



century. Boredom slays more of existence than war." How dreadfully sad is the truth in that.

In the introduction to *Socrates' Children*, Catholic philosopher Peter Kreeft writes "Love is a passion. Without blood from the heart, the brain does not work well. Without the will to understand, we do not understand." He dares the reader to "come up the hill and meet Plato. Fall in love with him. Struggle, be puzzled, get angry, fight your way out of the Cave." For philosophy—the love of wisdom—Kreeft contends, is not "dry and boring," it is "drama". For those philosophically averse, Plato's "Cave" is an allegory, more commonly known as "The Myth of the Cave", meant to explain our willing blindness to the truth. I spoke of this not long ago when the Gospel (Mk 10:46-52) was of the blind man, Bartimaeus.

Blindness comes in many forms, but seldom do we recognize any but the physical inability to see through the eyes in our head. Those who are physically blind, whether from birth or later in life, learn to adapt to their inability to see. They learn to see by sharper hearing, more sensitive touch, even a more delicate nose.

There is another blindness—spiritual blindness—which is borne out of hatred, ignorance, jealousy, greed, lust, selfishness, ego and sinful desires; such loss of spiritual sight dulls the senses and leaves the soul unable to see the good.

What we see through our eyes is always colored by our past, skewed by what we believe we know, altered by what we do not understand, and often "seen indistinctly, as in a mirror" (1 Cor 13:12). Even

when we are confronted by the truth we often refuse to alter our perceptions because as Mark Twain once quipped, "Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't."

In "The Myth of the Cave", the Greek philosopher, Plato, weaves a story where all of humanity lives their lives chained within a darkened cave, with nothing but shadows and illusions flickering upon a wall to define their reality. One man escapes his bonds, travels beyond the darkness of the cave, and looks upon the sun and sees the world as it truly is. When he returns and tells the others what he has seen and experienced they refuse to believe it. His truth must be mere fantasy, an illusion, the ravings of a madman, and he is summarily dismissed. How often do we dismiss or deny that which conflicts with our own perception of reality?

Yogi Berra, infamous for his malapropisms, once quipped "Sometimes you can see a whole lot of things just by looking." Sadly, most of us find ourselves doing a whole lot of looking without really seeing. The truth is there is more to seeing than having good eyesight—for too often do we find ourselves failing to see what is either directly in front of us or in plain sight. No doubt we have all experienced such moments.

This malady—which affects not only the eyes but the ears as well—is part and parcel of the human condition. The Lord God has been telling us so for a very, very long time. According to Jeremiah who lived six centuries before Christ, the Lord told him to say to his people: "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not" (Jeremiah 5:21).

The sixteenth-century English writer, John Heywood, subsequently borrowed from this passage when

he coined the proverb "There are none so blind as those who will not see." It is as true today as it was then, we delude ourselves into seeing only what we want to see and hearing only what we want to hear. Failure or refusal to see God in the countless works of His creation is definitely the worst kind of blindness. It is often and rightly said that a blind man may still have the possibility of seeing, but a man with good eyes but refuses to see surely cannot see.

There are, it seems to me, some rather humorous parts to this gospel. Imagine, this blind beggar asking Jesus for pity. Does Jesus do the logical thing and go over to the one who cannot see? No, he simply stops and waits for the blind man to find his way to him. And then he asks the "blind" man "What do you want me to do for you?" Well, duh! He's blind! What do you think he wants? Cheesecake?

But then, Bartimaeus obviously doesn't see the humor in this, does he? Notice that he does not say to Jesus, "I want my sight," but rather "I want to see," and between the two responses there is a marked difference.

Wanting to see is wanting to know the true nature of reality, hidden in some way from a person when he is blind. Seeing isn't limited to seeing the blue of the sky or the road to home. It is also a matter of seeing reality, the truth about things, or even of seeing the Truth, our Creator God.

The story of Bartimaeus is the story of each of us. God created us to be His sons and daughters made in His image. But because of our sins, many of us are living as sons and daughters of dishonor and shame. It is our sins of pride and egoism that usually make us blind. We are blind to the Truth because we are

consumed by the pursuit of worldly goods and our selfish ambitions.

