



A journal for restless minds

LOVE NEVER ENDING

There is nothing more to say

DIALOGUE OR DIATRIBE

An argument in search of reason

THAT MARTHA MOMENT

Recognizing the better part.

ET QUOD HOC...

This and that...

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.

Love Never Ending

There is nothing more to say

Whenever I chance to recall that moment when I first held her in my arms; it is the eyes that I remember with such deep and lasting memory. Those dark brown eyes stole my heart with such promise of never ending love and so it has been these past fifteen years.

There is a special bond and an love that never wavers, never falters, but only strengthens

over the years between two companions who find themselves bound together on the road of life. Where there is love, there is really nothing else, nothing more to say. It is for the eyes to express far more than words for the eyes are but tiny windows into love.

CJ was and has been my canine companion for nearly fifteen years, born on September 7, 2001 in Fallon, NV. She was my first and only, as was I hers. We lived a quiet life together, for she seldom

made a sound, although she communicated far more clearly than many humans are seemingly capable of doing these days.

Loving her was far too easy for she never asked for anything in return for her unconditional love. She knew no strangers and was always eager to give of herself to everyone she met—especially her abundant white fur and lots of licks.) She taught me what it is to love without reserve, to live only for the joy which comes from loving another so completely.



We are taught that God is Love and I know the truth of this. In my heart and soul I do believe that G-O-D made a mirror image of himself, which he lovingly called D-O-G, to be a companion and an outward expression of his unconditional, everlasting love for those he made in his image and likeness, M-A-N.

My beloved companion has passed away. She lived far longer than most and I believe she loved more than most. She loved me, what more is there to say.

Dialogue Or Diatribe

An argument in search of reason

Long ago, we who still enjoy calling this great nation our home were very familiar with a song—personally I first remember hearing it sung by Gene Autry—whose refrain included these lyrics:

*Home, home on the range,
where the deer and the antelope play,
where seldom is heard a discouraging word,
and the skies are not cloudy all day.*

At some point, and it is difficult or perhaps impossible to now recall, we as a nation quit singing that tune. All I know, with unpleasant and *discouraging* certainty, is that seldom do we hear an *encouraging* word these days, and I find myself more often than not wondering why all the bitterness, anger, resentment, hatred, vitriol, confrontation, shouting, ranting, blaming, and name-calling? Need I add more?

Where and when precisely did we lose the ability to engage in reasoned dialogue on *issues* without resorting to diatribe—a forceful and bitter verbal attack against someone or something? Of equal or more important weight why must every comment, tweet, post, or utterance we make be devoid of any semblance of decency or respect for others. When did the bully pulpit become a pulpit for bullying?

This goes well beyond the body politic—where diatribe has been elevated to a level that defies imagina-

tion. Regrettably, verbal abuse has become the only acceptable form of speech for the preponderant population of this great nation as well as beyond our borders.

Name a subject and within less than a heartbeat you will find yourself on the defensive, castigated for either your ignorance, stupidity, incompetence, bigotry, hatred, or simply for having the temerity to utter a simple cogent thought. Never mind the thought—that never was of any importance—merely the fact that you dared express one.



Yet beyond the growling and the mindless, thoughtless assault to any particular point of view, one will find—if one were only to make any effort at all to look—an unwillingness, disinclination, and a complete indifference to discovering objective truth.

Truth, for most, has become subjective and relative, that is whatever is true rests within one's own mind. Your truth is of no consequence to my truth unless it by chance is in complete agreement with mine—which is of course impossible or well beyond the improbable.

Prevailing progressive instruction has long imposed the notion that truth is derived from our emotions, our feelings and our personal reality, thus subjective and relative; and because they are subjective and relative they are therefore as solid and as changeable as the wind.

Reality thus has become entirely one's own particular point of view, unless of course you subscribe to the quite common novelty that life is but an illusion. Likewise, morality. Right and wrong are what each wishes to make of them. And if either reality or morality is mine to determine as I will, it follows that I may choose to alter or abandon either as I am want to do.

How often have you heard someone say, "*Don't impose your values on me because they aren't my values?*" This condemnation comes from a subjective and relativistic ideology that holds that a society is merely a man-made construct, not based on God or natural law; that all values come from man, so a society is then nothing but some men imposing their values on others—majorities on minorities, or rulers on ruled, or teachers on students, or media mind molders on the stupid, traditionalist masses.¹

The measure to which we have succumbed is readily discerned: all we have to do is ask ourselves "*To what degree do I fear the Lord?*" Seriously, it is an honest question. Many, if not most, to some degree or another,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

no longer retain much or any fear of God—that is to say, few hold God in such high regard or awe as to worry in the least for the consequences of disobedience to his commandments or to the natural law which he endowed us.

