

Colloquī

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A journal for restless minds

The Sin Of Indifference

Love never hates, truth never lies

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 Sin Of Indifference

Love never hates, truth never lies

This issue marks the beginning of a new year for Colloquī; the fourth year should one be the least interested. Three years, fifty-two issues each year, one-hundred and fifty-six issues in all, so far; each issue between 3,000 and 10,000 words, give or take a few thousand. And prior to that first issue (Vol. 01 No. 01, June 2, 2016) there were 235 weekly bulletin articles under the banner of Deacon's Corner; generally between 500-550 words. Any way you slice them apples, that is a pas-sel and a packed peck of words. It is, I suppose, a good thing I enjoy placing one word before another in what I sincerely trust to be a bit of cogent tease, although, I am certain there are some who wish I would write less or shut up.

Whether that be true or not, two

thoughts come to mind. First, with few, rare exceptions, dissent has been eerily absent which is strange these days of absurd presumption; it makes me wonder when the cruel fickle finger of fate might waggle as if to say enough is enough.

I have no sapient thought as to why this might be so but I cannot help but wonder at times whether anyone is really listening; like the lyrics from that song Chicago asks, "Does anybody really know what time it is? Does anybody really care?" To be sure, I have heard from far more who agree with what I put to paper and I sincerely appreciate their support and encouragement.



Although, like most of us, negative comment and diatribe are never sought nor desired, reasoned argument—critique that bears a different stamp—warrants welcome to

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any conversation, for one might in the silence infer no dissenting views or come to esteem too highly one's own ruminations.

Second, I am reminded of an aphorism which has come now too late in life—not that, in my seniority it is no longer useful or bears no meaning, quite the contrary, but my youth would have enjoyed far more peace and happiness had I known it earlier than at this age, now so advanced—and the truth is plainly this: "What other people think of me is none of my business."

The truth is, what others may think of me is about them, not me. Their thoughts are their business not mine; it is far more important to think well of myself—though not too highly. No one can please everyone, no one. If what others think of you becomes your business, it will soon enough suck the energy from your life and drain what little joy from your soul.

To live is risky business; there is no risk in death, no chance to change your mind, no sudden change of heart. What others think matters not to the dead, why should it matter then to the living? Perhaps it is the risks too many are so desperate to avoid: the risk of judgment, of offending others, of being disliked, of losing faith, of being vulnerable or found wanting of piddling courage. But, then, that is the inevitable outcome when what others think worries your good nature.

Though, what other people think of me is truly none of my business, that does not absolve me from justifica-

ble condemnation. To behave badly, to inflict injury or harm to another, to condone or support evil, to sin against Nature and Nature's God, all rightly deserve exorcism and punishment.

Before I proceed further I would direct your attention to the lower-left column on the front page of this issue. As with every issue, it is always the aim to provide serious content with the express purpose of encouraging serious discussion and reasoned debate. This, I hope I have done, though the paucity of opposing views is a bit concerning. I realize that Colloqui is not everyone's cup of tea; I sincerely wish it enjoyed a wider readership, and yet, it is enough.

Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to him who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says:

'You shall indeed hear but never understand,
and you shall indeed see but never perceive.
For this people's heart has grown dull,
and their ears are heavy of hearing,
and their eyes they have closed,
lest they should perceive with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their heart,
and turn for me to heal them.'

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

"Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it (Matthew 13:10-17).

Christianity is never easy. Perhaps that is why so many choose the easier path, the worldly road. Even the apostles were not immune.

And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:40-41).

The times are unsettling and evil is present far, far more than ever before, it surrounds us in no small way. Saint John Paul II, in his last book, *Memory and Identity*, reflected on the power of evil, specifically as was experienced throughout the twentieth century.

The evil... was not a small-scale evil. ... It was an evil of gigantic proportions, an evil which availed itself of state structures in order to accomplish its wicked work, an evil built up into a system.²

Before me, is a quote from Saint Maximilian Kolbe, whose memorial we celebrate on August 14th. They are powerful words, words meant to remind us that true love requires sacrifice and self-giving.

Let us remember that love lives through sacrifice and is nourished by giving. Without sacrifice, there is no love.

