



A journal for restless minds

THE RISING SON

Looking toward the East

OUR THIRST FOR GOD

God's eternal thirst for us

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.

The Rising Son

Looking toward the East

When Christ comes to us in the Eucharist, it is both a proclamation and a supplication. We conclude the Eucharistic prayer with both: *"When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord until you come again."* We acknowledge and affirm that the Lord Jesus is present, in the here and now, and is the One who is yet to come.

As Catholics, our faith calls us to believe at the moment of consecration, what was before no longer remains. What was mere bread and wine has now become the mystical body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"When the ancient Israelite prayed, he turned towards the Jerusalem temple. In this way, he linked his prayer to the salvation history which united God with Israel and was focused and made present in the temple."

*He prayed to the God who willed to be glorified in that temple, and in doing so, integrated his prayer with Israel's law of faith, the order established by God himself."*¹

The earliest Christians—who were almost entirely Jews—turned, not toward the temple, but to the East to pray, toward the rising sun. This orientation symbolized Christ who had risen from the dark night of death into the glory of the Father and who now reigns over all.

The cosmos thus became a sign of Christ and wherever the Christian community met they would trace the cross on the east wall of their worship space in order to properly orient themselves in prayer to the risen Lord.



The rising sun also signifies the returning Christ, he who promises to come again in glory. The image of the rising sun represents the intimate relationship between faith in the resurrection and the desire and hope for the parousia. *"The two are one in the figure*

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of the Lord who has already returned as the risen One, continues to return in the Eucharist, and so remains he who is to come, the hope of the world.... This cross was understood as a sign of the returning Son of Man, and also as a threat of eschatological punishment."²

Here we must pause to offer a brief but necessary explanation. Having just completed a course carrying the cryptic title "*Ecclesiology and Eschatology*," of which I not only had no knowledge but could not pronounce, I can only assume others may not know what is meant by the word "*eschatology*."

As a prelude: "*For centuries eschatology was content to lead a quiet life as the final chapter of theology where it was dubbed 'the doctrine of the last things.' But in our own time, with the historical process in crisis, eschatology has moved into the very center of the theological state. Some twenty years ago, Hans Urs von Balthasar called it the 'storm-zone' of contemporary theology. Today it appears to dominate the entire theological landscape.*"

It is important, when trying to discern the meaning of eschatology to begin with Jesus Christ, to look to the Lord. "*Eschatology's meaning and driving force depend upon the power of this waiting on Christ, not on temporal expectation of the world's end or transformation, no matter of what kind.*" To emphasize the importance and the centrality of Christ in any discussion of eschatology, Ratzinger argues, "*The truly constant factor is Christology. It is upon the integrity of Christology that the integrity of all the rest depends, and not the other way around.*"

The central question concerning eschatology revolves around the essential character of the message of Jesus Christ. Yet, before one can hope to make inroads into understanding the eschatological nature of his message, we must first admit and acknowledge the fundamental nature of human life: that man was created in the image and likeness of God, with the capacity to know and love his Creator, with a mortal body and an immortal soul.³

As the Apostle Paul told the Athenians:

²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything. ²⁶And he made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him. Yet he is not far from each one of us, ²⁸for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring."⁴

"All men are therefore called to the one and the same goal, namely God Himself."⁵

It is this innate calling of the heart toward a relationship with God that makes a human being immortal; it is what is embedded deep into man's very being, it comes from our immortal soul. The soul is a gift

from God; "*given to man to be his very own possession. That is what is meant by creation, and what Thomas [Aquinas] means when he says that immortality belongs to man by nature.*"⁶

Ratzinger asks how it is possible for human beings to live in a fashion that goes counter to their own essence: closed off from, rather than open to, the rest of being. Since, from the very beginning, man has seemingly wanted to generate his own immortality.

