

# Colloquī

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A journal for restless minds

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*Thinking is hard work*

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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.

## Mere Celebrity

*Thinking is hard work*

When did mere celebrity become the model of cerebrality? Why are the words of thespians,

divas, fashionistas or notorious gutter-snipes accepted as gospel, every uttered syllable sliced, diced, shaken not stirred, then swallowed whole by so many as if they were drinking champagne rather than Kool-Aid laced with vile vomitus, bilious bile and more than a touch of animus acid?

One possible answer to the second question—by no means the only one—is that we have become too lazy to think. To put it plainly, thinking is hard work; it requires a lot of time and patience, exacerbated by the cornucopia of sources

available (books, magazines, video, Internet, Social Media, etc., etc.) The list is seemingly endless which exhausts the mind just thinking of them all.

With all this, the task appears too onerous, too difficult even to contemplate, so we simply give up. We don't

even try to think for ourselves; it is far easier to allow others to do the hard work for us. In short, we choose not to think, we become an "a-gnostic," a "non-knower."



The mind is like a muscle, it must be exercised and properly nourished in order to

function as it should. Unlike muscles which are a common attribute shared by all species of animal, the mind (as distinguished from the brain) is uniquely human. Man alone possesses a mind; man alone can reason and think abstractly.

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# The Seed We Sow

## Thoughts of our Fathers

**T**houghts of our fathers come too few and far between and are generally of a completely different sort from those of our mothers. For instance, this Sunday is Father's Day, last month we had Mother's Day. Two days set aside each year to honor the two people most directly responsible for our very existence.

There are differences of course, between mother and father, some good, some not so good; some things we will always cherish and remember, others we would sooner forget than recall. Parental love is different as well, it has a decidedly different taste and feel to it, whether it is a mother's love or a father's. At least that is often our perception, especially when we are children growing up. And our love for our mothers and fathers differs as well, in many ways.

As a parent and a father and now a grandfather, I look forward to Father's Day, but I can't help but notice how different Father's Day is from Mother's Day. For instance, on Mother's Day, mothers are given flowers or candy or both, a beautiful card full of warm sentiment and praise, and more often than not, taken out for breakfast or lunch or dinner or perhaps all three. The message is clear: Mom, thanks. Take a well-deserved day off, relax and enjoy your day.

But then, and this is where I find myself most perplexed, comes Father's Day. Father's Day cards are generally

humorous or slapstick silly; and instead of flowers or candy, fathers are tossed a bag of charcoal, some lighter fluid and a match, a pile of steaks or chicken, and, almost as an afterthought, wished happy Father's Day, immediately followed by "When do we eat?"

As the father of two daughters, I honestly must admit that I was not perfect—fathers are human after all—but then, living with three women who I love with all my heart and soul, the last time I was right was the day I said, "I do."



**W**e seldom think much of seeds; I dare say, we may never think of seeds at all. We stand before a majestic cedar and see a tree, not the seed from which it sprang and yet, without the seed there would be no cedar, without the seed there would be no mustard plant, without the seed there would be no you nor I, without the seed there would be no salvation nor need of it.

The reign of God is a living and growing thing, it comes from the seed,

planted by God, who grew to become man. God, the Father of us all, became man to show us what it means, what it takes, to be a good father. It takes more than scattering seed on the land and then walking away.

**L**ife is like a seed, it is slow and subtle. Love also is like a seed, taking time to show and grow; both life and love do not instantly emerge full bloom. Life is a long parade of inconsequential moments; each moment unremarkable, often imperceptible. Children grow before our eyes, but they age imperceptibly. We blink and short becomes taller, blink again and they have grown taller still. We see them grow but never age, that is until the child is child no more.

Fathers, good fathers, are all too keenly aware that they stand in constant judgment, wondering if they are making progress, parenting wisely, hoping they are doing what is right. And yet, we are seldom aware of whether what we do and say has any good effect. At times, it is enough to make a grown man cry. .

There comes a time when seed grows tall and straight, and branches sprout, and new seeds are sown; it is the cycle of life which God has ordained. Too often we fail to see the whole of life, and we sell ourselves and God short. As Saint Paul points out, "while we are at home in the body," living our lives in the here and now, we can only walk with the Lord by faith, not by sight. But life is forever, one day we will "leave the body

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and go home to the Lord," to stand in judgment before Christ, "so that each may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil."

