



A journal for restless minds

FOOD FOR THE SOUL

Hunger satisfied, a meal complete

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DEACON'S DINER

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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.

Food For The Soul

Hunger satisfied, a meal complete

Whenever we come together to celebrate the liturgy we do so in prayer and thanksgiving for what we are about to receive. The liturgy is in every sense a healthy meal, in which we are fed full and sanctifying food, guaranteed to fill our souls with grace.

Each time we come before the table of the Lord, what is placed before us is a meal complete, carefully prepared to provide a balance of four essential food groups, each necessary for proper nourishment of the soul. Our souls, while incorporeal and immortal, still require nourishment in order to be found pleasing to God. Thus we must feed and care for our spiritual selves just as we do for our physical bodies.

At the West Coast Biblical Studies Conference last weekend, John Bergsma, Professor of Theology at the Franciscan

University of Steubenville, spoke, in part, of how we as members of the Body of Christ share in a full spiritual meal at every Mass. He outlined the four "food groups" which we partake with every liturgical sacrifice:

- 1) we receive apostolic teaching which fills our thoughts with God's love,
- 2) We feed our hearts by offering a portion of what we have received from God,
- 3) we satisfy our hunger for Christ's salvific death and resurrection in the breaking of the bread, and
- 4) We offer our prayers and petitions in thanksgiving to our heavenly Father for all the gifts we have received.



One thought, in addition to these "food groups": we are nourished by the music that fills our minds, hearts, and souls with joyful song in praise to God for all that we have received and are about to receive. Let us always be well-nourished by the love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Light Shines Forth

Piercing the dark night

Years ago, while on a business trip to the Northeast, what most drew my attention were the number of relatively new cars on the roads with rusted out fenders and lower door panels. Back then, during winter, salt was spread over pavements to melt the accumulated snow and ice, and inevitably, its corrosive effects would savagely burn away any metal that it came into contact.

Salt is generally considered a flavor-enhancer for the foods we eat. When we eat our food we can easily discern the presence, or absence, of salt, simply as a matter of taste. Yet, no one would cook a dish consisting of nothing but salt, would they? We put salt on chicken or beef or vegetables, dishes which we enjoy. They taste better with a dash of salt, and it is those dishes which we enjoy eating, not the salt.

So too, is it with light. We use light in order to be able to dispel the darkness, not to look at the light itself. As fascinating as modern day lighting might be to an engineer or a scientist, a lightbulb fascinates no one in its construction or properties beyond its illuminating capabilities. A light too bright or one of insufficient luminosity bothers the senses; you become aware of the light and not what should be illuminated by it.

Jesus said it, but Isaiah said it first: *"If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; if you bestow you bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday."*

Isaiah called for his nation to be a beacon of light; Jesus calls for his disciples to light the world on fire, to have an impact on all the nations. *"You are the light of the world. A City set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly father."*



We are called to be a lamp whose light of faith shines before all the world so that all might desire to give praise and glory to God. Yet, how often are we tempted to hide our faith, covering its light so that no one can see? Perhaps we hide our faith from the public eye, presuming there is no place for it in the "real" world. Or perhaps we keep the light of faith private—hidden under that bushel basket—under the false belief that faith and God are somehow irrelevant to

human society. Or perhaps, worst of all, we hide our faith to avoid possible ridicule or shaming.

Faith and God must never be hidden, never denied or disavowed. As Jesus said to his disciples: *"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned?"* It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot." Whenever we hide our faith, like salt, it goes flat, losing its taste, no longer of any use but to be trampled on by the world. It no longer has the power to change hearts, minds, societies, or cultures, it just mimics them.

The light of faith which Jesus calls each of us to be is neither loud nor silent; it is a faith that is always present, lighting the way out of the darkness, shining forth so that others may see God.

We are not called to outwardly communicate our faith by the eloquence of our words or by the wisdom of our arguments; we are not called to proselytize or to stand on street corners or doorways quoting chapter and verse; we are not called to convince or convict those who hold differing beliefs or no belief at all. No, we are called to be the salt and the light of the earth so that all can taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

For indeed, fiery speech and high-sounding words serve dishes that taste harsh, bitter, and cold to the tongue.

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Saint Paul understood this well, as we heard him tell the Corinthians: *"I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of Spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God."*

*"Clever argument and jaded rationalization are the very tools most often used to explain our faith away. The wisdom of a crucified God and the teaching of the Christ give little consolation and support to an acculturated mind."*¹

Sadly, we live in a time, a culture and a society that would too often rather ignore or dismiss faith in God as either superstitious nonsense, outdated, irrelevant, or all three. If truth be known, too much of the world now lies in the darkness of evil and the shadows of sin, blinded by a culture of self-actualization—the belief that the key to happiness is doing and buying and being anything you want, no matter the cost to anyone else—and self-aggrandizement—constantly promoting one's self as being powerful or important.