**W**e fail to see and appreciate the many blessings we have because we want and crave for more. We have voracious appetites for material things and our thirst for power and praise is unquenchable. We refuse to see the goodness and gift-ness of others because, in our pride and arrogance, we think we are the best, the first and the greatest. We choose to ignore our own sins and weaknesses because we have become inured of our own hypocrisy and lies. We cannot see because we believe the world revolves around us. We live in complete darkness because of our pride and selfishness.

Too many of us have for a long time been living in dishonor and shame due to pride, selfishness and arrogance. Now is the time for us to throw aside our cloaks of false comforts and delusions, rise up and stand with honor and dignity, and come to Jesus; and let this prayer be ours today: "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me. I want to see!"<sup>2</sup>

Though far removed in time and place, the ancient Greek philosopher, Thales of Miletus (624-546 B.C.), when asked what is most difficult, replied "To know oneself" and when asked what is easiest, he replied, "to give advice to others." Suddenly, it seems not so far removed.

Philosophers, much like any professional enterprise, employ and enjoy their own language, which is yet another reason why so many say they find it "dry and boring." In a footnote to the aforementioned book, Kreeft admits to the necessity to understand the words used by philosophers but challenges the reader:

I will not further define "monotheism," "polytheism," "anthropomorphism," "monism," "pantheism," or "transcendence." Look them up! Always have a dictionary nearby when you read good books. Expanding your vocabulary is a simple and powerful way to expand not just your knowledge but your mind. For minds are only as big as their ideas, and ideas live only in idea-houses, which are words.<sup>3</sup>

I will grant you, the language of philosophy may at first seem quite intimidating and difficult to comprehend. And yet, the same could be said for all beginnings.

A child first learning to stand and take that first step on two feet connected to wobbly legs and weak knees no doubt finds it uncomfortably awkward and intimidating. Should the child then be encouraged to continue crawling, thus, by maintaining a lower center of gravity and playing it safe reduce the risk of injury? After all, there must be good reasons why we were born with four limbs if it were not for crawling.

**L**ater, children are fraudulently conned into mastering their ABCs, the rudiments of language. But should that be the sum of it, especially when they find it difficult to make sense of the purpose of those strange incomprehensible symbols that seem to have been drawn by a creature quite beneath their elevation, a two-year-old with crayons? Why learn the alphabet when pictures are worth a thousand crazy cryptic scribbles? Would it not be the better part to stop before the child figures out the tortured cruelty of learning how to ...

read?

**B**ut no, children must learn to read; it is in their parents' best interest. But learning to read only goes so far and then it goes no further. Suddenly, the child in all of us admits to knowing just enough to get by—fit inside a box of Rice Krispies to snap, tweet, text, or post—and then we stop; it is easier on the brain to think less and leave the exoteric thinking to someone, anyone with a brain for it! Children are taught what, when, and how, but, never why; they are told what to think, not to question. Once upon a time, curiosity killed the cat, today, the cat kills curiosity out of revenge. We have forgotten that the purpose of education is to encourage curiosity and wonder, not to fill the mind with "just the facts."

Modern culture places greater emphasis and importance on the sciences: winning the space race, mastering technological challenges, artificial intelligence, advanced medical research, robotics and engineering. No one asks the question "Why?" because they "think" they know the answer: money, prestige and power. The humanities promise nothing more than "wisdom." Science "improves" on the past while the humanities are proved by the past.

The sciences progress almost automatically; the humanities do not. Philosophy is one of the humanities, not one of the sciences.

Our ancestors made mistakes, just as we do, but different ones. Theirs are now usually obvious to us; our own are not, and therefore much more harmful. They are the glasses through which we look rather than the things we look at. "To see

ourselves as others see us" is to broaden our mind. We wonder how we will appear to our remote descendants, but we cannot know. We cannot read the books that haven't been written yet. But we can know how we would look to our remote ancestors. For we can read their books.

The only alternative to listening to the many who have already spoken, and died, is listening to the few who are now alive and speaking: ourselves. The first, often called "tradition," is more democratic. It is what Chesterton called "the democracy of the dead": extending the vote to those who otherwise would be disqualified not by accident of birth but by accident of death.