**W**e will not be judged on how much we sow but, on the quality of our care and the bounty of the harvest we grow for God. If we scatter seed with little care for what and where we sow, our neglect will produce poor fruit. If we sow seed on fertile soil, tend it, care and feed it, and watch it grow, the fruit will be rich and the harvest bountiful, and pleasing to God.

The seed that we sow will bear fruit. It is how we attend to the seed after we plant it that will determine whether it grows tall and strong and pleasing to the Lord or shrivels and wilts from lack of nourishment.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta, when a journalist observed that she could never be successful in meeting the needs of all those who were dying in the streets of Calcutta responded, "I am not called to be successful, I am called to be faithful." We do the sowing, God does the growing and together we will reap a bountiful harvest.

Happy Father's Day. So, when do we eat?

Amen.

Homily #179  
Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
Ezekiel 17:22-24  
2 Cor 5:6-10  
Mark 4:26-34

Wishing you a

## Blessed and Happy Father's Day



### Prayer to St. Joseph

*Blessed Joseph, husband of Mary,  
be with us this day.  
You protected and cherished the Virgin;  
loving the Child Jesus as your Son,  
you rescued Him from the danger of death.  
Defend the Church, the household of God,  
purchased by the blood of Christ.  
Guardian of the Holy Family,  
be with us in our trials.  
May your prayers obtain for us  
the strength to flee from error  
and wrestle with the powers of corruption  
so that in life we may grow in holiness  
and in death rejoice  
in the crown of victory.  
Amen.*

## 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

**Thoughtful Theism**  
*Fr. Andrew Younan*  
Emmaus Road Publishing  
2017, 200 pages.

**Coming Soon**  
*Michael Barber*  
Emmaus Road Publishing  
2005, 326 pages.

**Strangers in a Strange Land**  
*Charles J. Chaput*  
Henry Holt and Co.  
February 21, 2017, 288 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)



## Young, Déjà Vu

*Nothing new under the sun*

**T**he coming of a certain age—one and seventy the most recent vintage—proves little beyond a peculiar narrowness of imagination and shallowness of thought when stood against such weathered monuments, testaments to ancient hands which inconceivably moved mountains, conquered the law of gravity and created unimaginable beauty from common clay and lifeless stone.

Arrogance commands no respect from the worn and stubborn climb, each stone a sneer, borne of common insolence, suffering not from the complaints of those far too young to acknowledge each and every well-worn step its storied past. Against the tapestry of long ago, no man of any age may outlast the endless thread of once and then and once before.

Youthful eyes see but illusions, hints of lavender deny the musty scent of yesteryear's bouquet; ancient images are cast aside with neither thought nor care, wiped away as little more than rustic stains upon the balustrade, neither worth a mention nor reprieve, as is every ancient decrepitude, for such "old" things are neither of their own design nor serve such youthful purpose.

Like a tired dusty canvas, worn and faded, the world cries out for restoration. Antiquity weeps and mourns

for the loss and careless disregard of artifacts first conceived within the minds of giants; such magnificent visions, born out of time and place, are readily dismissed by fools too much the fool to believe in any original thought they cannot call their own.



**T**he grape cares nothing for the ancient vine, nestled close among kith and kin; youth owns little notice of the old except that they are not; they know nothing much at all but then remain quite confident they know more than doddering doltish fools who stubbornly refuse to yield away what is youths' rightful place. The past and future brook no favor to the early morning snobbish crowd. Eyes, unaccustomed to the harsh glaring light of day, blind themselves to avoid inflicting the nascent mind with uselessness and clutter; "was" and "will be" are but cruel, unbidden strangers to "is" and "are", un-

welcome consequences of yesterday and tomorrow.

**A**ge is a gift, a totem, and a testament to the timelessness and creative power of God. It is a sacred reliquary, whose contents evidence the breadth and height and depth of mind and spirit, which comes from the product of God's creative genius, man. Age, properly amused, countermands the clock, denying time permission to proceed apace. Age is relative after all, idle thoughts and borrowed memories, and a fresh surprise of sunrise invigorate the spirit, clear the mind, and renew the soul.

