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A journal for restless minds

# Colloquī *: to discuss*

**Gaslighting, Dogma & Dog Whistling**

*The darker side of darkness*

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**Deacon's Diner**

*Food for a restless mind*

# Gaslighting, Dogma & Dog Whistles

*The darker side of darkness*

**T**ruth is. Whether to believe, disbelieve, rely, deny, know, doubt, or accept what is true is a choice; truth remains. Truth does not change for whim or fancy. Truth, whether known or yet to be discovered, is, but what the apostle knew, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face" (1 Cor 13:12). What we know or think we know to be true is provisional, subject to further discovery, to greater understanding. Should we discover or come to understand what was once thought true to be either untrue or but partially true serves to prove that man is neither a god nor God.

There is now a prevailing school of thought, postmodernism, that teaches there is no objective truth, that truth is relative: uncertain, indefinite, vague shadows cast upon the darker side of darkness. Postmodernism denies the hard reality that is objective truth. To the postmodernist, truth is what you make of it and your truth is not my truth nor is my truth your truth, though you are more than welcome to accept mine as yours, if you so please. Thus, the postmodernist feels justifiably released from the shackles of the hard and fast, the unequivocal, uncompromising Truth and the harsh realities of living; now free to choose, with no guilt of conscience, whatever, whenever, however the postmodern dogma meets with one's personal approbation. To the postmodern, born out of nineteenth century modernism, then, "'Nature' stands for a whole set of political and 'theological' positions, sometimes loosely adorned with the trappings of Christianity: free love, or at least a more equal relationship between man and woman; a 'genuine' life, that is a life in touch with one's feelings; a preference for spontaneity over law, and intuition over precept; a reduction of Christ the Savior to Jesus the preacher for the poor, or Jesus the good and gentle sufferer."<sup>1</sup>



But this worship of Nature is, for a while a potent drug, and leads to the Romantic worship of man. It's easy enough to go from believing that, given the right social circumstances, man can be made perfect to believing that he already possesses that perfection, and all we need to do is to liberate it.<sup>2</sup>

The modernist and postmodernist dogma are perhaps nowhere stated as succinctly than a line from *Leaves of Grass*: "Nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is."<sup>3</sup> Without objective truth, there is no Truth, only make-believe. Without Truth, there is no God, the source of all truth. God's word is truth. His Law is truth. The eighth commandment, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" is "one of the most neglected and most disobeyed of all the commandments. For like the first commandment, it is disobeyed whenever *any* commandment is disobeyed. Just as all sin is some kind of idolatry (choosing some false god), so all sin is some kind of falsehood, some kind of choice of darkness over light."<sup>4</sup>

In Jesus Christ, the whole of God's truth has been made manifest. "Full of grace and truth," he came as the "light of the world," he is *the Truth*. "Whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." The disciple of Jesus continues in his word so as to know "the truth [that] will make you free" and that sanctifies.

To follow Jesus is to live in "the Spirit of truth," whom the Father sends in his name and who leads "into all the truth." To his disciples Jesus teaches the unconditional love of truth: "Let what you say be simply 'Yes or No.'"

Man tends by nature toward the truth. He is obliged to honor and bear witness to it: "It is in accordance with their dignity that all men, because they are persons ... are both impelled by their nature and bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth once they come to know it and direct their whole lives in accordance with the demands of truth."<sup>2</sup>

That the eighth commandment is important neglects just how far-reaching it is, for as Kreeft makes clear, the eighth commandment is best understood as the Truth commandment. "It forbids not only perjury, false oaths, calumny, and slander, but all kinds of falsehood, and it

commands total truthfulness.” Furthermore, “The eighth commandment does not merely tell us to speak the truth to others but also to love and live the truth in ourselves, to commit our whole hearts to truth and to live that commitment. It forbids false witness not only against our neighbor but also against ourselves, since we are to love our neighbor “as ourselves”.<sup>6</sup>

What the postmodernist rejects is the immaterial, immortal soul, which Sacred Scripture often refers to as human life or the entire human person. “But ‘soul’ also refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him, that by which he is most especially in God’s image” (CCC §363), the spiritual principle, individual and immortal, immediately created by God. “The human person, created in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual” (CCC §362). In rejecting the soul, the postmodernist necessarily rejects the spiritual, rejects God. Though much is spoken of the dignity of the human person, at no time in human history has that dignity been threatened more and regarded less both in theory and in practice than the past century.

