



A journal for restless minds

FOR BETTER OR WORSE

Forever means no matter what

SOURCE AND SUMMIT

Rediscovering the presence of God

RELUCTANT ENCOUNTER

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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.

For Better Or Worse

Forever means no matter what

As a extremely fortunate man now on the threshold of a half-century of marriage to a living saint—she must be to have put up with me for so long—I must admit to something that many may find either difficult to accept or believe.

There is no such thing as happy ever after. It does not exist, it never has, and never will. So if you are wont to believe in fairy tales, please make every effort to dissuade yourself of such ill-considered thoughts.

Marriage is forever and while there will be many wonderful, fantastic, incredible, beautiful, marvelous moments, there will unquestionably be moments of difficulties, doubt, pain and loss. Marriage is the sacramental union of two lives and although living itself can be the source of great joy and bliss, it has the

tendency to frequently be messy and occasionally unpleasant.

Yet, there is a special beauty that only manifests itself whenever a soul finds itself in the presence of a soulmate. It is a beauty that dwells below the surface, hidden deep within, until encouraged by love, it finds the desire and the courage to take wing and fly above the clouds. Beauty such as this can only bloom when nourished by forever love,

which over time, is heard in whispers, memories, and echoes of love.



Love is often complicated, messy, and poorly understood by those who believe they are the masters of it. What is often taken to be love is seldom love at all but rather infatuation or a desire for intimacy coupled with passion. We live in an age where casual hookups and one-night stands have replaced intentional long-lasting relationships built upon authentic mutual self-giving love.

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The love necessary to endure forever is never easy to discover and even more difficult to describe. I have long believed that such perfect love may best have been described by Saint Paul in First Corinthians 13:4-8:

*Love is patient,
love is kind.*

*It is not jealous,
love is not pompous,
it is not inflated,
it is not rude,
it does not seek its own interest,
it is not quick-tempered,
it does not brood over injury,
it does not rejoice over wrongdoing
but rejoices with the truth.*

*It bears all things,
believes all things,
hopes all things,
endures all things.*

Love never fails.

If I have learned anything at all from forty-nine years of being in love with my love it is that love must be nourished and sustained for it to endure. That, in and of itself, demands hard work and dedicated devotion. Love is never easy nor is it free or cheaply purchased. You must pay dearly for forever love.

To love one another you must first like one another, respect one another, trust one another, be proud of one another. These are the minimums; you must always strive to do more. You must be of a mind that just as one cannot live without a heart or a brain, your spouse is even more essential to your well-being, to life itself. There is perfect truth in this: that when you

wed you become one flesh, no longer two but one.

For myself, I have always been inordinately proud of my wife who I know is much smarter than I and far more capable. She is simply irreplaceable to me, as I firmly trust I am to her. It is our love that became one so many years ago and it is our love that binds us still.

When you marry, you love yourself and become one body, one spirit. Just as parts of your bodies are irreplaceable, so must you be to each other.

No one should interpret what I have said as a proclamation of a perfect and saccharine relationship borne without occasional strife, discord, or hardships for that would seriously misrepresent the case.

No, any marriage is destined to be apportioned its share of good times and bad times; that is simply part of life. Yet, just as you would not suggest amputating a limb should some portion of it cause you pain, neither should you discard that portion of yourself when inevitably unbridled passion wanes and youthful beauty fades.

Our culture, biased and skewed by much of the popular media, has long promoted the notion that intimate relationships are physically noisy affairs, filled with perspiration and passion. Like magic, this image of intimacy is nothing but a pale illusion and a false dream. True intimacy is much deeper and far more complex.