Walk through ancient artifacts which have long withstood storm and tempest, rebuked assaults by lesser gods and laughed at Kronos' ineptitude; remnants and relics of ages past testify to the magnificent achievements of better men.

Walls, built upon the dust and bones of mortal man, still stand proud and strong unbowed by ball and bow; wars and battles won and lost, and yet, the monuments remain, unmoved and resolute, testaments to the determined genius of the best of men, now all but forgotten by the worst of them.

Youth finds little interest in antiquated oddments for such drear and droll are neither new enough nor relevant to the fleeting passions of the moment. This aversion is of course a consistency of youth rather than any peculiarity of habit.

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**W**hat youth desires is Peter Pan, to live without the discomfiture of admitting the inevitability of aging. Youth and wisdom are like grape and wine, the first a nascent state of being: fresh and new, firm and smooth, full of life and innocence. Wine and wisdom differ altogether, wholly contrived byproducts of age and process, neither native to the species but developed over time by learned and devoted hands. Experience, age, and righteous judgment are the necessary ingredients for attaining wisdom; absent one or two or even three denies a proper baking, producing little more than wild conjecture and dullish bother from blissfully bonkered blatherskites.

One may be young at any age for it is the essence and quality of the spirit; unlike youth which but briefly blossoms, then either ripens and matures or quickly sours, rots and inevitably decays. It matters not what life has wrought nor toward which end of mortality one now stands, the spirit knows neither age nor ending, it is eternal and thus, quite literally, forever young. It is perhaps mere happy happenstance, or better yet, sweet serendipity which stays the heart from demented dotage; whatever the circumstance: to feel young, breathe in the wisdom and the beauty of the past; to be young, stand before the works of ancient artisans who crafted lasting monuments far advanced of the tepid swill and shallow achievements of modernity.

Gaze with awesome wonder upon marbled forms carved by Michelangelo, the engineering designs of Leonar-

do da Vinci or the magnificent altar art of Caravaggio; climb the nearly two miles of some two thousand uneven steps to reach the battlements high above Kotor—the same, will of necessity, be demanded upon your descent, requiring something more than twice the effort as going up; stop to catch your breath and pray for the strength to complete the climb at the chapel of Saint John, midway through your arduous ascent; receive the Eucharist, celebrated in Croatian, in the tenth-century Basilica of Dubrovnik; or study the 8,000 square kilometers of mosaic art beneath the eleventh-century Basilica of San Marcos built

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among the canals of Venice, a city founded sixteen hundred years ago. No matter the age, the spirit will of necessity be renewed, the soul will sing young again and, to blatantly borrow a phrase, the spirit will be made young *déjà vu* all over again.

**A**merica's youthful arrogance and champagne myopia find little use or need for middle-age. It is by all appearances true, as a matter of narcissistic hubris, that the only proper spot for a thing determined "old" is the pasture or the

grave. Equally true is the constant and annoying habit of judging the "old" as completely lacking in utility or serving no longer a needful purpose.

**O**ne example should suffice to prove the point: the all-too-common compulsion and frantic pace to raze and replace so-called "old" outdated professional sports venues—none constructed more than fifty years ago, more commonly no more than half that age—always generously financed at the public trough by those whose game is pork for the sole benefit of over-fed, morbidly obese, pork-bellied investors.

Compare such wanton disregard to the continued use and honest respect granted such magnificent achievements as Saint Peter's Basilica or the Papal Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran in Rome, the Basilica of Saint Mark in Venice, or any one of the thousands of churches which are to be found throughout Italy and elsewhere on the continent. Most built between the fourth and fifteenth centuries, all richly appointed with priceless works of art generously funded by private donors, open to the public to appreciate while continuing to serve the spiritual needs of God's holy people.

Older yet, are the rich preserves of archeological artifacts which visibly serve to prove how insignificant have been more recent advances. Gaze upon the Parthenon, the Coliseum, the Pantheon (a former Roman temple, now a church dedicated to Saint Mary and the Martyrs) or walk among the ruins on the Greek Island of Delos, or the urban remains uncovered on Santorini

built three millennia ago, or the ancient remains of the city of Ephesus.

