

December 04, 2020  
Volume 05—Number 06



A journal for restless minds

# Colloquī *: to discuss*

## **In Search of the Good**

*Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness*

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## **Et Quod Hoc ...**

*This and that ... (READ THIS FIRST!)*

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## **Deacon's Diner**

*Food for a restless mind*

# In Search of the Good

*Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness*

**I**N THE BEGINNING. All things have a beginning. If that were not so, there would be nothing, for *ex nihilo, nihil fit*—from nothing, nothing comes. But God created time and gave *being* a beginning and “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31). But what is *good*? Is *good* an attribute only of God? One way of looking at it, I suppose, is to say that since God is all good, and he declared all that he had made as good, then what else is there to know about goodness? God, in his goodness, created all that is good, so that must mean we are good *per se*, should it not? And what is good if not God? How can we know good? Is the good—that which is good—self-determined or self-evident?

Saint Thomas Aquinas had a great deal to say concerning the good, though few there are today who find much, if any, interest in such esoteric thoughts. And yet, without understanding what is meant by the good, one can never hope to differentiate what is good from what is not, which is where far too many find themselves today. At the very beginning of his monumental work, *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas questions the good in general, posing six points of inquiry. The first point of inquiry is the question of whether *good* and *being* are the same. This, for many, might seem a quizzical querulous query, why would anyone think these two things are in any way related, let alone synonymous terms? That is precisely the point, for Aquinas means to show that it is our misunderstanding of what is good that leads us astray.

*On the contrary*, Augustine says that, “in so far as we exist, we are good.”<sup>1</sup>

*I answer that*, Good and being are really the same, and differ only according to reason, which is clear from the following argument. The essence of good consists in this, that it is in some way desirable. Hence the Philosopher says, “The good is what all desire.” Now it is clear that a thing is desirable only in so far as it is perfect; for

all desire their own perfection. But everything is perfect so far as it is in act. Therefore, it is clear that a thing is good so far as it is being; for it is being is the actuality of all things, as is clear from the foregoing (Q. III, A. 4; Q. IV, A. 1). Hence it is clear that good and being are the same really. But good presents the aspect of desirability, which being does not present.<sup>2</sup>

What is perhaps most difficult for the post-modern mind to understand is this relationship between good and being. Aquinas poses an objection citing Boëthius, “I perceive that in nature the fact that things are good is one thing; that they are is another. Therefore,” Boëthius concludes, “good and being really differ.” Aquinas replies to this objection in this way:

Although good and being are the same really, nevertheless since they differ in reason they are not said of a thing absolutely in the same way. Since being properly signifies that something is, ... a thing is, in consequence, called being absolutely according as it is primarily distinguished from that which is only in potency; and this is each thing’s substantial being. Hence by its substantial being, anything whatsoever is called being absolutely; but by any act add-

ed to this it is said to have being relatively. Thus to be white implies relative being, for to be white does not take a thing out of potential being absolutely, since it comes to a thing already existing actually. But good signifies the notion of perfection which is desirable, and consequently signifies the notion of something ultimate.<sup>3</sup>

For example, that the bee produces honey might be considered a good thing; that the bee exists, armed with a barb, quite another. Aquinas argues that “every being that is not God is God’s creature. Now every creature of God is good (1 Tim 4:4): and God is the greatest good. Therefore, every being is good. Every being, as being, is good. For all being, as being, has actuality.” What Aquinas is saying is that *being* is reality, there is an actuality associated with being, if there is no actuality there can be no being, no existence, no *is* there. This is what Aristotle calls the principle of non-contradiction, a thing cannot be and not be at



the same time. If something was pure potential, it would not exist; pure potential (potency) has no actuality. Being is actuality, "and is in some way perfect; since every act implies some sort of perfection; and perfection implies desirability and goodness. Hence it follows that every being as such is good." What Aquinas is saying is that goodness is being under the aspect of moving towards its finality, its telos, its perfection, its actuality. So, perfection and goodness are referring to the same thing, but under different aspects, and Aquinas notes that the aspect of goodness is an aspect of desirability, it engages our appetite, it engages our desire. We desire goodness and when we desire goodness, we are already desiring the perfection of something.

Now, if goodness is being under the aspect of moving towards its finality, its telos, its perfection, its actuality, what then is the good human beings are or should be moving toward? Should it not be toward the supreme good, the ultimate good which is all good, that is towards God? Aquinas thinks so.