I see these words before me and I pray. They sustain me whenever I forget or am faced with some difficulty I

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would rather wish away.

No one ever wants to sacrifice, to surrender something of one's self or possessions for another or for God. And yet, as Saint Francis of Assisi tells us, "it is in giving that we receive," which is much the same as what Jesus taught.

... give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back (Lk 6:38).

Current cultural norms call into question any notion of sacrifice, especially self-sacrifice. To act against one's self-interest is antithetical to the ideology of self, to the religion of "Me". We have become so self-absorbed we no longer look outside ourselves. We have no need for others or for God: our self-perfection precludes the stain of original sin or sin of any kind; we are god divine without equal and thus have no other gods before "Me".

Cultural gods worship themselves. Their world spins around them as though they are at the center. They believe what they believe without question; they know what they know from sound bites and tweets, not from serious study and honest research, not by using their minds to reason, to think, and to come to know the truth. They live in fear that their reality might be proven false if and when they come to know the objective truth, not their subjective truth.

Padre Pio, that sainted priest, once said:

The harm that comes to souls from the lack of reading holy books make me shudder ... What power spiritual reading has to lead to a change of course, and to make even worldly people enter into the way of perfection.

We have lost it. We have lost the ability—even more, the desire—to discern what is true and what is false, especially when it appears not to our benefit to know the truth. The more we take benefit from lies, the closer we come to the gates of hell, and the devil knows it. In the Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis imagines a conversation spread over a number of letters between Uncle Screwtape, "the devil", and his nephew Wormwood. Here is one of those letters.

My dear wormwood,

Be sure that the patient remains completely fixated on politics. Arguments, political gossip, and obsessing on the faults of people they have never met serves as an excellent distraction from advancing in personal virtue, character, and the things the patient can control. Make sure to keep the patient in a constant state of angst, frustration, and general disdain towards the rest of the human race in order to avoid any kind of charity or inner peace from further developing. Ensure the patient continues to believe that the problem is "out there" in the "broken system" rather than recognizing there is a problem with himself.

Keep up the good work,
Uncle Screwtape.

We have lost our sense of priority. We no longer know what should come first. What is truly amazing is that in losing our understanding of what is most important, we believe—falsely—

that we have come to know it. We have come to believe that Christianity is easy, that God is but he is not, that faith is whatever we choose to believe or not, that there is no heaven and thus there is no hell, that the Church is out of date and thus best left out of mind, that as Catholics we can pick and choose what Catholics must follow or not from a smorgasbord of doctrine and dogma; religion is entirely what we make of it. There is a terrible sin afflicting the human race, far worse than original sin. It is the sin of indifference. We simply no longer care.

Not all, but far too many Catholics are simply Catholics In Name Only (CINO) but in spite of their claim to be Catholic, the truth is, they are not; they are living an illusion. As Archbishop Charles Chaput puts it:

The time for easy Christianity is over. In fact, it never really existed. We're blessed to be rid of the illusion. We need to be more zealous in our faith, not more discreet; clearer in our convictions, not muddier and *more* Catholic, not less.

He also states with uncanny clarity what should be obvious to everyone who would claim to be Catholic: "If they don't believe what the church teaches, they're not really Catholic." No doubt, the plagues of sexual abuse and homosexuality perpetrated by some priests have brought grave scandal upon the Catholic Church. But, and this is meant in no way to diminish or minimize the gravity of such depravity among those who would be called men of God, and yet, there is another scandal which has received

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little or no attention.