Some twenty-nine centuries have come and gone since Qoheleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem, observed the vanity of man (Eccl 1:2-3, 9-10):

<sup>2</sup>*Vanity of vanities, says Qoheleth, vanity of vanities! All things are vanity.*

<sup>3</sup>*What profit have we from all the toil which we toil at under the sun?*

<sup>9</sup>*What has been, that will be; what has been done, that will be done. Nothing is new under the sun.*

<sup>10</sup>*Even the thing of which we say, "See, this is new!" has already existed in the ages that preceded us.*

Those of an honest virtue would admit—should one care to acknowledge pursuing such a modest course—that there is indeed *"nothing new under the sun."*

Walk through the ruins on the Greek island of Delos and anyone with eyes can readily discern that modern plumbing is an ancient contrivance. Look upon the pyramids or buildings constructed ages past and one could, with near historical certainty, conclude that such ancient artifacts—built upon the backs of honest men, not the braces of man-made machinery—will continue to stand long after all the modern monstrosities of steel and glass have crumbled into rust and rubble.

Modern engineering owes a debt to the creative genius of the likes of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, for such genius has provided the fundamental concepts, working studies and exquisite drawings upon which

modernity has greedily plagiarized to call their own.

What strikes with the force of Mjölnir<sup>1</sup> are the rich magnificent structures constructed so long ago solely for the worship of man's Creator, God. Modernity has clearly lost much of its taste for the divine; so often now empty desserts have replaced the entrée on the menu; God has become a side-dish, an unwanted aftertaste, if not absent from the menu altogether.

Youth must be allowed some latitude with certain heresies of thought and judgment for their youthful innocence betrays them. Not so with those older and supposedly wiser, they cannot be so readily forgiven their steadfast vacuity; indeed, their guilt is multiplied when they inflict such aberrant thought upon the innocence of youth through their own vincible ignorance<sup>2</sup>.

Modern man has acquired, to its everlasting detriment, a serious corruption of the spirit, a rapacious rot devouring the soul. It is nothing less than an addiction to self-indulgent pleasures at the expense of freedom. As Chesterton observed "The modern idea is that cosmic truth is so unimportant that it cannot matter what any one says." He adds, "Never has there been so little discussion about the nature of men as now, when, for the first time, any one can discuss it. The old restriction meant that only the orthodox were allowed to discuss religion. Modern liberty means that nobody is allowed to discuss it."<sup>3</sup> Mind that Chesterton wrote this more than a century in the past, yet, it still rings true today.

Chesterton wrote with genuine praise for those with whom he disagreed, steadfastly refusing to disparage anyone for their views. Instead he would carefully provide an accurate and approving summation of another's philosophy, no matter how much he might disagree or find it offensive, and then admit to their heresy. Bernard Shaw was a frequent target, a "friendly enemy" of whom he would write, "I am not concerned with Mr. Bernard Shaw as one of the most honest men alive; I am concerned with him as a Heretic—that is to say, a man whose philosophy is quite solid, quite coherent, and quite wrong."

Imagine living at the turn of the last century, the beginning of the twentieth century. The world was as mad then as it is today. The freedom to speak openly and freely, to expressing a philosophy was then and is now looked upon as old-fashioned and unimportant. Again, Chesterton wrote:

There is one thing that is infinitely more absurd and unpractical than burning a man for his philosophy. This is the habit of saying that his philosophy does not matter, and this is done universally in the twentieth century ... General theories are everywhere condemned; the doctrine of the Rights of Man is dismissed with the doctrine of the Fall of Man. Atheism itself is too theological for us today. Revolution itself is too much a system; liberty itself is too much a restraint. We will have no generalizations. Mr. Bernard Shaw has

put the view in a perfect epigram: "The golden rule is that there is no golden rule." We are more and more to discuss details in art, politics, literature. A man's opinion on tramcars matters; his opinion on Botticelli matters; his opinion on all things does not matter. He may turn over and explore a million objects, but he must not find that strange object, the universe; for if he does he will have a religion, and be lost. Everything matters—except everything.