It's all about *"me"*. How often do we hear or find ourselves saying: *"I just want to be me," "I do whatever feels right," "I'm taking care of number one," "If it feels good, I do it."* This self-centric love affair is best articulated with the lyrics of the song *"I did It My Way"* sung by Frank Sinatra.

*I planned each charted course,
each careful step, along the byway,
and more, much more than this,
I did it my way.*

The message rings loud and clear: everything in life was of my own effort. I get all the credit because I did everything *"my way."* Egotism aside, there is a counterintuitive sense of fear in this self-promoting attitude.

Unspoken and unacknowledged is a feeling of not being truly free to be one's self, of not being in complete control, of having someone else pulling the strings.

*"The world and its population are very, very large and it is no surprise that mass production and mass advertising and mass purchasing give us the feeling that we are just cogs in a wheel: a giant, international, industrial wheel, worth very little in ourselves but contributing to the market as long as we do and buy what is dictated. So, 'to do it my way' could be a statement about facing down the great machine and defying it outright. The scriptures assume the opposite. They suppose that every human being is created with an unrepeatable, deep, interior shape. Rather than having to fight to do my own will, I need to allow the Spirit of God to find a home within the space that is me. This Spirit does not invade me, it is the essence of loving, of respect, of forgiveness. It is God. You and I are built to be at one with this presence. Becoming myself means becoming what I was built to be: a home for the Spirit of Jesus and of God."*²

Jesus calls us to be a light to the world, to enable the beauty of all that God has made to be seen. He does not call for us to call attention to

ourselves. Let's face it, if you are aware of the light in the room, it is too bright. For our light should enable others to see something other than ourselves. Our vocation as Christians is to live a life that shines so that those living in darkness can see the Lord, the one true light of the world.

So also, as salt of the earth, we are called to add an appealing taste to the people of the earth to hear, see, and taste the goodness of the Lord.

As John Chrysostom taught, *"Therefore Christ said: 'Let your light so shine before all, that people may see your good works and praise your Father in heaven.'*

This is a light that reaches not only the bodily senses, but illuminates also the beholder's mind and soul. It disperses the darkness of evil, and invites those who encounter it to let their own light shine forth, and to follow the example of virtue...

*Let your virtue, the perfection of your life, and the performance of good works inspire those who see you to praise the common Master of us all. And so I beg each of you to strive to live so perfectly that the Lord may be praised by all who see you."*³

Amen.

Homily for the
The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
Isaiah 58:7-10
1 Corinthians 2:1-5
Matthew 5:13-16

1. John Kavanaugh, SJ, *Christian Faith and Politics*, The Sunday Website of St. Louis University.

2. John Foley, SJ, *Becoming Who We Are*, The Sunday Website of St. Louis University.

3. John Chrysostom, *Eighth Baptismal Catecheses 4, 18-26. 33:SC 50, 192-193. 196. 199, (C347-407AD).*

On Holy Ground

Know that the Lord is near

When Moses came to Horeb, the mountain of God, and spied a bush which was burning yet was not consumed, he was curious to discover why the bush was not burnt. As he approached, God called out of the bush to Moses and said, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.¹

In the final chapters of the Book of Exodus (37-40), Moses is instructed by God to build the Ark of the Covenant, the Table for the Bread of the Presence, the Lampstand, the Altar of Incense, the Altar of Burnt Offering, the Court of the Tabernacle, and various vestments, oils and incense. The Tabernacle was where the Ark was placed, screened by a veil, which only the high priest could approach, and then only once a year.

"So Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would go onward; but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not go onward till the day that it was taken up. For through-

*out all their journeys the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel."*²

Throughout Scripture and for nearly two millennia of Church history, the Tabernacle and the space surrounding it has been considered "holy ground," the place where God was most visibly present, where, like Moses, man knelt in great awe and reverence, and with fear of the Lord.



That disposition toward revering the presence of Christ in the Tabernacle resting within the Sanctuary in the house of God seems to have faded away, lost in the panoply of social exigencies and a steady deterioration in the belief and devotion in our Creator God.

We often tend to forget ourselves whenever we are in the holy presence of God, wishing to socialize with friends and fellow disciples in Christ, but are such actions appropriate? There are many who wish to take the opportunity before, during, and after Mass to silently and devoutly pray yet find it difficult to do so with so many

conversations breaking the sacred silence on holy ground.

Cardinal Robert Sarah has observed that "Many Catholics rightly complain about the absence of silence in ... the celebration of our Roman liturgy. It is ... important, therefore, to recall the meaning of silence as a Christian ascetical value, and therefore as a necessary condition for deep, contemplative prayer, without forgetting the fact that times of silence are officially prescribed during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, so as to highlight the importance of silence for a high-quality liturgical renewal."³

General norms of the Catholic Church provide guidance and explanation for the necessity of silence. Before Mass there should be a general atmosphere of silence. This does not exclude a quiet word of greeting, a nod of recognition or a friendly handshake among parishioners. What should be avoided is the steadily rising hum of multiple conversations in the pews, often on frivolous themes, interrupted only by the announcement that the celebration is about to begin.