Threatened it in theory because the three thinkers who have had the most influence on the twentieth century — Darwin, Marx, and Freud—all reduced man to something soulless: either an accidentally evolved clever ape, a cog in the economic State machine, or a suppressed sex maniac.

Threatened it in practice because of the twentieth century’s most dramatic invention, genocide: the deliberate murder of more than one hundred million innocent people, more than the entire population of the world for most of man’s history. And not just by Hitler, Stalin, and Mao. In “free” America, well over a million human beings a year continue to be slaughtered in the womb.

The cause of this human carnage should be obvious to any Christian or Jew or Muslim. **Once “God is dead” to any society or ideology, so is his image in man.** [emphasis added] “The abolition of man” (the title of a prophetic book by C.S. Lewis) follows from the abolition of God. For God is the source of all life, and when any culture says No to God, it says No to life and becomes what Pope John Paul II has dared to call a “culture of death”.

The defense of man is thus bound up with the defense of God. They are inseparable. “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar” (1 Jn 4:20). For the same reason, if anyone says, “I love man” and hates

God, he is a liar.<sup>7</sup>

“Post-medieval philosophy focuses on five issues,” Kreeft writes. Already, I can visualize eyes glazing, eyelids closing, a heavy sigh and a sudden urge to run out the door screaming “The sky is falling, the sky is falling! Not philosophy! Not again!” Well, yes, let us philosophize for a moment or two; I promise this will be brief but necessary, brief only in reviewing a few terms that are essential to understanding why so many have fallen into the postmodern pit of promiscuous prevarication. But first, let us take a deep breath and consider what philosophy is *not*. “Philosophy is not religion and religion is not philosophy.”

All religions, however diverse their content, originate in faith rather than pure reason, and their ultimate appeal is to divine authority, the authority of divinely revealed scriptures (e.g. Bible, Qur’an), or institutions (e.g. the Catholic Church), or mystical experiences (e.g. Buddhist “Nirvana”).

Philosophy, classically conceived, originates in and is justified by appeal to reason. Medieval philosophers often used philosophical reason to justify religious faith (e.g. rational proofs for the existence of God). Ironically, modern philosophers, in reaction against medieval philosophy, often begin by questioning the validity of faith and end by questioning the validity of reason and substituting ideology, feeling, or will (e.g. Hobbes, Hume, Rousseau, Kant, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Dewey, Derrida). Philosophers who make this move usually construe “reason” as *scientific* reasoning. If medieval philosophy is in bed with religion, modern philosophy is in bed with science.

The greatest difference between philosophers and other human beings is probably not philosophy but religion. For everyone has a philosophy, whether well thought out or not, but not everyone believes in a religion. According to the polls, only 5-10% of Americans identify themselves as atheists, but 75% of philosophers do. That fact explains why most histories of philosophy do not understand religious philosophies very well. Religion, like sex, humor, and music, is something one understands from within much better than from without.<sup>8</sup>

If philosophy is not religion, then why should we bother to think about it? Because, as Kreeft and others (including yours truly) point out: *everyone* has a philosophy. And, while most are not well-considered—most are ill- or unconsidered—like opinions, everyone has them

and most of them stink. That, being the case, which would you prefer? Polonius admonished his son, Laertes, “To thine own self be true” while attending university. The Ancient Greek aphorism γνῶθι σεαυτόν, “know thyself” precedes Shakespeare by age, order, and epistemology. Both are foundational principles of one’s philosophy.

