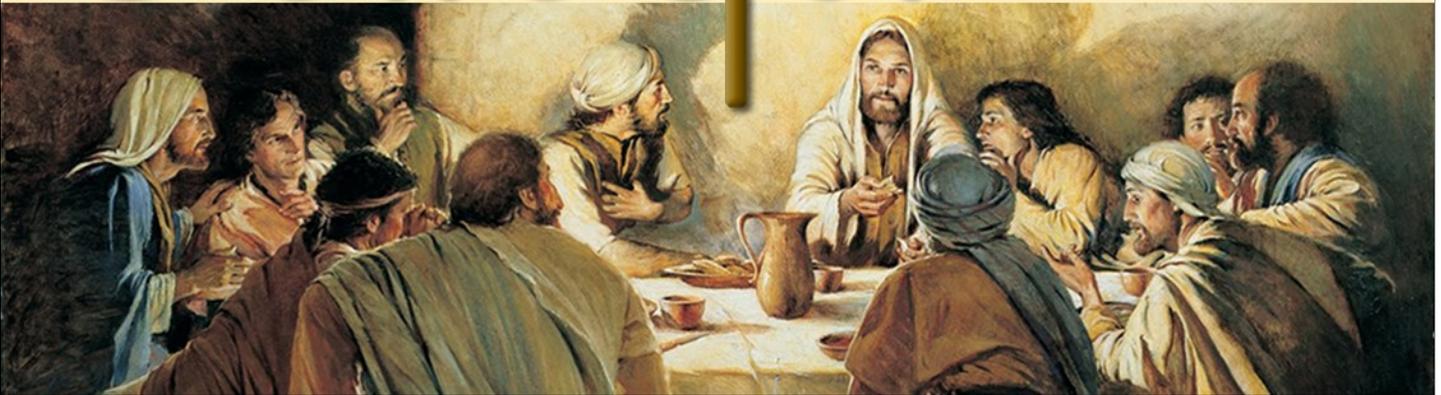


Colloquī

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A journal for restless minds

All Or Nothing At All

Binary choices

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.

All Or Nothing At All

Binary choices

Looking through the rearview mirror at what has been so quickly passing, receding, winking out of sight, then as soon forgotten; all newness ages before aging eyes with their blinking. It is but the softest whisper which so teases thoughts too tired to trouble; yesterday too soon forgotten, today fleeing fast away, tomorrow but a promise never to be met.

Old habits have lost their favor; few are anymore inclined to don such poor attire, evocative of best forgotten memory. The cassock, the collar, the distinctive tri-cornered biretta worn by parish priests, the tunic, scapular and cowl, the hood for monks or friars, the veil for nuns, all eschewed, exchanged for modern artless dress. Old distinctions have turned to bland; religious wear, once

black and white, brown or gray, have become kaleidoscopic, indistinguishable from the ordinary and the common.

Where have they gone, those men and women set apart, eagerly dedicated to the greater praise and glory of Almighty God? Where are they who once wore their faithful witness—humility, holiness, honesty, sanctity, chastity, virtue and divine devotion—on their sleeves with every fiber of their being? Where are they who by their living faith taught us everything we needed to aspire to sainthood,

and to heaven? Where are they who dared call sin a sin, who in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of God, imposed penalties for our transgressions, gentle but strict counsel for our souls and forgiveness when we fell.

And yes Lord, we fell again and again. We are still falling, ever more so, but with a difference,



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for we no longer care a twig or twad-
dle for such errant nonsense.

Like old habits, we no longer play that silly game once known as *Finding Heaven*, the game with ridiculously rigid rules that must be followed or suffer condemnation of our mythic souls. Right and wrong, good and evil, the battle for our souls, God and Satan are so passé, so yesterday, token relics from an analog boardgame buried beneath the dust and clutter of long forgotten oddments of useless stuff.