God is the supreme good absolutely, and not only as existing in any genus or order of things. For good is attributed to God, as was said in the preceding article, inasmuch as all desired perfections flow from Him as from the first cause. They do not, however, flow from Him as from a univocal agent, as shown above (Q. IV., A. 2); but as from an agent which does not agree with its effects either in species or genus. Now the likeness of an effect in the univocal cause is found uniformly; but in the equivocal cause it is found more excellently, as, heat is in the sun more excellently than it is in fire. Therefore as good is in God as in the first, but not the univocal, cause of all things, it must be in Him in a most excellent way; and therefore He is called the supreme good.<sup>4</sup>

If then God is the Supreme Good, does it not call us to seek our perfection, our finality, our telos in that which is the most perfect of goods, that which is of God? Aquinas says the "when we say that good is what all desire, it is not to be understood that every kind of good thing is desired by all," but that with respect to the supreme good, "other things are deficient in comparison with it." Should we not then, seek the utmost good? He responds to the objection that supreme implies comparison, that since God is not in the same genus as other good things, it seems that God cannot be called the supreme good in relation to oth-

ers, saying this:

Things not of the same genus are in no way comparable to each other if indeed they are in different genera. Now we say that God is not in the same genus with other good things; not that He is any other genus, but that He is outside genus, and is the principle of every genus; and thus He is compared to others by excess, and it is this kind of comparison the supreme good implies.<sup>5</sup>

Another objection addresses what the Philosopher contends, that "Good is what all desire," by noting "what all desire is nothing but God, Who is the end of all things. Therefore, there is no other good but God. This appears also from what is said (Luke 18:19): *None is good but God alone*. But we use the word supreme in comparison with others, as, for instance, supreme heat used in comparison with all other heats. Therefore, God cannot be called the supreme good." Aquinas responds, "When we say that good is what all desire, it is not to be understood that every kind of good thing is desired by all; but that whatever is desired has the nature of good. And when it is said, *None is good but God alone*, this is to be understood of essential goodness" Aquinas further explains what is essential goodness, citing Boëthius, "that all things but God are good by participation. Therefore, they are not good essentially."

*I answer that*, God alone is good essentially. For everything is called good according to its perfection. Now perfection of a thing is threefold: first, according to the constitution of its own being; secondly, in respect of any accidents being added as necessary for its perfect operation; thirdly, perfection consists in the attaining to something else as the end. Thus, for instance, the first perfection of fire consists in its existence, which it has through its own substantial form; its secondary perfection consists in heat, lightness and dryness, and the like; its third perfection is to rest in its own place. This triple perfection belongs to no creature by its own essence; it belongs to God only, in Whom alone essence is existence; in Whom there are no accidents; since whatever belongs to others accidentally belongs to Him essentially; as, to be powerful, wise, and the like, as appears from what is stated above (Q. III., A. 6); and He is not directed to anything else as to an end, but is Himself the last end of all things. Hence it is manifest that God alone has every kind of perfection by His own essence; therefore He Himself alone is good essentially.<sup>6</sup>

Aquinas further adds that “Although everything is good in that it has being, yet the essence of a creature is not very being; and therefore it does not follow that a creature is good essentially.” What then are we to conclude? As creatures made in the image and likeness of God, we have being and are good because we have being. That, in no way, presupposes that all our actions, behaviors, and thoughts are good, but that being, existence, actuality is good. We have to seek perfection which consists in the attaining of something else as the end, we have to orient ourselves to the good, ultimately towards the supreme good which is God.

However, not everything that is desired is really good. Sometimes we err about what is perfective; sometimes we pursue an inferior sort of perfection when we should not; sometimes we pursue a perfection in the wrong way or in the wrong context. For this reason, Thomas affirms that goodness is really the fullness of being, for what makes something complete and perfect is the actualization of its being. Goodness is simply the fullness of being, for what makes something complete and perfect is the actualization of its being.