The primary modern issue is epistemology<sup>10</sup> (theory of knowledge). Modern [and postmodern ever more so] philosophers are like teenagers who, instead of thinking first of all about the world and other people, think about themselves: Who am I? Am I ugly? Am I any good? And above all, how can I be certain about anything? Epistemology is like taking off your glasses and looking at them. Almost all pre-modern philosophers are first of all metaphysicians; almost all important modern philosophers are epistemologists, either *instead* of metaphysicians or at least *before* being metaphysicians. All the classical modern philosophers think they have to critique reason, their tool, before they build philosophical buildings with it.

This begins with Descartes, who is called the “father of modern philosophy” because he changed the central topic of “the Great Conversation” when he published his *Discourse on Method* in 1637. Classical modern [and again, postmodern] philosophy begins there and runs through Hegel (who died in 1831). It has a clearly defined story line of three options, three epistemologies: Rationalism, Empiricism, and Idealism.

But it is impossible to do epistemology without doing at least an implicit metaphysics,<sup>11</sup> or at least a discussion of the possibility or impossibility of metaphysics. The two always imply each other. For whatever comes under metaphysics—all being *that we know*—comes under epistemology—the study of knowing. And whatever comes under epistemology—all that knowing *is*—comes under metaphysics—the study of what-*is*.

A second issue ... is practical and political. It is not new but it begins anew with Machiavelli, the founder of modern political philosophy, and moves through Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Marx, all of whom offer alternatives to the natural law theory common to all pre-modern philosophers.

A third issue is “existential” (personal, psychological, ethical and religious). This too is not new but it begins anew with Pascal, in a much more typically modern way, that is, subjectively, and after a two-century hiatus, emerges with Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Marcel, and Buber, all of whom are loosely classified as “existential” philosophers, who center on questions of concrete, individual human existence like death, evil, freedom, values and purpose.

A fourth issue, about language, begins later, in the twentieth century. Its main founders are Moore, Ayer, and Russell, and its main figure is Wittgenstein. From it emerges “analytic philosophy,” which is the main way of “doing philosophy” today everywhere in the world where English is the primary language.

Not neatly fitting into any one of these four conversations but intersecting with all of them are pragmatists, phenomenologists, and postmodernists (especially deconstructionists), three more twentieth-century developments, all focusing on methodology.<sup>12</sup>

End of the brief lesson on philosophy; next class: psychology. I know, it’s not fair, but as I often told my children, “life’s not fair so get over yourself.” This too, will be brief and necessary. But first, let me introduce you to your professor, Gad Saad. Take it away, professor.

The quest for truth should always supersede one’s ego-defensive desire to be proven right. This is not an easy task because for most people it is difficult to admit to being wrong. This is precisely why science is so liberating. It offers a framework for auto-correction because scientific knowledge is always provisional. And accepted scientific fact today might be refuted tomorrow. As such, the scientific method engenders epistemic humility. I grew up in a household where this quality was sorely lacking. Several members of my family are classic know-it-all who seldom exhibit any deference to someone who might possess greater knowledge or wisdom on a given topic. They know more about the heart than the cardiologist, more about teeth than the dentist, more about mathematics than the mathematician, and more about academia than the academic. Also they were seldom, if ever, willing to admit to being wrong. When it came to epistemic humility, they were not reincarnations of Socrates. I was always deeply troubled by this family dynamic for I viewed their epistemic grandiosity as a deep affront to the truth. A personal anecdote that took place more than two decades ago perfectly captures this reality.

A family member remarked to me that the Ancient Greeks were anti-Semitic Christians to which I gently retorted that they were not Christians. The individual in question insisted that of course they were Christians. At that point, I explained that the time period in question was labelled “BC” in reference to its being “before Christ” (prior to Christianity). Once it was clear to this person that my position was unassailable, what do you think he did? Did he grant me the courtesy of admitting that he was wrong? I have recounted this tale on a few occasions and asked people to guess what his reaction was. No one has successfully cracked that mystery yet. When all hope that he might be proven correct was

extinguished, he looked me in the eyes and stated with a straight face, “ Yes, I said that they were not Christians, and you said that they were. So I am right.” Of course, we both knew that this was a grotesque lie but in his narcissistic and delusional bubble, his perfect record of superior knowledge remained intact.