We no longer—at least by all outward appearances—concern ourselves with what lies beyond the grave; eternal realities, heaven and hell are but fairy tales told to worry children toward good behavior. God, long absent the classroom, finds no room within, no fire, no desire, no love, no welcome. Satan has taken up residence within the vacant soul, an unbidden squatter demanding nothing for the pleasure of his perverted company.

Everything, whether natural or supernatural, comes with a purchase price and a payment plan, but, as someone once quipped, “the devil is in the details.” Heaven and Hell are polar opposites in every way possible. Heaven is purchased with a heavy price in the here and now. Hell is the purchase price for earthly paradise here and now. The choice is binary, cash or credit, pay now on layaway for eternal reward or enjoy paradise now and pay later for all eternity.

Consequentially, removing God from the classroom and the public

square, proves the aphorism “out of sight, out of mind.” Simply put, we no longer think about God since all mention has been forbidden by law. God, in truth, has been declared an “illegal alien” and denied entry into the squalor of our minds and darkened souls.

Without God, the supernatural has no meaning; without the supernatural, heaven and eternal life are meaningless. Without God, life has meaning only in what one desires of it. Without God, good and evil, right and wrong, love and hate, morality and immorality, truth and falsehood, guilt and innocence are but subjective scalars relative to personal whim. Without God, there can be no evil, no sin, no hell, for such as these are but mere antipodes of goodness, righteousness, and heavenly reward. Without God, worry or concern for what lies beyond the grave is hopelessly oxymoronic.

I choose to know and to love God. I choose to live my life as God desires. I choose to follow his rules, knowing full well that I will fail (sin) again and again and again. I choose all of God for the only other option is to choose nothing at all. I choose to worry about hell and eternal damnation; obviously there are others who are of like mind. Here is what John Clark, a prolific Catholic author and apologist said in a recent article [*“Aren’t Politicians Worried About Hell?”*, National Catholic Register: Blog Post, February 6, 2019]:

Full disclosure: When I think about my sins—though I am comforted by sacramental forgiveness, my charitable actions, and my hope in Divine Mercy—I worry about going to Hell. My suspicion is that, even though they may not admit it, plenty of other people worry about it,

too. And not just Christians. In fact, if you had to decipher one common denominator of eschatological belief among societies across time and place, it would be the belief in a place of punishment for evildoing after death.

Today, however, the notion of Hell has been muffled to the point where politicians promote infanticide without even an apparent pang of conscience. On a subjective basis, we cannot know the politician’s level of culpability for this evil, but we know that infanticide is an objectively grievous evil: even within the category of serious evil, infanticide is uniquely grave. Truly, abortion is bad enough—similarly, an indefensible action in any case, though it is often promoted through euphemisms and deception (such as hiding the image of the unborn child). This push for infanticide (though, in effect, it has been legal since *Roe* and *Doe*) has reached the level of superlative callousness.

There are those reading this who may think I’ve misplaced the blame by calling out politicians. After all, politicians are not the ones actually performing abortions. Robert Jackson, chief U.S. prosecutor at the Nuremburg trials, made an observation about Nazi officers that applies here. He said, “These defendants were men of a station and rank which does not soil its hands with blood. They were men who knew how to use lesser folk as tools.” The same could be said of politicians who cheer on infanticidal legislation, as was witnessed in that ghoulish scene recently in New York state. If infanticide is Satan’s choicest fruit, New York really is The Big Apple.

There are those who will think I’ve gone too far in my reference to Nazis. Good point. Because to be fair—judging purely on the basis of objective actions—it’s not Adolf Hitler that provides the best comparison

to Christian pro-abortion legislators; it's Judas Iscariot.

In the *Inferno*, Dante envisions Judas perpetually clenched in the mouth of Lucifer. Of course, Dante had no way of knowing who goes to Hell and who doesn't any more than I do, but it's worth making one observation: Judas never raised a hand to Jesus—that is to say, Judas committed no personal act of violence against Jesus; his betrayal simply allowed others to do so. For 30 damnable pieces of silver—a contribution to Satan's bloody campaign on earth—Judas paved the way for others to crucify Christ.

