is it? Saint Thomas Aquinas describes pride in a number of ways. He says first “pride is the appetite for excellence in excess of right reason” while adding what Augustine said in the *The City of God*, “that pride is the desire for inordinate exaltation: and hence it is that, as he asserts, pride imitates God inordinately: for it hath equality of fellowship under Him, and wishes to usurp His dominion over our fellow creatures.”²

Aquinas asks “Whether the four species of pride are fitting?”³ and then responds by describing them:

1. **Foolish pride:** is thinking you have an excellence which you don’t have, like a child who thinks he is the best basketball player in the world.
2. **Self-made pride:** is thinking you have an excellence from God, and yet believing it is of your own making.
3. **Self-congratulatory pride:** is thinking you have an excellence from above, while boasting that God gave it to you because he knew only you would make the best of it.
4. **Self-deceptive pride:** is believing you have an excellence from God and he gave it to you because he wanted to do so, BUT ... you are really glad

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others don't have it and you hope they don't get it!

How grave a matter is pride? In this Aquinas writes:

*"Pride is opposed to humility. Now humility regards the subjection of man to God,... Hence pride properly regards lack of this subjection, in so far as a man raises himself above that which is appointed to him according to the Divine rule or measure, against the saying of the Apostle (2 Corinthians 10:13), 'But we will not glory beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which God hath measured us.' Wherefore it is written (Sirach 10:14): 'The beginning of the pride of man is to fall off from God' because, to wit, the root of pride is found to consist in man not being, in some way, subject to God and His rule. Now it is evident that not to be subject to God is of its very nature a mortal sin, for this consists in turning away from God: and consequently pride is, of its genus, a mortal sin."*⁴

*"Pride is always contrary to the love of God, inasmuch as the proud man does not subject himself to the Divine rule as he ought. Sometimes it is also contrary to the love of our neighbor; when, namely, a man sets himself inordinately above his neighbor: and this again is a transgression of the Divine rule, which has established order among men, so that one ought to be subject to another."*⁵

How many of us have been guilty of pride at one time or another? Perhaps few harbor foolish pride beyond wishful thinking, but self-made pride is all too common; examples *in extremis* are but a presidential debate away.

We should always give thanks to God for what he has given us, yet it is but self-serving pride to offer gratitude for the perceived faults and failures of others while lauding praise and exaltation on one's own deeds and actions. *"I give you thanks, O God, that I am not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I pay tithes on all I possess."*

Have you ever said or heard someone say, *"I made it on my own."*, *"Its all because of me."*, *"I've earned it all myself."*? Only the self-righteous would dare utter such words, implicitly denying that what they have achieved or attained was a gift of God. They do not need God's love. They need not ask for mercy. They want nothing from God. Perhaps they want nothing of God.

The self-righteous spend their lives in comparison, always anxious to know: who is better, who is worse, who is first, who is last? And just as the Pharisee in the Gospel, those who fail to measure up to their canons of success are deemed unworthy. It is to such people, those *"who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else,"* whom Jesus told this parable.

Recognizing that the tax collector was by all reliable accounts less than reputable, clearly a man with many faults and a sinner, we must admire his willingness to acknowledge his brokenness. He considered himself unworthy, keeping his distance, refusing to raise his eyes to heaven. Does he boast of all his wealth...no. Does he preen with pride at his successes...no. All he offers is a

simple prayer: *"O God, be merciful to me a sinner."*

He knows he is a sinner. He knows to whom he is subject. He knows that he does not deserve God's mercy.

"The Pharisee, on the other hand, is condemned by his prayer in spite of being a Pharisee, and in his own eyes a person of importance. Because his 'righteousness' is false and his insolence extreme, every syllable he utters provokes God's anger."

But why does humility raise us to the heights of holiness, and self-conceit plunge us into the abyss of sin? It is because when we have a high regard for ourselves, and that in the presence of God, he quite reasonably abandons us, since we think we have no need of his assistance.

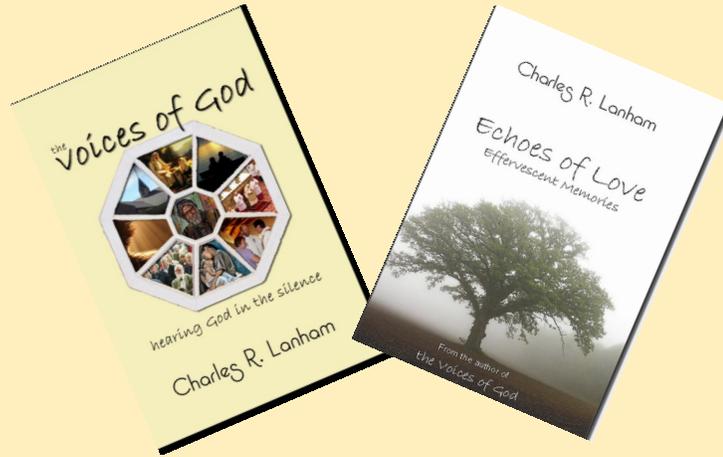
*But when we regard ourselves as nothing and therefore look to heaven for mercy, it is not unreasonable that we should obtain God's compassion, help, and grace."*⁶

Thus it is that Jesus tells us the tax collector went home justified, *"for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."* Amen.



Homily for
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle C
Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18
Luke 18:9-14

1. Sirach 10:12-17.
2. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, II-II q. CLXII a.1.ad 1.
3. STh., II-II q. CLXII a. 4.
4. STh., II-II q. CLXII a. 5 resp..
5. STh., II-II q. CLXII a. 5 ad 2.
6. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 2: PG 151, 17-20.28-29.*



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

<http://deaconscorner.org>.

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