Thomas divides the perfection of being in a way that mirrors his universal division of being into act and potency. Something becomes good insofar as it is actualized and perfected in its species-specific powers. That cause of actualization, which is to say the cause of perfection and goodness, is not identical to that which is perfected. Nevertheless, the cause of perfection is desirable because it is the perfective actuality desired by the imperfect subject.<sup>7</sup>

For Aquinas then, the good can be categorized into internal perfections and the external cause of perfection; into the actualized and the actualizing; into the internal and external; into the individual and the common. This latter classification bears further explication, but before advancing, a sidestep is in order. A question which inevitably arises is, “if everything that exists, that has *being* is *good*, what then is evil?” Good question. Saint Thomas denies the existence of evil, rather, he says evil is the privation of good, the absence of a good. For example, consider blindness, the lack of the ability to physically see, which is the absence of something (sight) that ought to be there, that is the power to see. Aquinas calls this a material evil, not a moral evil. There is no act of the will, no wrong choice that causes blindness in most cases. Blindness is something that happens, it is a material evil, it is a privation of a good that ought to be there. The Gospels are re-

plete with examples of material evil. Jesus cured the lepers, the blind, the lame, the ill, saying to those he cured that their faith had healed them. The first-century mindset considered material evil to be the direct result of sinfulness, of some moral evil committed on the part of the afflicted or members of their family. Jesus said first and often, “your sins are forgiven,” before he cured anyone of their material evil, clearly differentiating the two very different forms of evil: material and moral.

Think of evil as parasitical on good; evil is like a parasite, without good, there can be no evil for evil, in and of itself, does not exist, it is but the absence of perfections of the good. As difficult as this might be to accept, theologically speaking, Satan is good insofar as he exists. God made him, he has being, but he is evil insofar as the perfections of his being are no longer there. The same applies to those who we describe as evil: Hitler, Stalin, Mao, to name but three.

Returning to goods pursued by the individual and the common good, we must tread with care lest there be any misunderstanding, which is seldom uncommon. Whenever the “common good” is mentioned, the most common interpretation is made of a good or goods that are best for many, such as in law or governance. One example of this might be ordinances executed by a homeowners’ association enacted for the protection of the property values of all the homeowners in common within its jurisdiction. But such a common good is not what Aquinas is demonstrating, “it must be said that something is said to be common in two ways. In one way through predication;<sup>8</sup> however ‘common’ of this sort is not the same in number found in diverse things; and in this way the good of the body has community. In another way *something is common according to participation of one and the same thing according to number*; and this community is most able to be found among things that pertain to the soul; because through it is achieved that which is the common good to all things, namely God; and therefore the reason does not proceed.” This is an important distinction which Aquinas makes, though some theologians have argued otherwise, nevertheless, it seems obvious that he means to say that all things are ordered to God as an end and that God therefore is the common good in the sense that he is the final cause, an example of the common good by causality.

Thomas compares and distinguishes individual and common goods in a variety of ways. The common good is communicable, whereas the individual good is incommunicable; that is, the individual good is not the kind of good that can be shared. It is private and exclusive. My health is my health and it cannot be directly shared by anyone else; it is not the health of another. To be sure, my health may indirectly contribute to the good of another, but only by occasioning a different perfection. It directly perfects me and no [one] else. Again, my money may be used to the benefit of others, but only by its no longer being in my possession. By contrast, the common good is common because it may be shared, that is, it is a good that perfects more than one. The victory of the army is shared by all its parts, and the procreation and education of children perfects both parents. For this reason, Thomas says that the common good is a good common to many whereas the individual good is the good of one, which means that it is communicable (or sharable).

Thomas distinguishes between two sorts of common goods: those that are one in number and those that are not. Goods of the body, like health and food, are goods common for all living corporeal natures. Yet they do not constitute a good that is one in number. Health is common to every healthy animal, but every instance of the perfection of health is a different instance; health is a good that is diversified, multiplied, and individualized among the many who enjoy it, and as such, it is common only by predication. The same sort of thing may be said about the consumption of food. By contrast, the more important sense of the common good, the one that Thomas associates with God, is a good that is one in number but somehow shared by many. All things—in one way or another—are ordered to the *one* God. The common good by predication is a good common to many taken separately and individually. As such it does not serve as the unifying common good of the whole as such; it is fundamentally not a group good. This can be explained in terms of numerical distinction. A group good must be one in number, otherwise it could not unite the community and be the good of one united whole as such. A sports team does not pursue many different victories, but one and the same goal, the team's victory. In fact, it is accounted a failure if one seeks exclusively individual laurels in team sports, the accumulation of personal honors, rather than the goal of the team. Such an athlete has failed precisely because he is not unified with his teammates in pursuit of numerically one good, namely, the victory of the team. On the other hand, the good common to many taken separately is common in the sense that it is multiplied among many. This is not really and truly a common good, but an individual good made common by

division into many individual instances. The hallmark of the common good by predication is division and multiplication; the hallmark of the common good by causality is unity.<sup>9</sup>

No doubt, Aquinas is no easy read, which is interesting in that the *Summa Theologiae* was, as he described it, a book for beginners in theology. As one philosophy professor once observed, "That's just like—just as daunting as hearing that the Federalist Papers were written for newspapers. It tells you about the intellectual climates of the respective times." Considering that Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) died at the young age of 49, fully two centuries before Gutenberg's printing press, the quantity and quality of the volumes of work he produced puts any writer since the late 19th century to shame. The *Summa Theologiae* was never finished, Aquinas died before its completion, even so, it is a massive and impressive work.