"He would like to fabricate it out of his own stuff: *non omnis moriar, not everything about me will perish. The monumentum aere perennius, the achievements I bequeath, these will immortalize a part of me. But in this attempt to manufacture eternity, the vessel of man must, at the last, founder. What endures after one is not oneself. Man falls headlong into the unreal, yielding up his life to unreality, to death....*

An existence in which man tries to divinize himself, to become 'like a god' in his autonomy, independence and self-sufficiency, turns into a Sheol-existence, a being in nothingness, a shadow-life on the fringe of real living."⁷

Faith in God and in his promise of eternal life with him is thus the essential first step in eschatological understanding. Jesus Christ, God made man, is the tree of life whence we receive the food of immortality. In addition, the hope in the eschatological resurrection of the body, that Christian belief in the unity and inestimable value of the whole person, body and soul, as it journeys toward eternal life with Jesus

Christ and the expectation of seeing God face-to-face provides the impetus to take the next step.

Ratzinger once again observes that *“part of the Christian idea of immortality is fellowship with other human beings. Man is not engaged in a solitary dialogue with God. He does not enter an eternity with God which belongs to him alone.... It takes place, therefore, within the ‘body of Christ,’ in that communion with the Son which makes it possible for us to call becoming a son with the Son, and this must mean in turn by becoming one with all those others who seek the Father.”*⁸

As we are all members of the Body of Christ, that is the Church, it is reasonable to ask, as does Schönborn, *“The Church is where Christ is. How then would it be possible for her not to be primarily in heaven, where Christ is?”*⁹ The Apostle Paul reminds us of this frequently.

¹If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life hid with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory (Col 4:1-4).

⁶So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it

our aim to please him. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body (2 Cor 5:6-10).

²⁰But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself (Phil 3:20-21).

¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph 2:19-22).

Augustine asks: *“Who is the city of God, if not the holy Church?”*¹⁰ Are they one and the same? Augustine then answers his own question: *“Thus, the Church is already now the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of heaven.”*¹¹

“We do not believe that one can refuse to identify the Church and the kingdom. We have two concepts here, but only one single reality. The Church is the kingdom; the kingdom is the Church. The concept of ‘kingdom’ refers to eschatology. But it is precisely with Jesus that eschatology, which belongs above all to the qualitative order, has broken into time. From the time of Christ onward, the whole Church has

*entered the end time; she is eschatological.”*¹²

What Schönborn argues, and I believe rightly so, is that *“If the Church is essentially heavenly, since she is ‘there where Christ is,’ if she is his body, and it is ‘not only the believers who are alive today that belong’ to this body ‘but also those who have lived before us, and those who will come after us until the end of time,’ then it is not possible to grasp a reason not to identify the Church and the kingdom of God.”*¹³

Catholic eschatology is inextricably grounded in the age-to-come and its presence in the here and now. The pilgrim Church, that is, the Church on earth, is always and at the same time, united with the Church in heaven. It will attain full perfection only in the glory of heaven, *“at the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old”* (Acts 3:21).

Then will the Pilgrim Church, that is the whole of mankind, be perfectly reestablished in Jesus Christ as it is written *“For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth”* (Eph 1:9-10).

Jesus, in speaking of his impending death, resurrection, and glorification, said, *“when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself* (John 12:32). This should not, however, be construed as a portent of the last days, any more so in that his ascension denotes his absence.

Our Thirst For God

God's eternal thirst for us

We are, by our nature, a thirsty people. Sadly, that which we drink to quench our thirst seldom truly satisfies for much of what we are want to drink merely whets the appetite, leaving us thirsting for more.

Not all for which we thirst is good, for we are too easily tempted by what entices the senses. It has been so since the beginning, it is human nature to thirst. Beyond our need to drink water to sustain us for our physical health and well-being, lies an existential thirst for fullness and completeness which drives our every effort. It is behind every move we make; as Saint Thomas Aquinas reminds us, even those born of our misdirected and misguided longings.

The thirst for freedom led the people of Israel out of Egypt, where they had been enslaved for four hundred years. Yet freedom failed to satisfy their thirst. They were never satisfied, they constantly complained; they thirsted for something, anything, everything but God. First they complained to Moses because they were hungry, *"Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this who assembly with hunger."*¹ So God gave them food to eat.