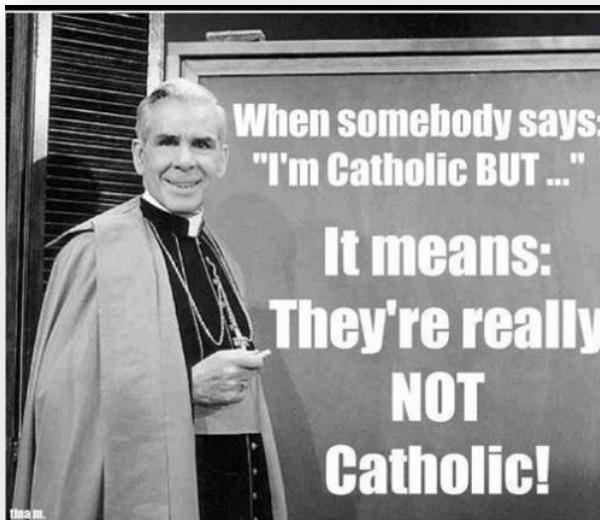
This is the greater scandal, the scandal caused by public figures who claim to be Catholic while denying obedience to the Church and her teachings. The scandal is exacerbated by Church leaders who are unwilling to condemn their heresy, who refuse to demand those promoting and professing error contrary to the teaching of the Magisterium and the Catholic Church to either repent and renounce their heresy or cease claiming to be Catholic. Leaders who hide behind the strict cloak of Canon Law must come to realize that doing little or nothing only allows the scandal to continue, to grow and to fester.

Catholics, faithful Catholics, have long grown tired of the evasion and the excuses, they want to know that their faith is not subject to the whim and fancy of whomever has the most public voice. They hunger for a voice of reason, they thirst for "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord'" (Jn 1:23). They have grown weary of the unknowing, tired of the silence and the obfuscation of clerics whose energy is expended on entertainment and novelty rather than guiding the faithful to an ever-increasing knowing of what God desires of us. They are hungry to know what is necessary for salvation, what the gospel tells us, and what the Church teaches and has always and everywhere taught. They want to know what it will take to walk the straight and narrow path. They want to learn to know God. They long

for the Truth.

A young couple, newly married, heard these words from the presider—who happened to be yours truly:

You might say that I have always been partial to weddings. As the proud father of two exceptionally brilliant, beautiful, and talented daughters—and naturally I am totally and completely without bias when I speak of them—I have had the wonderful privilege and the distinct honor to give their hands, their hearts, their bodies, and their souls over to become one in heart, mind, body, and soul with another in the blessed and holy Sacrament of Matrimony.



I have come to know you both over the past few months as we have met and spoken of this moment, of your dreams and hopes for the life you will now begin to share, and of all that God has in store for you. It has been a wonderful gift to have become acquainted with the two of you, to learn more about you, and to walk with you, if only for an hour or so, as you begin to fulfill the promise of a lifelong journey together.

In a few minutes you will state your intentions and voice your mutual self-giving love to and for one an-

other. The sad truth is that we live today in a culture and a society that finds all too little value or merit for the virtues of commitment, fidelity, and mutual self-giving love. Without God in our lives, marriage is no longer seen as a life-long sacramental union of two kindred spirits but a legal fiction, nothing more than a contract between two consenting adults, which can be broken or dissolved whenever it is deemed convenient.

Ours is a society that increasingly bows to the false and self-serving ideology that has reduced love to lust, replaced morality with feelings, made the sublime mundane, and exchanged intimacy for passion. Relationships have become nothing more than physically noisy affairs, filled with lots of perspiration and passion. Without thought or understanding as to its true purpose we are taught to act upon our impulses, merely for the momentary pleasure gained.

Your love must reach for far greater heights than mere passion for it to survive and it must be nourished and sustained for it to endure. You must provide real food to feed your love, for perspiration and passion will never satisfy. True love will feed the soul; selfless, self-giving, forever love will sustain you.

I believe that you do understand this because when we met we spoke of it but I would be remiss if I did not remind you of it once again. God made us, male and female in his image and likeness and he commanded us to come together, united as one and in that unity to be fruitful and multiply. God instilled deep within our hearts the need and the desire to love as he loves us, without condition, without pause, never ending. By that love and through the selfless life-giving procreative act he gave us the means to

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generate new life, to bring children, created through in the image and likeness of God, into this world.

During one of our meetings we spoke of what will be required of you for your marriage to last: I said that you must first like one another, respect one another, be proud of one another, encourage one another to reach for the stars. You must come to know the soul and not the body that attracts, for the beauty of the body fades over time but the soul will always be the light of love.

Remember those things that attracted you to each other and hold onto to those when times get tough—and believe me there will be tough days ahead. We have spoken of this before. Only God knows what lies in store for you, the good times and the bad, and the challenges you will face. Know that he will never leave you even if you choose to leave him. When times are dark, go to him and he will lift you up and carry you into the light.