Whenever we hear someone say, "Life is not worth living," we most often liken it to someone saying it was a rotten day; such statements are seldom taken seriously. Yet, Chesterton suggests if such an "utterance were really believed, the world would stand on its head." With amazing accuracy, he wrote:

Murderers would be given medals for saving men from life; firemen would be denounced for keeping men from death; poisons would be used as medicines; doctors would be called in when people were well; the Royal Humane Society would be rooted out like a horde of assassins. Yet we never speculate as to whether the conversational pessimist will strengthen or disorganize society; for we are convinced that theories do not matter. ...

The modern idea is that cosmic truth is so unimportant that it cannot matter what any one says. ... Never has there been so little dis-

cussion about the nature of men as now, when, for the first time, anyone can discuss it. The old restriction meant that only the orthodox were allowed to discuss religion. Modern liberty means that nobody is allowed to discuss it.

I must admit to never having read Chesterton before. On my travels, a friendly library of unmet companions always accompanies me for those few idle moments which arrive with maddening infrequency. Sometimes I fancy a certain book, more often a book fancies me. Whatever the case might be, this book suited both our fancies perfectly. A final parable from this colossal genius:

Suppose that a great commotion arises in the street about something, let us say a lamp-post, which many influential persons desire to pull down. A grey-clad monk, who is the spirit of the Middle Ages, is approached upon the matter, and begins to say, in the arid manner of the Schoolmen, "Let us first of all consider, my brethren, the value of Light. If Light be in itself good—" At this point he is somewhat excusably knocked down. All the people make a rush for the lamp-post, the lamp-post is down in ten minutes, and they go about congratulating each other on their unmediaeval practicality. But as things go on they do not work out so easily. Some people have pulled the lamp-post down because they wanted the electric light; some because they wanted old iron; some because they wanted dark-

ness, because their deeds were evil. Some thought it not enough of a lamp-post, some too much; some acted because they wanted to smash municipal machinery; some because they wanted to smash something. And there is war in the night, no man knowing whom he strikes. So, gradually and inevitably, today, tomorrow, or the next day, there comes back the conviction that the monk was right after all, and that all depends on what is the philosophy of Light. Only what we might have discussed under the gas-lamp, we now must discuss in the dark.

The past never changes; the present is the past; there is nothing new under the sun.

1. In Norse mythology, Mjölñir is the hammer of Thor, the Norse god associated with thunder. Mjölñir is depicted in Norse mythology as one of the most fearsome and powerful weapons in existence, capable of leveling mountains.
2. Vincible ignorance is a lack of knowledge for which a person is morally responsible. It is culpable ignorance because it could be cleared up if the person used sufficient diligence. One is said to be simply (but culpably) ignorant if one fails to make enough effort to learn what should be known; guilt then depends on one's lack of effort to clear up the ignorance. That person is crassly ignorant when the lack of knowledge is not directly willed but rather due to neglect or laziness; as a result the guilt is somewhat lessened, but in grave matters a person would still be gravely responsible. A person has affected ignorance when one deliberately fosters it in order not to be inhibited in what one wants to do; such ignorance is gravely wrong when it concerns serious matters. (Etym. Latin *vincibilis*, easily overcome; *ignorantia*, want of knowledge or information.)
3. G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936), *Heretics*. Chesterton was and is well known for his reasoned apologetics and even some of those who would disagree with him have recognized the universal appeal of such works as *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man*. As a political thinker, Chesterton cast aspersions with equal delight on both progressivism and conservatism, saying, "The whole modern world has divided itself into Conservatives and Progressives. The business of Progressives is to go on making mistakes. The business of the Conservatives is to prevent the mistakes from being corrected."

The problem is, we don't. Like Maynard G. Krebs we have developed a deep aversion to anything akin to thought work. Rather than exercise our minds and make a serious effort to know, we simply pick up our smartphone. After all, there must be an app for that.

Father Andrew Younan describes the differences between thinking, believing, and opinion this way:

Thinking is hard work. That's why, if I can make a mean generalization, so few people do it. Believing is, in itself, pretty easy, though oftentimes the consequences of belief can be deeply challenging. Having an opinion is the easiest thing of all. *Thinking* is the process whereby our minds attempt to arrive at a true understanding of reality, which, if successful, leads to *knowledge* ("I know there is ice at the South Pole"). *Believing* is affirming something about reality. It can (and should) be the result of thinking as well, to the greatest degree possible ("I believe that Jesus rose from the dead"). Having an opinion is affirming something about yourself ("My favorite color is red"). There's nothing hard there, unless perhaps you have a bad opinion of *Citizen Kane* and express that opinion at a film school.<sup>1</sup>

Saint Augustine reminds us that there is price we must pay for choosing not to think. "Remember, you will be faulted not because you are ignorant

against your will, but because you neglect to seek out what makes you ignorant."