Wanting More

It is enough to know we love

*Oh how we once did soar with grace
to lofty heights above the clouds,
and we did fly too near the sun
and thus our hearts did melt
from the torrid heat of our desire
while our descent from heaven's gate
left us wanting, wanting more.*

*Once upon a time, so long ago,
across a crowded room we met,
and talked and talked and talked
and talked of many things, and yet,
we could not fill our souls with knowing
all that was the other, for it merely
left us wanting, wanting more.*

*The days of yesterday have slipped away
all but forgotten among the boxes
filled with "what might have been-s"
and "what was never meant to be-s".
But there were moments, oh such moments
when joyous gifts thrice surprised and
left us wanting, wanting more.*

*Do you ponder as I wonder
when the knowing of the other
was enough to simply be
in quiet presence, nothing more?
When did we soar beyond the sun
into cathedral silence, knowing nothing
left us wanting, wanting more?*

*It does not matter why or wherefore,
it is enough to know we love
the other more beyond the telling,
beyond the heat of passion's breath,
beyond the knowing of the other.
It is enough to love, my love,
forever wanting, wanting more.*

*Love whispers soft and low such
sweet music from the heart and
every note and measured beat
sings with such perfect harmony
a melody so pure the soul cries out
in sublime and joyful agony
echoes of love, wanting more.*

Source And Summit

Rediscovering the presence of God

Do you feel the presence of God during the celebration of the liturgy? Do you believe you are in the presence of the divine? Take a moment and reflect on the image here before you on this page.

In its introduction, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy states, "For the liturgy, 'through which the work of our redemption is accomplished,' most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church. It is of the essence of the Church that she be both human and divine, visible and yet invisibly equipped, eager to act and yet intent on contemplation, present in this world and yet not at home in it; and she is all these things in such wise that in her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine, the visible likewise to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, which we seek."¹

Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine

Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, is often of the same mind as Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, especially when it comes to the celebration of the liturgy. Both believe that the Church is facing a serious crisis and that too many Church leaders have underestimated the danger.

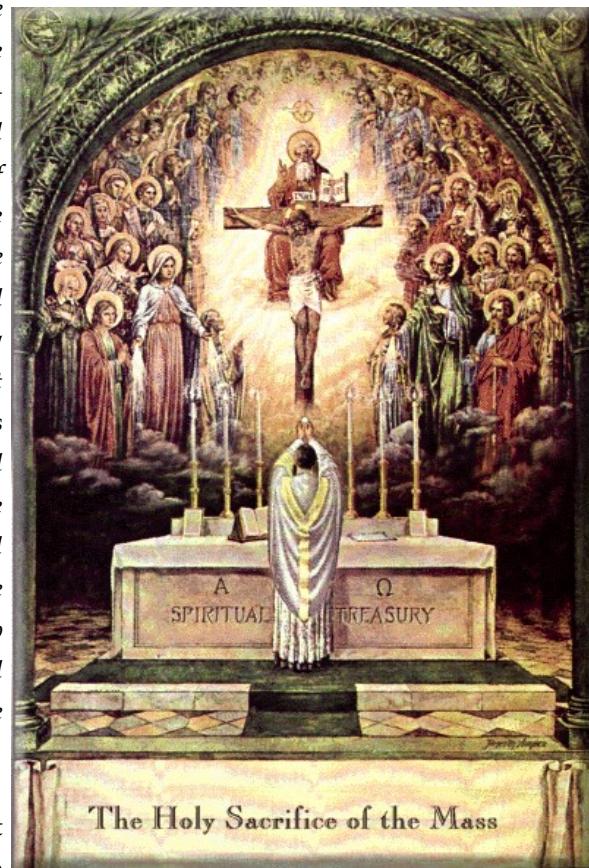
In the preface to the newly released Russian edition of the Opera Omnia (complete works) of Benedict XVI / Ratzinger, Benedict writes, "it

In his introductory address to a German conference on the sacred liturgy, Cardinal Sarah noted:

becomes ever clearer that the existence of the Church lives on the just celebration of the liturgy, and that the Church is in danger when the primacy of God does not appear anymore in the liturgy, and therefore that has subverted the Church is located in the effacing of the priority of God in the liturgy. In the conscience of the men of today, the things of God—and with this the liturgy—do not appear urgent, in fact.

