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A journal for restless minds

Colloquī *: to discuss*

The Unfairness Doctrine

Suck it up, buttercup; life is never fair

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Any child who ever lived long enough to meet adulthood head on has at least one time cried out in juvenile pique, "That's not fair!" Inevitably, their complaint, occasioned upon some perceived sleight of hand or mind, comes before the court of a supposed responsible adult whose duty it is to sit in judgment over all things juvenile and childish. Parents are, by reason of their parenthood, *solely*, and of far greater import, *soul-y* responsible for the development of their children, both by their word and deed, to instill in them moral and ethical norms, a firm commitment to the cardinal virtues of mind and character: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance; to know, love, and serve God and to obey his commandments. Anything less is an abdication of parental responsibility and grossly unfair to their prodigious progeny; it is indubitably the gravest of sins, no less severe than mental and spiritual infanticide. Sadly, there are far too many Neverlanders who, upon refusing to grow up, are the first to wine and whine, "That's not fair!" It is in those moments of over-extended childhood when the monstrous *Abnormitas* inevitably rears its *hydra corpus*¹ and commands absolute and unadulterated public devotion.

Russell Kirk noted that an abnormity (or abnormality,) from the Latin *abnormitas*, *ab* (away from) *norma* (the norm,) "means a monstrosity, defying the norm, the nature of things. An abnormal generation is a generation of monsters, enslaved by will and appetite. To recover an apprehension of normality, then, is to acquire an understanding of one's real nature. The alternative to such recovery is not a piquant pose of 'nonconformity,' but monstrosity of the soul and in society."² Kirk proposed assisting "in the rescue of normative consciousness from the clutch of ideology. For it ought to be the moral imagination which creates political doctrines, and not political

doctrines which seduce the moral imagination."

A norm ... is an enduring standard for private and public conduct. It is a canon of human nature. Real progress consists in the movement of mankind toward the understanding of norms, and toward conformity of norms. Real decadence consists in movement of mankind away from the understanding of norms, and away from obedience to norms. The decay of the Greek civilization in the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ; the decline of the Roman order in the four centuries after Christ; the collapse of the medieval world in the fourteenth century; the decline of culture and the eruption of dark powers in our own twentieth century—these were times in which norms were forgotten or defied. The disintegration of moral understanding was at once cause and consequence of confusion in the social order.



One cannot draw up a catalogue of norms as if it were an inventory of goods. Normality inheres in some sensible object, and norms depend one upon another, like the stones of a cathedral. But it is possible to say that there is a norm of charity; a norm of justice; a norm of freedom; a norm of duty; a norm of fortitude. Most of us perceive these norms clearly only when they are part and parcel of the life of a human being. Aristotle made norms recognizable by describing his "magnanimous man," the upright person and citizen. For the Christian, the norm is made flesh in the person of Christ. **Normality is not what the average sensual man ordinarily possesses: it is what he ought to try to possess.**

(emphasis added)

A value is the quality of worth. Many things are worthwhile that are not normative. When most writers nowadays employ the word "value" as a term of philosophy, moreover, they mean "subjective value"—that is, the quality of being worthwhile, of giving pleasure or satisfaction to individuals, without judgment upon the intrinsic, absolute, essential merit of the sensation or action in question; without reference to its objective deserts. **In the subjective sense, going to church is a value for some persons, and taking one's ease in a brothel is a value for others.** (emphasis added) A norm has value, but has more than value. A norm endures in its own right, whether or not it gives pleasure to particular individuals. A norm is the standard against which any alleged value must be measured objectively.³

It is the subjective value we have set to our lives which has led us hellbent down the brimstoned macadam in search of relevance; everyone wants to be relevant; no one wants for irrelevance—yet that is precisely the affective intent and the effective result—societal and cultural cancellation—of the cancel culture mob. Though it seems but yesterday, fifty-six years ago (1965) Pope Paul VI promulgated *Gaudium et Spes*, “The Church in the Modern World,” and the rest, it must be said, is sotted history. Henceforth, the Church would engage the world and it did not take long for the world to engage the Church by countermanding traditional religious devotions. Many called for “relevant Church doctrines”—bearing remarkable similarities to the twenty-first century ideological discombobulation commonly ascribed as “political correctness”—with tantric screams of “That’s not fair!” or “Don’t tell me what to do!” or “It is my religion and I choose my own heresies, thank you very much!”