No one wants to admit they don't know something, no one wants to appear stupid. So, when faced with such a dilemma, we immediately deploy evasive maneuvers, hoping to deflect attention away from our own ignorance. This is terribly easy to do; that is why we use evasive tactics so often.

When asked, "Why is there something rather than nothing?", Lawrence Krauss simply dismisses the question as uninteresting: "Either way, what is really useful is not pondering this question, but rather participating in the exciting voyage of discovery that may reveal specifically how the universe in which we live evolved and is evolving and the processes that ultimately operationally govern our existence."<sup>2</sup> What Krauss does here is more than simply refuse to answer the question, he refuses to ask it. He refuses to even think about it and in doing so he avoids learning and knowing the truth, which might run counter to his beliefs.

We have succumbed to the mantra that thinking and the acquisition of knowledge is the sole domain of science. Science answers the how and we are more than satisfied with that; but, it cannot address the why. Science speaks the language of mathematics; it draws conclusions with precision based on empirical data and repeatable experiment. But, to rely on science for answers to the whys is like asking a blind man to describe a rainbow or a deaf mute to sing a lullaby.

Technology, the product of applied science, has allowed us to advance in knowing the how but at a great cost. The adage "Use it or lose it," generally associated with athletics, applies equally to the mind. The less one exercises the mind, the more rapid the deterioration in the ability to think and recognize reality and truth.

Technology has made it easy—too easy some (myself included) would say—for anyone to acquire information on virtually any subject. Information is just a click away, and yet, information is not knowledge absent considered and studied thought. Technology has made it possible to acquire information without thought, without effort. It is as arduous a mental exercise as using a remote while comfortably ensconced in a La-Z-Boy. In point of fact, it is far worse than one might suppose, for a remote, while multifunctional, simply controls the operation of some device, such as turning it on or off. It is mindlessly simple because it has no mind, no intelligence, no capability to act on its own.

The use of information technology—a combination of hardware devices (computers, tablets, smartphones, etc.) and software (Internet, social media, etc.)—have diametrically altered how we use (or not) our minds. Technology has opened up a vast store of information to virtually everyone, but like Pandora's box, once opened, the treasure of all that is good or bad, true or false, holy or profane is presented naked and raw, without comment or consequence. Technology cannot think, it can only regurgitate. It is incapable of reason. It may have a brain,



but it does not have a mind. Intelligence is an attribute of the human mind, it is the measure of our ability to think, to reason, and to know.

**A**rtificial Intelligence is a delusional fantasy, a chimera foisted upon the unwary by madmen who would play god. Intelligence is neither a mathematical function nor an algorithm, it is a property of a reasoning, thinking, human mind. No machine, no matter how fast, complex or capable, can replicate the human mind, for the mind is incorporeal; it is not the brain.

Perhaps one day, science will be able to replicate the brain, but the brain is like that remote control device, it controls other things. The brain controls the nervous system and most of the activities of the body, processing integrating, and coordinating information received from the physical sense organs and then sending instructions to the rest of the body. It bears repeating: the brain is not the mind. A computer has a brain (CPU) but has no mind—and never will.

“Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord” (Isaiah 1:18). Man alone, of all God’s creatures, has been given a mind with intelligence, capable of reasoning and rational thought, and free will to think or to not. Some things simply cannot be delegated or relegated, such as our ability to reason or to think for ourselves.

That is not to admit more than what might first appear. The degree to which we exercise our minds to think and to reason is independent of the

measure of our intelligence. Rational thought and intelligence are too often conflated. Anyone, of *any* intelligence, can think, can reason, and can ask “Why?” or ask for proof or clarification. Everyone should, most of us seldom do.

