



A journal for restless minds

## CHRIST'S FINAL COMMAND

*A disciple is more than a name*

### THE WORD OF THE LORD

*Fulfilled in the hearing*

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### 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.

## Christ's Final Command

*A disciple is more than a name*

**P**ope Saint John Paul II in the second year of his pontificate issued his Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae: On Catechesis In Our Time*.

*"The Church has always considered catechesis one of her primary tasks, for, before Christ ascended to His Father after His resurrection, He gave the apostles a final command — to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that He had commanded. He thus entrusted them with the mission and power to proclaim to humanity what they had heard, what they had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon and touched with their hands, concerning the Word of Life. He also entrusted them with the mission and power to explain with authority what He had taught them, His words and actions, His signs and commandments. And He gave them the Spirit to fulfill this mission.*

*Very soon the name of catechesis was given to the whole of the efforts within the*

*Church to make disciples, to help people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so that believing they might have life in His name, and to educate and instruct them in this life and thus build up the Body of Christ. The Church has not ceased to devote her energy to this task."*<sup>1</sup>

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, quoting from that very same document, states: *"Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people, and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with the view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life."*<sup>2</sup>



**T**he importance of catechesis cannot be understated or ignored, yet that is precisely what we have done. We have become *"Christians In Name Only"* woefully ignorant of what Jesus taught. It is incumbent upon all Christians to know what it truly means to be a disciple. Let us resolve this year to become true disciples of Christ Jesus.

1. Pope Saint John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation: Catechesi tradendae*, October 16, 1979, §1.

2. CCC §5. CT §18.

## The Word Of The Lord Fulfilled in the hearing

**C**hristians, and with greater respect, Catholics, often underappreciate or misunderstand the significance and importance of Scripture in the liturgy. This, I believe, is primarily due to a lack or absence of catechesis with respect to the liturgy as a whole, but in particular when it relates to the reading of Scripture which is the Word of the Lord.

Sacred Liturgy is seldom thought of much beyond what Catholics experience at Mass; it is the liturgy of the Eucharist which generally takes center stage. How else to explain those who consistently arrive sometime near the transition point between Word and Eucharist? After all, the liturgy of the Word is not an obligatory element in faithfully observing the Lord's day, is it? Jesus gave us the Eucharist in remembrance of him; he never said anything about listening to Scripture, did he?

What many deem incidental to the liturgy, that is Scripture, is to the contrary, as essential as the Eucharistic rite; together, Scripture and Eucharist, form the sacrament of the liturgy.

*"Scripture is for liturgy, and scripture is about liturgy. The liturgy, likewise, proclaims the scriptures even as it interprets and actualizes them. The unity of scripture and liturgy may be described as both material and formal.*

*It is material in that the content of scripture is, to a great extent, concerned with the liturgy, and the content of the liturgy is drawn from scripture. Liturgy figures most prominently in salvation history's key moments—creation, the flood, the call of Abram, the exodus, and the founding of the kingdom of David. Scripture, for its part, figures most prominently in every aspect of the liturgy, in both the ritual words and ritual actions. This is most evident in the liturgy of the word, but also in the institution narrative and in many of the standard prayers. Scripture is, in this important sense, about liturgy, just as liturgy is about scripture.*



*Their relationship is formal in that scripture took its final form—it was canonized—for the sake of liturgy, and the canon itself derived from liturgical tradition.”<sup>1</sup>*

**T**he canon of Sacred Scripture, the texts included in the Old and New Testaments, are the direct result of its liturgical use. As one scholar observed: *“That which is canon comes to us from ancient communities of faith, not just from individuals. ...*

*The whole of the Bible, the sum as well as all its parts, comes to us out of the liturgical and instructional life of early believing communities.”<sup>2</sup>*

**T**he liturgical pattern found within Scripture is not a new or recent view. Both ancient rabbis and modern scholars have long been in agreement as to the liturgical character of the whole of Scripture. As Scott Hahn writes:

*“The cosmos itself seems to follow a liturgical calendar. God created the world in six ‘days’ for the sake of the seventh, the Sabbath, which he made holy (Gen 2:3). Thus the first pages of the canonical scriptures set a sabbatical rhythm for all subsequent history. This divine model established the order for humanity: work was ordered to worship, labor to liturgy. Man subdued the earth in order to consecrate its fruits to God. From the beginning, then, God made time holy, and creation itself became a cosmic temple with Adam as its high priest.*

*From the first two generations, then, the scriptures present mankind as liturgical by nature—homo liturgicus. ...*

*From Genesis to Revelation, the texts themselves demonstrate the formal unity of scripture and liturgy. Scripture is, by and large, about liturgy. Often, it is liturgy—or the culpable neglect of liturgy—that drives the biblical drama. Liturgy sustains the assembly of God’s people—the qahal, the ekklesia, the church—and liturgy restores it when it falls.”<sup>3</sup>*

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The scriptural canon was primarily determined for liturgical purposes, yet it was liturgical use that preceded and determined the canon. Although the Church finalized the New Testament canon at the councils of Hippo (393 A.D.) and Carthage (397 A.D. and 417 A.D.) and was subsequently ratified by Pope Damasus I, the Church had been celebrating the Eucharistic liturgy for more than three centuries. Early evidence proves that Sacred Scripture had always played an important and key role in the liturgy. As Everett Ferguson points out: *"The church did not have to wait until the end of the second century (and certainly not the fourth century) to know what books to read in church."*<sup>4</sup>

As Hahn points out, *"in an interesting historical turnabout, liturgical use became a primary criterion for compiling the canon that would officially limit the books deemed suitable for liturgical use. ... Scripture is canonized for liturgy, and it is liturgy that canonizes scripture."*

It is incumbent upon us to acknowledge the importance Scripture played within the liturgical mission of Jesus. The question asked at the beginning of this tract as to whether Jesus ever called for the reading of scripture in a liturgical setting can be readily answered in the affirmative. One only has to look to the Gospels to understand its importance.

According to Luke, Jesus began his public ministry and announced his mission when he *"went according to his custom into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a*

*scroll of the prophet Isaiah"* (Is 61:1-2; 58:6). After reading, he rolled up the scroll, *"handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, 'Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.'"*<sup>5</sup>

Jesus was clearly following traditional Hebrew liturgical form, even preaching a homily, anticipating the objections that would be raised, defending his mission utilizing other Hebrew scriptures (1 Kgs 17 and 2 Kgs 5).

The liturgy then as now was non-sacrificial. *"It was a liturgy of the word— involving scriptural prayer, proclamation, and interpretation. Indeed, it is likely that the Christian liturgy of the word derived from this formative experience of the first generation Christians, who were predominantly Jews. ..."*

*Biblical religion has always required the proclamation of God's word within the assembly of God's people. In the old covenant, that proclamation had always been public, communal, and liturgical. It remained so with the new covenant of Jesus Christ.*

*Jesus' subsequent preaching placed a particular emphasis on the hearing of the word."*<sup>6</sup>

Saint Paul confirms the importance of "hearing" in his Letter to the Romans: *"So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."*<sup>7</sup> He asked the church in Galatia, *"Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?"*<sup>8</sup>

According to Hahn then, *"In the liturgy, the people assemble to hear the*

*terms of the law proclaimed, to bear witness to the oath, and to enact and renew the covenant. It involves more than just the republication of information—more than just 'reading them their rights.' It is a dialogue. The people hear the word of God and they respond in faith. Moses 'took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient' (Ex 24:7). To put it in more familiar terms: the assembly hears the readings in every liturgy, and they respond with the creed and the Anaphora*<sup>9</sup>*—the oath and the offering of sacrifice.*