"The serious crisis of faith, not only at the level of the Christian faithful but also and especially among many priests and bishops, has made us incapable of understanding the Eucharistic liturgy as a sacrifice, as identical to the act performed once and for all by Jesus Christ, making present the Sacrifice of the Cross in a non-bloody manner, throughout the Church, through different ages, places and nations. There is often a sacrilegious tendency to reduce the

*Holy Mass to a simple convivial meal, the celebration of a profane feast, the community's celebration of itself, or even worse, a terrible diversion from the anguish of a life that no longer has meaning or from the fear of meeting God face to face, because His glance unveils and obliges us to look truly and unflinchingly at the ugliness of our interior life. But the Holy Mass is not a diversion. It is the living sacrifice of Christ who died on the cross to free us from sin and death, for the purpose of revealing the love and the glory of God the Father. Many Catholics do not know that the final purpose of every liturgical celebration is the glory and adoration of God, the salvation and sanctification of human beings, since in the liturgy 'God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified' (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7).*



The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

There is urgency for every possible thing. The things of God do not ever seem urgent. ... If God is no longer important, the criteria to establish what is important are changed. Man, by setting God aside, submits his own self to constraints that render him a slave to material forces and that are therefore opposed to his dignity."

Most of the faithful—including priests and bishops—do not know this teaching of the Council. Just as they do not know that the true worshippers of God are not those who reform the liturgy according to their own ideas and creativity, to make it something pleasing to the world, but rather

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Reluctant Encounter

Facing uncertainty

Each of us, at some time in our lives, will have an Emmaus encounter, a moment in which we come face to face with the unfamiliar, accompanied by its own unique risks, challenges, and uncertainties; an encounter which we are reluctant, even afraid, to embrace. Many of us will encounter more than one such moment, if we should be so fortunate. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, it is not so much the encounter which is most important but how we embrace the moment and learn from it.

Some years ago, while in diaconal formation, I had such an encounter which, in retrospect, offers a perfect illustration of that experienced by the disciples. Throughout the formation process, each candidate was assigned various six month ministries, one of which was visiting and taking communion to the homebound. My first experience with this ministry was, shall we say, met with considerable reluctance and uncertainty on my part.

On Sunday, after early morning Mass, I drove to the assisted living facility where I was scheduled to meet with and offer communion to 4 or 5 residents in their rooms. I was nervous, unsure whether I could do this. I sat in my car for a long time—at least it seemed to me to be so—afraid to take the first step. Why this was so I can not say, but I was immobilized by the unknown.

Reluctantly, I left the safety of my own self-constructed womb and took a few steps toward the building, only to find myself becoming nauseous and returning to my car. Eventually, after a few deep breaths and much prayer, I found myself entering the room of the first resident, a woman of some ninety years of age, with a beatific smile that could melt even the hardest of hearts.



In the breaking of the bread, offering her Holy Communion, my eyes were opened and I encountered the resurrected Jesus in her face. I realized at that moment that my heart had been burning within me on the way. The gift of his presence came to both of us that day. It was transformative, opening hearts to seeing what was once hidden from sight. I encountered two strangers, I gained two friends, I had been freed from my fear.

What is perhaps most compelling is the thought,—no, more of a honest conviction—an image of three robed figures in rapt conversation, on the

road to somewhere. What draws attention, what thought gives mention to this scene is what is yet unrecognized: the stranger walking with them, knowing them yet they know not who he is.

How like ourselves. We walk with strangers throughout our lives, never knowing the stranger, never inviting the stranger into our lives. We immobilize ourselves within our self-constructed wombs, afraid to acknowledge our own doubts, our own confusion, insecurities, neediness, and especially our brokenness.

The encounter on the road to Emmaus can be seen as a metaphor for how, no matter how far we might stray or how long we might find ourselves lost, feeling abandoned and alone, God knows where we are and he never leaves us, never.

