



A journal for restless minds

FRESH FAITH

Young hearts, yearning for God

THE WORD ENCOUNTERED

The Ways of Jesus

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.

Fresh Faith

Young hearts, yearning for God

There are moments which surprise us, moments which amaze us, moments which change us, moments which shatter our preconceived notions, rock-solid assumptions and long-held beliefs. Such moments may merit little notice, and yet, their tremors unsettle and disturb the rime which incarcerates the mind.

Cherished canons, when liberated in the moment, engender vulnerability and discomfort, challenging us to discard the certainty of what we thought we understood, to free the mind of stubborn conviction, to herald fresh whispered voices, so new and so alive.

Monuments must be built brick by brick; no tower approaches heaven on a single stone. Life must be met day by day, living each moment to the full;

monuments are built to stay the breezes which once blew soft sweet melodies. The wrinkled brow of regret and worry, the weathered face of pain and sorrow, the clouded eye of vanquished dreams, the muffled ear of silent screams: age and life creep inexorably forward, blinding us to fresh beginnings.



It is hard to acknowledge advancing age, to acquiesce to winter's death with stoic equanimity, to welcome with a gracious smile the youthful exuberance and vitality of

spring. Yet, the future belongs not to winter's child, for life has run full measure; the future belongs to unseasoned youth, fresh hope of spring, yet untested.

These aging hands have been blessed to hold young hands, yearning for God. These aging eyes have looked into young eyes filled with fresh, unsullied faith, hungering for the grace and love of God. This aging spirit rejoices when young spirits sing of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

The Word Encountered

The Ways of Jesus

We do not have to feel the drudgery and anguish of Job to sense sometimes that our lives are without point or passion.

While disaster and depression might be rare for us, ennui and a lack of focus are not. And they are enough to bring us low. The causes can be many, yet often enough it is just simply a “managerial” attitude toward our lives, a “maintenance” frame of mind, that makes our feelings and faith go flat. We seriously misunderstand our faith if we see it in terms of getting by and getting through. If that is what it is all about, it has to become a frightful bore.

Perhaps at times our young people catch this. They sense a tedium, a staleness about our religion and our practices. “*Mass is so boring,*” a young woman recently told me. Well, surely, she is not going to find much entertainment there—especially if you compare it to our fifty available channels and the razzmatazz of pop culture. And besides, why would one expect novelty and slickness from a sacred communal practice, the hallmarks of which are great tradition, universality, and stability of form?

Jesus not only transforms our se-

cluded moments, our intimacies, and our social compassion. He lives there.

But I also think my young friend is on to something. There is not much intensity or urgency in a community whose primary concerns are managing its relationship to God and maintaining its own existence. Is the church really about the powerful message of Christ, or is it just concerned with itself?



Saint Paul, on the other hand, seems positively driven to write and speak of Jesus and his revelation. “*An obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!*” So much does his faith mean to him that he is willing to be the slave of all, to be all things to all people in order to win them over. For Paul, the faith is definitely not a matter of small consequence.

We, in contrast, seem hounded by doubts. Is it really that big a deal that people believe in Jesus? Does it matter very much to us if our children drift away from a faith we say we love? Isn't one religion just as good as another?

And don't theologians themselves suggest that conversions, missions, and proselytism are passé, if not wrong-headed?

Well, if our faith is something that really does not make a very big difference, if it is actually not crucial that we or others believe, no wonder it seems boring to some of our young. Anything we don't care much about can't be very interesting.

The things we do care about, however, we inevitably talk about. As another, very wise, young person put it: “*If you love someone or something deeply enough, you want to tell others, you want to share it with others, you think they are missing something if they do not have it.*”

Paul's drivenness is as understandable as the lover's. Both turn almost desperately to declamation, poetry, or song.

If faith is real, it seeks expression. It will communicate and profess. It will have the energy of passion.

But faith cannot be real for us if it is not allowed into our real world. A Christ who is squeezed into a pew may feel cozy, but the relationship will soon tire and confine.

Could this be one of the reasons why the Gospel of Mark at the outset portrays our encounters with Christ over a broad range of life experiences?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

We first find Jesus leaving the synagogue to enter into the midst of human intimacies—friends, community, and family. He walks and abides with comrade-apostles and their in-laws. There he is found. He inhabits relationship.

Second, he is never far from pain and diminishment. Grasping the hand of Simon's mother-in-law, he helps her up as her fever abates. Other people with afflictions, obsessions, and interior injuries call out for his touch and he responds. This was not his major work, of course, but he seemed always to have time for the marginal and the outsider.

