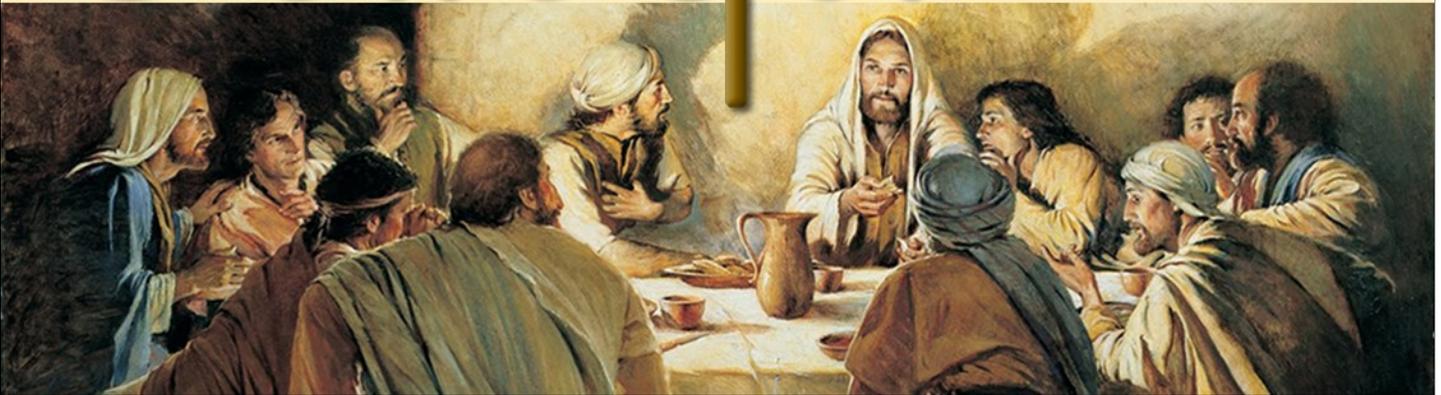


# Colloquī

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A journal for restless minds

## In Or Out

*It is all about location*

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.

## In Or Out

*It is all about location*

**L**OCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION. Someone once observed—predictably in real estate, though to whom we owe the credit is arguably disputed—that the tongue-tripping triptych were the three most important things to know about real estate. And, I suppose, it indeed may well be considered a constructive truism, a sawing *bon mot*, or a homey catchphrase if you so happen to be a purveyor in such punctilious delineations.

And yet, could not such a triptych be applied as well to areas other than mere real estate? Perhaps, we might try and conjugate a few. Why, you ask? Well, I might suggest for grins and giggles or just because we can, but here, a moral exercise in self-importance.

The three most important things to know about truth is God, God, God! The three most important things to know about life is God, God, God! The three most important things to know about love is God, God, God! The three least important things to know about myself is I, I, I. The three least important things to know about yourself is you, you, you.

A small stone, ignorant of its privilege atop a mountain at first resists the

unseen force compelling it to move. With shuddering hesitation it topples from its ancient perch but not alone for it carries with it first a neighbor then another each add-

ing neighbors of their own to the clamoring cataract.

**F**rom the dislodging of a small aphoristic pebble the mind is soon subjected to a full-on avalanche, a cascading cataract of



CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

chaotic thoughts seeking answers to questions heretofore not considered.

**C**ase in point, the recent spate of malevolent murderous machinations put forth by the lobotomized inhabitants—the right side of the brain is surgically removed leaving the patient incapable of reason and rational thought—of various state asylums for the legislatively insane. None but the criminally insane would contumaciously infanticide; how else to explain their utter delight in such criminal lunacy.

Ramesh Ponnuru, in a recent essay *Infanticide And the Left*, offers insights into why and how the left defends infanticide. Although it is well-worth the read, what especially caught my eye was this paragraph:

What Northam, Obama, and Tran have all demonstrated is that the line between abortion and infanticide is blurry, and politicians zealously committed to the former are liable to cross it. While infants are usually at a more advanced state of development than fetuses, what distinguishes each group from the other as a class is not that fact. An individual infant who was born very prematurely is less developed (often substantially so) than a fetus at term, but it is the former who has legal protection. **The distinction turns entirely on location: Inside the womb the developing human organism is a fetus, and outside it an infant.** (*emphasis mine*)

The U. S. Supreme Court has compounded the confusion surrounding when an abortion is or is not permissible. Prior court rulings are thought by many to limit abortion to the early

stages of pregnancy and to allow prohibitions in later stages.