A scientist studies the history of science as a series of instructive errors and gradual progress to enlightenment. And this is right, in science, because in science the past really is inferior to the present, and has been proved to be that. But it is not right to do this in philosophy because philosophy is not science, and past philosophers have not been proved to be inferior to present ones. Here is a proof of that fact—or, rather, of the fact that at least unconsciously *we believe that* they were wiser than we are, and not vice versa: We do not speak of "modern wisdom" but of "ancient wisdom." The noun we spontaneously connect with "modern" is not "wisdom" but "knowledge." Knowledge is incremental, like a stairway: it naturally progresses. Wisdom is not. And philosophy is the search for wisdom.<sup>4</sup>

We have lost our focus or, rather, we have lost our minds, and like Bo Peep, we have no idea where to find them. Why? Because we simply do not care to make the effort to search for them! We are convinced that if we leave them alone they will come crawl-

ing back to their cranial home and of a sudden be full of wisdom. But there is more to the rhyme, somewhat less familiar:

*Little Bo peep fell fast asleep  
And dreamt she heard them bleating,  
But when she awoke, she found it a joke,  
for they were all still fleeting.*

**E**schewing philosophy may be and is most often a leading cause of chronic CI (*Caput Inanis*: Empty Head) psychosis. It is believed to be noncontagious though the rapid rate of onset may indicate a contraindication worthy of further study. Common indications are long-term ever-increasing bouts of carelessness and irresponsibility along with unwarranted smugness and know-it-all-ness. In many cases, obliviousness and stubborn blindness to truth and reality are also presented. Intelligence and degrees of higher education are believed may also be contributing factors. Romance novels, comic books and fashion magazines are not recommended and should be avoided; frequent and regular consumption may result in increased occurrences of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Television, game consoles and social media are not advised as they have been shown to be highly addictive and prone to substance abuse. The only known cure is to read good books with a dictionary at-the-ready.

A philosopher who lived around the same time as Socrates was Democritus. His cosmology, of all the Greek philosophers, is generally considered to come "the closest to that of modern science, for he gave us the first developed version of the atomic theory." The Greeks in his day (450-370

B.C.) showed great curiosity about the material world and were interested in technology, producing such things as voting machines and lottery machines for random jury selection. "These afforded workable models or analogies to the universe as a very large machine." Do not look behind the curtain for you might find something interesting and worth knowing.

*There once was a man, Democritus,  
who lived to one-hundred and nine.  
He traveled to Athens,  
but out of envy and pride,  
ignored that fellow,  
his rival philosopher, Socrates,  
then famous and living nearby.  
He is known to have said,  
as status envy filled his head,  
"I came to Athens and no one knew me."*

A perfectly awful limerick I will admit but the truth: status envy is common among intellectuals. As Kreeft notes: "He is the only philosopher whose books Plato not only never mentions but even wanted to burn (literally!—but there were too many in circulation), apparently because he was a materialist, with no place in his theory of reality for mind or spirit, nor for values, morality, or choice. He said, "**everything happens of necessity**" because there is nothing but matter." Remember, "philosophy is not science, and past philosophers have not been proved to be inferior to present ones," but neither have they been proven superior or always true. That does not mean they should be forgotten or simply dismissed. For the purpose of philosophy is not to build a better, more efficient mousetrap but to question why the mouse, knowing it is a trap, continues trying to nab the cheese.

**W**hile Democritus' materialistic theory has significant flaws—I will mention two, but there are many more—it should not be rejected wholly and entirely outright.

According to Democritus, the only things that are real are tiny, invisible atoms. ("Atom" meaning "uncuttable" or "unsplittable." "Of course, in modern physics atoms are not only splittable but very complex.... But this is a mistake in physics, not philosophy, and corrected by physics, not philosophy." And then:

The theory may explain the universe but it does not explain itself. The theory of atomism is a *theory*. The theory exists; atomists *do think*. How can a theory *about* atoms *be*, or be made of, merely some of those atoms? Theories are made of ideas, not atoms. *Brains* are made of atoms. Theories of brains are not brains.... Knowledge is about something other than itself. The knowledge of the whole material universe must be something more than the whole material universe.