We are too easily distracted by all that surrounds us: the violence, the gut-wrenching economic turmoil, the overt, unreasoned vitriolic anger, hatred, and resentment spilling out upon our streets and communities, all draw our attention away from him.

Like those disciples on their way to Emmaus, we so often get caught up with things of the world that we lose the ability to recognize his presence among us, in the human brokenness we encounter.

Our eyes will be opened to his presence among us when we break bread with others. When we encounter

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those with broken hearts, Jesus is there. When we comfort someone with a broken spirit, Jesus is there. Whenever we encounter anyone who is experiencing pain or loss and we console them, Jesus is present. When we feed the hungry, offer clothes and shelter to the homeless, Jesus is there. Whenever we visit the lonely, the sick, and the dying, Jesus is there. Jesus is there.

Jesus told us as much when he taught us of the final judgment: “Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me.”¹ And Jesus went on to tell us, “as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”²

In today’s Gospel, we encounter two disciples on a road, a road we are told that leads to Emmaus. But a road can be more than a path to a destination, a road can be a symbol, a symbol of pilgrimage, a quest.

Sometimes a pilgrimage entails a physical journey to a physical place, such as a pilgrimage to the Holy Land or to the sites where Mary has appeared. But there is another kind, a pilgrimage so deep and intense, a pilgrimage that originates in the inner-most places within the soul as a quest for Truth.

We are pilgrims on a quest to discover our place in God’s infinite plan. Each of us seeks to discover what God

has in store for us. Our lives are filled with many stopping points, places where we discover another truth within the Truth that is God. Some are places where we come to live, to work, and perhaps to raise a family. But then there are other places less obvious: places for prayer, to worship, for the breaking of the bread, for giving thanks to Almighty God.

A few years ago, Donald Miller wrote a book called *Blue like Jazz: Non-religious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality* in which he wrote: “I am early in my story, but I believe I will stretch out into eternity, and in heaven I will reflect upon these early days, these days when it seemed God was down a dirt road, walking toward me. Years ago He was a swinging speck in the distance; now He is close enough I can hear His singing. Soon I will see the lines on His face.” Such a wonderful vision of our journey toward heaven, our quest to eventually see God face to face.

There is a paradox of faith, of distance and closeness, of belief and unbelief, of certainty and doubt, that repeats itself over and over again in our lives. Often we are blind to it in our own lives although we can see it clear enough in the lives of others.

Someone speaks of feeling distant from God, acknowledging that this separation is resulting in great unhappiness. They are filled with regrets, wishing they had used their gifts more wisely, wishing they had been more attentive, closer to God, more appreciative and prayerful. There are even times when trust in God is lost and they feel they are lost as well.

Someone else wonders where faith has gone, there is no longer a sense of wonder and mystery, now it just seems empty without God.

So too were the disciples on the road to Emmaus. We hear them say, “But we were hoping that he would be the one ...” Once there was hope, they thought. Yet, even their sense of loss, their longing, was that not hope? Even their desire to believe was believing. Even their longing to love was love.

Sometimes we forget to look to ourselves and see our own brokenness. What we so readily discern in others we cannot see within us. Such self-blindness can be a good thing, but unless we are open and honest in admitting to our own faults and failures, to our weaknesses and brokenness we will find it difficult to recognize the presence of God in our life.

Those who saw the resurrected Jesus often failed to recognize him. Mary Magdalene knew that it was him only when he said her name. The disciples recognized him only in the breaking of the bread. The resurrected Jesus was miraculously both different from before and yet the same person. That remains true today as it was then.

Amen.