*Implicit in every element of the process—proclamation, hearing, and response—is the divine authority of God's word. ... Men might violate their covenant oaths; but the 'word of the Lord' stood as an ultimate and irrevocable authority—a divine speech act. 'Let God be true though every man be false (Rom 3:4)."*<sup>10</sup>

In third-century Alexandria the Christian theologian Origen urged the adoption of a very practical piety toward both Scripture and Eucharist: *"You who are accustomed to attending the divine mysteries know how, when you receive the body of the Lord, you guard it with all care and reverence lest any small part should fall from it, lest any piece of the consecrated gift be lost. For you believe yourself guilty, and rightly so, if anything falls from there through your negligence. But if you are so careful to preserve his body, and rightly so, why do you think that there is less guilt to have neglected God's word than to have neglected his body?"*<sup>11</sup>

Subsequent to the Reformation, apologetics have at times reduced all

## To Dream Another Way *Encountering an epiphany*

**N**o matter how great the desire to foresee the future, to know what lies in store tomorrow and beyond, to anticipate and to know what yet awaits for gain or loss, prescience is for God alone. Life is a journey which requires countless course corrections without benefit of either map or direction.

For us, the future will always be unknowable and while that can be exciting and intriguing, providing opportunities to exercise our free will, it can also be terribly frightening and daunting, holding us back, even causing us to reverse course, seeking the nearest sanctuary.

At times we have to choose another road or move in new directions. It is in those moments—when fear, anxiety, and doubt grasp the heart and soul with their dark, cold hands—when epiphanies most often occur, assuming one is properly disposed to receive and accept such gifts. Epiphanies occur when least expected, requiring a willingness to recognize them when they appear.

Traditionally we celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord each year on January 6th, commemorating when Magi, wise men from the East arrived to give homage to the newborn king of the Jews.

There is a more mundane meaning of epiphany: a sudden and profound understanding of something.

And yet, there is an even deeper meaning of epiphany for which we should consider: when God appears or comes present to us. We seldom think of such moments as epiphanies and yet perhaps it would be wise for us to ponder those times when God has been most present in our lives: guiding us, carrying us, lifting us up, encouraging us to change direction, filling our souls with love and our hearts with courage.



**E**piphany is about changing course, going in a new direction and it happens to all of us. It happened to the Magi and the shepherds and it happens to each and every one of us during our brief temporal lives.

The Magi, who came from the east, followed the star westward. They left the familiar and traveled toward the unknown. They had nothing but the star to guide them and had no idea where it would lead them or how long the journey would take. Yet they made the journey.

Their journey certainly contains all the essential elements of high drama: a

long journey guided by a star, filled with unknown dangers, visions and dreams, daring escapes, and murderous threats.

**T**he Magi represent what is the noblest of mankind. They were, by all accounts, men of science, philosophy, and astrology; men seeking the truth. Their search drove them to alter the course of their lives, to travel westward to a foreign land, to see for themselves what came to them in their dreams.

They made the journey, despite the unknowns and the dangers, to give homage, not to the powerful and the strong but to a newborn child born in a stable. On their journey they met with Herod, then king of the Jews, inquiring where they might find the newborn king. Herod had long ruled Israel through subterfuge and unwavering cruelty, but his paranoia and psychopathic fear of any potential usurpation went well beyond reason. He was irrationally threatened by the mere thought of a poor defenseless powerless child of whom foreigners imputed to be the newborn king of the Jews.

Thus we are told that the Magi, having been warned in a dream, "*departed for their country by another way,*" not just geographically, but with an entirely new perspective on life and God. They traveled with a new spirit, filled with wonder, awe, and thanksgiving for having met their savior. They came and gave homage to God Incarnate and were changed forever.

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**W**hat the Magi experienced was an encounter with God, an epiphany most profound. They discovered truth in the Incarnate Word and gave due homage to him who would be king. God was present to them and they knew it without demurrer, doubt, or hesitation.