Why, then, read Democritus? Why philosophically, not literally, follow Plato's lead and burn his books? Because, and this is precisely the point, philosophy searches for "atoms" of truth that are to be found in all the *wrong* answers. It is in discerning what flaws and fallacies are contained within a philosophy that we learn what should wisely be avoided. That is the beginning and the end of all "wisdom."

Another reason why Democritus' philosophy remains important is because modern materialistic philoso-

phers have borrowed from it, in more sophisticated forms; names and philosophies at least nominatively familiar within modern memory; to name but three: Hobbes, Descartes, and Marx. Kreeft argues that "the arguments against the [materialism] theory in all its forms are easier to see when we look at it in its earliest and simplest form. It is the first ancient philosophy that we have encountered so far that is still very much alive, ..."

**A**ccording to strict materialists, materialism, in whatever form, holds there are no such things as persons. "There are only things. We are only objects thinking that we are subjects."

But in a world of mere objects, how could subjectivity itself arise? How can an It become an I? A mere object of consciousness is not the same as, and cannot fully explain, a subject of consciousness; and the consciousness of objects, of others, cannot fully explain or cause self-consciousness, consciousness of self.

**There is no morality without free choice. We are morally obliged to do only what is in our personal power to choose.** [Emphasis added] As Kant [a modern philosopher] put it, "ought" implies "can." But materialism entails determinism, which is the denial of free choice. As Democritus put it, "everything happens by necessity." Atoms have no will or choice. Atomism = determinism = no free choice = no morality.

Of course our free choice is limited and conditioned by material events. It is influenced by material events, but it cannot be created by material events, for to create something is to make it begin to exist, but free choice has to already exist before it can be influenced. And our choice

can also influence material events. How can this be if it is merely the effect of them? How can effects cause their causes, or causes be effected by their effects?

But if materialism is true, all ideas are determined by unfree and unthinking, non-rational causes. Therefore all ideas are equally irrational—including that one!<sup>5</sup>

**I** sincerely hope you got all that because it *will* be on the test. Extra credit for anyone who goes so far as to actually attempt to read Democritus's philosophy or Kreeft's *Socrates' Children*. Extra, extra credit if you read *Socrates' Children* and find it anything but "dry and boring."

One final note, extra, extra, extra credit if you mention this on the exam: Materialism, whether as posited by Democritus, Hobbes, Descartes or Marx, and no matter whether it comes in the form of communism, fascism, socialism or its deviant sibling, "democratic" socialism, they all have one thing in common: atheism. Materialism, by definition, disavows the existence of God, angelic or demonic spirits, and the human soul made in the image and likeness of that nonexistent Creator who made all out of nothing.

Philosophy has been called "the great conversation" because it can be seen as a continuous dialogue from antiquity to post-modernity. It has passed through numerous stages with some philosophers claiming that the Sophists introduced the most interesting; all before them had looked outward, at nature. The Sophists looked inward, at man.

Their “wisdom” consisted mainly of clever tricks of rhetoric. “Rhetoric” is the art of oral or verbal suasion.

The name [Sophists] means, literally, “wise men” or “wise guys.” (The first was *their* interpretation, the second was their critics’.) They were itinerant educators who taught their “wisdom” for high fees to rich Athenians who needed to learn rhetorical skills to defend themselves in court when sued (which was quite often, as in America).

This was a new response to a new need—in fact, for the rich it was a necessary survival skill in Athens, because of two recent inventions: democracy and the jury system. Both demanded demagoguery (the “augury” or power to persuade the “demos” or masses). In both the courts and in the public assemblies (where policies were decided by direct majority vote, not by elected representatives), verdicts were usually determined more by the cleverness of the speakers than by the inherent justice of the case.

The Sophists were skeptics in epistemology, relativists in ethics, and subjectivists in both. They denied the existence and knowability of objective truth and objective values. They believed that both truth and goodness were invented by and relative to subjective human minds and wills, whether individually or socially.<sup>6</sup>

Sophistry, by any and all accounts, is the prevailing philosophy in American politics and media today. Those on the progressive left—the so-called democratic socialists, the antifa brown shirts, and the radical anti-everything from anti-men—white, black, brown, name your poison—homophobes, xen-

ophobes, pro-choice, open borders, etc., etc., etc. are all post-modern Sophists in the truest sense of the word. True and false are both true and false. Good and evil can be evil or good or both, they are relative to your subjective mind, whatever you think they are is your truth.