In 1968, when Pope Paul VI reaffirmed the immorality of contraception, many priests and religious rebelled.

Rebellion was easy back then. Priests like Andrew Greeley (the Chicago sociologist and best-selling author of dirty books) suggested we would lose many Catholics by holding to “irrelevant” Church teaching. You know, just like Jesus losing most of His disciples during the Eucharistic Discourse: “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (Jn 6:53).

The USCCB (under a different name back then) got relevant. Over many decades, the USCCB commented on every known social issue. Does anyone take the endless documents on immigration, the economy, global warming or global cooling, or climate change – whatever – seriously?

Indeed, to a large extent, priests and bishops ceased to be relevant shepherds and became sheep of the culture, wholly owned subsidiaries of liberal fashions. Over the past fifty years “The Role of the Church in the Modern World” became “The Role of the Modern World in the Church.”

Fifty years of “Please, like me!” tactics haven’t worked. Despite our best efforts, we have become irrelevant.⁴

In a more contrived sense, those who then called for relevance outside the traditional Christian canon, stridulated against the two millennia of hierarchical patrimony, much as current ideologues argue all white people are *finé*

racist, anyone identifying as male a misogynist; love a meaningless four letter word, synonymous with sexual promiscuity—a weak woke morpheme to promote the hubristic pleasure of conceit; gender multinarianism and self-derangement: be anything you want to be, anything goes when you know not what or who you are. God is dead and sooner than you are wont all your yesterdays will have lighted fools the way to dusty death. Beauty is in the eyes of the sightless, nothing to see but rotted stumps and besotted termites.

“Never before has humanity existed in a culture that rejects belief in a transcendent power. Previous cultures — even when rent by bitter disagreements — shared a common belief that a greater force stood above the material realm. But when one side acknowledges an ultimate source of truth while the other side denies it, debate is dead, and mutual understanding is impossible.” In his soon to be released book, *Beheading Hydra*, Father Dwight Longenecker shows how, like the mythical serpentine beast with myriad writhing and venomous heads, atheism manifests itself today through sixteen “isms” that cloak the actions of the antichrist, who seethes with pure hatred of God and His truth. By exposing the philosophies behind scientism, materialism, utilitarianism, sentimental humanitarianism, and more, explaining how they became the core assumptions of our culture and how they are, in turn, corrupting the politics and power structures of the world, Longenecker catalogs the alluring and seductive deceptions to help you see how they are corroding the very foundations of Western civilization and entrapping countless faithful Christians. “Only by the light of our lives will we defeat this darkness. Debate and dialogue are now pointless. Our lives are our only remaining argument.”

Russell Kirk argued that “social order begins to disintegrate ... when political custom and political theory are overwhelmed by ideology; and when established political institutions are abandoned or permitted to decline, out of popular indifference and ignorance.” For citizens of the twenty-first century such disintegration has become a *fait accompli*; no single shot heard round the world, just two shots to stop death “Made in China.”

"Ideology" does not mean political theory or principle, even though many journalists and some professors commonly employ the term in that sense. Ideology really means political fanaticism—and, more precisely, the belief that this world of ours may be converted into the Terrestrial Paradise through the operation of positive law and positive planning. The ideologue—Communist or Nazi or of whatever affiliation—maintains that human nature and society may be perfected by mundane, secular means, though these means ordinarily involve violent social revolution. The ideologue immanentizes religious symbols and inverts religious doctrines.

What religion promises to the believer in a realm beyond time and space, ideology promises to everyone—except those who have been "liquidated" in the process—in society. Salvation becomes collective and political.

The original "ideologists" or "ideologues" believed that all knowledge is derived from sensation, and that a science of ideas could be developed upon this basis, describing the history and evolution of thought, and applicable to politics, ethics, and pedagogy.