One of the earliest questions in the first part, entitled, *Treatise on God*, is Question II on the existence of God and in the first Article he asks, "Whether the Existence of God is Self-Evident?" This term, "self-evident" has been mentioned earlier, but most Americans have heard or read it elsewhere in the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident." But what does self-evident mean? Aquinas begins by stating three objections, let us deal then with the second:

Further, those things are said to self-evident which are known as soon as the terms are known, which the Philosopher says is true of the first principles of demonstration (deductive reason). Thus, when the nature of a whole and of a part is known, it is at once known that every whole is greater than its part. But as soon as the meaning of the word "God" is understood, it is at once seen that God exists. For by this word is signified that thing than which nothing greater can be conceived. But that which exists actually and in the intellect is greater than that which exists only in the intellect. Therefore, since as soon as the word "God" is understood it exists in the intellect, it also follows that it exists actually. Therefore the proposition "God exists" is self-evident.<sup>10</sup>

That is a mouthful. Keep in mind that this is an objection, so expect Aquinas to respond with a reasoned explanation. This objection was first made by Saint Anselm of Canterbury, an 11<sup>th</sup> century monk who made a series of very famous arguments for the existence of God. Anselm

began, in what is now called the ontological argument, with Psalm 14:1, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” He then wants to know, why is it foolish to say there is no God? He then asks the fool who denies God exists, what do we mean by “God”? What do you mean when you say God? And the fool replies, the highest thing that could exist, because, if there was a thing higher than that, that would be God. So God describes the highest thing. Or to put it formally, God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived. Because if you could conceive of something greater, that would be God; so whatever God is, God is the greatest thing that can be conceived.

Now, the logic of the Philosopher (Aristotle) utilizes a syllogism as the basis for a valid and strong argument. A syllogism contains a major premise and a minor premise, which if both are true asserts that the conclusion must also be true. So according to Anselm, “God is the greatest thing that can be conceived” is the first premise and the second premise is “Existence is greater than non-existence,” therefore, assuming both to be true, the conclusion follows—God exists.

This may not be obvious. Think about it this way. If I have this idea in my mind that God is that which none greater can be conceived and I’ve also conceded that existence is greater than non-existence, and if those two things are true, then an existing God must be greater than a non-existing God and I already have the idea in my mind, existence must be necessary to the idea.

Perhaps an analogy will help. In your mind you have an idea that a triangle exists, but the angles of a triangle do not add up to 180 degrees. What’s your conclusion? You either have no idea what a triangle is or you are contradicting yourself. Just as it is necessary for a triangle to have 180 degrees—that is a necessary property of triangularity—so you define God as that than which none greater can be conceived. That means a property of God has to be existence. Therefore, the fool is in a self-contradiction; he violates the principle of noncontradiction, simultaneously saying he has an idea of God and then, that he has no idea of God. And Anselm says, you cannot have that, therefore, God must exist.

Though the ontological argument *prima facie* appears

reasonable, there is something that does not sit quite right for most people; there are plenty of “smart” people who don’t quite know exactly why it is wrong, they just know it is, including Aquinas himself. Aquinas does not accept the ontological argument; for one, he thinks we can never logically deduce existence, that the only way we know existence exists is by experiencing it. Think of it this way, ask yourself: Is there a cat in the closet? I cannot merely by using logic make an argument for whether there is a cat in the closet. How can I know? I can go open the closet to see whether there is indeed a cat in the closet, or, if I cannot open the door to look for a cat, I can at least listen for some effects that might indicate the presence of a cat: some scratching on the door, a few meows would tell me there must be a cat in the closet. Thus, a logical argument to infer existence is, therefore, illogical.