But the Court does not allow governments to prohibit abortion at any stage of pregnancy. It requires that any ban on late-term abortion include an exception allowing it when necessary to promote the health of the pregnant woman, with “health” understood expansively to include mental and emotional health. Governments may prohibit particular methods of abortion; the Supreme Court in 2007 upheld the federal ban on partial-birth abortion. But it upheld it in part because other methods remained legal.

**W**hile late-term abortion may not be available in many areas and laws may be on the books appearing to ban it, it is effectively legal everywhere. In a partial-birth abortion case before the Supreme Court, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg joined by Justice John Paul Stevens, wrote an opinion scoffing at the notion that partial-birth abortion was worse than other methods that took place entirely inside the womb, arguing that a ban on partial-birth abortion though allowing morally equivalent abortions was “irrational.”

She cited a decision by Judge Richard Posner that put the point even more plainly: “From the standpoint of the fetus, it makes no difference whether, when the skull is crushed, the fetus is entirely within the uterus or its feet are outside the uterus. Yet the position of the feet is the only difference between committing a felony and performing an act that the states concede is constitutionally privileged.” To the extent the ban was irrational, it is because it was working within the irrational jurisprudence that the Supreme Court itself had created, a jurisprudence

that made location a matter of life and death.

**T**his then was the fell blow which caused the aphoristic pebble to come dislodged, colliding with a squalid statement uttered by the giddy gibbering governor of New York, Andrew M. Cuomo. As noted in the March 18, 2011 edition of *The New York Times*, Governor Cuomo is only too eager to pronounce his Catholicism.

He goes to Mass, though not every Sunday. **He considers himself a practicing Roman Catholic**, yet avoids calling himself devout. He opposes the death penalty, as church leaders do. But he is divorced. And he supports same-sex marriage and abortion rights, stances **sharply at odds with church teaching.**

The conflict over the governor’s faith began last month, [February 2011] when Edward N. Peters, who teaches at the seminary of the Archdiocese of Detroit and holds an appointment as an adviser to the Vatican on canon law, wrote that Mr. Cuomo should not be allowed to receive holy communion because he is divorced and living with his girlfriend, the Food Network host Sandra Lee, in what Mr. Peters called “public concubinage.”

Yet friends of the governor who were interviewed in recent days said Mr. Cuomo was disturbed at so promptly **being thrust into the spotlight of conservative Catholics’ moral disapproval** — rough treatment previously accorded only to the most high-profile Catholics, like Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts or former Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani when they ran for president.

When Dr. Peters' criticism received public attention last month [February 2011], the governor said, "**My religion is a private matter and not something that I discuss in the political arena.**"

By most accounts, religion for Mr. Cuomo is not something to be discussed much in private, either. Unlike his father, who relishes a good theological debate and as governor was fond of quoting the French Jesuit philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on the nature of evil, the younger Mr. Cuomo is said to be less verbal on the subject of the soul.

At home, Mr. Cuomo's parents scrupulously observed the Catholic liturgical calendar, and **his father enforced a courtly, old-world morality** expressed in the kind of admonition he would utter when the son left the house for a date: "Just remember that the girl you're going out with tonight is somebody else's sister," Andrew Cuomo once recalled him saying.

In e-mailed responses to questions, Dr. Peters said there were only three ways to resolve what he referred to as "**the scandal**" that Mr. Cuomo was causing the church. "He should cease cohabiting without benefit of matrimony, or he should cease presenting himself for holy communion, or the sacrament should be withheld from him," he wrote. "As a general rule of Catholic morality, men and women are not supposed to live together without benefit of matrimony."

