



A journal for restless minds

### TECHNOLOGICAL HUBRIS

*Knowing truth when you find it*

### WHAT KING IS THIS?

*Fear of the Lord*

### 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.

## Technological Hubris

*Knowing truth when you find it*

Recently I have found reason for serious introspection and reflection which has disturbingly elevated an unspoken question to a quandary.

The question is quite simple in form yet virtually impossible to answer either objectively or with precise certitude: *What is truth?* In earnest search for that priceless quality we inevitably find ourselves increasingly reliant upon technological resources to uncover and discover what is true. Yet when we find it, is it? Or is it something else?

Once upon a time, say before the year 1439, most of the world's population was illiterate and uneducated. The principle reason: books or manuscripts were simply unavailable in sufficient quantities; each requiring laborious time-consuming hand-copying. Such a process necessarily limited what was copied

to what was deemed of greatest value.

Today anyone can write, publish, and produce anything and nothing at all with the click of a button. We are inundated with tommyrot and folderol all advanced as either reality or the truth. We find ourselves increasingly incapable or unaware of anything which hasn't been digitally generated. Reality is nothing but an app and life is but a game downloaded to a computer or a smartphone.



We are sustained by sound bites and images taken out of context, twisted and contorted so as to square with circular reasoning and blatant sophistry. Reality is what someone wants you

to believe and there is little if any desire to learn the truth of it.

Technology has clouded our minds, hardened our hearts, enshrouded our souls; and we have allowed it, welcomed it, reveled in its fantasies and meaningless delights. Technological hubris has left us empty, devoid of our own humanity. We have

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blithely enslaved ourselves, no longer capable of knowing truth when we find it. Tragically we have lost even the will to come to know the truth.

**W**hy this is so thus alters the question into a quandary for “*what is truth*” no longer holds relevance for the self-enslaved, now kneeling in complacent submission to their golden calf, their digitized, pixelated god.

The English poet Thomas Gray expressed the current sentiment for truth some two-hundred and seventy years ago, long before the age of the technological advances which we are now so inescapably enslaved:

*To each his sufferings: all are men,  
Condemned alike to groan;  
The tender for another's pain,  
The unfeeling for his own.  
Yet ah! why should they know their fate?  
Since sorrow never comes too late,  
And happiness too swiftly flies.  
Thought would destroy their paradise.  
No more; where ignorance is bliss,  
tis folly to be wise.<sup>1</sup>*

Perhaps we should not be so prompt to fault the calf upon the spear, for it well and truly does appear, we have not changed so much from yesteryear.

So why the will toward ignorance? What drives us toward such obliviousness? Could it be precisely what Gray surmised: *thought would destroy their paradise*? There is, I believe, no small amount of truth to be discerned from that.

What rests upon the minds of those who would refuse to wade the shallow shores of here and now to dive to deeper depths for greater gain fills the soul with hope of life beyond the grave. Those who find their happiness in empty shells and pretty things, such detritus the sea has cast upon the shore, will soon find wanting what has so easily been obtained.

Petulance does not become us well, yet petulant and self-absorbed we have become. John Rosemond, author and family psychologist, suggests that the problem is a serious lack of Vitamin N, that is the word “No.” Multiple generations of parents have deprived their children of this essential vitamin by seldom if ever saying no to their children and parents, their children, and our entire culture is paying the price.

**T**o illustrate this he tells the story “of a father who gave his son, age five, pretty much everything the little boy asked for. Like most parents, the father wanted more than anything for his son to be happy.

*But he wasn't. Instead he was petulant, moody, and often sullen. He also had problems getting along with others. In addition, he was very demanding and rarely if ever expressed any appreciation, let alone gratitude, for all the things his parents gave him.*

*His parents were concerned, worried that their son might be suffering from depression, wondering if he might need therapy. The psychologist told them that their son was suffering the predictable ill effects of being over-indulged. What he*

*needed was a healthy and steady dose of Vitamin N.*

*Over-indulgence—a deficiency of Vitamin N—leads to its own form of addiction. When the point of diminishing returns is passed (and it's passed fairly early on), the receiving of things begins to generate nothing but want for more things.*

*One terrible effect of this is that our children are becoming accustomed to a material standard that's out of kilter with what they can ever hope to achieve as adults. Consider also that many, if not most, children attain this level of affluence by not working, sacrificing, or doing their best, but by whining, demanding, and manipulating. So in the process of inflating their material expectations, we also teach children that something can be had for next to nothing. Not only is that a falsehood, it's also one of the most dangerous, destructive attitudes a person can acquire.*

*This may go a long way toward explaining why the mental health of children in the 1950s—when kids got a lot less—was significantly better than the mental health of today's kids. Since the '50s, and especially in the last few decades, as indulgence has become the parienting norm, the rates of child and teen depression have skyrocketed. Children who grow up believing in the something-for-nothing fairy tale are likely to become emotionally stunted, self-centered adults.*

*Then when they themselves become parents, they're likely to overdose their children with material things—the piles of toys, plushies, and gadgets one finds scattered around most households.*

*In that way, over indulgence—a deficiency of Vitamin N—becomes an inherited disease, an addiction passed from one generation to the next. This also explains why children who get too much of what they want rarely take proper care of anything they have. Why should they? After all, experience tells them that more is always on the way.”*

**R**osemond goes on to say, “Children deserve better. They deserve to have parents attend to their needs for protection, affection, and direction. Beyond that: They deserve to hear their parents say ‘no’ far more often than yes when it comes to their whimsical desires. They deserve to learn the value of constructive, creative effort as opposed to the value of effort expended whining, lying on the floor kicking and screaming, or playing one parent against the other. They deserve to learn that work is the only truly fulfilling way of getting anything of value in life, and that the harder they work, the more ultimately fulfilling the outcome.