Thus, it's hard not to draw a comparison between Judas and Christian politicians who once followed Christ—or even claim to *continue* following Him—but now eagerly pass laws that allow others to murder babies. And, judging by the cheers and clapping and grinning, they seem to have no worries about eternal punishment in doing so.

On some level, maybe this shouldn't be surprising. In her *Diary*, Saint Faustina writes about her mystical tour of Hell:

Today, I was led by an Angel to the chasms of hell... The kinds of tortures I saw: the first torture that constitutes hell is the loss of God; the second is perpetual remorse of conscience; the third is that one's condition will never change; the fourth is the fire that will penetrate the soul without destroying it...the fifth torture is continual darkness and a terrible suffocating smell...the sixth torture is the constant company of Satan; the seventh torture is horrible despair, hatred of God, vile words, curses and blasphemies. *But I noticed one thing: that most of the souls there are those who disbelieved that there is a hell.*

One last point. It's no accident that these Luciferian pieces of legislation are being passed at a time when the Catholic Church has been weakened from within.

The ghastly sins of prelates against children, the orchestrated cover-ups, the reticence to teach doctrine, the promotion of renegade priests, the suspicious statements directed toward those actually living the Catholic Faith [*emphasis mine*]**—all this has served to eat away at the heart and mind of the Church.**

Once I read that before descending into hell the damned were granted the briefest glance upon the face of God, thus knowing what they had lost would burn their soul forever.

John Clark's essay, of which a portion has been included here, focused on Christian politicians who promote and support abortion and infanticide—the subjects of recent reports covering numerous states legislative efforts to legalize murder of the unborn and “just born.” He goes further as to who is, at least in part, complicit in these murderous efforts.

Further, the reluctance—nay, absolute refusal—to ecclesiastically censure pro-abortion politicians is at fault for this diabolical legislation, at least in large measure. There are those who claim that the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church has lost her moral authority in the eyes of the public to do things like excommunicate. But the moral authority of the Catholic Church will not be strengthened by adding another helping of accommodation.

While some may object to placing any measure of fault for the promotion of such diabolical regimes upon ecclesiastical shoulders, there remains, in

fact, some precedent for its genesis (*see the highlighted and underlined portions above.*) I have written of this before (*see Colloqui Vol. 03, Nos. 30-33.*)

When Clark suggests that “the reticence to teach doctrine”—what the Catholic Church holds to be the gospel truths taught by Jesus Christ to the apostles and through them to their successors and to all the nations of the world—as one cause for the current weakened condition of the Church, it is an unfortunate and tragic reality, for far too many prelates today refuse or are reluctant to teach doctrine to their congregations.

They, as well as all Catholics, would do well to listen to the words of Saint Paul in his second letter to Timothy (4:1-5):

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching.** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.

Moreover, what further confounds the ill-informed, poorly catechized faithful, are the suspect, often ambiguous, contradictory and confusing statements issued by unreliable, incredible

sources. That this is old news should, in and of itself, be alarming to every Catholic, but the truth is the alarm bells have been ringing far too long, so long we no longer find them alarming.

We are living at a time of great upheaval, where doctrine and dogma, professed and believed by the Catholic faithful for millennia have become suspect and criticized, deemed irrelevant and inconsistent with modern values. The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church founded by Jesus Christ is under assault from Satan and his minions unlike any other time in her long and storied history. At no other time have the forces of evil engaged the Church, both without and within, on so many fronts, with so great a power.

The Church is besieged and beset by the dark forces of evil, facing challenges which some believe will ultimately destroy her. And yet, challenges can, will and must be met with faith and love for Jesus founded his Church on rock which no force or power can destroy.

Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it (Mt 16:17-18).