**H**ighlighted above are a few words and phrases which "triggered" my "Roman Catholic" soul, grievously grinding grit into the wounds of fervent faith, while fatuously frolicking among the tumbling tumult recklessly rushing

toward the gates of hell. That anyone so **sharply at odds** with the tradition, canons, dogma and doctrine of the Catholic faith would continue to claim so profanely to being a **practicing Roman Catholic** is mind-bogglingly incomprehensible.

**J**udas Iscariot sold his soul for forty pieces of silver; Mr. Cuomo has sold his to win political favor from the maddened murderous mob. With his betrayal, Judas, one of the twelve chosen by Christ, lost any and all claim to discipleship; no longer would he be counted as one of the apostles, no longer could he claim to be one of the twelve. Judas could no longer claim to be a faithful apostle of Jesus Christ, neither should Mr. Cuomo.

Mr. Cuomo's specious claim reeks of self-aggrandizement, seeking approval—and votes—wherever and however possible. That he was in the least discomfited by the **moral disapproval of conservative Catholics** is as surprising as it is supercilious. The governor "doth protest too much, methinks" when it comes to adherence to any objective, **courtly, old-world morality**—here, obedience to the Decalogue, those pesky old-world Ten Commandments from God, come to mind. The governor thoroughly enjoys "having his cake and eating it too," publicly proclaiming to be a "practicing Roman Catholic" while pompously protesting that his **religion is a private matter**. One must admit he plays that tune like Nero on a fairly fine fiddle.

Since rejoicing in thunderous applause at the passage of the genocidal "Reproductive Health Act"—an oxy-

moronic euphemism for unrestricted abortion and infanticide—many frustrated Catholics have been insistent in calling for the governor to be excommunicated, a cry which has generally been summarily dismissed by canon lawyers as a legitimate canonical penalty for Catholic politicians who argue for legalized abortion.

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York has taken a dim view of excommunicating Catholic politicians who champion abortion rights. In a statement, a spokesman for the cardinal said that "excommunication should not be used as a weapon" and that too often those who call for that penalty "do so out of anger or frustration."

The statement mentioned that "notable canon lawyers" have said excommunication is "not an appropriate response" for politicians who support or vote for legislation advancing abortion. It also said Cardinal Dolan has taken the same approach of his predecessors to address issues "personally and directly" with a parishioner.<sup>1</sup>

**M**eanwhile, governor Abortion Andy continues to mock the faith of Catholics with unabashed abandon, smugly self-assured that no one will cast the first stone; the would-be casters being rather preoccupied at the moment with stopping the spate of slithering serpentine servants from seeing sunlight. All this of course is scandal; we know it, we sense it, we are justifiably angered by the absent condemnation which silence tacitly allows.

Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.<sup>2</sup>

The rippling rock slides ever downward, falling nowhere and everywhere it is wont to fall. There is no rhyme, no reason to its path; anarchy and chaos rule the day.

The mailman came and went, leaving a somewhat smallish sum of enveloped bills and papered stuff—it grows smaller with the passing by—which for the most found new residence in the bin of unwanted matter. One brief citation, like a blade of grass beneath the snow, begged for attention and soon enough I found myself buried with it and all its fellows struggling to once again breathe fresh air.

But it is pride which exercises an incomparably greater sway over the soul to blind it and lead it into error, and pride sits in Modernism as in its own house, finding sustenance everywhere in its doctrines and lurking in its every aspect. It is pride which fills Modernists with that self-assurance by which they consider themselves and pose as the rule for all. It is pride which puffs them up with that vainglory which allows them to regard themselves as the sole possessors of knowledge, and makes them say, elated and inflated with presumption, “We are not as the rest of men,” and which, lest they should seem as other men, leads them to embrace and to devise novelties even of the most absurd kind. It is pride which rouses in them the spirit of disobedience and causes them to demand a compromise between authority and liberty. It is owing to their pride that they seek to be the reformers of others while they forget to reform themselves, and that they are found to be utterly wanting in respect for authority, even for the supreme authority. Truly there is no road which leads

so directly and so quickly to Modernism as pride.<sup>3</sup>

I will comment further on this citation in a moment but first, in the same periodical, there immediately followed this unexpected but marvelously apropos excerpt:

I date my break [with Communism] from a very casual happening. I was sitting in our apartment on St. Paul Street in Baltimore. It was shortly before we moved to Alger Hiss’s apartment in Washington. My daughter was in her high chair. I was watching her eat. She was the most miraculous thing that had ever happened in my life. I liked to watch her even when she smeared porridge on her face or dropped it meditatively on the floor. My eye came to rest on the delicate convolutions of her ear—those intricate, perfect ears. The thought passed through my mind: “No, those ears were not created by any chance coming together of atoms in nature (the Communist view). They could have been created only by immense design.” The thought was involuntary and unwanted. I crowded it out. If I had completed it, I should have had to say: Design presupposes God. I did not then know that, at that moment, the finger of God was first laid on my forehead. ...

Communism is what happens when, in the name of Mind, men free themselves from God. But its view of God, its knowledge of God, its experience of God, is what alone gives character to a society or a nation, and meaning to its destiny. Its culture, the voice of this character, is merely that view, knowledge, experience, of God, fixed by its most intense spirits in terms intelligible to the mass of men. There has never been a society or a nation without God. But history is cluttered with the wreckage of nations that became indifferent to God, and died.<sup>4</sup>

And then below and on the same page another piquant quote—rounding out this unlikely but decidedly relevant triptych:

Jesus doesn’t urge Peter to “go ahead, betray me, I understand.” Jesus doesn’t tell the woman taken in adultery, “go back to your lover, because your situation is complex.” Jesus doesn’t tell Zacchaeus the tax collector, “actually, keep the money you may have unjustly taken, because you need it to support your family.” Jesus dines with sinners, hangs out with prostitutes and publicans, he evangelizes the much married Samaritan woman, he welcomes thieves into eternity. But he never confirms them in their sins, or makes nuanced allowances for their state of life; that sort of rhetoric is alien to the gospels. ...

This is not some complicated esoteric reading of the New Testament; it is the boringly literal and obvious one, which is why it takes a professional theologian to dispute it.<sup>5</sup>

There is a common thread weaving throughout the three citations above, a thread spanning more than a century of thoughtful discourse on the consequences of our abject deliberate failure to place God first, or, as more often is the case, if at all in our lives. In his monumental encyclical, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (Feeding the Lord’s Flock,) Pope Pius X wrote of the growing tide of evil that was in the world.

1. One of the primary obligations assigned by Christ to the office divinely committed to Us of feeding the Lord’s flock is that of guarding with the greatest vigilance the deposit of the faith delivered to the saints, rejecting the profane novelties of words and the gainsaying of

knowledge falsely so called. There has never been a time when this watchfulness of the supreme pastor was not necessary to the Catholic body, for owing to the efforts of the enemy of the human race, there have never been lacking “men speaking perverse things,” “vain talkers and seducers,” “erring and driving into error.” It must, however, be confessed that these latter days have witnessed a notable increase in the number of the enemies of the Cross of Christ, who, by arts entirely new and full of deceit, are striving to destroy the vital energy of the Church, and, as far as in them lies, utterly to subvert the very Kingdom of Christ. Wherefore We may no longer keep silence, lest We should seem to fail in Our most sacred duty, and lest the kindness that, in the hope of wiser counsels, We have hitherto shown them, should be set down to lack of diligence in the discharge of Our office.

2. That We should act without delay in this matter is made imperative especially by the fact that the partisans of error are to be sought not only among the Church’s open enemies; but, what is to be most dreaded and deplored, in her very bosom, and are the more mischievous the less they keep in the open. We allude, Venerable Brethren, to many who belong to the Catholic laity, and, what is much more sad, to the ranks of the priesthood itself, who, animated by a false zeal for the Church, lacking the solid safeguards of philosophy and theology, nay more, thoroughly imbued with the poisonous doctrines taught by the enemies of the Church, and lost to all sense of modesty, put themselves forward as reformers of the Church; and, forming more boldly into line of attack, assail all that is most sacred in the work of Christ, not sparing even the Person of the Divine Redeemer, whom, with sacrilegious audacity, they degrade to

the condition of a simple and ordinary man.

