



A journal for restless minds

## MADE FOR HEAVEN

*Born of this earth*

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

*So all may be one*

**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.

## Made For Heaven

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**O**ur nature, the who and what which constitutes the human person, has long been much debated by philosophers, metaphysicists, psychologists—and more often than one might suspect—charlatans.

Each—far too eager to suggest as much—claims to have in their possession the illusory answer; their theories all too fickle and quite as fleeting as those for which they somberly conclude and denounce as fallacious, even heretical.

Perhaps a few have captured some near equivalence, some expression which approximates the human condition. And yet, for all their eloquence of speech and professed profundity, it is this simple phrase which turns them all to common clay: *“We are creatures made for heaven, but we are born of this earth.”*<sup>1</sup>

God formed man from common clay; from the earth he loved man into existence. But such a form left to itself is but an image, nothing but a caricature, a prototype; whole, yet suddenly incomplete, like a clay pot not yet put to flame.

No doubt, given sufficiency of time and man's hubristic conceit, man will

replicate a caricature of himself. But man has neither the capacity nor love enough to create the whole, to cause into being the eternal essence of a soul which makes the manufactured caricature complete, the person whole.



**T**here is a fallacy of mind, perpetuated by those who have fully convinced themselves of having *correctly* answered the unanswerable, such as: *“Which came first, the chicken or the egg?”* Notwithstanding the irreconcilable opinions they express, there are mysteries and imponderables, limits and barriers which cannot, will not, nor are not solvable deterministically. Such answers are known by God alone.

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It is hubris—extreme, foolish pride—which defies nature’s norms and dares to challenge the creative power of God; it is the ego which convicts the mind, making unto itself a god; it is *pride* which lies at the center of sin and immorality. *“Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.”*<sup>2</sup>

Pride is what has turned our understanding of creation on its head, placing effect before its cause. We see the body and presume the soul a mere superfluous adjunct, an impractical, improbable artifact, or egregious religious nonsense. It is, in his presumptiveness, that man has proved himself to be the biggest fool. And yet fools though they are, their pride and their conceit provide no honest exit from their foolishness.

We read *“then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, ... ”* (Gen 2:7). This is neither meaningless tripe to be ignored nor nonsense to be imperiously dismissed.

The manufactured man was formed from dust, and had God proceeded no further, what would have been his fortune? At best or worst, man was then but a caricature, a statue, a lifeless mass, a clod of dirt too easily reshaped by some wandering breeze or pleasant shower; a castle crafted out of sand, whose carefully carved turrets and sturdy walls look to be impervious to assault, are so quick-

ly erased with the rising tide, no trace of the craftsman’s artistry left behind. far more beautiful than what we might experience in our brief earthly sojourn.

Is that then to be the fate of man? A random amalgam of uncertain shape and nothing more? It takes no genius to state the obvious: man is more than common clay, so much more than dust rolling aimlessly upon the ground at the mercies of the wind.

If we but read a few words more we find that the Lord God then *“... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”* More than simple potter’s clay shaped by the One Potter of all that was, is, and ever shall be; the Potter breathed into his creation the essence of His being; He gave him life from lifelessness, His life, His being, His image and likeness. God caused man into existence not by merely forming him from dust but through the giving of what was His alone to give, God gave of himself. Saint John Paul II once said that there is something in every human being that *“mirrors the image of God as Creator.”*<sup>3</sup>

That which makes man a living being is from God, of God, and is God. God made us to live with him forever in heaven, but he made us from the dust of this earth. We are born of earth but not for earth, for God’s purpose in creating us has always been to live with him in heaven.

Our body is of this earth, our spirit of heaven. While our body longs for the beauty that is of this earth, our spirit senses something more, longs for something outside ourselves, something otherworldly, unseen, and unknowable, yet

But then our pride gets in the way. We seem incapable of leaving well enough alone. We know better but then *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall”* (Prov 16:18).