Third, he is found in the "lonely place." Mark notes here that the desert is where he finds solitude. At other times, it is on the mountain. But as it is with his appearance in relationships and the wounded of the world, he maintains this dimension of quiet and prayer as a hallmark of his life.

The ground of the real world—our solitude, our relationships, and our human solidarity—is the terrain from which Jesus sets out to proclaim the good news and visit the synagogues of Galilee.

Our practice of faith, our discipleship, cannot be otherwise. Jesus not only transforms our secluded moments, our intimacies, and our social compassion. He lives there.

And his presence is a matter of supreme importance. For in our human solitude we find not isolated brokenness—we discover a citadel of relationship to God. Our friends are not

diversions from a far-off deity; they give our life in God flesh and blood. The call of the wounded is not merely some problem to solve or avoid; it is an invitation to love's redemptive power.

The Eucharist re-enacts this truth. And without this truth or its expression, we would be, like Paul if he were not to preach Christ, quite desperate.

Amen.

Homily for the
The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
Job 7:1-4, 6-7
1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23
Mark 1:29-39

Full Transparency Alert!

This week's homily is not of my own making. None of the words are my own.

These are the words of the late Father John Kavanaugh, S.J., who was a professor of Philosophy at St. Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri; this homily was originally published by Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1966.

I was profoundly moved by what he had written and rather than attempt to include small bits and pieces in my own homily, have decided to leave you with his beautifully written thoughts in their entirety.

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

On Conscience
Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger
Ignatius Press
2007, 82 pages.

Society and Sanity
Frank Sheed
Sheed & Ward, New York
1953, 270 pages.

Strangers in a Strange Land
Charles J. Chaput
Henry Holt and Co.
February 21, 2017, 288 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

the glory of the Lord.

There was a moment, not long ago, which surprised, amazed, and changed the spirit within this aging soul. Asked to celebrate Adoration with the Young Adult Ministry, what surprised this aging spirit was the joy expressed by those young hearts who knelt in prayer before their God; what amazed was how many youthful hands met to offer praise in the night to their God:

"¹Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord! ²Lift up your hands to the holy place, and bless the Lord" (Psalms 134:1-2).

What amazed was the praise for the goodness of their God:

"¹Praise the Lord! Praise the name of the Lord, give praise, O servants of the Lord, ²you that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God! Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good, sing to his name, for he is gracious" (Psalms 135:1-2)!

What changed the spirit was the honest gratitude expressed for the opportunity to worship their Creator God. What changed the heart and mind was the awesome acclamation by so many youthful hearts in love with their God. It was a powerful testament to what the Apostle Paul so beautifully proclaimed:

"¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all

faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; ⁵it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. ⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; ¹⁰but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. ¹³So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:1-13).

My soul was remade young, my spirit renewed by the fresh faith so lovingly expressed, praising the One who made us all out of his abundant love.

Then, there came a moment when the spirit was sorely tested, a youthful body spent in agonizing pain so severe, yet grateful to her loving God for the gift of life now beating within her. Through the pain, she prayed, "[I] need to start thanking God more than I ask him of his help... I've said this a million times, but when something good actually does hap-

pen, I NEVER reach out to thank him. It's sad."

It is truly sad how common her sentiment can be found among us all. When we desire or need something we immediately look to God for help or answers, and yet, seldom do we bother to acknowledge or bend a knee in gratitude when he lovingly obliges our request.

There is something more that must be said, of young and old, and of our God. Those who, like myself, have lived more years than we care to remember, need to breathe in the fresh air of youth, to live in the nearness of youthful energy, to be cleansed in their vitality, their hopes, their faith, their dreams.

Looking out on the hundreds of young people, students from local Catholic schools, who had come together to celebrate their faith at the conclusion of Catholic Schools week, this old soul felt renewed. Sitting among the youthful throng, their ebullient faith, hope, and love surprised and amazed, but most of all, it changed preconceptions and assumptions of youth.

While the young have much to learn from those who have come before them, the path to learning is not a one-way street. Young or old, we ought never believe we know it all, never stop searching for greater knowledge, never accept what we know to be enough. Young or old, we can learn from each other, grow together, share faith, hope, and love with one another, and live and die for one another. God bless us, young and old.

The Pen/Pin Point

Nellie Ann Lanham, Jan. 17, 1985

There is nothing like getting a bunch of grown-up children together to learn what kind of pranks they did—and got away with—when they were still at home.