Still they were not satisfied, nor did they offer any gratitude to the one who saved them, freed them, and fed them. They steadfastly refused to listen and obey God's commandments and his laws. They were not satisfied with all that God had given them. They thirsted for more, and again they complained, *"Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?"*²



Once again, God responded to their complaints with compassion, love and mercy; Moses struck the rock and water flowed from it, for all the people to drink.

Thirst led a Samaritan woman to the well to draw water. It was midday when she approached the well, an unusual time as normally it would be drawn early in the morning. As we will soon learn, she is not a virtuous woman, having had five husbands and was then living with one who was not her husband. The women of the village would have thus shunned her, explaining her untimely arrival at the well.

The unexpected presence of a man, a Jew, at the well would have caused her some concern for Jews and Samaritans were not on friendly terms. Yet, despite the cultural and ethnic taboos, Jesus welcomed her presence and asked her for a drink.

Saint Augustine wrote that the very one who asks for a drink promises a drink. The one who seems to be in need, hoping to receive, is the one who is most eager to give, to satisfy our greatest thirsts.

Jesus promises the Samaritan woman more than mere water, he promises her eternal life. *"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

Hearing this, the woman's thirst was finally quenched; accepting his gift, her desires were fully met. The woman recognized that Jesus was more than who he appeared to be, a prophet perhaps, to which he responds *"the hour is coming when you will worship the Father ... the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth."*

It is interesting to consider how, when the woman claimed that the Messiah, the Christos would come and reveal all things, Jesus replied, *"I am he, the one who is speaking with you."*

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When the disciples urged Jesus to eat, believing he should be hungry, Jesus refuses their offer, telling them, *"I have food to eat of which you do not know."* Seeing their confusion, he adds, *"My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work,"* indicating that in our relationship with him who is God, it is not only our thirst that will be quenched; our hunger will be satisfied as well.

The gospel reminds us and should lead us to thoughts of what divides and of what unites us as human beings, creatures made by God. The world lies fragmented, torn asunder by bitterness and hate, brother against brother, sister against sister, divided in our thoughts and feelings, motivated by individual thirsts, desires, and wants.

It is in our divisiveness that we can come to understand how water, especially *"living water"* has come to be a powerful metaphor for God's relationship with we human beings. We find this in the words of Jeremiah:

"But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:11-13).

Augustine notes that *"Jesus is tired, tired out by his journey. He sits down. On the edge of a well he seats himself. It is midday, and he sits there exhausted. ... In*

Jesus, we encounter divine power together with weakness. He is strong and weak at one and the same time: strong, because 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, present with God from the beginning.' Would you know how strong the Son of God is? 'All things were made through him, and apart from him nothing came into being.' The whole universe was made without effort. Could any greater power exist than the power of one who was able effortlessly to construct the entire universe?

And would you know him in his weakness? 'The Word was made flesh, and lived among us.' The power of Christ created you; the weakness of Christ recreated you. Christ's power caused what did not exist to come into being; Christ's weakness saved existing things from destruction. In his might he fashioned us; in his weakness he came in search of us.

Jesus, then, is weak, tired out after his journey. Now that journey of his, undertaken for our sake, was his incarnation. How could he otherwise journey when he is present everywhere, and absent from nowhere? To what place or from what place could he travel? In only one way could he come to us, and that was by assuming our visible human flesh."⁴

Our insatiable thirst is what drives us in this life to constantly produce more, earn more, consume more. Thirst excites our spiritual longings as well, in our constant drive to prove and to strive for virtue, for perfection, but such great thirst can also cause us to lose ourselves by ignoring the only Truth that can truly satisfy. That great truth is God's thirst for us, even in our sin. We are want to forget or to ignore

that it was Jesus who asked for a drink, it was Jesus who reached out to the Samaritan woman.

As great as our thirst might be, God's thirst for us is greater and it is eternal. God yearns with an infinite, unquenchable thirst for our faith, our trust, and our love. What he desires is our recognition that we owe him everything, to acknowledge that we are nothing without God. God is our true drink. God is our true food. God sustains us.