*In the process of trying to protect children from frustration, parents have turned reality upside down. A child raised in this topsy-turvy fashion may not have the skills needed to stand on his or her own two feet when the time comes to do so.”*

Rosemond concludes by offering this advice to parents: “Here’s a simple rule: Turn your children’s world right-side up by giving them all of what they truly need, but no more than twenty-five percent of what they simply want.” He calls this the “Principle of Benign Deprivation” and suggests that the most character-building two-letter word in the English language is No, Vitamin N. He says, “dispense it frequently. If you do you will

*be happier in the long run, and so will your child.”<sup>2</sup>*

There can be little doubt of what Rosemond speaks goes a long way to explaining much of what is going on around us but it is far from the complete picture. What is even more deficient is vitamins F and G, Faith and God. We have forgotten to feed our children daily meals of faith, infused with vitamin G. Without faith in God and the promise of eternal life our children’s spiritual life is not fed and their souls suffer from a deficiency of those essential vitamins, F and G.

It has often been said that the best way to evangelize is to live the gospel every minute of our lives. Someone once said, “we can hardly think like Christians if we do not live like Christians” which seems obvious, yet what should be equally as obvious is that “we cannot live like Christians if we do not think like Christians.”

**W**e owe everything to God. The measure with which we live for, with, and in God, the depth and frequency of our prayer, the openness to accept all that he has planned for us, our every moment behaviors and actions, these all reflect outwardly upon others, especially our children. Children are but mirrors of ourselves and what they reflect is all that we do, say, and believe. If we say no to God, why should we expect our children to say anything different? If God is the center of your life, if you are filled with Vitamin F and G, your children will be properly nourished as well.

1. Thomas Gray, *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, 1747.

2. John Rosemond, *Vitamin N*, Prager U.

## 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

#### Faith Comes From What Is Heard

*Lawrence Feingold*

Emmaus Academic

July 8, 2016, 756 pages.

#### Practical Theology

*Peter Kreeft*

Ignatius Press

November 28, 2014, 400 pages.

#### Disorientation: How to Go to College Without Losing Your Mind

*Edited by John Zmirak*

Ascension Press

December 21, 2010, 188 pages.

### PERIODICALS

#### First Things

Institute on Religion and Public Life

Editor: R. R. Reno

Ten Issues per year.

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

#### Touchstone

A Journal of Mere Christianity

Editor: James M. Kushiner

Bi-Monthly.

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

#### Catholic Answers Magazine

Share the Faith, Defend the Faith

Editor: Tim Ryland

Bi-Monthly.

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

# What King Is This?

## *Fear of the Lord*

**W**hat is it that attracts so many to horror films? Is it the adrenalin rush from being frightened? Whatever it is that compels us to actively and purposely place ourselves in such circumstances is beyond easy or ready comprehension. Yet we do it over and over again.

Yet not all fear is the same. Some fear is inspired by love, based upon feelings of reverence and respect for another. Whenever I am called upon to prepare a couple for the sacrament of matrimony, I always speak of this kind of fear.

When someone truly loves another there is a sincere level of anxiety, call it fear or worry, which is present in one person for the welfare of the other. This type of fear comes in two forms: one is that nothing we say or do will ever disappoint, disrespect, or violate the other; the second is concern for the other's welfare, a fear of somehow being a hindrance or roadblock to the other's hopes and aspirations.

This is Holy Fear, fear that we will never betray a trust or cause another pain or disappointment. Holy Fear is the fear we should have for God, the Fear of the Lord. We should never be afraid of God for he is not a fearsome presence but a loving one.

God does not punish us for our transgressions but loves us with his

grace. It is we who punish ourselves for sins he has forgiven and forgotten. Thus we have no reason to fear God in such a way. Yet, for that we must fear him by giving ourselves to him, to respect and reverence him, to bend a knee in gratitude for our brokenness.

A brief story illustrates this very well:



**O**ne evening, a six year-old boy, who had just started school, hopped into bed without first kneeling in prayer. His mother, who had taught him to kneel by his bed each night before going to sleep and to recite a number of prayers, was astonished at this sudden change in behavior. She challenged him with these words, "Don't you pray anymore?" He replied, "No, I don't. My teacher at school told us that we are not supposed to pray. She said that we're supposed to talk to God ... and tonight I'm tired and have nothing to say."

