



A journal for restless minds

THE BEST OF DAYS

Where you go, I will go

RISING

If we have died with Christ

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 Best Of Days

Where you go, I will go

Why is prevailing prejudice of thought granted the presumption of wisdom? Why does never-ending progress obligate the collapse of virtue? Why must preferential bias countermand reality? Why has irrational invention disallowed objective truth? Why has debauched sacrilege replaced principled integrity? Why must maudlin mediocrity sully high aspiration? Why has desultory lust vanquished pro-creative passion? Why is the past no longer present? Why must now denigrate then?

The whys so overwhelm the mind, sanity and reason now fade into the gray mist of witless apathy, life entertained by the cold unfeeling numbness of nothing-

ness, and few remain to care for that which once was of a better nature.

These thoughts, mere meandering eddies, swirl and dance on woven tapestries in the mind of one for whom time and memory hold meaning beyond the currency of banal veniality. Yet, I dare not chance to tarry long, for such whys and wherefores matter little to the mar-

row of enduring love and steadfast devotion, such sentiment will beckon on the morrow, all well-answered with a kiss, warm affection, tender remembrance, and loving silence cadenced to hearts well-joined.



What love which knows no other; two hearts, two minds, two souls as God created, by love united, no longer two but one, shared thoughts and feelings more than circumstance.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Rising

If we have died with Christ

Light and Goodness. Let it be. Heavens and earth, day and night. Movements of moon and stars that would never have been, had they not been willed into existence. Water, sky, and earth. The great parade of natural kinds, nurtured by earth, fills the horizons. Waters teem and trees flower. Fertility. Multiplicity. Creeping creatures, urgent and easy, wild and gentle, small and great. God is the original environmentalist, the first cause of all our species, the eternal lover of diversity. Good. Yes.

Then the final good gift. *"God created them in God's own image; male and female God created them."* This final nature, a human one, would be given all else: as gift to nurture, name, and affirm. All is benefaction, and the human, made specially in the likeness of God, is empowered to know existence and pronounce it all good. All is benediction.

At least one might have thought so. But the creature with the power to name, with the freedom of "yes," said "no." It was a rejection of the great order and the great orders. There would be a resounding "no" to the goodness of limits. The tempter was a liar. They already had the tree of life as their shade and comfort. They would not die anyway. They were already like unto God. And yet, resistant to the very condition of their creaturehood they ate of the tree of limits. They wanted more than the power to name all the goods of the earth. They

wanted to name evil, to dictate right and wrong. They wanted to control all, even if it meant losing everything they were.

In exile, there was left to them either despair or faith in a journey back. But such a journey could be led only by one who knew the way, only by one who could be absolutely trusted, one wholly other than the namers who misnamed it all. Thus Abraham, against all hope, learned to place all hope in the promise that God made, to yield and obey at the core of his very being. Thus he became the ancestor of all faith, even in the face of total loss.



The return was rife with peril, traps set by alien powers. Our people were horrified by the odds. The sea of frenzied life seemed impassible. Yet steadfast Moses, armed with nothing more than the "other's" promise, split the very sea in two, offering passage. He became the ancestral leader of all journeys.

The return had its snares, captivities of every manner. Our forebears, like us, knew days and years of being lost and abandoned. Moved by our

affliction, the one who first pronounced us good consoles us in prophetic voice. *"With great tenderness I will take you back ... with enduring love I will pity you."* The covenants of Eden, of Noah, Abraham, and Moses will never be forgotten.

Something new is promised: a water, not of chaos, but of cleansing; a new food of unremitting nourishment; a mercy con-founding, lavish in forgiveness; love beyond the grasp of mere human imagination. *"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts."* God's very word will come to be the final "yes" of goodness.

But what of our sin, our resistance, our ritual of death and folly, the compulsive repetition of Eden's inhabitants? How might the wisdom of God penetrate our thickness? If our hearts would only turn, Baruch chides us, with the humility of the stars. If our minds might only surrender to the will that moves the earth. Yet we cling to other gods, their twisted principles and precepts.

Ezekiel, who saw our horrors and shame, indicted us but also promised that the covenant holds despite our deed. Unfaithful, we stay cherished. Besotted, we will be purified. Hard, cold, and lost at sea, we heard Ezekiel's rumor of our ransom. Could we chance a hope for some new spirit, for hearts no longer made of stone, for a homeland?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Who would have guessed that our home might be a person? Who would have dreamed that the passage through the sea was just that: going into the water, even under, but with someone who, like a sleek, glorious dolphin of grace, would bear us on his back?