After several weeks of guests through the holidays and a wedding, I am firmly convinced that (1) we raised a bunch of monsters or (2) their antics have grown proportionately through the years that have passed since the antics took place.

Something else I learned—(1) that grandparents could never have been as mean as their own parents were; and (2) that as grandparents, we parents have suddenly matured and are no longer nearly as vicious as we once were (and this may very well be true—the viciousness just wears out after a lifetime of raising kids.)

I also learned that they did a lot of things I did not know about. They learned that I did know about a lot of things they didn't know I knew about. Sometimes it was just as well not to know too much.

What is also interesting is that often when the things that happened back then are told, they reveal that some of the good little children were not really as good as you thought—especially the good little children that you were inclined to hold up as examples—and maybe the real toughies sometimes were not as bad as it ap-

peared at the time. But you learn, if you didn't know it by this time, that in all likelihood, anything that anyone else's kids did, yours did too, and vice versa.

I hear things that surely are a little exaggerated—the brotherly fights described in gory detail that would make a heavyweight championship bout sound like a ladies' tea party—

—the hours spent crying in an upstairs room over a broken romance or damaged friendship—



—the way “I hated you” or “you hated me” when they were younger, especially as I watch them sit up until the wee hours nowadays, enjoying each other in the kind of friendship I always hoped they would have;

—the times “Mother and Dad always treated the rest better than they did me”—(it's amazing that with 11 children, each one of them has said the same thing at one time or another)—

—the felonies committed by Child A, who let Child B take the blame for all these years, finally admitting to being the criminal and Child B being able

to laugh about it—

I was reminded once, during the everlasting diapers, bottles, training panties, wet gloves and lost hats, too late hours and too little homework done on time—that someday they would grow up and we would find that we had acquired, instead of children whom we simply could not understand—friends.

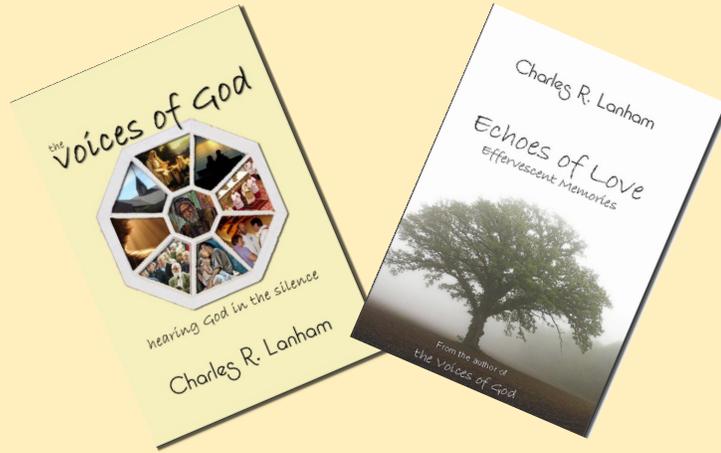
You young parents, with the everlasting diapers, bottles, training panties, etc., etc., it does happen—just hang in there.

Nellie Ann Lanham, my mother, in addition to being mother to eleven children, was an award-winning journalist, writer, and author. The Pen/Pin Point was a weekly op-ed published in the Monroe City News.

This was her final article, published on January 17, 1985. Both she and Robert (Bob) G. Lanham, my father, were killed in a tragic automobile accident the previous day, January 16, 1985. They died too soon; they died too young. At the time of their deaths, they were 59 and 58 years young.

All of what she wrote was and still remains true, especially of the abiding friendships of their children. We are the best of friends and we love one another dearly.

I have written of this before, but I believe it is worth repeating: somewhere, sometime over the passing years, our grief has passed us by, yet the missing never fades, it remains indelibly etched within our hearts. We ache for memories which shall never be, yet cherish memories of their love.



Books are available on **Amazon.com** or from the author's web site at:

deaconscorner.org

Deacon Chuck Lanham is an author, columnist, speaker, and a servant of God.

He is the author of **The Voices of God: Hearing God in the Silence**, **Echoes of Love: Effervescent Memories** and is currently writing his third book **Without God: Finding God in a Godless World**.

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

<http://deaconscorner.org>.

Deacon Chuck can be contacted thru email at

deacon.chuck@deaconscorner.org

Colloquī is a weekly publication of **Deacon's Corner Publishing**.

Copyright © 2016 by **Deacon's Corner Publishing**. All rights reserved.

Deacon's Corner Publishing

4742 Cougar Creek Trail

Reno, Nevada 89519