My mother’s admonition about the incongruity between my notions of intellectual and moral purity and the real-world was ironically on full display in my interactions with family members who possess zero epistemic humility. My intellectual probity was repeatedly violated by these individuals who cared only about signaling to the world that they knew more than you did about anything and everything. This family dynamic might explain why I am so offended by individuals who exhibit the Dunning-Kruger effect, that is, a self-assuredness and supreme confidence despite one’s idiocy. Social media is infested with such types.<sup>13</sup>

It is not at all difficult—it is far too easy—to encounter such absurd behavior in society writ large, no more so than in our politics, media, and especially, on social media. Such lunacy is everywhere, it has become a national epidemic, if not a global pandemic. The last four years have seen an unprecedented escalation of the madness which Saad labels the Dunning-Kruger effect. But, like any virus, to find a cure one must first begin by determining, among other things, the source, and Saad points directly at ground zero: the university.

Beyond being purveyors of anti-science (postmodernism) and science denialism (biophobia), universities serve as patient zero for a broad range of other dreadfully bad ideas and movements. In the immortal words of George Orwell, “One has to belong to the intelligentsia to believe things like that: no ordinary man could be such a fool.”<sup>14</sup> The proliferation of many of these bad ideas has yielded reward mechanisms in academia that are upside down. The herd mindset is rewarded. Innovative thinkers are chastised. “Stay in your lane” academics are rewarded. Outspoken academics are punished. Hyper-specialization is rewarded. Broad synthetic thinking is scorned. Every quality that should define intellectual courage is viewed as a problem. Anything that adheres to leftist tenets of progressivism is rewarded. Those who believe in equality of outcomes receive top-paying administrative jobs. Those who believe in meritocracy are frowned upon. If they go unchecked, parasitic idea pathogens, spawned by universities, eventually start to infect every aspect of our society.

Parasitic viruses of the human mind (devastatingly bad ideas) ... parasitize human minds, rendering them im-

pervious to critical thinking, while finding clever ways to spread across a given population (for example, getting students to enroll in women’s studies departments).

Some of the parasitic viruses of the human mind that I tackle include postmodernism, radical feminism, and social constructivism, all of which largely flourish within one infected ecosystem: the university. While each mind virus constitutes a different strain of lunacy, they are all bound by the full rejection of reality and common sense (postmodernism rejects the existence of objective truths; radical feminism scoffs at the idea of innate biologically-based sex differences; and social constructivism posits that the human mind starts off as an empty slate largely void of biological blueprints). This general class of mind viruses is what I have coined Ostrich Parasitic Syndrome (OPS), namely various forms of disordered thinking that lead afflicted individuals to reject fundamental truths and realities that are as evident as the pull of gravity. In a similar vein to how all forms of cancer share a mechanism of unchecked cell division, these mind viruses all reject truths in the defense of a pet ideology. The ideological tribe to which one belongs varies across the mind viruses, but the commitment is always to the defense of one’s dogma—truth and science be damned.<sup>15</sup>

Saad goes on to describe how the West is experiencing a death by a thousand cuts. “The greatness of the West stems in part from its protection of fundamental freedoms and its commitment to reason and the scientific method (where appropriate). Over the past few decades though,” he writes, “several nefarious forces have slowly eroded the West’s commitment to reason, science, and the values of the Enlightenment.”

Such forces include political correctness (as enforced by the thought police, the language police, and social justice warriors), postmodernism, radical feminism, social constructivism, cultural and moral relativism, and the culture of perpetual offense and victimhood (microaggressions, trigger warnings, and safe spaces on campuses, as well as identity politics). This has created an environment that has stifled public discourse in a myriad of ways. Academics shy away from investigating so-called forbidden topics (such as sex differences or racial differences) lest they be accused of being rabidly sexist or racist. Professors are intimidated into using nonsensical gender pronouns when addressing students lest they otherwise be committing a hate crime. University students demand they be “protected” from ideas that are antithetical to their own while being warned by administrators about wearing “offensive”