Aquinas does, however, believe that we can know for certain that God exists. Can we make an argument from a set of premises that God exists? Aquinas says, yes, and one of the ways is exemplified in something that the Apostle said to the Romans.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. **Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.** So they are without excuse, for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles (Rom 1:18-23).

Aquinas argues, “But this would not be unless the existence of God could be demonstrated through the things that are made; for the first thing we must know of anything is, whether it exists.<sup>11</sup> Aquinas says further, in reply to the objection:

The existence of God and other like truths about God, which can be known by natural reason, are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles; for faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes nature, and perfection supposes something that can be perfected. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent a

man, who cannot grasp a proof, accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically known and demonstrated.<sup>12</sup>

Faith, by definition, is a thing that goes beyond our natural knowledge, just as grace would not mean anything if there was not nature. Grace is that super-abundant thing that supervenes upon the natural thing. So, if we do not have nature, if we do not have reason, then we cannot have grace, neither can we have faith. Aquinas says not to worry if you do not understand the cosmological argument for the existence of God, this is merely a preamble to faith, that is, he thinks we can prove that God exists, though he does not think we can prove by reason that God is the Trinity. He does not think we can prove that Christ is the son of God, that Christ is the incarnate, second person of the Trinity, that the Holy Spirit sanctifies us. Aquinas does not think we can prove any of those, for those, he argues, require revelation not reason, the gift of God revealing himself to us. He thinks that through our natural reason, through philosophy, we can come to know that God exists, but we cannot know in a way that is salvific; we cannot know in a way that will save us, but that knowledge can be a foundation for us to have belief that is salvific.

This then leads us back to the beginning, for if we can know that God exists and we believe God is all good, then for what is it we should be searching? Should not the soul be searching for the highest good? As we have come to know, as Augustine tells us, that "in so far as we exist, we are good" and according to the Philosopher, all desire the good, then, if what we desire most is the good and God is all good, should we not desire God above all else? If that is true, then why does man seek the good in everything but God?

It is this disorientation from the greatest good, this disaffection of the soul from God that gives us pause. What is then this good that all desire? Perhaps, the question better asked, is what is then this desire that all describe as good? Jesus said, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." So, if our desires are not directed towards God, then where or what is the good in them? That is not to say that anything we desire other than God is not good, even Jesus did not mean that, but rather, to admit that our first and greatest desire for good must be for God. All desire, other than the desire to seek the source of all goodness, God, is secondary for not every

desire of man is good or right or just. Jesus said elsewhere,

Therefore do not be anxious, saying "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day (Mt 6:31-34).

We have become anxious, our desires have turned toward earthly pleasures, material goods, temporal matters; we no longer hunger for the greatest good, good enough fills our every thought. Having most recently celebrated Thanksgiving, I am reminded of a proclamation by James Madison, the 4<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, "Given at the City of Washington on the fourth day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifteen, and of the Independence of the United States the thirty ninth" in which he wrote:

And to the same Divine Author of every good and perfect gift, we are indebted for all those privileges and advantages, religious as well as civil, which are so richly enjoyed in this favored land.

It is for blessing, such as these, and more especially for the restoration of the blessing of peace, that I now recommend, that the second Thursday in April next be set apart as a day on which the people of every religious denomination may, in their solemn Assemblies, unite their hearts and their voices, in a free will offering to their Heavenly Benefactor, of their homage of thanksgiving, and of their songs of praise.

1. Augustine, *Christian Doctrine*, I, 32 (PL 34, 32).
2. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q.5, a.1, a, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, n.d.) Aquinas refers to Aristotle as the Philosopher and elsewhere to Saint Paul as the Apostle.
3. *S. Th.*, I, q.5, a.1, o.1 resp.
4. *S. Th.*, I, q.6, a.2 resp.
5. *S. Th.*, I, q.6, a.2, o.3 resp.
6. *S. Th.*, I, q.6 a.3 resp.
7. Benjamin L. Smith, "The Meaning and Importance of Common Goods," *The Thomist*, October 2016, Vol. 80, No. 4, 585.
8. **Predication**, as used by Aquinas, is the expression of action, state or quality; an act of proclaiming.
9. Smith, *Common Goods*, 587-93.
10. *S. Th.*, I, q.2, a.1, o.2.
11. *S. Th.*, I, q.2, a.2, c.
12. *S. Th.*, I q.2, a.1, o.1, resp.