Thus John Adams, in 1813, wrote of ideology: "Our English words, Idiocy or Idiotism, express not the force or meaning of it. It is presumed its proper definition is the science of Idiocy. And a profound, abstruse, and mysterious science it is. You must descend deeper than the divers in the Dunciad to make any discoveries, and after all you will find no bottom. It is the bathos, the theory, the art, the skill of diving and sinking in government. It was taught in the school of folly; but alas! Franklin, Turgot, Rochefoucauld, and Condorcet, under Tom Paine, were the great masters of that academy!"⁵

Kirk, along with others before and after, have long acknowledge the hard truth. "Real thinking is a painful process; and the ideologue resorts to the anaesthetic of social utopianism, escaping the tragedy and grandeur of true human existence by giving his adherence to a perfect dream-world of the future. Reality he stretches or chops away to conform to his dream-pattern of human nature and society. For the concepts of salvation and damnation, he substitutes abstractly virtuous 'progressives' and abstractly vicious 'reactionaries.'" In a very real sense, the ideologue is both an idler and a coward, no matter how strident the rhetoric, unwilling and afraid to expend any effort toward understanding truth; to borrow a phrase from Eric Voegelin, the ideologue's interests and creed lie squarely with "immanentizing the eschaton,"⁶ creating heaven on earth.

The twentieth-century [and twenty-first-century] ideologue, ... thinks that his secular dogmas are sustained by the Goddess Reason; he prides himself inordinately upon being "scientific" and "rational"; and he is convinced that all opposition to his particular wave of the future is selfish obscurantism, when it is not direct vested interest. One may add that ever since the modern scholar began to call himself an "intellectual," he has tended to fall addict to the opiate of ideology; for the word "intellectual" itself, used as a noun of persons, implies an overweening confidence in Reason with a capital R, to the exclusion of faith, custom, consensus, humility, and sacred mystery.

The ideologue, in brief, is one of Orwell's new-style men "who think in slogans and talk in bullets." For the ideologue, humankind may be divided into two classes: the comrades of Progress, and the foes attached to reactionary interests. All human actions may be judged in terms of ideological motive, the ideologue is convinced. ... The ideologues are "terrible simplifiers." They reduce politics to catch-phrases; and because they will tolerate no stopping-place short of heaven upon earth, they deliver us up to men possessed by devils.⁷

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, who I once had the great pleasure of meeting, albeit ever so briefly, frequently recounts of growing up the son of a mortician, of living above his father's mortuary. It is from his lived experience that he writes of how thinking of our own mortality puts the world into perspective. "It helps us see what matters, and also the foolishness of things that, finally, *don't* matter. Your hearse, as my father might say, won't have a luggage rack."

Time has a purpose. The meaning of a sentence becomes clear when we put a period at the end of it. The same applies to life. When we talk about things worth dying for, we're really talking about the things worth living for; the things that give life beauty and meaning.

There are two great temptations that I've seen people struggle with over my lifetime. The first is to try to create life's meaning for themselves, which translates in the end to no meaning at all. The second is to live and die for the wrong meaning, the wrong cause, the wrong purpose. The world is full of disguised and treasonous little gods that demand our full attention and in the end betray our deepest longings. But there is only one God, the God of Israel. And only in him, as Augustine said 1,600 years ago, can our hearts finally rest.

Love is demanding. It draws us outside ourselves. The more we love, the greater our willingness to sacrifice.

When we know, honestly, what we're willing to sacrifice for, even to die for, we can see the true nature of our loves. And that tells us who we really are.

But it's also important to note that as religious belief recedes, and communities of faith decline, the individualism at the heart of modern societies becomes more selfish and corrosive.