Halloween costumes. Politicians are fearful to critique Islam or open-border immigration policies lest they be accused of being bigots. More generally, people are deathly afraid to espouse any opinion that might get them ostracized from the politically correct club (try being a conservative Republican in Hollywood or on a university campus). These trepidations are weakening our culture because we are no longer able to talk with one another using rational and reasoned discourse that is otherwise free from a dogmatic and tribal mindset.<sup>16</sup>

Though Saad is a secularist, possibly an atheist, likely an agnostic, clearly an evolutionist, one can and should read *The Parasitic Mind* for the common sense and truth therein. There is much to be gleaned from his thoughts, for though he does not acknowledge the existence of God, he never denies outright the possibility—“There is a bidirectional relationship between truth and freedom such that the truth will set you free (John 8:32), and only in being free can one aspire to uncover the truth.” He is more averse to ritualistic religion than admitting to the possibility of the Almighty. He describes himself as a “free thinker who is allergic to go-along, get-along group-think. The ideals that drive my life are freedom and truth, and any attack on these ideals represents an existential threat to all that I hold dear.” He notes that the Lebanese war taught him early on “about the ugliness of tribalism and religious dogma. It likely informed my subsequent disdain for identity politics, as I grew up in an ecosystem where the group to which you belonged mattered more than your individuality.”

It is perhaps understandable though off-putting how Saad sees a lack of epistemic humility in others but denies the same in himself and in his “notions of intellectual and moral purity.” His drive for freedom and truth are what should drive us all, but truth can never be discovered fully without seeking the whole truth, which must necessarily include religion, faith, the spirit, and God. While tribalism is indeed ugly it is perhaps the epitome of epistemic hubris to characterize religious dogma the same. Dogs and cats may be pets but a dog is not a cat, neither is a cat a dog. A corn beef on rye sandwich without the rye is not a sandwich; it is simply corny.

Underlying Saad’s philosophy, though subtly implied, is the notion that much of our beliefs and thought are evolutionary, that biology plays a much greater part in our

epistemology, in what and how we know, than what has been previously been considered. There should be no denying that biology plays a part, just so environment and lived experience, but the human person is a unity of body and soul, a unity of the biological and the immaterial spirit. To seek the truth outside one’s self is to deny one’s self the Truth. “You were within me and I was outside, and I sought you there. In my unloveliness I plunged into those lovely things which you have made. You were with me, and I was not with you.”<sup>17</sup>

As noted above, “There is a bidirectional relationship between truth and freedom such that the truth will set you free, and only in being free can one aspire to uncover the truth.” Yet, as Ratzinger notes elsewhere, “In the consciousness of mankind today, freedom is largely regarded as the greatest good there is, after which all other good things have to take their place.”

In legislation, artistic freedom, and freedom of speech take precedence over every other moral value. Values that conflict with freedom, that could lead to its being restricted, appear as shackles, as “taboos”, that is to say, as relics of archaic prohibitions and anxieties. Political action has to demonstrate that it furthers freedom. Even religion can make an impression only by depicting itself as a force for freedom for man and for mankind. In the scale of values with which man is concerned, to live a life worthy of humanity, freedom seems to be the truly fundamental value and to be the really basic human right of them all. The concept of truth, on the other hand, we greet rather with some suspicion: we recall how many opinions and systems have already laid claim to the concept of truth; how often the claim to truth in that way has been the means of limiting freedom. In addition there is the skepticism fostered by natural science regarding anything that cannot be precisely explained or demonstrated: that all seems in the final analysis to be just subjective judgment, which cannot claim to be obligatory for people in general. The modern attitude to truth shows itself most succinctly in Pilate’s words: What is truth? Anyone who claims to be serving truth with his life, and with his words and actions, must be prepared to be regarded as an enthusiast or a fanatic. For “Our line of sight to all above is blocked”; this quotation from Goethe’s *Faust* sums up the way we all feel about it.