## Et Quod Hoc ...

*This and that ...*

### THIS ...

*Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.*

To my ever patient and often frustrated faithful readers, please accept my sincerest apologies; or as one would offer a confessional: Bless me, dear reader, for I have sinned. I have been quite remiss in regular delivery and for that I ask for your forgiveness. I cannot admit, with any degree of precision, to my imprecision, though I must submit that I have not been idling about enjoying life in solitary confinement.

While I wish I could assure you that these irregular hebdomadal regularities would return to hebdomadal regularity, what I wish and what I will are too often constipated these days to assure you of any such regularity. I try my best, but then, my best is often not the best of it. So, I ask for your continued patience and steadfast indulgence.

### AND THAT ...

On a completely different subject, that being the subject of this week's essay, "In Search of the Good," I believe further apologies are in order. It will not take but a brief scan to become aware that the subject matter requires some heavy slogging through esoteric theology and philosophy. To be perfectly honest, it took some heavy slogging on my part to only partially understand what I was reading and then putting to paper. So, if you find it more than you ever want to know, that is TMI, I understand completely. As an aside, I must admit the reason for the two week delay was a direct result of my poor attempt to conquer, in but a poor attempt, the Angelic Doctor's reasoned words. As mentioned in my essay, Aquinas thought of his *Summa Theologiae* as a beginner's introduction to

theology; I am not sure what that makes me compared to a medieval theology student but I am sure it is not flattering.

Anyway, my original thoughts were measured by the current crisis of faith within the Christian world, a crisis encouraged by a secular persecution that has, in a broad sense, forced Christians to live their faith in the catacombs lest they be fed to the lions in the public square. Some may sense this a bit too much; if that were to be so, I will apologize. But I ask, how long before faith becomes a vagrant memory, when faith is disavowed and worship disallowed? December 8th is a Holy Day of Obligation, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, and yet, no one is much offended by the loss of knowing the solemn importance of the occasion, of the obligation to attend Mass to honor such a blessed event. Sadly, most have no recollection, no memory of what the solemnity connotes.



Sadly, far too many, when asked what of the Immaculate Conception know not to what it refers. The typical answer is that it is when Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb. No, that is the Annunciation. The Immaculate Conception is when Mary was conceived, for she was conceived without the stain of original sin,

she was conceived immaculately to be the tabernacle of the Lord.

But during this time of great persecution and sacrificial suppression of Christianity, few dare to increase their faith, to grow in faith, to bear witness to their God. I cannot help but think of those first Christians who dared to believe even to the reality of persecution and the cruel ty of death. I keep thinking of the words of Jesus, "Why are you afraid, Oh, you of little faith" (Mt 8:26).

## 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

**Salvation: What Every Catholic Should Know**

*Michael Patrick Barber*

Ignatius Press

2019, 189 pages.

**Faith and Politics**

*Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI)*

Ignatius Press

2018, 269 pages.

**Voyage to Alpha Centauri: A Novel**

*Michael D. O'Brien*

Ignatius Press

2013, 587 pages.

**G.K. Chesterton Collected Works: Volume XXVIII**

*The Illustrated London News 1908-1910*

Ignatius Press

1987, 668 pages.

**Catholic Christianity: A Complete Catechism of**

Catholic Beliefs

*Peter J. Kreeft*

Ignatius Press

2014, 426 pages.

**The Irony of Modern Catholic History:**

How the Church rediscovered itself

*George Weigel*

Basic Books

2019, 322 pages.

**Letters on Liturgy**

*Father Dwight Longenecker*

Angelico Press

2020, 164 pages.

**Immortal Combat**

*Father Dwight Longenecker*

Sophia Institute Press

2020, 144 pages.

### PERIODICALS

**First Things**

[www.firstthings.com](http://www.firstthings.com)

**Touchstone**

[www.touchstonemag.com](http://www.touchstonemag.com)

**Catholic Answers Magazine**

[www.catholic.com](http://www.catholic.com)

**Catholic Herald**

[www.catholicherald.co.uk](http://www.catholicherald.co.uk)

**Chronicles**

[www.chroniclesmagazine.org](http://www.chroniclesmagazine.org)

**Gilbert!**

[www.chesterton.org](http://www.chesterton.org)

**The National Catholic Register**

[www.ncregister.com](http://www.ncregister.com)

**Our Sunday Visitor**

[www.osvnews.com](http://www.osvnews.com)

### ONLINE

**Crisis Magazine**

[www.crisismagazine.com](http://www.crisismagazine.com)