"Honor" is a word that can seem theatrical or outdated to the modern ear. But that's simply a defect of our times. Honor is profoundly important. We expect it from others, and we want it for ourselves. It's linked to the idea of dignity or integrity. When a man stays faithful to his wife, he honors his wedding covenant and secures the integrity of his marriage. The same goes for our deepest convictions: they also need to be honored. We all have a hunger—even when we fail at it—to live as honorable people, people of principle willing to speak for what we know to be right and true.⁸

What is most absent from the heart of the dissident left, those angry voices railing against some trumped up, imagined, or perceived injustice, is love. Because it is demanding, it demands self-sacrifice which the social justice warrior dare not contemplate. The proof of this is buried within the collective mind: social justice warriors amorphized, safe within the womb of the mob, the group, the cult, the disenfranchised, the weak made strong by mere numbers. Hidden among the crowd, they are safe, no threat to their unwillingness to "sacrifice for, even to die for," their "cause." They are hooded cowards, emboldened by the comforting blanket of cowardly pussycats that surrounds and protects their ignorance. The emptying pews further signal the decline of selfless, self-sacrificial love and the steep descent into the abyss of selfishness.

Elsewhere Archbishop Chaput writes, "The most telling feature of our era is that it curves us in upon ourselves. It seduces us to live without love. We're smothered in sweet-sounding slogans like 'love wins' and 'hate has no home here.' But so often these words are merely masks for resentment; weapons in a culture war filled with more poison than honesty. Authentic love turns us away from ourselves and toward the Other. It's ordered to truth; the truth about human beings, human nature and creation. It's demanding and self-denying. It anchors us to realities that are deeply human, deeply rewarding, and the deepest sources of joy; but also inconvenient, and easily seen as burdens."⁹

If you were made a Ford or an Edsel, no manner of wishful thinking, mumbo-jumbo, or technological legerdemain on the part of the bipedal gods could remake you a Lamborghini or a Cadillac. There are far more Fords than Cadillacs, rare the Edsel or Lamborghini. These days, equity and diversity demand an accounting; should not there be an equitable distribution of Lamborghinis? Should not diversity demand as many Edsels be made as Fords or Cadillacs? Fewer Fords and more Lamborghinis is the only answer, so say those ubiquitous and annoying bipedal gods. But wait! What if lesser gods *prefer* to afford a Ford, what then? Should not there be central planning by the better gods to determine what vehicles will be manufactured, what they will cost, and who can own one and when? Oh, wait! That has been done before, has it not? Once upon a time there were a triptych of utopian dreams: Socialism, Marxism, Communism. Tell me now, how exactly did those dreams (nightmares) work out?

Everyone knows the Lamborghini is better than the Ford; all the public experts (mindless meddling mendicants) must agree, though just a minute and the selfsame will disagree to agree to disagree, it is much too confusing to follow. Why that must be so is anyone's guess, there are no peer reviewed studies to disprove the assertion because the expert has no peer; it is quite obvious a conspiracy theory. What does *better* mean, anyway? How is *better* calibrated? What is the standard for *better*? Anyone who would refuse a Lamborghini is obviously a misguided, maladjusted, prejudicially incorrect deplorable; the decision, therefore, must be taken out of their misguided hands, the decision made *for* them, for their own good and the common good of Lamborghini. Either that or such warped and twisted minds must be sent to Critical Car Programming (CCP) for reeducation on the MEDIA¹⁰ Elysian Fields of the CarVantric Neurotic Nonsense (CNN) clinic.

Ultimately, every vehicle is manufactured in the image and likeness of an automobile, all equal in common purpose (all are automobiles, after all) though unequal in form and class, each made for a life of indentured servitude—slavery, any way you slice it—to the barbarous horde of bipedal gods. Some vehicular slaves are short, others long; some are wide, others narrow; most have four wheels, others three, some a centipede; some red, others

white, some blue, still others every other color of the rainbow, each color pleasing in the equitable eyes of the foolish gods who enslave them all. Should blue appeal to some but not to others neither diminishes nor magnifies the measure of the vehicle; it is what it is, nothing more, nothing less. Could Henry Ford have had it right? "Any customer can have a car painted any color that he wants, so long as it is black." Should a Lamborghini's color fade, does that make the Lamborghini less the Ford or the Ford the better merely for the color of its skin? Should the Lamborghini be destined for the rust yard or merely pampered with a facial wax?