Not too long ago I sat in on a moral theology workshop presented by a Catholic priest, who coincidentally holds a doctorate in Moral Theology from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California. His presentation was interesting and informative, though quite familiar as much of what he spoke was taken from James Bretzke’s book *A Morally Complex World: Engaging Contemporary Moral Theology*. A book which I have thoroughly enjoyed reading, rereading and rereading; each time with new insights and greater understanding than before. I must admit, to be perfectly honest, it can intimidate and overwhelm the mind; it is not an easy read.

At a point in his lecture, he stated “Healthcare was a human right.” To that, I raised my hand and objected, arguing that it was not a “human right” and that “healthcare” was not a right but merely a civil conscription of, heretofore, private medical care. Having no desire to prolong the argument further discussion was summarily curtailed. Several of the attendees, however, during breaks asked for a fuller explanation of my thoughts which I was delighted to provide.

Healthcare is a service provided by medical professionals and institutions (hospitals and clinics) to cure what ails you, to fix what is broke and to correct

what is wrong. It is a industry, a very large industry, in business to make money while providing patients (you) with services you pay for. It is not in the business of losing money or, as many would have it, providing services free of charge. There is, to use a much in the news phrase of late, an explicit *quid quo pro*: you, with either cash or insurance, pay for what you get. You owe for what you receive; the medical provider is under no moral or ethical obligation to provide services without compensation, although free to do so if he or she wills it.

Many languages are more nuanced, having five words for one in English—there are five words for love in Greek. The English language, rather than multiple words when one seems sufficiently broadminded, employs adjectives and prepositions to distinguish one from another. For instance, theology can be further defined as either biblical, confessional, constructive, contextual, dogmatic, ecumenical, historical, moral, natural, normative, pastoral, philosophical, political, scientific, or (breathe!) systematic. It is difficult to square some of those with the ordinary definition of theology which is the study of the nature of the divine and, and more broadly, of religious belief.

The same can be and is said of the noun, “right” or “rights”. There are human rights, natural rights, civil rights, legal rights, LGBTQ rights, women’s rights, animal rights, the political right, turn right and whatever adjective you claim to be right. Then there are unalienable rights: the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of

happiness. We have the Bill of Rights which contains more rights than a person has fingers and toes. Think of something and there is a right for that.

**W**ith so many rights, is it any wonder we have lost our proverbial minds and chosen to drop the adjectives, lose the prepositions and make the noun unwed and all-inclusive? But, at what cost? The word “rights” has been reduced to stubble; ambiguous beyond any hope of clarity; nothing more than a gewgaw, and that is saying much too much. It has become as meaningless as the word “love” or “God” or “truth”.

So, what of this many colored coat which we wear? Is every coat the same? Does one size fit all? Does anyone recall what *right* means divorced of all the adjectives and prepositions? Are we right or wrong in our thinking, assuming we think of it at all? Or are we content with the jaded, faded colors of that raggedy old coat?

Whenever someone speaks of human rights, the thought that immediately comes to mind is what does the speaker mean saying something is a *human right*? Followed by a second and a third: “What does the speaker understand to be *human*?” and “What does the speaker define as a *right*?” Such thoughts are both philosophical and theological; they are questions considered by some of the greatest philosophers and theologians of every age: Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Ratzinger to name but a few. But, these questions beg for answers to deeper, ever more fundamental questions, questions of what is life,

does God exist, what is a human being, is there a soul, is there a heaven or a hell? So, you see, there is nothing at all “dry and boring” about philosophy or theology. If one does not know the answers to these fundamental questions, then, where is there wisdom?

To understand what is meant by *human rights* one must know which side of the argument the speaker resides. Whether the speaker believes in the existence of God or that there is no Divine Being who caused all from nothing will necessarily color their coat a different hue.

Those who believe God exists will also believe that human beings are created in His image and likeness with a body and an immortal soul, endowed with free will, a rational mind and the ability to reason. Every human being is thus a child of God, unconditionally loved into being. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:1-4). Every human being is thus a person who by virtue of being a child of the Most High, has a duty to respect the innate dignity of every human life and is owed the same by every human person.