**The Imaginative Conservative**

[www.theimaginativeconservative.org](http://www.theimaginativeconservative.org)

**Catholic Exchange**

[www.catholicexchange.com](http://www.catholicexchange.com)

**Intellectual Takeout**

[www.intellectuالتakeout.org](http://www.intellectuالتakeout.org)

**Life News**

[www.lifenews.com](http://www.lifenews.com)

**Life Site News**

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**OnePeterFive**

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**Catholic Vote**

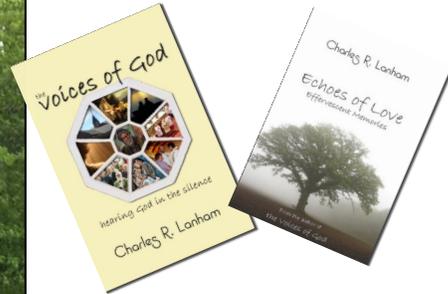
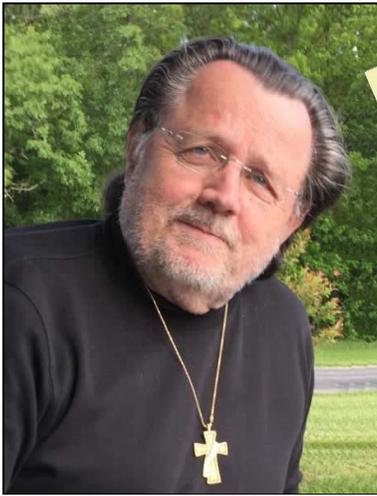
[www.catholicvote.org](http://www.catholicvote.org)

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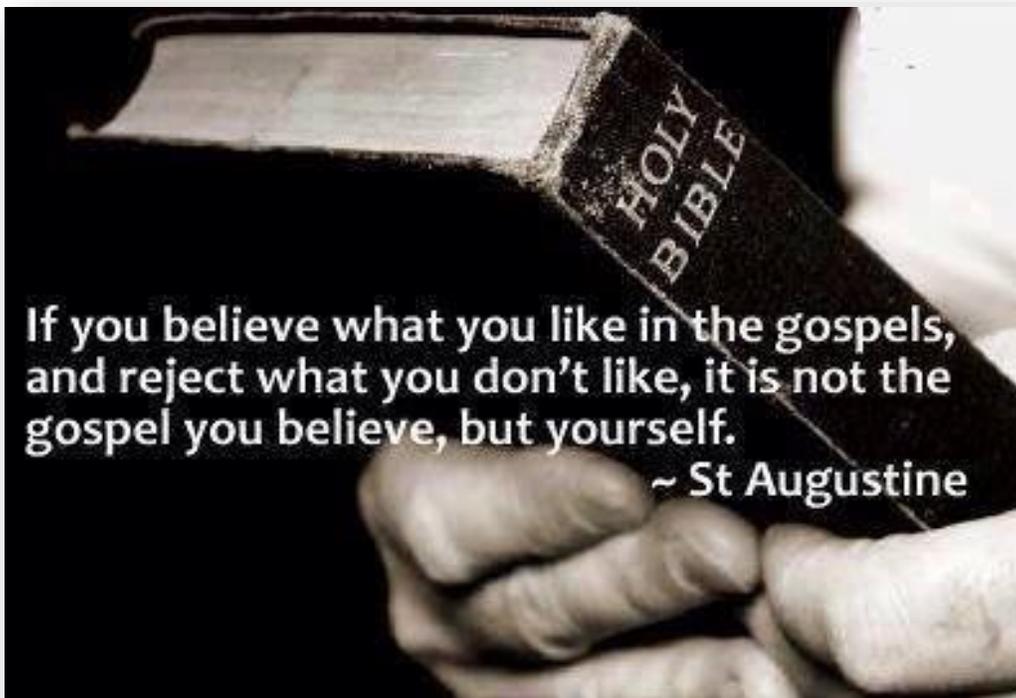


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**Deacon Chuck Lanham** is a Catholic author, columnist, speaker, theologian and philosopher, a jack-of-all-trades like his father (though far from a master of anything) and a servant of God. He is the author of **The Voices of God: Hearing God in the Silence**, **Echoes of Love: Effervescent Memories** and has written over 500 essays on religion, faith, morality, theology, and philosophy.

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**Colloquī** is published weekly by Deacon's Corner Publishing. Each issue of **Colloquī** is available online: <https://deaconscorner.org>

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