This little boy had discerned what it really means to be God's child and how God is not so much a love to be obeyed as one who desires to have a loving relationship with us, one of ho-

ly fear.<sup>1</sup>

**A**nd then there is fear of authority, fear of those who hold power over others, such as kings and emperors. Most would agree that with few exceptions, royalty and those who wield power over others are seldom viewed with a friendly eye. For those who resided in first-century Palestine and the Eastern Mediterranean region, royalty were seldom very popular, more often than not they were despised and hated. Certainly Herod and Caesar were not held in high esteem by those over whom they ruled. The common sentiment would have been of unholy fear.

Yet, the kingdom of God and the coming reign of the Son of God were of great importance in the mind of Jesus and his followers. What is important for us to understand is the significant difference between earthly kingships and the heavenly one. The Jews were expecting a Messiah, an anointed one, a king who would vanquish the foes of the house of Israel, a great military leader, an earthly ruler. They had no concept or thought of a heavenly kingdom or a spiritual realm. To this they were blind and thus saw Jesus, not as a king but as a teacher, a rabbi, and a counter-cultural revolutionary.

The kingship of Jesus represents a complete reversal of the usual roles for royalty and servitude. When asked if he was a king, he responded, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and

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for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus was a decidedly different sort of king for he came not to be served but to serve. He is the king who serves others. He is the king who dies for those he rules. He refuses to be the master, but washes the feet of those who follow him. He is the king who accepts without complaint the scorn, mockery, and ridicule of others. He was a powerless sovereign who refused all power and dominion over others.

Jesus refused bodyguards or protection of any kind for he abjured all manner of force and violence.

In Jesus we can find no envy, no greed, no lust for power. The king who executes none is cruelly executed for his innocence. He seeks no vengeance, he demands no reparation.

*"It can be shown ... that there is not a single action or word attributed to Jesus—including those that seem harshest at first sight—that is not consistent with the rule of the Kingdom.*

*It is absolute fidelity to the principle defined in his own preaching that condemns Jesus. There is no other cause for his death than the love of one's neighbor lived to the very end.*

*A non-violent deity can only signal his existence to mankind by having himself driven out by violence in the Kingdom of Violence."<sup>3</sup>*

It is through the violent cruelty of his death on the cross that we find the

triumph of the king.

As we hear from Paul in his letter to the Colossians God *"delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."* In Jesus we have a king who by his death and resurrection redeemed the lowly and obtained the forgiveness of his almighty Father.

Jesus is the king, *"the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."<sup>4</sup>*

Pilate asked Jesus if he were a king. He was a king, just not the kind of king Pilate could comprehend for he only understood the tremendous power that came with empire backed by great military size and strength.

But Jesus was neither a king bent on the acquisition of power nor of empire; Jesus was the king of the small and the weak. He came not to conquer the world but to change the world, to open the gates to the kingdom of God to those who would follow him, to those who would observe all that he had taught.

Jesus is the king of the outcast, the

poor, the rejected; not the powerful but the powerless.

*"What Jesus proclaims by word, he enacts in his ministry. ... His mighty works symbolize that the reign of God is more powerful than evil, sickness, and the hardness of the human heart.*

*He offers God's loving mercy to sinners, takes up the cause of those who suffered religious and social discrimination, and attacks the use of religion to avoid the demands of charity and justice."<sup>5</sup>*

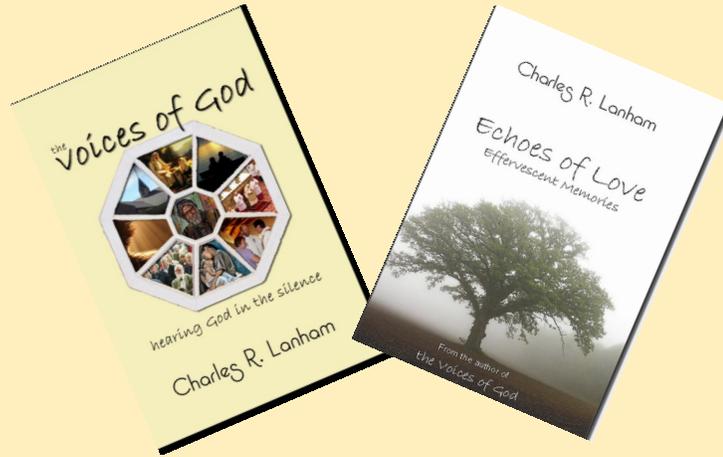
As Christians we pledge allegiance to the reign of God in our lives; that requires us to profess our faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we gather in communion as the body of Christ at Eucharist, we experience the kingship which is Christ the King. We submit to his rule and accept him as our Lord and King of heaven and of earth.

Amen.



Homily for  
The Solemnity of Christ the King  
2 Samuel 5:1-3  
Colossians 1:12-20  
Luke 23:35-43

1. Ron Rolheiser, *In Exile: Holy and Unholy Fear*, The Sunday Website of St. Louis University.
2. John 18:37.
3. Rene Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*.
4. Col 1:15-20.
5. U.S. Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, 1987, §24.



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](mailto:deacon.chuck@deaconscorner.org)**

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