Saint Paul reminds us of the awesome disproportion between our own aspirations and the beneficence of God. We must not become fixated on how deep and undying our own desires may be, but we must remain fixed on the unlimited, unending vastness of God's desire for us. *"For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us."*

As acute and overwhelming as our thirst for God might be, as exhausting and enervating as our journey to God might seem, the yearning that God has for us and the journey that God has made into our hearts surpass it all infinitely. Amen.

Homily for the
Third Sunday of Lent (A)
Exodus 17:3-7
Romans 5:1-3, 5-8
John 4:5-42

1. Exodus 16:3.

2. Exodus 17:3.

3. John 4:13-14..

4. Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 15, 6-7: CCL 36, 152-153.

Christ is always present, just as he told his disciples, “I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:20). As Ratzinger explains, “What this means is that the Christian hope is not some news item about tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.... Hope is now personalized. Its focus is not space and time, the question of ‘Where?’ and ‘When?,’ but relationship with Christ’s person and longing for him to come close.”¹⁴

It is important to consider the image of the disciples (the apostles, the entire community of believers in Jesus, and Mary, the mother of Jesus) gathered in the upper room, united in prayer (Acts 1:12-14), “as the context in which the Church is born; the Eleven, who are listed by name; Mary, the women and the brethren—it is a genuine *qahal*, a covenant assembly with diverse orders, which is at the same time a mirror of the entire new people.”¹⁵

The primitive church is clearly depicted—as noted in Acts 2—by the early converts’ adherence to the teaching of the apostles—previewing apostolic succession and of the official witness entrusted to the successors of the apostles, to the community—in the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.

This is validated by Jesus when he says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”¹⁶

At Pentecost, Ratzinger observes, “at the moment of her birth, the Church was already catholic, already a world Church.” Thus, there was never a local church from which, over time, other local churches were established. What is true is quite the opposite, “what first exists is the one Church, the Church that speaks in all tongues—the *ecclesia universalis*; she then generates Church in the most diverse locales, which nonetheless are all always embodiments of the one and only Church. The temporal and ontological priority lies with the universal Church; a Church that was not catholic would not even have ecclesial reality.”¹⁷

This recognition of an eschatological Christ is deeply rooted in the messianic hopes of the people of Israel. In Zechariah we read: “I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a first-born”¹⁸. Further on the prophet says, “On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.”¹⁹ This will later be restated in the Revelation to John: “Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, every one who pierced him; and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.”²⁰

In Daniel, we find a description of the whole kingdom of God: “and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, na-

tions, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”²¹ The “Son of Man” was a messianic reference, thus for first century Jews, whenever Jesus referred to himself as the “Son of Man”—found 84 times throughout the New Testament—they heard him clearly claim to be the Messiah, the one who is to come.

Thus, the meaning and driving force of Catholic Eschatology rests entirely and powerfully in the waiting on Christ and not on any expectation of a coming end time.

At the Last Supper, by his Davidic kingship and divine authority, Jesus said to the Apostles: “²⁹as my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you ³⁰that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”²² The Apostles were thus granted authority to rule as vice-regents over the *ekklēsia*, the universal church, the kingdom of David, the new Jerusalem.

This kingdom over which Christ now reigns forever is both heavenly and earthly, as Peter proclaims: “³²This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear.”²³

There is a strong tendency among scholars and exegetes to inflict modern biases on ancient Jewish texts, thus, by

failing to establish proper context, they often misinterpret what was intended. This is especially true in understanding the kingdom in the context of the Last Supper.