There is no doubt that we have reason enough, in the face of a sentimental and all-too-confident claim to truth, to ask: What is truth? Yet we have just as much reason to put the question: What is freedom? What do

we actually mean when we praise freedom and set it on the highest level of our scale of values? I believe that the content generally associated with the demand for freedom is most accurately described in the words Karl Marx once used to express his dream of freedom. The state of affairs in the future Communist society will make it possible "to do one thing today, another tomorrow, to go shooting in the morning and fishing in the afternoon and in the evening look after the cattle, to indulge in criticism after dinner, just as the fancy takes me". It is just in this way that the average attitude, without thinking about it, understands by "freedom" the right, and the practical possibility, of doing everything we wish and not having to do anything we do not wish to do. Putting it another way, freedom would mean that our own will was the only criterion for our action and that this will would be able to want to do anything and also be able to put into practice anything it wanted. At this point the question arises, of course: How free in fact is our will? And how rational is it?—And, is an irrational will truly a free will? Is irrational freedom truly freedom? Is it really a good thing? Does not the definition of freedom, as being able to decide to do anything and being able to do what we decide, have to be expanded to include the connection with reason, with mankind as a whole, in order to avoid becoming tyranny and unreason? And will not seeking for the common reason of all men, and thus the mutual compatibility of freedoms, be a part of the interplay of reason and the will? It is obvious that the question of truth is concealed within the question of the rationality of the will and its relation to reason.

The moral superiority of the liberal system in politics and the economy that thus emerged arouses no enthusiasm, even so. The number of those who have no share in the fruits of this freedom is too great—those, indeed, who lose every kind of freedom: being out of work has once more become a mass phenomenon; the feeling of not being needed, of being superfluous, torments people no less than material poverty. Unscrupulous, exploitation is becoming widespread; organized crime is making use of the opportunities of the free world; and in the midst of it all the ghost of meaninglessness is wandering around.<sup>18</sup>

Once, some years before, there was a man, a holy man of God who dared to ask, "Is life worth living, or is it dull and monotonous?" Being of a philosophical mind, full of the love of wisdom, he followed his question with an answer: "Life *is* monotonous if it is meaningless; it is *not* monotonous if it has a purpose."

The prospect of seeing the same program on television

for a number of weeks is this problem in minor form. Will not repetition of the same format, the same personality, the same chalk, the same blackboard, and the same angel create monotony? Repetition does generally beget boredom. However, two beautiful compensations have been given a television audience to avoid such boredom: one is a dial, the other is a wrist. Put both together, and all the forces of science and advertising vanish into nothingness.

Life is monotonous if it has not goal or purpose. When we do not know why we are here or where we are going, then life is full of frustrations and unhappiness. When there is no goal or overall purpose, people generally concentrate on motion. Instead of working toward an ideal, they keep changing the ideal and calling it "progress". They do not know where they are going, but they are certainly "on their way". Life is then like a radio in the early days. Remember? No one seemed to be interested in getting a particular program. He was interested only in picking up distant places, sitting up all night, turning the dial. The next morning he would say with glee, "You know, at three o'clock last night I got Washington, then Mobile, and I even heard Peoria.

Those who have no ultimate destiny for life really can never say they are making progress; if there is no fixed point, they can never say whether they are getting to their goal or not. Life under these circumstances is boring.

People live ten, twenty, thirty, fifty years without a plan. No wonder they find their existence humdrum and tiresome. If they were farmers, they would probably plant wheat one week, root it up and plant barley the next; then dig up the barley and plant watermelon; then dig up the watermelon another week and plant oats. Fall comes around, and they have no harvest; if they repeated that process for years, they could go crazy. It is the meaninglessness of life that makes it wearisome.