When this happens the result is that while the body and the voice are ostensibly raised in prayer, the mind carries on the theme of conversation. In contrast, an overall spirit of silence allows for an easy transition from the world to the celebration of the mystery.

The General Instruction of the

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Roman Missal, in No. 45, says: "Sacred silence also, as part of the celebration, is to be observed at the designated times. Its purpose, however, depends on the time it occurs in each part of the celebration. ... Even before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence to be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner."

After Mass, the most charitable approach is to quietly leave the main body of the Church so as to facilitate the recollection of those who wish to extend their personal thanksgiving for Communion. This quiet is similar to the situation before Mass as it does not exclude a friendly greeting. But actual conversation should not begin until outside.

Silence is an important component of the Liturgy as well. "All parishes should allow for silence in the church as soon as one enters into it, for to enter into a Catholic Church is to pull back the door into heaven itself. But alas, too many churches are more and more like meeting places of gossip and idle chit-chat before Mass. Yet most priests fail to address the issue of silence in their churches. To speak up—even politely—to people in the parish is to be met with consternation and a look of bewilderment as well as the typical response that 'Mass hasn't started yet'...or 'Mass is over'. They fail to give any acknowledgment that Jesus is still present in the reserved Eucharist. Thus Mass is often reduced to somewhat of a show. On the door to the Monastery of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Manchester, NH is a sign which says, 'For the sake of Jesus pre-

sent in the tabernacle kindly maintain silence in this place'. ...

In the Old Testament the (minor) prophet, Habakkuk declared to the people of ancient Israel in his oracle of the same name: 'the LORD is in his holy temple; silence before him, all the earth. The prophet Zephaniah likewise calls for silence: 'Silence in the presence of the Lord God!...Yes, the LORD has prepared a sacrifice...'. If these two prophets called for silence before the presence of God how much more should we, the people of the New Testament, be silent before Jesus present in the tabernacle—Body, Blood, Soul & Divinity."⁴

"Our modern world is starved of silence and Holy Mass should be a privileged moment to escape the hustle and bustle of daily life and, through worship and participation in Christ's eternal sacrifice, become capable of giving an eternal value to these same daily and transitory activities.

To help achieve this, we should foment by all available means the spirit of attentive and active silence in our celebrations and refrain from importing the world's clamor and clatter into their midst."⁵

To be silent is to breathe in quiet moments. You cannot breathe in and speak at the same time. To speak you must breathe out thus breaking the silence. You must be silent in order to breathe in the Breath of God. You must be silent to hear His Voice.⁶

1. Exodus 3:1-6.
2. Exodus 40:33-38.
3. Robert Cardinal Sarah, *Silence in the Liturgy*, *L'Osservatore Romano*, January 30, 2016.
4. Cynthia Trainque, *On The Importance of Silence in the Liturgy*, catholicexchange.com, June 29, 2016.
5. Father Edward McNamara, *Sounds of Silence*, (Rome: A ZENIT Daily Dispatch, January 20, 2004).
6. Charles Lanham, *The Voices Of God*, (Reno, NV: Deacon's Corner Publishing, 2014), 12.

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.

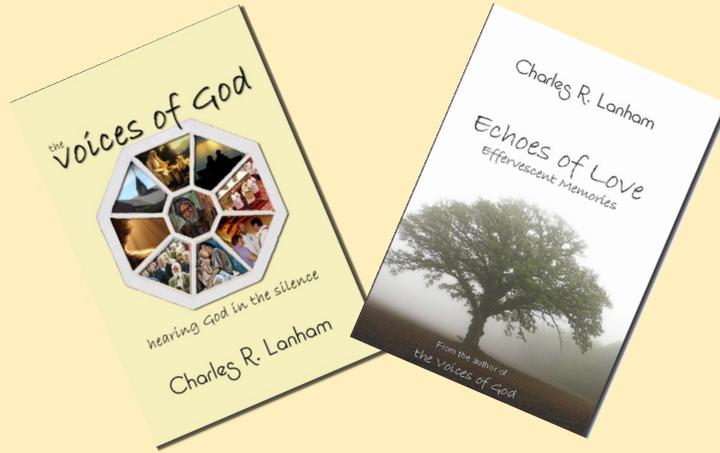
Orthodoxy
G. K. Chesterton
Digireads.com
March 30, 2004, 121 pages.
Originally published 1908.

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

Catholic Answers Magazine
Share the Faith, Defend the Faith
Editor: Tim Ryland
Bi-Monthly.
www.catholic.com



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

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