Some things are simply too important to accept *prima facie*. One example should suffice. At the Golden Globes earlier this year, Oprah Winfrey, upon accepting the Cecil B. DeMille Award famously stated: “What I know for sure is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have.” This statement, more than any other, was widely reported, quoted and wildly acclaimed by virtually all media and social media alike. None questioned the truth of her statement. It was taken as the gospel truth, so help us all, Oprah.

Not withstanding the hyperbole and the assumed omniscience, what should a reasonable person think? Perhaps we should think about it for a moment.

What evidence does she provide for her unsupported claim to sure and certain knowledge? How could she absolutely proof-positively know what is in the thoughts and minds of all, unless of course, she believes she is a goddess with omniscience and omnipresence? Obviously, to some her statement was hyperbolic, but how many took it to be the gospel truth?

**A**nd then there is that phrase, so catchy and empowering, those two little words: “**your truth.**” Where were the questions which should have been asked? Your truth? Individual truth is a fiction

played upon the mind, a delusion. If your truth differs from reality, how can it be truth? If my truth tells me the sun no longer shines, and your truth is in opposition to my truth, how can both be truth?

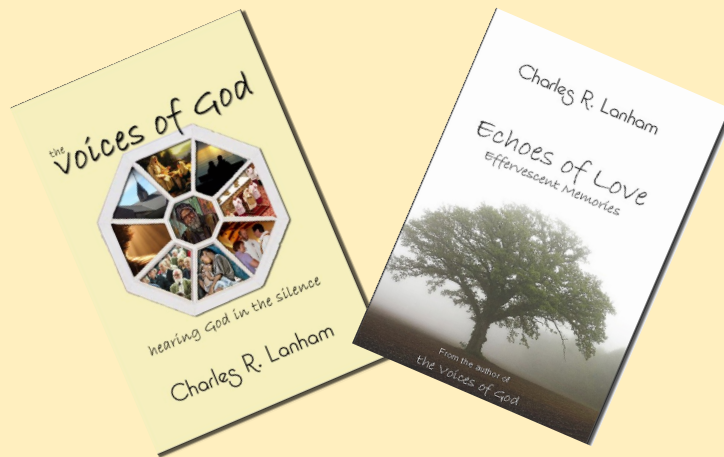
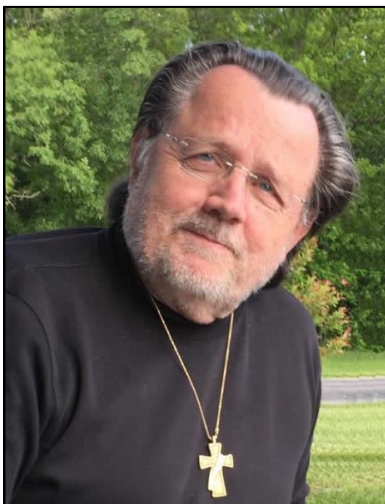
It should be obvious, that truth cannot be relative. Relative truth is merely a warm blanket around an opinion or an irrational belief.

**A**nd then there is the unsubstantiated and absurd assertion—based entirely on Oprah’s opinion, not fact—that something (in this instance, “**your** truth”) is “the **most** powerful tool” we all share. Not to belabor the point, but, opinion couched as truth is like a mudpuddle calling itself a newly discovered ocean; a delusion pretending to be reality.

One final point. The result of our lazy attitude toward reason and thought can be summarized by a recent Dilbert cartoon. One character, ASOK, sitting before Dogbert who for \$100 offers life advice, asks “How do I find meaning in my life?” Dogbert responds “Nothing has meaning. The best you can do is postpone your own lonely and painful death.” ASOK then asks, “Are you saying I should take care of my health?” to which Dogbert replies, “What answer gets me the best review on Yelp?” It is something to think about.

1. Father Andrew Younan, *Thoughtful Theism: Redeeming Reason in an Irrational Age*, (Steubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Press Publishing, 2017), 2-5. Father Andy is a priest of the Chaldean Catholic Church. He teaches courses in Philosophy, the Liberal Arts (Logic, Rhetoric, etc.), as well as Biblical Hebrew at John Paul the Great Catholic University.

2. Krauss, Lawrence. *A universe from Nothing: Why There is Something Rather than Nothing*. (New York: Atria Paperback, 2012), 178. Krauss is one of the new atheists.



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