Though I never begin with either purpose or intent to any mention of my dear friend, G.K.C.—may he rest in peace—I have come to such a state of mind that to ignore him is in all practicality impracticable. After all, he had so much to say on so many great and small things that any essay bereft of what he had to say would be a trifling thing, mundane and uninteresting, bordering on blasé. G.K.C.—self-admittedly geographically challenged, he at times would call his wife to find out where he was and where he was supposed to be—always walked eyes wide, yet unafraid in a world filled with strange and interesting characters, eager to take on education, government, big business, feminism, anything and everything in and of the world; only he dared ask and answer *What's Wrong With the World?* Originally published a century and eleven years ago, his genius remains as readable and rewarding today as when he first put ink to paper, offering unparalleled analysis of contemporary ideals, incisive critique of modern efficiency, and humorous but heartfelt defense of the common man against trend-setting social assaults—the wokeness of his day. In *Part IV Education: Or the Mistake About the Child, Chapter Two, The Tribal Terror*, Chesterton wrote of the madness of hereditary dogmas.

Popular science, like that of Mr. Blatchford, is in this matter as wild as old wives' tales. Mr. Blatchford, with colossal simplicity, explained to millions of clerks and working men that the mother is like a bottle of blue beads and the father like a bottle of yellow beads; and so the child is like a bottle of mixed blue beads and yellow. He might just as well have said that if the father has two legs and the mother has two legs, the child will have four legs. Obviously it is not a question of simple addition or simple division of a number of hard de-

tached "qualities," like beads. It is an organic crisis and transformation of the most mysterious sort; so that even if the result is unavoidable, it will still be unexpected. It is not like blue beads mixed with yellow beads; it is like blue mixed with yellow; the result of which is *green*, a totally novel and unique experience, a new emotion. A man might live in a complete cosmos of blue and yellow, like the *Edinburgh Review*; a man might never have seen anything but a golden cornfield and a sapphire sky; and still he might never have had so wild a fancy as green. If you paid a sovereign for a bluebell; if you spilt the mustard on the blue-books; if you married a canary to a blue baboon; there is nothing in any of these wild weddings that contains even a hint of green. Green is not a mental combination, like addition; it is a physical result, like birth. So apart from the fact that nobody ever really understands parents or children either, yet even if we could understand the parents we could not make any conjecture about the children. Each time the force works in a different way; each time the constituent colours combine into a different spectacle. A girl may actually inherit her ugliness from her mother's good looks. A boy may actually get his weakness from his father's strength. Even if we admit it is really a fate, for us it must remain a fairy tale. Considered in regard to its causes, the Calvinists and materialists may be right or wrong; we leave them their dreary debate. But considered in regard to its results there is no doubt about it. The thing is always a new colour; a strange star. Every birth is as lonely as a miracle. Every child is as uninvited as a monstrosity.

On all such subjects there is no science, but only a sort of ardent ignorance; and nobody has ever been able to offer any theories of moral heredity which justified themselves in the only scientific sense; that is, that one could calculate on them beforehand. There are six cases, say, of a grandson having the same twitch of mouth or vice of character as his grandfather; or perhaps there are sixteen cases, or perhaps sixty. But there are not two cases, there is not one case, there are no cases at all, of anybody betting half a crown that the grandfather will have a grandson with the twitch or the vice. In short, we deal with heredity as we deal with omens, affinities and the fulfilment of dreams. The things do happen, and when they happen we record them; but not even a lunatic ever reckons on them. Indeed, heredity, like the dreams and omens, is a barbaric notion: that is, not necessarily an untrue, but a dim, groping and unsystematised notion. A civilised man feels himself a little more free from his family. Before Christianity these tales of tribal doom occupied the savage North; and since the Reformation and the revolt against Christianity (which is the religion of a civilized freedom) savagery is slowing creeping back in the form of realistic novels and

problem plays. The curse of Rougon-Macquart is as heathen and superstitious as the curse of Ravenswood; only not so well written. But in this twilight barbaric sense the feeling of a racial fate is not irrational, and may be allowed, like a hundred other half emotions that make life whole. The only essential of tragedy is that one should take it lightly. But even when the barbarian deluge rose to its highest in the madder novels of Zola (such as that called "The Human Beast"; a gross libel on beasts as well as humanity), even then the application of the hereditary idea to practice is avowedly timid and fumbling. The students of heredity are savages in this vital sense; that they stare back at marvels, but they dare not stare forward to schemes. **In practice no one is mad enough to legislate or educate upon dogmas of physical inheritance** (*emphasis added*); and even the language of the thing is rarely used except for special modern purposes, such as the endowment of research or the oppression of the poor.¹¹