The laws of God and of nature are clear, absolute and apply equally to all, as are the penalties for failure to comply; we ignore them at our own peril. It is perhaps God's intransigence and man's transience which has turned the hearts and minds of so many away from the righteousness of God.

Without objective truth, which can only come from God, there can be no objective and absolute morality, reality, or law. What is left is a truth which is no truth at all—it is whatever we wish it to be. There is no right or wrong, good or bad, truth or falsity, real or unreal. There is only what I feel to be right, good, true, or real. And when your right, good, truth, or reality comes into conflict with mine—which they inevitably will—then it is obvious that you are either too stupid to live, a racist, hate-monger, misogynist, dimwit, imbecilic lunatic, etc., etc., etc.

Since truth is subjective and relative to each individual, facts that contradict such truth are irrelevant, immaterial, and unworthy of even the slightest consideration. Let's face it, it should be obvious to anyone with half a brain in their head that there is no need for discussion or reasoned dialogue. After all, 97% of those who know anything at all agree that the matter is settled, so shut up, you loser.

When Archbishop Charles Chaput issued pastoral guidelines instructing clergy and other Philadelphia archdiocesan leaders on implementing *Amoris Laetitia*, "The Joy of Love" the clamor of dissenting voices was deafening but quite telling. According to the guidelines, divorced and civilly remarried Catholics, as well as cohabitating unmarried couples, must "refrain from sexual intimacy" in order to receive Holy Communion. The guidelines further state that Catholics in same-sex partnerships, those remarried without a church annulment, and cohabitating persons may not serve on parish councils, instruct the faithful, serve as lectors or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

As Archbishop Chaput correctly points out: "Allowing persons in such irregular relationships, no matter how sincere, to hold positions of responsibility would offer a serious counter-witness to Catholic belief, which can only produce moral confusion in the community."

Among the first to denounce Archbishop Chaput was Mayor Jim Kenney of Philadelphia, a Catholic and frequent critic of the Archbishop's conservative stances on matters of faith. Mayor Kenney quickly tweeted "Jesus gave us gift of Holy Communion because he so loved us. All of us. Chaput's actions are not Christian."

One unhappy commenter wrote: "So Chaput gets to decide ... The sheer arrogance and un-Christian attitude of Chaput continues to stun. I, for one, will continue to receive Communion unless the one distributing it is obliged to ask each communicant, 'Are you divorced, gay,

cohabiting, or remarried but chaste?' Perhaps the archbishop could issue identification tags."

Another wrote, "Archbishop Charles Chaput should focus on policing his priests, who take a vow of celibacy, instead of his flock. Protecting innocent victims of sexual abuse by his employees seems to be a much more important problem than the sex lives of lay Catholics."

There were many more who objected to the Archbishop's pastoral guidelines as well as many who spoke in support. What is missing in virtually all of those who wrote in opposition is any reasoned argument.

Yes, Jesus gave us the Eucharist as his gift of love. But throughout his public ministry he consistently admonished the sinner to "go and sin no more." He also commissioned the eleven apostles to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."²

Those offended by Archbishop Chaput's teaching would like to ignore the fact that Jesus himself ordered the apostles and their successors—bishops (including the Pope, bishop of Rome)—to teach us to observe all that Jesus commanded and Jesus commanded us to go and sin no more. Those who choose to live in a state of habitual sin would like to ignore that uncomfortable fact, but it remains true no matter how much they may wish it otherwise.

1. Peter Kreeft, *A Refutation of Moral Relativism*, Ignatius Press, 2009.

2. Mt 28:19-20.

That Martha Moment

Recognizing the better part

In the Gospel Martha invited Jesus into her home; I wonder why? What was her reason for asking? Was her motivation centered on Jesus and what he might have to say? Or was it centered on herself; perhaps a desire for prestige, recognition, or personal gratification?

When we come together on Sunday for Mass, what is our motivation for being here? Are we here to hear what God has to tell us, to focus our attention on what Jesus has to teach us, to listen with open minds and contrite hearts; or ... are we here to be entertained, to socialize, to impress others?