C. S. Lewis says of pride *“Now what you want to get clear is that Pride is essentially competitive—is competitive by its very nature—while the other vices are competitive only, so to speak, by accident. Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man.”*<sup>4</sup>

He goes on to note: *“The Christians are right: it is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began. Other vices may sometimes bring people together: you may find good fellowship and jokes and friendliness among drunken people or unchaste people. But pride always means enmity—it is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God.”*<sup>5</sup>

As much as we love the beauty of this world and the universe which surrounds it, we seem to instinctually want to create our own beauty and new life which is the sole domain of our own creator God. And in many ways—perhaps in too many ways—we have achieved much in this regard.

*“We live in a time when, despite all of our achievements, the brutality and indifference of the world have never been greater. And that cruelty is also the work of human hands. So if we’re troubled by*

the spirit of our age, if we want to change the current course of our culture and challenge its ruling ideas, then we need to start with the author of that culture. That means examining man himself.

Culture exists because man exists. Men and women think, imagine, believe, and act. The mark they leave on the world is what we call culture. In a sense, that includes everything from work habits and cuisine to social manners and politics. But most of us focus in a special way on those elements of culture that people consciously choose to create; things like art, literature, technology, music, and architecture. These are what most of us think about when we first hear the word ‘culture.’”<sup>6</sup>

But to the Western mind today, God has been cast out of the equation, God is no longer a part of the cultural milieu. Almost every scientific advance comes with its own retrogression. Science and technology provide us with power. But that power creates an ever strident cult of Pride.

New cruelties permeate entertainment venues; cynicism, spin, and base degradation abound in politics; not-so-subtle genocides pose as rights such as the abortion cult; and the apparent endless “trans” confusion on what it truly means to be human.

“Philosophers like Ludwig Feuerbach and Friedrich Nietzsche give us the language to deny God. The result, in the words of Henri de Lubac, is not atheism, but an anti-theism built on resentment. In destroying God, man sees himself as ‘overthrowing an obstacle in order to gain his freedom.’ The Christian understanding

of human dignity claims that we’re made in the image and likeness of God. Thomas Aquinas said that ‘In this [likeness to God] is man’s greatness, in this is man’s worth, in this he excels every creature.’ But this grounding in God is exactly what the modern spirit rejects as an insult to human sovereignty.”

Most people will never read Nietzsche or Feuerbach. But they will experience the benefits of science and technology; marketing will tease their appetites, make death seem remote, and turn morality and meaning into matters of mere private opinion.

“While many people in the developed world still claim to be religious, their faith—in the words of the Pontifical Council for Culture—is ‘often more a question of religious feeling than a demanding commitment to God.’ Religion becomes a kind of insurance policy for eternity. Too often, it’s little more than a convenient moral language for daily life.”

Pride increases the desire for power and erodes concern for the weak and vulnerable. “Genius can breed vanity. Vanity breeds conflict. Conflict breeds suffering. And the vanity of creative genius has a pedigree that leads back a very long way.”<sup>7</sup>

It is odd that in the wake of recent history, in which millions upon millions of human lives were starved, tortured, gassed, shot, blown apart, and incinerated that so many are unwilling, even to the point of embarrassment, to speak of the devil. Any mention is intentionally directed toward a being little more than a comic book character or an implausible yet flawed human being.

That caricature is far from the truth. Satan is real. He was vividly real for Jesus. He was very real for Paul as well as for every saint throughout history. And, rest assured, the devil is far more formidable than any human being.

God created angels before he created man. They are glorious creatures, Pure Spirits, without corporeal form. And Satan was an angel, one of the greatest of all the angels.

“This is the kind of Being—once glorious, then consumed by his own pride—who is now the Adversary of humanity. This is the Pure Spirit who betrayed his Creator and his own greatness. This is the Intellect who hates the Incarnation because through it, God invites creatures of clay like us humans to take part in God’s own divinity. There is nothing sympathetic or noble about Satan; only tragedy and loss and enduring, incandescent fury.”<sup>8</sup>

Here’s the rub: If we don’t believe in the devil, then sooner or later we will not believe in God. The devil is an integral part of the salvation narrative. Satan is neither God nor a god. He is a creature and subject to God who waged war against his Creator and was defeated. He is the first author of pride. Without the devil, the Incarnation and Redemption would be without meaning. The devil is real. There is no escape from this simple truth.