Boredom can lead to revolution. A boy is given a BB gun. If the father gives him a target, for example, a bull's-eye on the side of a barn or an old tin can, the boy is happy to shoot at it and use his gun as it ought to be used. As soon as the target is rejected or ignored or not given, generally he goes in for shooting anything, particularly school windows. The revolutionary spirit in the world today is born of such purposeless and meaningless existence.<sup>19</sup>

I will finish with this brief note with respect to freedom, truth, and the American way. All three are in desperate straits; we live in dark times. Our fundamental liberties are being cut from under our feet, freedom of speech and of religion are under assault, our treasured

way of life threatened, denigrated, and eroded at every turn by those who have no faith, no trust or hope in God. This is real, it is no longer a fantasy. Evil has come to America's shores, indoctrinated our children and our children's children through our schools, by our "free" propagandizing press, through social media, and by the abdication of our sovereign free will and the unwillingness to use God's gifts of the mind and reason. We have betrayed ourselves, allowed ourselves to be gaslighted, manipulated into questioning our own memories, perceptions, and judgments. Using denial, misdirection, contradiction, and misinformation, the left has worked diligently to destabilize and delegitimize all that we hold most dear. Like Pavlovian test subjects, we have been played by the political class, the media, and elite technocrats to salivate, sit up and beg, whenever we hear the sound of their dog whistles. It is time to know the truth, to live the truth, and to speak the truth. It is time to wake up from this nightmare and tell evil to go back from whence it came and where it belongs—hell.

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1. Anthony Michael Esolen, *"The Politically Incorrect Guide to Western Civilization,"* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2008), 250.
  2. Esolen, *"Western Civilization,"* 253.
  3. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass,* (Dover Publications; Original 1855 Edition, 2007), 1271.
  4. Peter J. Kreeft, *"Catholic Christianity: The Eighth Commandment: Truth,"* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2001, reprint 2014), 269. Peter Kreeft, Ph.D., is a Professor of Philosophy at Boston College.
  5. *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* (Vatican City State: Vatican Publishing House, 2017), §2465-2467.
  6. Kreeft, *"Catholic Christianity,"* 269-70.
  7. Kreeft, *"Catholic Christianity,"* 56.
  8. Peter J. Kreeft, *"Socrates' Children: the 100 Greatest Philosophers, Volume III: Modern Philosophers,"* (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2019), 11-12.
  9. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* Act 1, scene 3.
  10. **Epistemology** is derived from the ancient Greek *epistēmē*, meaning "knowledge", and the suffix *-logia*, meaning "logical discourse" (derived from the Greek word *logos* meaning "discourse"). It is one of the four main branches of philosophy, along with *ethics*, *logic*, and *metaphysics*. Epistemology aims to answer questions such as "What do we know?", "What does it mean to say that we know something?", "What makes justified beliefs justified?", and "How do we know that we know?" It is the investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion.
  11. **Metaphysics** is the branch of philosophy that examines the fundamental nature of reality, including the relationship between mind and matter, between substance and attribute, and between potentiality and actuality. Metaphysics studies ques-

tions related to what it is for something to exist and what types of existence there are. Metaphysics seeks to answer, in an abstract and fully general manner, the questions: What is there? What is it like? Topics of metaphysical investigation include existence, objects and their properties, space and time, cause and effect, and possibility.

12. Kreeft, *"Socrates' Children,"* 17-18.
13. Gad Saad, Ph.D., *"The Parasitic Mind: How Infectious Ideas Are Killing Common Sense,"* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2020), 12-13. A Lebanese Jew whose family immigrated to Canada, Saad is an "evolutionary psychologist" and professor of marketing at the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University. His two main ideals are Freedom and Truth. "The central focus of this book is to explore another set of pathogens that are potentially as dangerous to the human condition: parasitic pathogens of the human mind. These are composed of thought patterns, belief systems, attitudes, and mindsets that parasitize one's ability to think properly and accurately. Once these mind viruses take hold of one's neuronal circuitry, the afflicted victim loses the ability to use reason, logic and science to navigate the world. Instead, one sinks into an abyss of infinite lunacy best defined by a dogged and proud departure from reality, common sense, and truth."
14. George Orwell, "Notes on Nationalism," *Polemic* 1 (May 1945): 1.
15. Saad, *The Parasitic Mind,* 16-18.
16. Saad, *The Parasitic Mind,* 20.
17. St. Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions.*
18. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Truth and Tolerance,* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2004), 231-34.
19. Fulton J. Sheen, *"Life is Worth Living,"* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1999; New York, NY: 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Mission Foundation, Inc., 1953), 15-16.