Are we God-centered or self-centered? We should understand that true hospitality demands self-sacrifice, a willingness to forgo our own self-interests and focus on the interests and needs of others?

Life has changed significantly over the past two-thousand years. Today, our world is filled with marvelous technology, gadgets that keep us informed, entertained, and in constant communication with anyone and everyone twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. We have radios, televisions, telephones, cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, Gameboys, X-Boxes, Wiis, Computers, DVDs, and much, much more. We are constantly connected through email, satellite, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, texting, twitter, voicemail,

and occasionally phone calls.

With all this marvelous technology at our fingertips you would think we must be the most fascinating, socially-adept, well-informed, and interesting people to be around.



Sadly, I believe, this is rarely the case. All this wondrous, magical stuff appears to be driving us inward, closing our minds and hearts from the real world; our world now comes to us as digital images on a game console or a television set; friends and acquaintances are represented as icons or avatars on a computer screen.

We are rapidly losing our ability to socialize and to see the value in the company of others. Instead of engaging in deep and interesting dialog we communicate in sound-bites; we text, we twitter, we tweet, we blog. Today my grandchildren sit in their bed-

rooms and text each other rather than sitting down face-to-face and talking to one another!

We seem to have forgotten the one thing that is truly important, close personal relationships with others, with Jesus, and with God. We have lost the willingness and even the ability to open ourselves to those around us, to listen, to learn, and to grow through honest interaction with one another. Close, personal, intimate human contact has somehow become something to avoid. Far too many of us actually fear it. Stress, anxiety, and fear are barriers to doing good for others; for doing that one thing that is needed; for listening and hearing what God wants us to do.

Some years ago a friend of mine recounted how she experienced her own Martha moment. Shortly after their marriage, she and her husband invited some friends to their home for the evening. After an enjoyable dinner, everyone moved to the family room to relax and continue their conversation. Everyone, that is but my friend, who felt compelled to clean up before she could sit and enjoy time with her guests.

She busied herself clearing the table, doing the dishes, putting the remains of the meal away. While she was busy doing, her guests kept asking her to come and visit.

She insisted that she was on her way even while continuing to finish her work. When she was finished, she

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

hurried to the family room, only to find that her guests had grown tired of waiting and had left.

She got the message and has never forgotten what is truly important.

Martha and my friend weren't wrong to want to be hospitable and to desire to provide a welcoming environment for their guests. But where each got into trouble was while in their eagerness to provide for their guests they forgot their guests. In scrambling about, doing welcoming things, they failed to make their guests feel welcome. Jesus even tells Martha that she is needlessly anxious and worried about a great many things but has forgotten the one thing that is necessary: spending time with him.

Real hospitality demands a two-way relationship in which host and guest open to each other and become present to one another in various ways. Good hosts find ways to provide for their guests while simultaneously spending time listening and conversing with their guests.

Our lives are busy ones, filled with activities such as work, school, children, homework, housework, yard work. We never stop; it's always go, go go, be here, be there, do this, do that. We are a society of overworked, triple-booked, overcommitted, busy, anxious, stressed-out people.

It is hard not to become over-busy and consumed by work; difficult, almost impossible to surrender yourself to the never-ending demands coming from everywhere. Henri Nouwen once

described our lives as over-packed suitcases with too much in them. There is always one more task to do, one more phone call to make, one more person to see, one more bill to pay, one more thing to check, one more leak to fix, one more demand from church or school, one more item that needs to be picked up from the store. Simply put, our days are far too short for all that needs to be done.

And it creeps up on us so that we seldom see it coming. The busier we get the less we realize what it is that we are no longer doing: building and strengthening relationships with our families, friends, church, and with God. The heavy weight of busyness protects us from the unresolved issues within our lives. It provides us with an all too perfect excuse: we are just too busy.

And therein is where we encounter much the same problem as did Martha. We tend to become overworked and in doing so lose sight of what is most important. We become needlessly anxious and worried about a great many things but forget the things that are truly important: family, friends, church, and God.

Bruno of Segni, a twelfth century bishop, spoke of Martha as symbolizing the active life and Mary symbolizing the contemplative. He wrote:

"All that contemplatives want to do is to sit at the feet of the Lord—to read, pray, and give themselves up to contemplating God is their whole desire. It is enough for them to be always listening to the word of God and feeding their minds rather than

their stomachs.