Those who disbelieve in the existence of God—or who claim no need for a god or gods—must nevertheless place their faith in something which they can believe in that is not God, thus, they place their faith in man. This, of course, prejudices their argu-

ment as to what they mean to be human. To be human is seen differently through the lens of a believer or an unbeliever.

Human rights to the believer are immutable, inviolable rights granted by the Creator. Human rights impose a duty and an obligation for every human being to honor and respect the inalienable rights of every other human person. The Declaration of Independence declares these inalienable rights, endowed by our Creator, to be “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” Take careful note: these inalienable rights are human rights; they are objectively restrictive and protective of the individual; they do not impose any obligation or duty on others nor do they place any burden on any other person for their benefit. In a sense, God has cloaked every human being with a protective coat of impenetrable armor which no man or men can penetrate.

Human rights to the unbeliever are subjective and mutable, changeable by the will of men. By their definition, human rights are moral principles or norms that describe certain standards of human behavior and are regularly protected as natural and legal rights in municipal and international law. It is generally considered that they should not be taken away except as a result of due process ... at the hand of man. Much more next week.

1. Peter Kreeft, *Socrates' Children: The 100 Greatest Philosophers, Volume 1: Ancient Philosophers*, (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2019), 3.
2. Excerpted and adapted from the homily for the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, “None So Blind: What do you want?”, October 28, 2018.
3. Peter Kreeft, *Socrates' Children*, 62.
4. Peter Kreeft, *Socrates' Children*, 2.
5. Peter Kreeft, *Socrates' Children*, 77-80.
6. Peter Kreeft, *Socrates' Children*, 85-86.

## Off Angels' Wings

*Look and see the face of God*

**F**or many, Thanksgiving is a pivotal moment in the steady march toward a new year, marking the onset of what is commonly called the "holiday season". Bookended by the national holiday and the ringing in of the New Year, the season is filled with a mad-cap rush of non-stop activities centered on family gatherings, shopping, decorating, cooking, parties, and more. The air is filled with insistent voices urging everyone to stop whatever they are doing and shop, shop, shop. Each passing day only serves to increase the sense of impending doom should one fail to get it while it lasts!

Lost in all the hype and blather is the true reason for the season and recognition that there are those who will find it impossible to participate in this festive time. With all of the activities that ensue in preparation for the Thanksgiving holiday, our thoughts are seldom focused on the why? Each year it seems, fewer and fewer can either recall or care to consider the basis upon which we come together to celebrate any of the holidays that occur over the final days of the year. The prevalent attitude appears to be that there need be no reason for bacchanalian celebration.

Forgotten are those who find themselves in circumstances much like a poor Jewish carpenter and his very pregnant wife who found themselves in unfamiliar surroundings, friendless,

alone, and homeless. Those who did not share their circumstances gave no thought to their plight as they went about their ordinary and busy lives. They traveled through the masses as if they were wrapped in invisibility cloaks. It was the darkest of times.

But there came a night, a time of new birth, when light off angels' wings dispelled the darkness and the heavens sang with joyful noise. It was a time when those who lived among the shadows received unexpected visitors whose presence lifted their spirits and brought them the gift of hope. And the visitors received the greatest gift of all for they looked upon the newborn child and saw the face of God.



**A**s we begin to journey through the year's waning days let us take a moment to remind ourselves of the richness of the season, the significance of the events we should be observing, and to remember those less fortunate. Let us always and everywhere thank God for all the blessings we have received from him. And let us open ourselves to be the lamp that brings light to those in darkness and fire to warm the hearts of those who lay shivering in the cold.

I penned the poem that follows as I looked upon the partially snow-covered ground that lay outside my window this past Thanksgiving afternoon. It was then that I realized just how blessed I was to be in a warm, safe place, filled with the satisfaction and contentment that comes from sharing a bountiful feast with family and friends. And while I sat enjoying the moment an uneasy disquietude began to slowly seep into my consciousness, disrupting my otherwise pleasant musings.

There is nothing wrong with having enough or even plenty, just so long as we recognize that there are those who have little or nothing at all, and do something, anything, to share our abundance with those in need. Jesus always looked with love and charity toward those who found themselves in need, recognizing that poverty will never be completely eradicated from the human condition. It is incumbent upon all who have much to help those who have little. Give thanks to God by giving what you can to others.