Homily for the
Third Sunday of Easter (A)
Acts 2:14, 22-33
1 Peter 1:17-21
Luke 24:13-35

1. Matthew 25:34-36.

2. Matthew 25:40.

3. Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality*, (Thorndike Press, August 2006), 1.

those who reform the world in depth with the Gospel so as to allow it access to a liturgy that is the reflection of the liturgy that is celebrated from all eternity in the heavenly Jerusalem. As Benedict XVI often emphasized, at the root of the liturgy is adoration, and therefore God. Hence it is necessary to recognize that the serious, profound crisis that has affected the liturgy and the Church itself since the Council is due to the fact that its CENTER is no longer God and the adoration of Him, but rather men and their alleged ability to "do" something to keep themselves busy during the Eucharistic celebrations. Even today, a significant number of Church leaders underestimate the serious crisis that the Church is going through: relativism in doctrinal, moral and disciplinary teaching, grave abuses, the desacralization and trivialization of the Sacred Liturgy, a merely social and horizontal view of the Church's mission."²

Cardinal Sarah adds, with pointed emphasis that, "the first to have abandoned her Christian roots and past is indisputably the post-conciliar Catholic Church. Some episcopal conferences even refuse to translate faithfully the original Latin text of the Roman Missal. Some claim that each local Church can translate the Roman Missal, not according to the sacred heritage of the Church, following the methods and principles indicated by *Liturgiam authenticam*, but according to the fantasies, ideologies and cultural expressions which, they say, can be understood and accepted by the people. But the people desire to be initiated into the sacred language of God. The Gospel and revelation themselves are 'reinterpreted', 'contextualized' and adapted to decadent Western culture. ...

Many refuse to face up to the sanctum Concilium: "the liturgy is the Church's work of self-destruction through the deliberate demolition of her doctrinal, liturgical, moral and pastoral foundations. While more and more voices of high-ranking prelates stubbornly affirm obvious doctrinal, moral and liturgical errors that have been condemned a hundred times and ranking prelates stubbornly affirm obvious doctrinal, moral and liturgical errors that have been condemned a hundred times and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take work to demolish the little faith remaining in the people of God, ..." ³

"supper."⁶

Cardinal Ratzinger earlier acknowledged as much when he stated, "What the Popes and the Council Fathers were expecting was a new Catholic unity, and instead one has encountered a dissension which—to use the words of Paul VI—criticism to self-destruction. There had been the expectation of a new enthusiasm, and instead too often it has ended in bore-dom and discouragement. There had been a summons to a presumed "spirit of the Council" and by so doing has actually and increasingly discredited it."⁴

One observable critique, mentioned by the Fathers of the Council, is that before men can come to the liturgy they must be called to faith and to conversion. This is of utmost importance, for as the Apostle wrote: "How then are they to call upon him in whom they have not yet believed? But how are they to believe him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear if no one preaches? And how are men to preach unless they be sent?"⁵

Here it is important to reiterate what the Council declared in *Sacro-*

The Church Fathers went on to write: "But in order that the liturgy may be able to produce its full effects, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds be attuned to their voices, and that they should cooperate with divine grace seems to have passed over from self-criticism to self-destruction. There had must therefore realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, something more is required than the mere observation of the laws governing valid and licit celebration; it is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by its effects."⁷

The liturgy should bring us face to face with God in a personal relationship of intense intimacy. It should plunge us into the innermost life of the Most Holy Trinity. Pope Benedict XVI, in his letter which accompanied his *Motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* observed:

"Immediately after the Second Vatican Council it was presumed that requests for the use of the 1962 Missal would be limited to the older generation which had grown up with it, but in the meantime it has clearly been demonstrated that young persons too have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a

form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, particularly suited to them."

As Cardinal Sarah observes: "Indeed, the Eucharist is not a sort of 'dinner among friends', a convivial meal of the community, but rather a sacred Mystery, the great Mystery of our faith, the celebration of the Redemption accomplished by Our Lord Jesus Christ, the commemoration of the death of Jesus on the cross to free us from our sins.