There are elements to this familiar Gospel passage which cry for greater explication. First, we find early Christian kerygma describing the messianic genealogy of Jesus and the prophetic pronouncement that he would be born in Bethlehem, the city of David, near the end of the reign of Herod the Great.

Kerygma is a Greek word found in the Gospels of Luke (LK 4:18-19) and Matthew (3:1) and also in the Letter to the Romans (10:14). Generally translated as “preaching” it is related to the Greek verb κηρύσσω *kērússō* which literally means “to cry or proclaim as a herald” used in the sense of “to proclaim, to announce, or to preach.” Some sources further define kerygma as “the apostolic proclamation of salvation through Jesus Christ.”

Widespread Hellenistic belief within the early Church held that the source of wisdom came from the East where the Magi originated. The star was a well-known symbol for the Messiah, as found in Numbers 24:17 “I see him, though not now; I behold him, though not near: A star shall advance from Jacob, and a staff shall rise from Israel, ...” This text played a prominent role

at Qumran, shaping the story of the Magi prior to Matthew’s account.

While not explicitly referenced by Matthew, other Old Testament texts influenced the formation of the Gospel narrative. We can see that the presentation of gold, frankincense, and myrrh are clearly based upon the first reading from Isaiah as well as from Psalm 72. Only the formulaic quotation from Micah 5:1 can be attributed to the evangelist with any degree of certainty. Finally we must note that while the thought of the Magi being Gentiles—although underscored at least as early as the 10th-century in the illuminated Latin Gregorian Sacramentary—it is not emphasized in the narrative itself; it most assuredly is present in the Old Testament Scriptures that lie behind it.

**O**ne of the three great Cappadocian Fathers, Basil the Great, spoke of the Epiphany in these words: “‘The star came to rest above the place where the child was. At the sight of it the wise men were filled with great joy’ and that great joy should fill our hearts as well. It is the same as the joy the shepherds received from the glad tidings brought by the angels.

*Let us join the wise men in worship and the shepherds in giving glory to God. Let us dance with the angels and sing: ‘To us is born this day a savior who is Christ the Lord. The Lord is God and he has appeared to us,’ not as God which would have terrified us in our weakness, but as a slave in order to free those living in slavery.*

*Could anyone be so lacking in sensibility and so ungrateful as not to join us all in our gladness, exultation, and radiant joy?*

*Stars cross the sky, wise men journey from pagan lands, earth receives its savior in a cave. Let there be no one without a gift to offer, no one without gratitude as we celebrate the salvation of the world, the birthday of the human race.”.*

**E**very day we start anew, with expectations for what lies ahead but with an awareness that circumstances may require us to move in a different and unanticipated direction. At times we may be forced to swerve or slow down for potholes or bumps in the road—like a chance encounter with a stranger, a passing billboard message, or even a gentle breeze. Or we may encounter a major obstacle that forces us to choose a different path, such as the loss of a job, a sudden illness, or even the death of someone whom we love.

And yet Epiphany reminds us that despite our uncertainties and doubt, despite the frequent and unexpected course corrections, roadside assistance is always available. We may never have a star to guide us as did the Magi or have heavenly hosts give us directions as did the shepherds but we can trust that God will show us the way if only we open our hearts and minds to an epiphany. Amen.

Homily for the  
The Epiphany of the Lord (A)  
Isaiah 60:1-6  
Ephesians 3:2-3A, 5-6  
Matthew 2:1-12

discussion of the liturgy to solely defending transubstantiation.

**E**ven Catholic apologists have emphasized—as unfortunate as it most assuredly is—the act of consecration while relegating scripture to an mostly incidental position.

*“The word is the Lord’s, but it is revealed to mankind. It must be written, but primarily so that it can be proclaimed ‘in the midst of the assembly’ (Sir 15:5) in every generation. Theologian Jeremy Driscoll said it with startling simplicity: ‘The book is a means to an end.’ And the end, he explained, is ‘the presence of the living Word in the midst of the believing assembly, accomplishing and extending to that assembly what has been accomplished in concrete historical events.’ Put, by Driscoll, into even more lapidary terms: ‘Scripture is the announcement of the Word of God; liturgy is its actualization.’”<sup>12</sup>*

Perhaps there is no better place to observe the importance and relationship between Scripture and liturgy than in Luke’s account of the conversation that took place on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-25).