As much the sage and seer, my august friend could only then see but in a mirror dimly, unable to fully confront face to face the madness yet to be. While he rightly suggested "The time will come when somebody will laugh louder to think that men thundered against Sectarian Education and also against Secular Education; that men of prominence and position actually denounced the schools for teaching a creed and also for not teaching a faith," he never imagined the time would come when children would be educated "upon dogmas of physical inheritance." That would be madness, or so he thought at the time.

Now having read numberless newspaper articles on education, and even written a good many of them, and having heard deafening and indeterminate discussion going on all round me almost ever since I was born, about whether religion was a part of education, about whether hygiene was an essential of education, about whether militarism was inconsistent with true education, I naturally pondered much on this recurring substantive, and I am ashamed to say that it was comparatively late in life that I saw the main fact about it.

Of course, **the main fact about education is that there is no such thing.** (*emphasis added*) It does not exist, as theology or soldiering exist. Theology is a word like geology, soldiering is a word like smoldering; these sciences may be healthy or not as hobbies; but they deal with stones and kettles, with definite things. But education is not a word like geology or kettles. **Education is a word like "transmission" or "inheritance"; it is not an object, but a method. It must mean the conveying of**

certain facts, views, or qualities to the last baby born. (*emphasis added*) They might be the most trivial facts, or the most preposterous views, or the most offensive qualities; but if they are handed on from one generation to another they are education. Education is not a thing like theology; it is not an inferior or superior thing; it is not a thing in the same category of terms. Theology and education are to each other as a love-letter to the General Post Office. ... **Education is tradition** (*emphasis added*), and tradition (as its name implies) can be treason.

This first truth is frankly banal; but it is so perpetually ignored in our political prosing that it must be made plain. A little boy in a little house, son of a little tradesman, is taught to eat his breakfast, to take his medicine, to love his country, to say his prayers, and to wear his Sunday clothes. Obviously Fagin, if he found such a boy, would teach him to drink gin, to lie, to betray his country, to blaspheme and to wear false whiskers. But so also Mr. Salt the vegetarian would abolish the boy's breakfast; Mrs. Eddy would throw away his medicine; Count Tolstoy would rebuke him for loving his country; Mr. Blatchford would stop his prayers; and Mr. Edward Carpenter would theoretically denounce Sunday clothes, and perhaps all clothes. I do not defend any of these advanced views, not even Fagin's. But I do ask what, between the lot of them, has become of the solid entity called education. It is not (as commonly supposed) that the tradesman teaches education plus Christianity; Mr. Salt, education plus vegetarianism; Fagin, education plus crime. The truth is, that there is nothing in common at all between these teachers, except that they teach. In short, the only thing they share is the one thing they profess to dislike; the general idea of authority. **It is quaint that people talk of separating dogma from education. Dogma is actually the only thing that cannot be separated from education. It is education. A teacher who is not dogmatic is simply a teacher who is not teaching.**¹² (*emphasis added*)

This last sits at the heart of the matter, it is as Bilbo recounted the here and back again. The little boy in a little house, son of a little tradesman, ought and must be taught how to live, become a good citizen, love God, country, family and himself first, last, and always by his *mother* and *father*; not by Fagin, Mr. Salt, Mrs. Eddy, Count Tolstoy, Mr. Blatchford, or Mr. Edward Carpenter. Teachers who do not teach but inculcate their students with social justice ideology should be imprisoned for criminal child abuse. Case in point, *teaching* Kindergarten social justice by asking them to describe what "fair" means, then having them *record* their thoughts on fairness. Kindergarten? What, with Crayolas and coloring books?

Asking a five-year-old the meaning of “fair” makes about as much sense as asking a goldfish to climb a tree then sing the Hallelujah chorus in four-part harmony!