It is therefore appropriate to celebrate Holy Mass with the beauty and fervor of the saintly Curé of Ars, of Padre Pio or Saint Josemaría, and this is the sine qua non condition for arriving at a liturgical reconciliation "by the high road", if I may put it that way. I vehemently refuse therefore to waste our time pitting one liturgy against another, or the Missal of Saint Pius V against that of Blessed Paul VI. Rather, it is a question of entering into the great silence, a human being gains his nobility and his grandeur only if he is on his knees selves to be enriched by all the liturgical forms, whether they are Latin or Eastern. Indeed, without this mystical dimension of my day are found in the incomparable silence and without a contemplative spirit, hours that I spend on my knees in darkness the liturgy will remain an occasion for hateful divisions, ideological confrontations and the public humiliation of the weak by those who claim to hold some authority, instead of being the place of our unity and communion in the Lord. Thus, instead of being an occasion for confronting and hating each other, the liturgy should bring us all together to unity in the faith and to the true knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... and, by living in the truth of love, we will grow into Christ so as to be raised up in all things to Him who is the Head (cf. Eph 4:13-15).

... The sense of the sacred that imbues and irrigates the rites of the Church is the inseparable correlative of the liturgy. Now in recent decades, many, many of the faithful have been ill treated or profoundly troubled by celebrations marked with a superficial, devastating subjectivism, to the point where they did not recognize their Heimat, their common home, whereas the youngest among them had never known it! How many have tiptoed away, particularly the least significant and the poorest among them!"

Cardinal Ratzinger, long before the publication of *Summorum Pontificum*, had observed that the crisis in the Church and therefore the crisis of the weakening of the faith has come in large measure from the way in which we have treated the liturgy. Cardinal Sarah suggests three possible paths for the renewal (not reform) of the liturgy: Silence, Adoration, and Formation. "In is a question of entering into the great silence, a human being gains his nobility and his grandeur only if he is on his knees in order to hear and adore God. For my part, I know that all the great moments of the Most Blessed Sacrament....and finally immersion in the liturgy, in the deep mystery of God."

1. Pope Paul VI, Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium, Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy*, December 4, 1963, § 2.
2. Cardinal Robert Sarah, Introductory Message, Colloquium "The Source of the Future" ("Quelle der Zukunft") on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the publication of the Motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* by Pope Benedict XVI, March 29, 2017.
3. Cardinal Robert Sarah, Introductory Message.
4. Joseph Ratzinger and Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report: An exclusive interview on the state of the Church*, translated by Salvator Attanasio and Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 29-30.
5. Rom 10:13-15.
6. *Sacrosanctum Concilium, Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy*, § 10.
7. *Sacrosanctum Concilium, Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy*, § 11.

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.

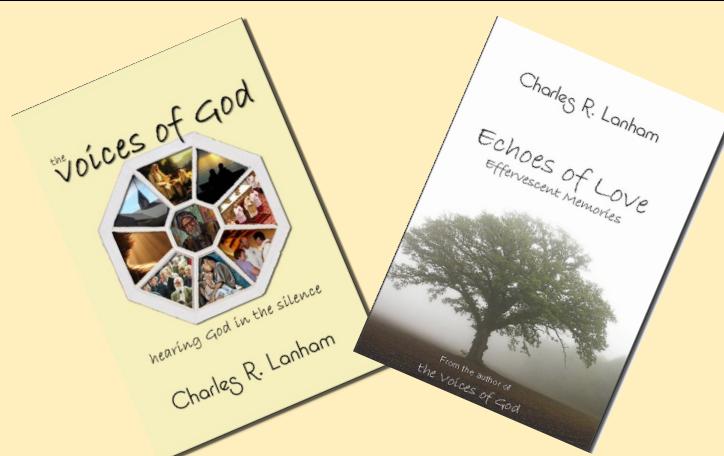
Orthodoxy
G. K. Chesterton
Digireads. com
March 30, 2004, 121 pages.
Originally published 1908.

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Institute on Religion and Public Life
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