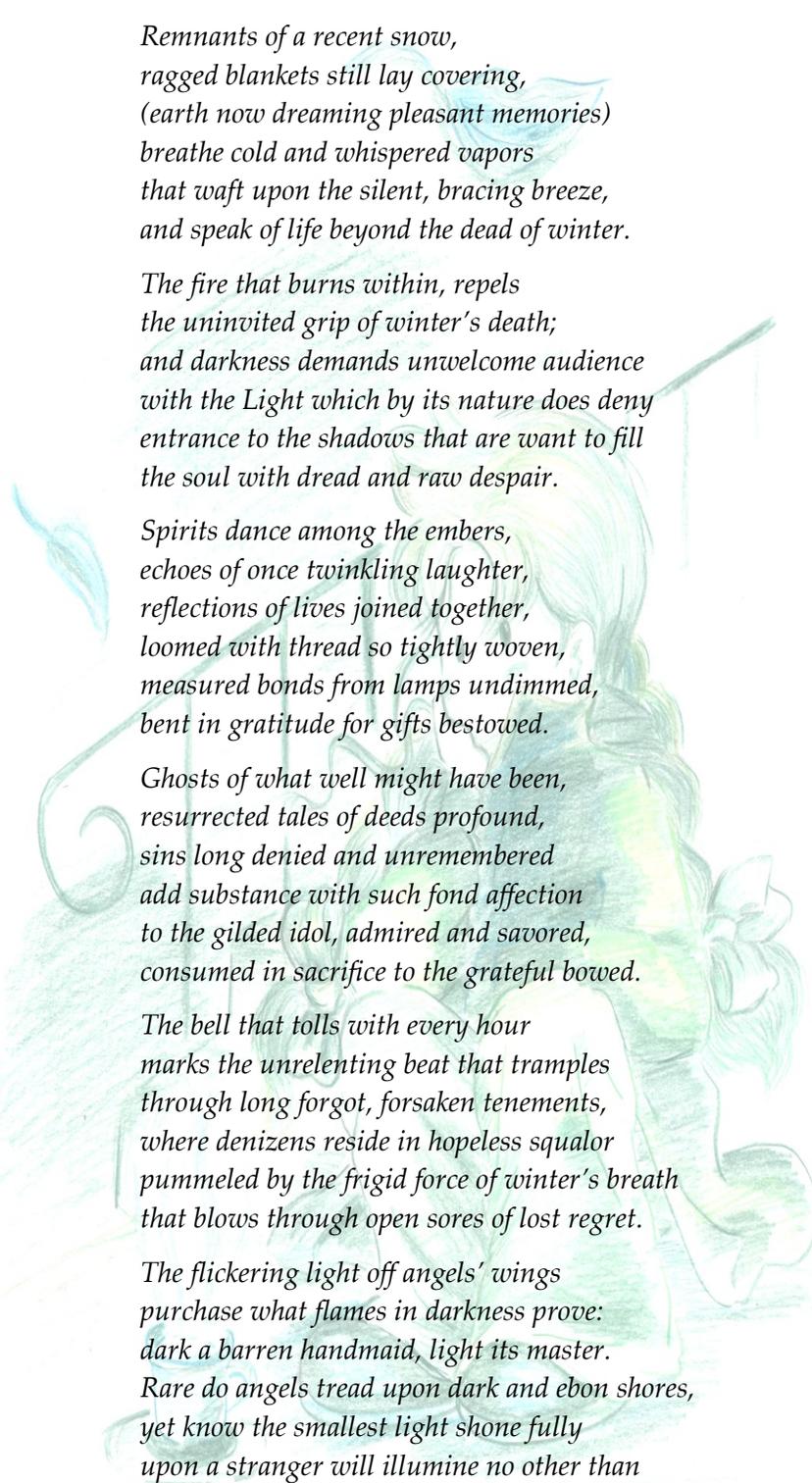
### Thanks be to God.

Originally published 12/02/2014. Essay republished in *Echoes of Love: Effervescent Memories*, (Reno, NV: Deacon's Corner Publications, 2015).