According to Donald DeMarco, professor emeritus at St. Jerome's University in Canada and an adjunct professor at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut, for the eminent Catholic historian Christopher Dawson (1889-1970)

the dominant faith of the succeeding century was liberalism, which lived off the capital it inherited from Christianity. Liberalism emphasized rights but not duties, freedom but not responsibilities, justice but not truth, conscience without principles, sex without procreation and compassion without real love. But liberalism, one-sided as it is, cannot sustain itself and inevitably tends toward a form of uniform or monolithic secularism.

In Dawson's words, "Once society is launched on the path of secularization it cannot stop at the half-way house of Liberalism; it must go on to the bitter end, whether that end be Communism or some alternative type of 'totalitarian' secularism."¹

Liberalism, as we observe it in the contemporary world, stretches what were once Christian values to the point where they begin to war against themselves. The legalization of homosexual practices and same-sex "marriages" offer illuminating examples. The present consortium of what were once considered sexual deviants represent a liberalization of sexuality on the one hand, but an intolerance toward traditionalists on the other, sometimes to the point of violence.

By refusing to capitulate to such intolerant demands, many employers have been heavily fined, and several bakeries, florists and bed-and-breakfast establishments have been driven out of business. Individuals have lost their jobs simply for defending traditional marriage. Hate speech is virtually defined as speaking against the new mores.

The famous Catholic convert Malcolm Muggeridge (1903-1990) has made the comment that whenever there is "some drastic readjustment of accepted moral values" and they become the law of the land, the "consequent change in mores soon becomes to be more or less accepted."

The change to which Muggeridge is alluding is profoundly significant, for it is a change from moral values that are anchored either in the natural law or in the word of God to the arbitrary mores of the people.

The moral values that are part of Christianity have an intelligibility that allows them to be explored, discussed and understood by people of good faith. By contrast, lacking this intelligibility, mores are what people simply demand. Mores must be upheld through intimidation or force, since that cannot be validated through reason.

Feminism provides a good example of this drastic shift from moral values to mores. Rebecca Todd Peters, who is a professor and a Presbyterian minister, has published a book entitled, *Trust Women: A Progressive Christian Argument for Reproductive Justice* (2018).

The book is remarkable since it is neither "progressive," "Christian," an "argument" or in the least concerned with "justice." It is flagrantly pro-abortion, without any real concern for the nature of the unborn or the consequences of abortion. The direct implication of trusting women is not trusting men or not trusting those women who disagree with the author.

Abby Johnson, who left Planned Parenthood and became a pro-life Catholic, was taken to court in a failed attempt to silence her. Johnson, since she revealed what was going on at Planned Parenthood in her book *Unplanned*, presumably is not one of those women who could be trusted. Rev. Peters wants a culture that is controlled by feminist will. It is a culture without dialogue because, in such a view, there can be no basis on which dialogue could take place.

It is illustrative of the march of liberalism toward a totalitarian society in which there is but one opinion.

Fiorella Nash's recent book, *The Abolition of Woman* (Ignatius Press, 2018), however, is the perfect antithesis as well as the logical contradiction of Peters' effort. In addition, society will find it difficult to suppress the voice of New Wave Feminists: "When our liberation costs innocent lives, it is merely oppression redistributed."

A culture in which no opposition to the "LGBTQ" agenda or to abortion or to secular feminism is permitted clearly epitomizes totalitarianism.

Nonetheless, like liberalism, neither can a totalitarian regime sustain itself indefinitely, for it lacks the realism that is needed to nourish the souls of its citizens.

The true Christian wants to remain a Christian. He finds himself in a culture that is increasingly Christophobic. He wants to honor the moral rights of the individual, to practice virtues that are based on the natural law, to be charitable toward the poor, to establish loving marriages and to raise children in the faith.

The Christian's task in the present climate where liberalism is slouching toward totalitarianism is particularly difficult.