Where are the responsible adults in the classroom? Apparently, all the teachers, led by the superintendent, have left the building for holiday. Never fear, however, there will be class warfare zoom zoom; virtual attendance mandatory. Now to be *fair*, as fair as fair can be, the current lot of teachers are the mere biproduct of the same deplorable scholarship now generations in the making; in short, to fault them for such abhorrent pedagogy, who can blame them when they stomp their pedagogical feet and cry “That’s not fair!”

A number of years ago, I took a river cruise from Moscow to St. Petersburg; Maria was the forty-one-year-old tour guide assigned to our group, originally from Yaroslavl, a medium-sized village on the Volga River, north of Moscow. Her parents lived during the Soviet regime, her father a professor of mathematics. She had one older sister some 10 years older and she herself had a 14-year-old daughter who we briefly met during our stopover in Yaroslavl. Four generations spread over some 70 to 80 years. Maria told us how different history was taught and experienced throughout the changing political landscape by first her parents, then her sister, herself, and now, her daughter. She told us how her mother often pined for the good old days of Communism and how her father would ask her how she enjoyed the weekly four-hour train rides to Moscow to wait for hours in line hoping to be able to purchase a small loaf of bread, yet more often than not, unavailable. Her sister was a member of a Soviet youth group, inculcated in the Soviet school system, indoctrinated in the glories of the revolution of the working class over the oppressive tyranny of the bourgeoisie (never explained,) propagandized by the government-controlled media, Pravda and Tass. Maria grew up during the breakup of the Soviet Union, was able to travel to the U.S., to Texas, where she completed her college education. Her elementary and high school education still highly controlled by the State, but Communism and Socialism were no longer looked upon as glorious or the sole path to a worker’s paradise. Her daughter was taught the history of Russia, including the Tsars, the good and the bad, though still through the State’s lens.

Maria’s story should remind us of the terrible danger and the awful threat Socialism, Marxism, Fascism, Communism, and all the myriad of isms present to our cherished freedoms. Ronald Reagan once spoke of the fragile nature of freedom. “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.” There can be no freedom where there can be only oppressors and victims of oppression. When our children and our children’s children are taught to hate our country, burn our flag, despise their neighbor for the color of their skin, and to deny faith in the one true God, then we are truly headed for extinction. “Tyranny,” Thomas Jefferson once described, “is defined as that which is legal for the government but illegal for the citizenry.” He also said, “When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty.”