It is a familiar passage in which we hear how two disciples, on the day that Jesus rose from the dead, were walking toward a village, Emmaus, talking about all the things that had occurred. And, as Luke tells us, *“it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.”* Jesus questions them and elicits their ac-

count of the past several days, to which they conclude, *“But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.”* Jesus then admonishes them for their lack of faith: *“Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”* He then, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, interpreted all that was referred of him in the scriptures, replacing it with a thoroughgoing exegesis of his own.

When they arrive at Emmaus, still unaware of who he was, the two disciples urge him to stay and dine with them and *“it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?’”* They returned to where the apostles were and *“recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.”*

**H**ere we see the liturgy in its most familiar and essential form with scripture proclaimed and opened up, followed by the breaking of the bread.

In the Emmaus encounter, the breaking of the bread, is referred to as a *koinonia*, a communion. This same term is found in Acts (2:42) to describe the church’s eucharistic fellowship and it is used twice in 1 Corinthians (10:16) to describe the Christian’s reception of the Eucharistic body and blood of Christ.

**C**hristians at liturgy receive a *“participation in the blood of Christ,”* *“a participation in the body of Christ,”* a share in his suffering, death, and resurrection. *“The Liturgy consists of this participation of the members of Christ’s mystical body in the mysteries which Christ, their Head, originally fulfilled.”*<sup>13</sup> *“Do you not know,”* Paul writes, *“that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”* (Rom 6:3).

*“This is why every Eucharistic liturgy conforms to the pattern established at Emmaus: the opening of the scriptures followed by the breaking of the bread, the liturgy of the word followed by the liturgy of the Eucharist. The Mass, then, is the place par excellence of the scriptures’ faithful reception. It is the place where, by grace and by habit, the scriptures are rendered most intelligible to the disciples and most potent to transform human lives.”*<sup>14</sup>

No matter how far back one travels, in any Biblical religion (Jewish or Christian) the proclamation of God’s word within the assembly has been both essential and required. In the ancient Jewish covenant the proclamation of scripture was public, communal, and liturgical and it remained so with the new covenant of Jesus Christ.

*“For both Jews and Christians, the scriptural texts, though historical in character, are not merely records of past events. The scriptures are intended to sweep the worshiper into their action. Liturgy is the privileged place of this ‘actualization’ of God’s word, because the liturgy is itself formed from the scriptures and by the scriptures. Scripture is, in this sense, for liturgy.*

All of scripture is intrinsically liturgical. Liturgy is like a golden thread that runs through the many pearls of salvation history and holds them together. Remember that the *oikonomia*, the divine economy, refers to all the acts by which God reveals himself and communicates his life. In the Old Testament, these acts often appear as liturgical acts—even when they take place in the midst of battles, family disputes, and the ordinary administration of a nation-state. The divine drama turns on ritual acts of worship, blessing, cursing, oath-swearing, fasting, penance, and, most significantly, sacrifice. In the New Testament, we discover that the liturgies of the Old Testament found typological fulfillment in the sacrifice of Christ. The New Testament reveals as well that Christ's unique sacrifice extends through time in the sacramental liturgy of the church."<sup>15</sup>

Modern Christianity has largely forgotten that Scripture is the word of God. Scripture is seldom read or heard outside of the liturgy for we no longer listen to his voice with any real sense of awe and wonder.

As Scott Hahn suggests, "today in large segments of the academy and even the Christian community, the Bible tends no longer to be read and studied as Scripture—a 'word' spoken by God to a community that acknowledges this word as authoritative and normative for its life and worship. Instead it is read as 'text,' a literary and historical artifact bearing no more or less meaning or legitimacy than any other product of ancient civilization.