### A Prayer For You

May your days be bright with the glory of God. May your nights be filled with starlight. May your hearts beat with the blood of Christ. And may your soul reach out and see the face of God. Amen.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



*Remnants of a recent snow,  
ragged blankets still lay covering,  
(earth now dreaming pleasant memories)  
breathe cold and whispered vapors  
that waft upon the silent, bracing breeze,  
and speak of life beyond the dead of winter.*

*The fire that burns within, repels  
the uninvited grip of winter's death;  
and darkness demands unwelcome audience  
with the Light which by its nature does deny  
entrance to the shadows that are want to fill  
the soul with dread and raw despair.*

*Spirits dance among the embers,  
echoes of once twinkling laughter,  
reflections of lives joined together,  
loomed with thread so tightly woven,  
measured bonds from lamps undimmed,  
bent in gratitude for gifts bestowed.*

*Ghosts of what well might have been,  
resurrected tales of deeds profound,  
sins long denied and unremembered  
add substance with such fond affection  
to the gilded idol, admired and savored,  
consumed in sacrifice to the grateful bowed.*

*The bell that tolls with every hour  
marks the unrelenting beat that tramples  
through long forgot, forsaken tenements,  
where denizens reside in hopeless squalor  
pummeled by the frigid force of winter's breath  
that blows through open sores of lost regret.*

*The flickering light off angels' wings  
purchase what flames in darkness prove:  
dark a barren handmaid, light its master.  
Rare do angels tread upon dark and ebon shores,  
yet know the smallest light shone fully  
upon a stranger will illumine no other than*

### **The Face of God.**

## Deacon's Diner

*Food for a restless mind*

**F**or 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.

**The Day Is Now Far Spent**

**Robert Cardinal Sarah**

Ignatius Press  
2019, 350 pages.

### PERIODICALS

**First Things**

[www.firstthings.com](http://www.firstthings.com)

**Touchstone**

[www.touchstonemag.com](http://www.touchstonemag.com)

**Catholic Answers Magazine**

[www.catholic.com](http://www.catholic.com)

**Chronicles**

[www.chroniclesmagazine.org](http://www.chroniclesmagazine.org)

**The National Catholic Register**

[www.ncregister.com](http://www.ncregister.com)

**Our Sunday Visitor**

[www.osvnews.com](http://www.osvnews.com)

### ONLINE

**Crisis Magazine**

[www.crisismagazine.com](http://www.crisismagazine.com)

**The Imaginative Conservative**

[www.theimaginativeconservative.org](http://www.theimaginativeconservative.org)

**Catholic Exchange**

[www.catholicexchange.com](http://www.catholicexchange.com)

**Intellectual Takeout**

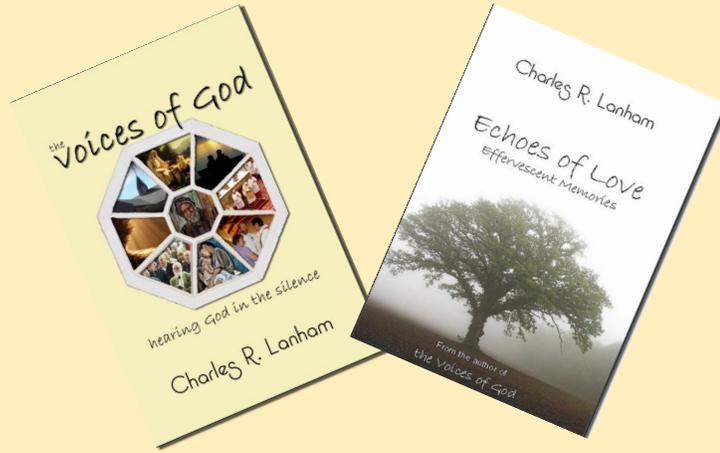
[www.intellectualtakeout.org](http://www.intellectualtakeout.org)

**Life News**

[www.lifenews.com](http://www.lifenews.com)

**Life Site News**

[www.lifesitenews.com](http://www.lifesitenews.com)



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Ours may become the first civilization destroyed, not by the power of our enemies, but by the ignorance of our teachers and the dangerous nonsense they are teaching our children. In an age of artificial intelligence, they are creating artificial stupidity.

— Thomas Sowell —

AZ QUOTES