## 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: What Every Catholic Should Know**

*Michael Patrick Barber*

Ignatius Press

2019, 189 pages.

**Faith and Politics**

*Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI)*

Ignatius Press

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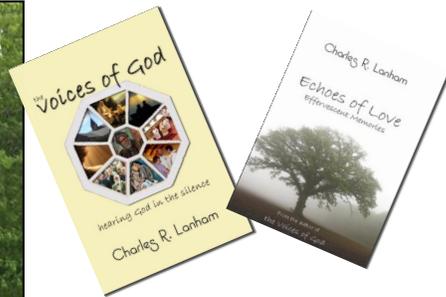
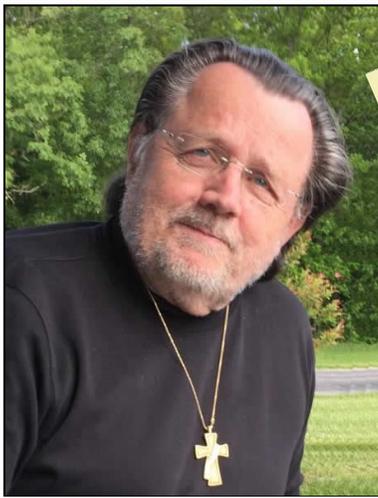
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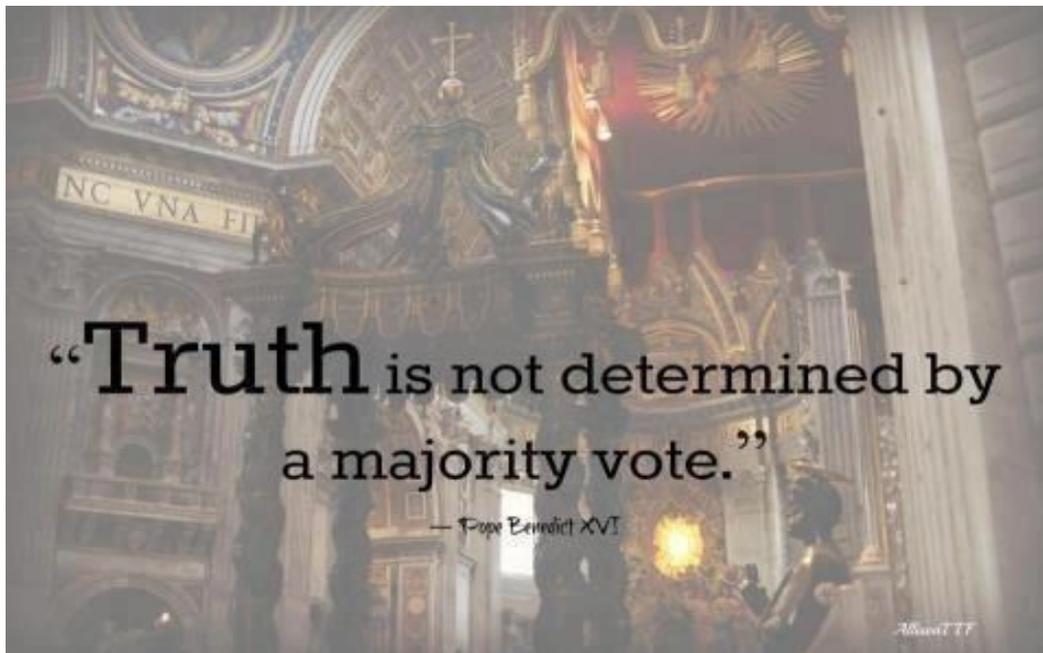


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**Deacon Chuck Lanham** is a Catholic author, columnist, speaker, theologian and philosopher, a jack-of-all-trades like his father (though far from a master of anything) and a servant of God. He is the author of **The Voices of God: Hearing God in the Silence**, **Echoes of Love: Effervescent Memories** and has written over 500 essays on religion, faith, morality, theology, and philosophy.

Deacon Chuck can be contacted thru email at

**deacon.chuck@deaconscorner.org**



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