1. Charles J. Chaput, *Strangers in a Strange Land*, (Henry Hold and Co.: February 2017), 227.
2. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (HarperOne, 2002), 103.
3. Saint John Paul II, *Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to Artists*, 1999..
4. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 104.
5. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 105.
6. Charles J. Chaput, *Strangers in a Strange Land*, 227.
7. Charles J. Chaput, *Strangers in a Strange Land*, 229.
8. Charles J. Chaput, *Strangers in a Strange Land*, 232.

## A Family Affair

*So that all may be one*

**W**e have heard the words many times; so much so that we seldom really listen to them anymore. *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the holy Spirit be with you all!"* And then these words pass by without much attention: *"In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!"*

Holy words. Sacred Words. Words rich in meaning, so profound, yet too often spoken or heard *in absentia*, so ingrained are they in our minds, we pay little heed to what it is we are saying or hearing.

And then there are those other things, bothersome notions, rekindling thoughts and memories of unpleasant times, unsavory and unwelcome bitterness toward a family member: perhaps a tyrannical parent, someone who demanded obedience without a simple touch of love, or one too distant or absent by their own admission. These memories reprise hurtful thoughts.

There are other reasons, to be sure, why some find it difficult to pray to the triune God. Times and cultures have imbued the word "God" with many and varied meanings—remote, unfeeling, authoritarian, arbitrary, angry, demanding, caring, wise, peace, loving, vengeful, righteous, judgmental, father, mother, ruler, king, Lord—

but for Christians, God is a community of persons, a family, three persons in one God, a relationship grounded in being one with the other. The doctrine of the Trinity affirms God as loving and all-knowing, generous in giving, welcome in receiving. We believe and profess every time we recite the Creed that God could not be God without the Father and the Son eternally bonded in their relationship through the Holy Spirit.

While some think of the Trinitarian doctrine as somehow a negotiable which may or may not be held to be true, it is at its core, the heart and soul of our faith. As Christians, if we lose faith in the triune God, we lose all we are. We cannot call ourselves Christians if we do not hold fast to the truth in the Trinity, that is God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



**T**he God of Moses, "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, rich in kindness and fidelity," is thus shown through Saint Paul as the interpersonal Trinity that serves as a true model of human family relationships. Thus Paul prays, *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Spirit be with you all."*

**W**hat we see in the Trinity reveals something very important for all family relationships. The relationship between Jesus and the Father is an intimate, self-giving relationship. Every joy, every pain, every tear, every feeling which the Son experienced was experienced by the Father and the Spirit.

This is often difficult for us to accept. It is a mystery beyond our understanding and yet we are called, as Catholics and as Christians to believe it without demurral. Gregory Nazianzen was a fourth century bishop who is credited for the final acceptance by the Council of Constantinople of the Nicene Creed. In what is called a poem, Gregory speaks clearly and eloquently of the Trinity.

*"To speak of the Godhead is, I know, like crossing the ocean on a raft, or like flying to the stars with winds of narrow span. Even heavenly beings are unable to speak of God's decrees or of his government of the world."*

*But enlighten my mind and loosen my tongue, Spirit of God, and I will sound aloud the trumpet of*

*truth, so that all who are united to God may rejoice with their whole heart.*

*There is one eternal God, uncaused and uncircumscribed by any being existing before him or yet to be. He is infinite, and all time is in his hands. He is the mighty Father of one might and noble Son. In no way does the birth of this Son resem-*

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ble human birth, for God is spirit.

**T**he Word of God is another divine Person, but not another Godhead. He is the living seal of the Father, the only son of the only God. He is equal to the Father, so that although the Father always remains wholly the Father, the Son is the creator and ruler of the world and is the Father's power and wisdom.