*“Jesus not only saw the Kingdom as an eschatological reality. He also saw it as a messianic kingdom, an international kingdom, and a heavenly kingdom. Moreover, when Jesus’ teachings about the banquet are juxtaposed with his words and deeds in the Upper Room, together they also suggest that Jesus saw himself and his disciples as participating in the heavenly kingdom and anticipating the eschatological kingdom precisely by means of the liturgy of the Last Supper.”*²⁴

A banquet or feast, whether eschatological or covenantal, was both familiar and common practice in ancient Judaism. There are many passages in Jewish Scriptures from which one can ascertain the frequency and importance of a banquet. Petri observes that *“When we turn outside the Old Testament to early Jewish literature such as the Dead Sea Scrolls and the pseudepigraphal works, we find that expectation of the messianic banquet is even more pronounced. By far the most explicit witness is found in the Dead Sea Scroll known as the Rule of the Congregation.”* Pitre then turns to the pseudepigrapha 1 Enoch which *“describes the age of salvation as a time when the righteous will be allowed to dine in the heavenly Temple on the fruit of the Tree of Life.... Later in the same book, the future banquet is described again. But this*

time it is explicitly messianic.” Jesus’ teaching in the gospels concerning the eschatological banquet can be found most explicitly in Matthew and Luke.²⁵

Let us remember, whenever we come together in prayer, to look to the East, for there we will surely see the rising Son of God.

1. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 6; trans. Michael Waldstein, 1; originally published in German under the title *Eschatologie—Tod und ewiges Leben* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet Verlag, 1977).
2. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 7.
3. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 11.
4. Acts 17:24-28.
5. *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, (Pope Paul VI, 12/7/1965), 24 § 1.
6. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 155.
7. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 156.
8. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 159.
9. Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, O.P., *“The Kingdom of God and the Heavenly-Earthly Church,”* Letter & Spirit 2 (2006): 217; 221
10. Augustine, *The City of God*, Bk. 16, chap. 2, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 310.
11. *The City of God*, Bk. 20 chap 9, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 429.
12. Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, O.P., *“The Kingdom of God and the Heavenly-Earthly Church,”* Letter & Spirit 2 (2006): 223; Cardinal Charles Journet, *L’Eglise du Verbe Incarné*, 2: 997, n. 1; compare 60-91 and *Nova et Vetera* 38 (1963), 307-10.
13. Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, O.P., *“The Kingdom of God and the Heavenly-Earthly Church,”* Letter & Spirit 2 (2006): 223.
14. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 8.
15. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 41; trans. Adrian Walker; originally published in German under the title *Zur Gemeinschaft gerufen: Kirche heute verstehen*, second edition, (Freiburg im Briesgau: Herder, 1991).
16. Matthew 28:18-20.
17. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 44.
18. Zechariah 12:10.
19. Zechariah 13:1.
20. Revelation 1:7.
21. Daniel 7:13-14.
22. Luke 22:29-30.
23. Acts 2:32-33.
24. Brant Pitre, *“The Ransom for Many,” the New Exodus, and the End of the Exile: Redemption as the Restoration of All Israel (Mark 10:35-45,”* Letter & Spirit 1 (2005): 52.
25. Matthew 8:11-12; Luke 13:28-29.

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.

Called To Communion
Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger
Ignatius Press
1996, 165 pages.

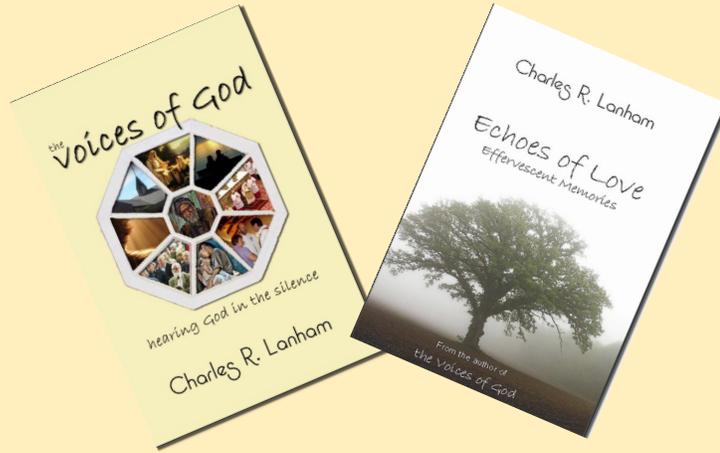
Orthodoxy
G. K. Chesterton
Digireads.com
March 30, 2004, 121 pages.
Originally published 1908.

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