The consequences of this shift in biblical understanding and interpretation have been felt in every area of Catholic and

Protestant faith and life—from doctrinal formulations and organizational structures to disciplines and worship."<sup>15</sup>

Hahn further contends: "Insofar as the canon of Scripture was established for use in the liturgy, and inasmuch as its content is 'about' liturgy, it follows that we must engage Scripture liturgically if we are to interpret these texts according to the original authors' intentions and the life-situation of the believing community in which these texts were handed on."

What ought to be clear at this point is essential and particular role that Scripture plays in the liturgy. Those who question its value show little regard for the word of God by their own words and actions. To take lightly the efficacy of the liturgy of the Word, displayed through their habitual lateness at liturgical celebrations, is to disrespect and trivialize God's Word. It is that important.

1. Scott Hahn, *Letter and Spirit: From Written Text to Living Word in the Liturgy*, (The Crown Publishing Group; 1st edition, November 8, 2005).
2. James A. Sanders, *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), p. 162.
3. *Letter and Spirit*.
4. Everett Ferguson, "Factors Leading to the Selection and Closure of the New Testament Canon," in McDonald and Sanders, p. 296.
5. Lk 4:16-17, 20-21.
6. *Letter and Spirit*.
7. Rom 10:17.
8. Gal 3:2.
9. The Anaphora is the most solemn part of the Divine Liturgy, or the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, during which the offerings of bread and wine are consecrated as the body and blood of Christ. This is the usual name for the part of the Liturgy in Greek-speaking Eastern Christianity. In western Christian traditions which have a comparable rite, the Anaphora is more often called the Eucharistic Prayer. When the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church had a single Eucharistic Prayer (between the Council of Trent and Vatican II) it was referred to as the Canon of the Mass.
10. *Letter and Spirit*.
11. Origen, On Exodus 13.3.
12. *Letter and Spirit*.
13. Danielou, *The Lord of History*, 259.
14. *Letter and Spirit*.
15. Scott Hahn, *Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic*, St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology, *Letter & Spirit I* (2005): 101-136.

## Deacon's Diner

### Food for a restless mind

For those restless minds that hunger and thirst for more. Each week this space will offer a menu of interesting and provocative titles, written by Catholic authors, in addition to those referenced in the articles, for you to feed your restless mind.

### BOOKS

**Faith Comes From What Is Heard**  
*Lawrence Feingold*  
Emmaus Academic  
July 8, 2016, 756 pages.

**Called To Communion**  
*Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger*  
Ignatius Press  
1996, 165 pages.

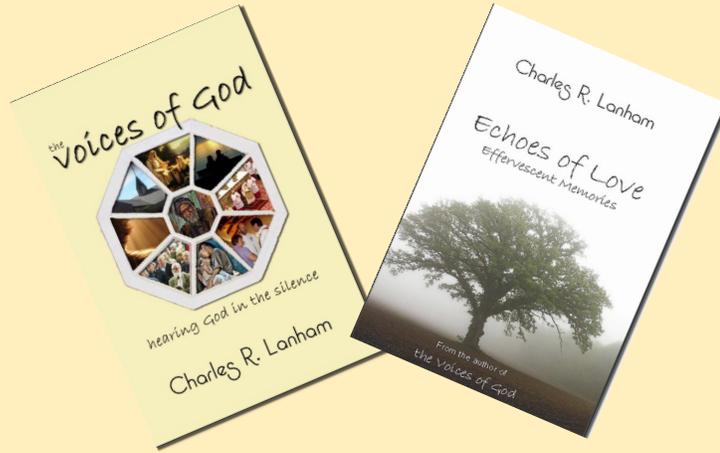
**Orthodoxy**  
*G. K. Chesterton*  
Digireads.com  
March 30, 2004, 121 pages.  
Originally published 1908.

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