Now the reason the active life is so called is because it consists of constant activity, weariness, and toil, so that scarcely a moment's quiet can be found in it.

*The contemplative life then is superior to the active because it is free from anxiety and will never end. Nevertheless the active life is so indispensable that in this world the contemplative life itself cannot exist without it."*¹

So, it is important that we pause every now and then and focus on the one thing that is needed. Do we sit at the feet of Jesus as Mary did or are we like Martha, too busy to do the one thing that is needed, to choose the better part?

I believe that if it had been today, Jesus would have looked at Martha, and with a little smile and a twinkle in his eye said *"Martha, Martha, Chill girl! Come, spend some time with me; after all I'm not going to be around forever, you know. And oh, if you really feel the need, just order a pizza."*



Homily for
16th Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle C
Genesis 18:1-10A
Colossians 1:24-28
Luke 10:38-42

¹ Bruno of Segni, Bishop, *On Luke's Gospel 1, 10: PL 165, 390-391*, ed. Edith Barnecut.

Et quod hoc...

This and that...

We have all heard it before. Jesus telling us to “*Stop judging that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you.*” [Mt 7:1-2] But precisely how are we to interpret this? Is Jesus telling us that we are to avoid judging altogether? Is that even possible or practical?

For more than fifty years now moral liberals, those who espouse, among other things, a philosophy of sexual freedom, abortion, and same-sex marriage have been promoting an ethic of non-judgmentalism. Accordingly, toleration has been their refrain, incessantly beating the drums for toleration of any and all attitudes and behaviors that “*do no direct, obvious, and tangible harm—harm to others, that is.*”

For if you are eighteen years of age or older, and you wish to do things or think things or feel things that harm yourself, well, that’s up to you. You are the owner of yourself. It’s your life, your body, your mind. You are free to do what you like with your own property as long as you don’t hurt your neighbor.

As a result of this ethic of non-judgmentalism, we Americans have learned to tolerate a great deal of bad morals, bad manners, bad music, vulgarity, profanity, obscenity, pornography, blasphemy, etc. The two most recent achievements along this line have to do

with our latest metaphysical fad, transgenderism. Americans are now expected to abstain from judging that you’re mistaken or even mentally ill if you believe that you’re a man in a woman’s body or a woman in a man’s body.”

So writes David Carlin for Catholic Answers Magazine (*Collected Wisdom: ‘Judge Not’ Doesn’t Mean Don’t Make Judgments*, pp. 6-7, July-Aug 2016). He writes that while God alone can judge the value of a person’s whole life, that in no way precludes us from making judgments as to motives or intentions at a particular moment or instance. “*Judges and juries make these judgments every day all over the world. And so do you and I in our routine interactions with other people.*”

Carlin suggests that our skills in judging have atrophied from disuse and that as a result we no longer have the skills necessary to make sound value judgments. It is certainly something we should all consider.



Archbishop William Lori, chairman of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty and Cardinal Timothy Dolan, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities issued a news release on June 22, 2016 strongly denouncing the latest assault by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on religious freedom, the right to life, and the rule of law.

This latest foray by HHS was

their declaration that the California Department of Managed Health Care could continue to force all health plans under its jurisdiction to cover elective abortions. This ruling allows the State of California to force all employers—even churches—to fund and facilitate elective abortions in their health insurance plans.

In the Bishops’ response, they called for an immediate federal remedy by urging Congress to pass the **Conscience Protection Act (CPA)** (H.R. 4828, S. 2927.)

The House of Representatives on July 13th passed the CPA in a 245 to 182 party line vote. but its fate remains uncertain. The president has indicated that he will veto it should it pass the Senate.

Rep. Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House, said on the House floor, “*I think we can all agree that in this country, no one should be forced to perform an abortion.*”

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council added, “*I applaud the House for voting to codify longstanding federal conscience protections, and to give pro-life victims of government discrimination the right to sue in court. No person, organization or healthcare provider should ever be forced by the government to participate in the abhorrent act of abortion.*”

The USCCB is urging all Catholics to write or call their Senators to urge them to support and pass the Conscience Protection Act.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Editor of First Things Magazine, R. R. Reno (*While We're At It*, p. 67, June/July 2016) observed:

"Students at Indiana University were atwitter on a recent Friday evening. Someone reported seeing a white-robed Klansman with a whip roaming the streets of Bloomington. Warnings were tweeted. One read: 'iu students be careful, there's someone walking around in kkk gear with a whip.' The dangerous man turns out to have been a Dominican friar, Fr. Jude McPeak, who serves as an associate pastor at IU's St. Paul Catholic Center. His whip? It was the long string of rosary beads dangling from his tunic belt."