Christopher Dawson's book does not leave the reader without hope: "The only thing that can stand against such forces is the spiritual vitality of the Christian community. If every Christian has an intellectual grasp of Christian principles and a living interest in his religion, it will be impossible to suppress Christianity even in a Communist State."

The Christian can no longer rely on culture to support his Christian life.

He must be more assertive, both as an individual and within his community. He is at odds with an environment that is essentially anti-religious, one that abides no rival to liberal secularism.

Nonetheless, he has God's indelible word on his side. Therefore, his prayer life must be strong and his faith must be sturdy enough to withstand the slanders and injustice that will come his way. In a word, he must be more capable than his enemy.²

Dawson presumed that every Christian would have an intellectual grasp of Christian principles and a living interest in his or her religion. Perhaps that was so in the earlier half of the twentieth century, but clearly not the case in the first score years of the twenty-first.

In our weakness and lacking understanding of the consequences of our sin, we have become accustomed to the darkness that has enveloped the intellect.

We have all had the experience of being in a dark room—say a theater—and emerging into a bright sunlit day. Our eyes hurt, and we complain of the harshness of the light. But of course, the light is not harsh, and many of the people around us who have not been in the dark room enjoy the light and are not bothered by it at all. The problem is within us; we have become accustomed to the darkness, and thus the light seems obnoxious.

Now, this is an analogy for what happens to us, morally speaking. To the degree that we indulge the dark error of sin, we accustom ourselves to moral darkness. Our thinking becomes distorted, and the light of truth seems obnoxious, even painful and hateful. And unless one rouses themselves to become reaccustomed to the light of truth, they retreat even further into the darkness as a preference.

Jesus says: "And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to

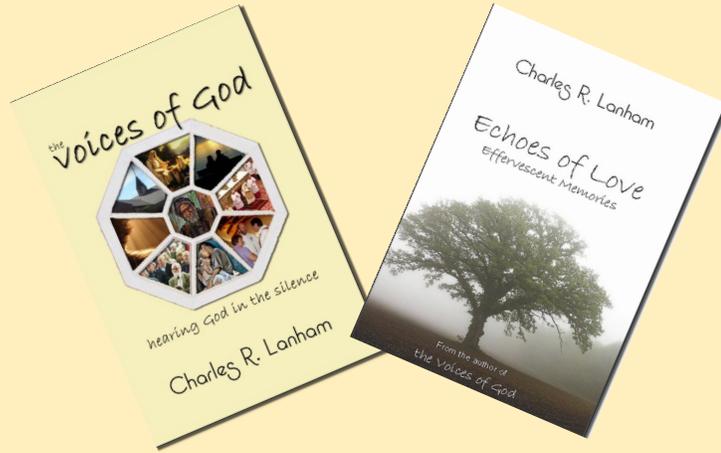
light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God" (Jn 3:19-21).

St. Paul also speaks of "those who suppress the truth by their wickedness. For what can be known about God is evident to them, because God made it evident to them. Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. As a result, they have no excuse. For although they knew God, they did not accord him glory as God or give him thanks. Instead, they became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless minds were darkened. While claiming to be wise, they became fools. ... Therefore, God handed them over to impurity through the lusts of their hearts for the mutual degradation of their bodies. ... God handed them over to their undiscerning mind to do what is improper" (Rom 1:17-22, 24, 28).

Here we see that a darkened intellect comes from suppressing the truth that is obvious in the created order and allowing our desires to overrule reason. This leads to vain (empty) thinking, which embraces the darkness even more. Thus the truth is suppressed, and the moral confusion and error are not suppressed. This permits the darkness to grow as it snuffs out the light of reason.³

Until next week, God bless.

1. Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*. (New York, NY: Sheed & Ward; First American Edition, 1935).
2. Donald DeMarco, Ph.D., "How to Survive Secular Totalitarianism", National Catholic Register, March 3-16, 2019, p. 11.
3. Monsignor Charles Pope, *Darkening the Intellect*, Our Sunday Visitor, Mar. 17-23, 2019, p. 15



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

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