Jesus entered the deeps of death, a plunge he need not have made, had he not loved us in our sorry state. But he went to death with a "yes," with the utter trust of Abraham, the constancy of Moses, the bright reliance of Isaiah. In Easter's vigil, we plunge with him: "Are you not aware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Being like him through likeness to his death, so shall we be through a like resurrection."

The risen crucified one sounds again God's original "yes" to us now, even in our sin, even in the death which sin brought on us. Allowing us to be like and in him since he became so fully like unto us, he carries us, as one of his own, to safe land.

"If we have died with Christ, we believe that we are also to live with him. His death was death to sin, once for all; his life is life for God."

Homily for the
Easter Sunday (B)
Acts 10:34a, 37-43
Colossians 3:1-4 or
1 Corinthians 5:6b-8
John 20:1-9 or
Matthew 28:1-10 or
Luke 24:13-35

This week's homily is by the late
Father John Kavanaugh, SJ.



Have a
Glorious
Resurrection
Sunday!

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

How do you account the moments, each and every blessed moment: best and worst, good and bad, all the joys and sorrows, every gain, every loss? Of all the days, what counts are the memories. Each day is numbered—and there have been 18,235 of them. God willing, there will be more, yet unnumbered, to be lived and loved.

What grates, what so confounds the soul with irksome consternation, is the willful and absurd sophistry, so stridently contended in fashionable circles—by those who would be called fashionable—proffered concerning the unreasonable restrictions imposed by *“the laws of nature and of nature’s God.”* To hear it told, nature is what man wills to make of it; all are but malleable objects subject to the vacant whimsy of post-modern fashioned elite. Obviousness of purpose is of no avail to those who would rather alter, deny or abolish the laws of nature. Certainly, they admit no providence from the hand of God; such admission would deny them self-satisfaction.

Wishing a thing makes fiction fact; public utterance brooks no argument to reality. Woe to those who dare object to such mendacious folly, for such is the game which denies reality. And, they are masters of it, rolling loaded dice topped with disingenuity, distortions and fabrications, full of pure, unadulterated poppycock.

Their genius lies in convincing a square block that it is in truth a round ball; or in similar fashion: asserting, without hesitation and with every ounce of subjective conviction they can

possibly muster, that a circle has four equal straight sides and four right angles.

It takes no genius, no effete affection to recommend, that among the vast multitudes of human beings, there has never—not once since the first—been but two genders: male and female. Both distinctly human, yet, genetically and biologically complementary to the other. There are, have always been, and always will be only two; no amount of tinkering or wishful thinking will add or subtract from the reality of this duality of purpose.

Procreation is the most necessary purpose in life; to maintain and sustain the species, for creation, there *must* be intercourse between a male and a female. Obvious differences in plumbing necessarily precludes same-gender procreative intercourse—a bolt cannot be fastened to another bolt nor a nut to another nut. All living creatures are inherently bound by natural law in this regard; no power on earth is capable of abolishing, abrogating, or altering God’s design, any more than one can choose to make a circle square.

The procreative union of male and female is a sacred act, ordained by God, the Creator. God, in his infinite wisdom, designed us as a matched pair, perfectly suited for the purpose of cooperating in the creation of new life. *“Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh”* (Genesis 3:16).

Man and woman were made by Love out of love to love and to be loved. From the beginning, their union was

intended to be a match made in heaven to be lived on this earth.

Marriage is a gift from God, a sacred life-giving union of mutual life-long selfless, self-giving love. The consequential conjugal union which consummates a marriage is the highest form of self-giving love which can be expressed between a man and a woman.

Yet some will say, God’s love demands too much. His love is unconditional, boundless and infinite; human love is conditional, circumscribed and finite. Or so goes the argument.

But what of love? Love, it is now said, is but a fleeting feeling, a base emotional response, a mere momentary pleasantry requiring only one’s self to fully satisfy; others are but optional accessories. To love is to like; it has become an action verb: *“to love”* is to *“make love,”* to engage in gender unspecified sexual interplay, a determining factor as to whether one *“likes”* another. *“Love”* has been rebranded, available now as a cheap commodity, an impulse purchase, strategically placed for quick and easy checkout.

Cheap love requires nothing, owes nothing, commits nothing, holds nothing sacred or profound. Deep, abiding, selfless commitment is casually dismissed, no longer a necessary obstacle to wanton immorality and hedonistic pleasure. Life-long monogamous relationships are seen as hinderances to base desires. Marriage and procreation are but relics of an unpleasant past; values and morality, which have long

kept the species from descending into unfeeling animal savagery have come under the purview of the tribe, the group, the minority, and the individual.