Noticing that modern science has rendered atheism irrational, Harry Blitz writing for Touchstone Magazine (*Views: Naked Truth*, pp. 12-13, July/August 2016) submits that these days "Catholic" higher education appears too often willing to take contemporary atheism seriously even while modern science has rendered it irrational and he offers two compelling reasons for saying so.

"For the fact is that modern science now has very well corroborated evidence that the natural universe (time, space, matter, and energy) had a beginning. Since that fact makes it irrational to take the very unscientific position that things popped into existence uncaused, from true nothingness (nothingness in terms of the absence of time, space, matter, and ener-

gy), the rational person would conclude that the natural universe must have been caused by a reality that transcends the natural, that is, by a supernatural reality.

Modern science now knows that even the simplest reproducing, single-celled life form consists of ultra-sophisticated, digital-information-based nanotechnology the functional complexity of which is light years beyond anything modern science knows how to build from scratch. It would be far easier to explain how a laptop computer might come about mindlessly and accidentally than to come up with a plausible explanation of how such beyond-our-own nanotechnology might have been produced that way. The computer you use everyday is crude technology compared to that of a living organism. Can your computer replicate itself, or even a simpler version of itself, using available resources? Single-celled, reproducing life forms do all that and more using digitally stored assembly instructions.

Technology, by definition is the result of the application of knowledge for a purpose. That is why technology never comes about mindlessly and accidentally. It is utterly obvious that life is technology that is astoundingly superior to our own, and therefore it must be the result of the application of knowledge (tremendously superior to our own) for a purpose."

What perhaps frustrates and frightens the most is the continued and rapid decimation of Catholic religious education at "Catholic" Colleges and Universities throughout the United States. Let us pray that those who would inspire our young would turn them toward rather than away from God.

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.



Bon Appétit!

BOOKS

A Refutation Of Moral Relativism

Peter J. Kreeft

Ignatius Press

December 7, 2009, 188 pages.

Old Errors and New Labels

Fulton J. Sheen

Alba House

(1931) May 30, 2007, 222 pages.

City Of God

Saint Augustine

Doubleday

February 1958, 551 pages.

PERIODICALS

First Things

Institute on Religion and Public Life

Editor: R. R. Reno

Ten Issues per year.

www.firstthings.com

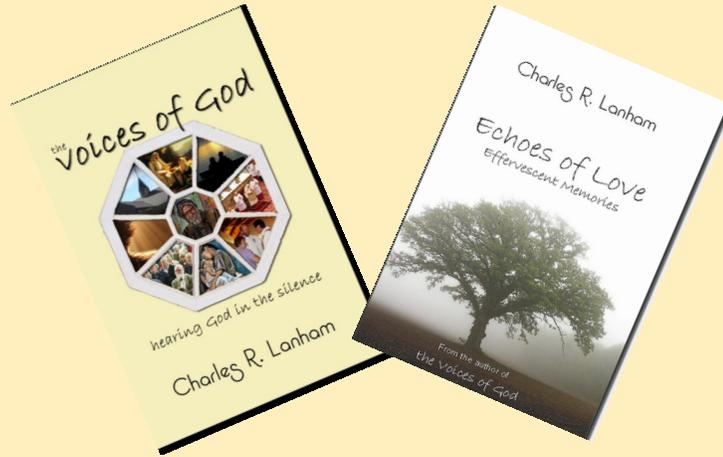
Touchstone

A Journal of Mere Christianity

Editor: James M. Kushiner

Bi-Monthly.

www.touchstonemag.com



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

deaconscorner.org

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

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

He is the bulletin editor for Saint Albert the Great Catholic Church. He has written over 230 articles on religion, faith, morality, theology,

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

<http://deaconscorner.org>.

Deacon Chuck can be contacted thru email at

deacon.chuck@deaconscorner.org

Colloquī is a weekly publication of **Deacon's Corner Publishing**.
Copyright © 2016 by **Deacon's Corner Publishing**. All rights reserved.
Produced in the U.S.A. www.deaconscorner.org

Deacon's Corner Publishing

4742 Cougar Creek Trail
Reno, Nevada 89519