**O**n the centennial of *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* one writer, Luiz Sergio Solimeo, wrote:

A hundred years ago, on September 8, 1907, Pope Saint Pius X (1903-1914) published the Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (Feeding the Lord’s Flock) against the devastating doctrines of Modernism.

It was the culmination of an offensive that caused irreparable damage to Modernism. A month earlier, the Congregation of the Holy Office had published the *Lamentabili Sane* Decree condemning 65 distinct modernist propositions. ...

In these times of historic revisionism and political correctness, it becomes all the more necessary to celebrate the centennial of this great document since there are those who downplay the importance of *Pascendi* by denying the very existence of a Modernist conspiracy or even the errors Saint Pius X condemned. They claim the whole controversy was a misunderstanding caused by the pope’s excessive zeal. To their view, the saintly Pontiff simply did not understand the “genial” ideas of the new Church reformers who proved true precursors of the new times.

For example, one Catholic Web site notes:

[T]oday it is possible for us to have quite a different view [from *Pascendi*’s] about the Modernist crisis as a whole . . . it becomes ever clearer that the “conspiracy” evoked by that encyclical never existed. The times of the Modernist crisis were times of mutual incomprehension between those who proposed to renew Catholic thinking in its different aspects, exegesis, philosophy, dogmatics and spirituality, [and the Pope]. It also becomes ever

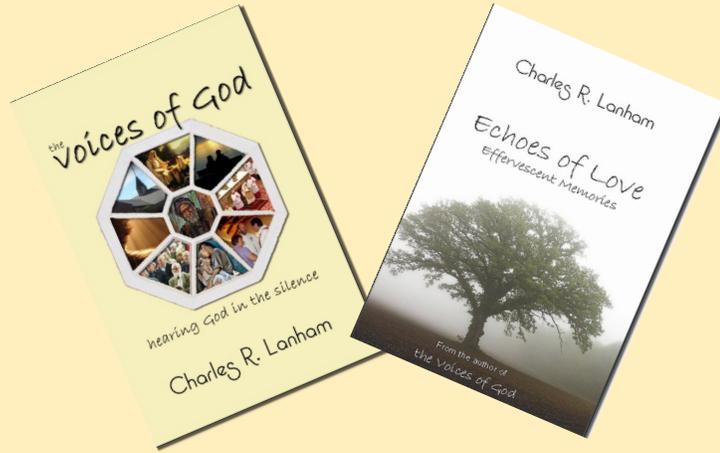
clearer that the modernist system, as a system, was nothing but a construct of *Pascendi*.<sup>6</sup> ...

Modernism did not appear suddenly, nor was it an isolated episode in the Church’s history. It was an integral part of the Church’s great struggle against those who sought to adapt the Church’s teachings and ways of being to the ideas and political regimes stemming from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

*Pascendi* builds upon the themes of its immediate predecessors, *Mirari vos* and *Singularis nos*, written by Pope Gregory XVI in 1832 and 1834, respectively, against the errors of religious indifference; *Quanta Cura* and the *Syllabus*, written by Pope Pius IX in 1864, condemning modern naturalism and rationalism; *Imortale Dei*, *Libertas Praestantissima* and *Satis Cognitum*, written by Pope Leo XIII in 1885, 1888 and 1896, respectively, against the philosophical, political and theological foundations of liberalism.

**T**here is much more to say here but time and space are limited so have patience and stayed tuned, more is yet to come. In the meantime, go to [papalencyclicals.net](http://papalencyclicals.net) to read *Lamentabili Sane* as well as the encyclicals mentioned above.

1. Brian Fraga, “Canon lawyers debate excommunication,” *Our Sunday Visitor*, February 17-23, 2019, p. 4.
2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German pastor, theologian, anti-Nazi dissident, and key founding member of the Confessing Church.
3. Cf. Saint Pope Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907), §40; as cited in *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, March/April 2019, p. 8.
4. Cf. Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*, “Letter to my children” (1952); as cited in *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, March/April 2019, p. 9.
5. Cf. Ross Douthat, *To Change the Church: Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism* (2018), 178; as cited in *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, March/April 2019, p. 9.
6. Pierre Colin, *Modernisme et crise moderniste*.



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