Speaking for myself, I have always been proud of my wife who I know is much smarter than I and far more capable. She is simply irreplaceable to me. You have to feel that way about each other. In a very real sense when you marry, you lose yourself and become one body, one spirit. Just as parts of your bodies are irreplaceable, so must you be to each other. Take care of that which is irreplaceable and your love will be well-fed and complete.

You will find that as the years roll by your love for one another will change. It is both inevitable and true. You will find it less necessary to speak, to touch, and to look for moments to connect emotionally or physically and yet you will discover that your love for one another has become ever more intimate.

If ever you are in doubt about your love for one another, remind yourselves of Saint Paul's poetic verse

on love (1 Cor 13:4-8). Keep it close and reread it often to remind you of what love is and what it must remain:

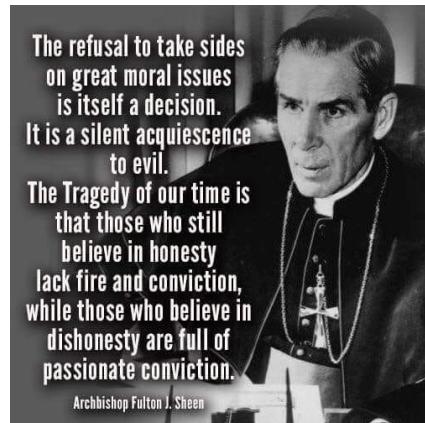
*Love is patient, love is kind.
It is not jealous, is not pompous,
it is not inflated, it is not rude,
it does not seek its own interests,
it is not quick-tempered,
it does not brood over injury,
but rejoices with the truth.*

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

Love never fails."

Love never hates, truth never lies. Such should be obvious. Tragically, far too many no longer know the difference. Those who hate do not hesitate to call anyone who disagrees "hater". Words no longer mean what they should, they have been weaponized.

What Paul writes of love has been thoroughly and completely negated. Love is impatient. Love is unkind. Love is jealousy, pomposity, inflated egos, self-centered, crude and rude. It damns reality and truth. It bears nothing, believes nothing, hopes for nothing and endures nothing. Love is a fantasy, a pornographic illusion. Love will always fail.



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

Salvation

Michael Patrick Barber

Ignatius Press

2019, 189 pages.

Faith and Politics

Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI)

Ignatius Press

2018, 269 pages.

Catholicism & Modernity

James Hitchcock

The Seabury Press

1979, 250 pages.

PERIODICALS

First Things

www.firstthings.com

Touchstone

www.touchstonemag.com

Catholic Answers Magazine

www.catholic.com

Chronicles

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The National Catholic Register

www.ncregister.com

Our Sunday Visitor

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ONLINE

Crisis Magazine

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The Imaginative Conservative

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Catholic Exchange

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Intellectual Takeout

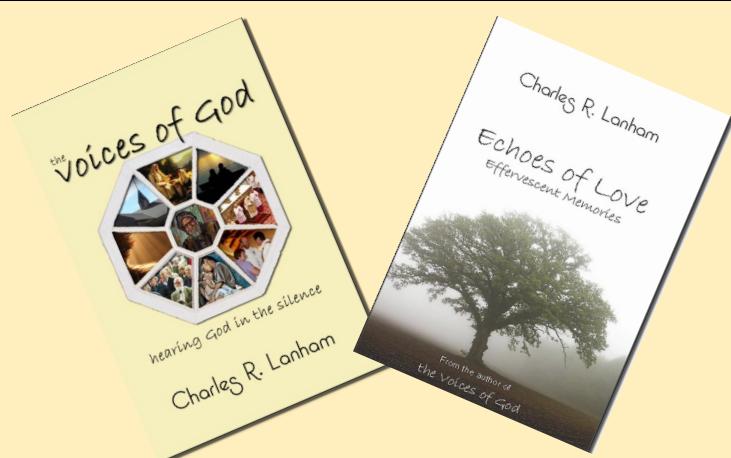
www.intellectualltakeout.org

Life News

www.lifenews.com

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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

<http://deaconscorner.org>.

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