Let us praise the Son first of all, venerating the blood that expiated our sins. He lost nothing of his divinity when he saved me, when like a good physician he stooped to my festering wounds.

He was a mortal man, but he was also God. He was of the race of David, but Adam's creator. He who has no body clothed himself with flesh. He had a mother, but she was a virgin.

He who is without bounds bound himself with the cords of our humanity.

He was victim and high priest—yet he was God. He offered up his blood and cleansed the whole world. He was lifted up on the cross, but it was sin that was nailed to it. He became as one among the dead, but he rose from the dead, raising to life also many who had died before him.

On the one hand, there was the poverty of his humanity; on the other, the riches of his divinity. Do not let what is human in the Son permit you wrongfully to detract from what is divine. For the sake of the divine, hold in the greatest honor the humanity which the immortal Son took upon himself for love of you.

My soul, why do you hold back? Sing praise to the Holy Spirit as well, lest your words tear asunder what is not separated

by nature. Let us tremble before the great Spirit who also is God, through whom we have come to know God, who transforms us into God.

He is the omnipotent bestower of diverse gifts and the giver of life both in heaven and on earth. He is the divine strength, proceeding from the Father and subject to no power. He is not the Son, for there is only one Son, but he shares equally in the glory of the Godhead.

In the one God are three pulsations that move the world. Through them I became a new and different person when I came out of the font, where my death was buried, into the light—a man restored to life from the dead. If God cleansed me so completely, then I must worship him with my whole being.”<sup>1</sup>

Let us take a moment to honestly consider what it must have been for God himself to become himself incarnate. Imagine all that God must, out of his love for his creation, have given up to become man. Who among us would have so much love as to give up so much of who you are to become a flea or a worm or even a tree. So much more did God give to become man and walk among us.

**A**s Paul wrote, “Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interests of others. Have this in mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in

human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”<sup>2</sup>

Think of how God made himself incarnate, was born of a human woman, who took the Lord to her breast and suckled him there. Think of all those who were so fortunate to have encountered God incarnate: the beloved Apostle John who reclined his head on the bosom of the Lord, the woman who washed his feet with her tears, the blind man whom Jesus wiped mud on his eyes so he could see. How would you have liked to be among those so favored by God's human presence?

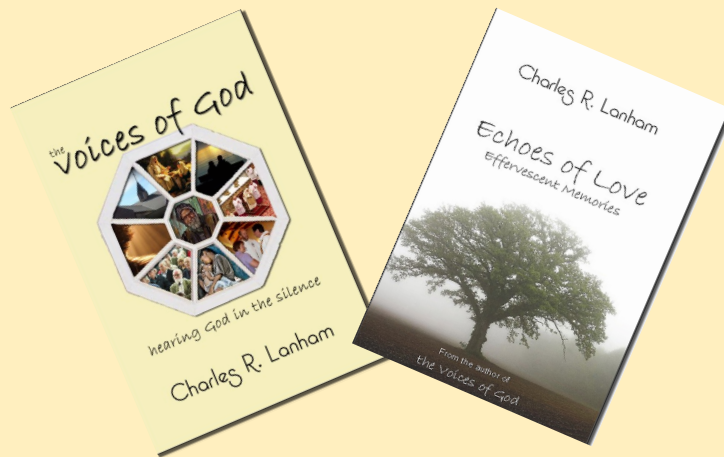
It is good that God became man and thus entered into human history. But all history is local, circumscribed by time and place. While God, the Father, Son, and Spirit exists outside of time, he is present then, now, and yet to come. We know that he is fully present with us now and forever, here and wherever we may go.

Amen.

Homily for the  
Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity (A)  
Exodus 34:4B-6, 8-9  
2 Corinthians 13:11-13  
John 3:16-18

1. Gregory Nazianzen, *Poem 1-3: PG 37, 397-411.*  
2. Philippians 2:3-11.





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