No longer must God's laws be considered relevant, for such laws too readily admit to our fallen nature, our concupiscence, our tendency to break his covenant with us. Our brokenness demands judgment, penance, forgiveness and mercy. But, above all else, it requires recognition and admission of our faults and failures, and that proves impossible for those who know or admit no guilt of wrongdoing.

All this is deeply distressing for this I know to be true: love holds no relation to lust. Love, true love, *requires* a God who is Love. Because he loves, we are made to love likewise. Such love is neither transitory nor can it be purchased cheaply, it belongs to those who will to give all they have with neither want nor expectation of return. Love is a gift. It must be given solely for the benefit of another. Expecting or demanding recompense denies love its essence.

I wrote of this in the Preface to *Echoes of Love*, and I firmly believe it to be ever true:

"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

*As someone who has known such love I am always fascinated to find others who have loved as long as or longer than I, especially those who have been soulmates for fifty, sixty, even seventy years or more. What secret do they possess to explain such longevity?"*¹

There is no secret to explain such longevity. All it takes is a willingness and a desire of two souls to love the other more than life itself, to live in mutual self-sacrificing, unconditional love for the other.

God's love is *agápē* love: selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. God's *agápē* love is immeasurable, incomparable, ongoing, outgoing for all his creatures made in his image and likeness. *"Agápē love is unmotivated in the sense that it is not contingent on any value or worth in the object of love. It is spontaneous and heedless, for it does not determine beforehand whether love will be effective or appropriate in any particular case."*²

Whenever I counsel engaged couples, I speak of the fifty-years I have had the good fortune of spending with my forever love. Fifty years has not been time enough to love her enough; there will never be time enough in this life to prove my love.

As much as I love her, I have never discovered why I have been the steadfast object of her love and affection for close to half-century, five-sevenths of our lives. A decade ago, a sister of mine asked how long we had been married. When told we were approaching our

fortieth anniversary, she looked at Janet, shook her head and told her: *"Oh! You are a saint!"* Knowing the truth of it, I could but nod my head in agreement.

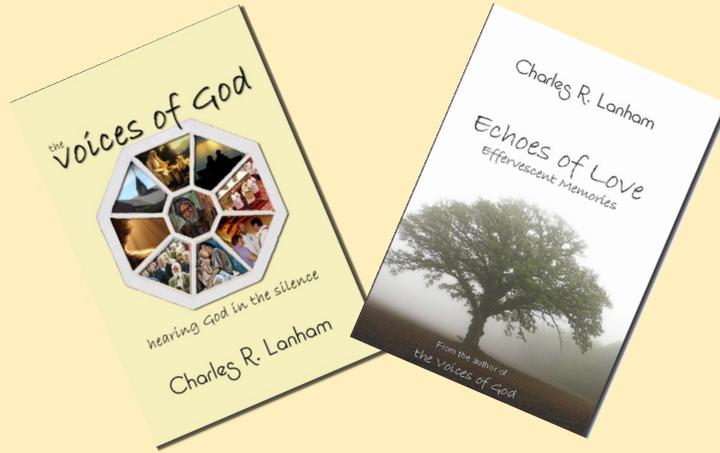
What I know of our marriage is this: it has had its good times, its not so good times, more joys than sorrows, more ups than downs, more than its share of disagreements, arguments, trials and tribulations. What it has not had are too few and inconsequential to mention. Together, with God's help, we brought two beautiful lives into this world: two daughters, Cherie Jean and Charlene Jene'. In turn, they have given us five grandchildren whom we love beyond measure.

Our love has grown throughout the years although I suppose *"grown"* is inappropriate for that would imply a transitory love, varying in size and intensity. Perhaps what I am wont to say of our love cannot be well expressed, only known over a lifetime. What I can say of it is that such love demands constant effort, honesty, dedication, devotion, trust, admiration, humility, submission, unselfishness, mercy, forgiveness, loyalty, support, laughter, tenderness, kindness, acceptance, self-sacrifice, and loss of self to the other. Passion is fleeting, youth fades to gray, things change in passing, all is vanity.

What of love? *"So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love"* (1 Cor 13:13). Thank you, my love, for fifty years of your love. Your love sustains me and makes me whole.

1. Charles R. Lanham, *Echoes of Love*, 2014.

2. Anders Nygren.



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.

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

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