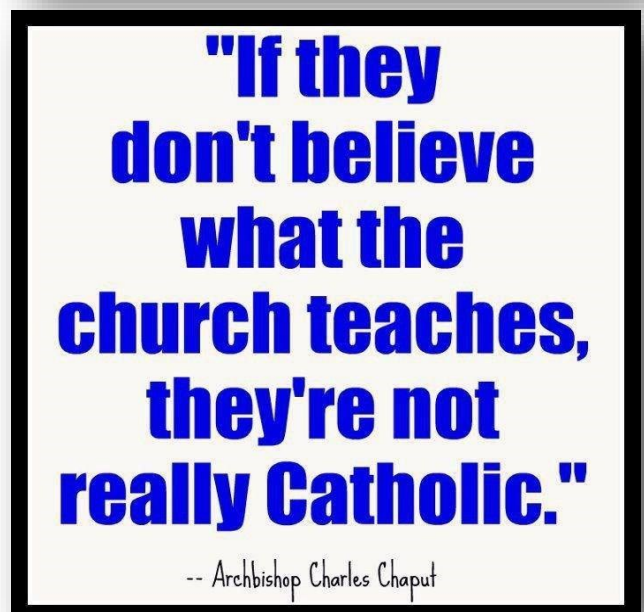
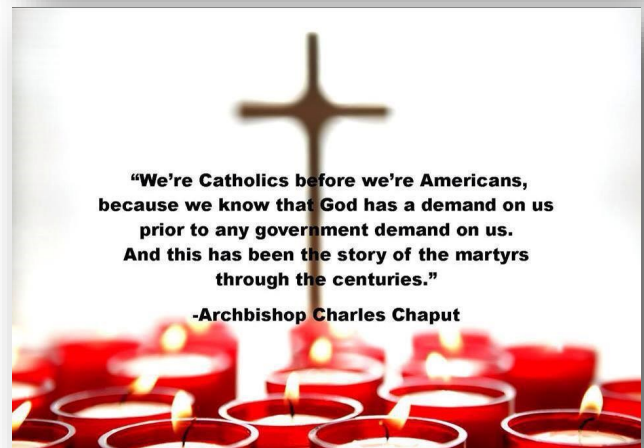
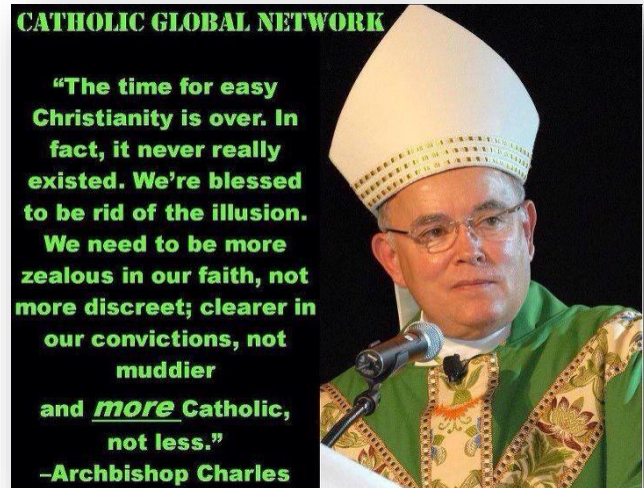
Your life is what *you* make of it, only you. The accident of your birth is an irreversible, immutable fact; what you do to repair yourself is solely yours to mess up or dress up. Where you are now is the result of choices you, and you alone, have made; you alone are responsible for where you are and where you aim to become. No one owes you anything, you owe a filial debt to those who loved you into being. When a disciple of Confucius queried him on filiality,¹⁴ Confucius put it bluntly: “Filiality is the root of virtue and the wellspring of instruction.” When pressed to explain, Confucius responded, “Give your parents no cause for worry other than your illness,” meaning a good child allows illness to be the only cause for parental worry. “Nowadays, [filiality] is taken to mean being able to feed your parents. But dogs and horses do as much. If you are not respectful, how are you different?”¹⁵

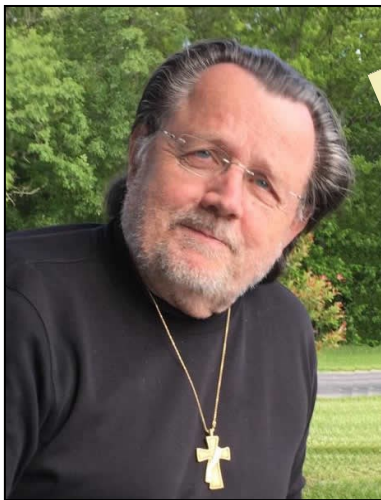
Sitting on the stump you call your rump complaining of the unfairness of it all, demanding your fair share of what you have not earned is highway robbery, and you, the highwayman. No one ever won a lottery without first purchasing a ticket. If you want to change the quality of *your* life, take control of it, accept the responsibility for yourself; your neighbor owes you nothing, the world

owes you nothing, God owes you nothing, so, suck it up, buttercup, life is never fair, nor will it ever be. That is not how life works.

1. **Hydra corpus:** In Greek mythology: a many-headed serpent or monster, slain by Hercules and each head of which when cut off was replaced by two others; a multifarious evil not to be overcome by a single effort.
2. Russell Kirk, *"Enemies of the Permanent Things: Observations of Abnormity in Literature and Politics"*, (Peru, Illinois: Sherwood Sugden & Company, 1984, 1988) 16.
3. *Ibid.*, 20-21.
4. Rev. Jerry J. Pokorsky, *"Dare to be Irrelevant"*, The Catholic Thing, June 13, 2021.
5. Russell Kirk, *"Enemies of the Permanent Things"*, 153-55.
6. **Immanentizing the eschaton:** In political theory and theology, trying to bring about the eschaton (the final, heaven-like stage of history) in the immanent world. In all these contexts, it means "trying to make that which belongs to the afterlife happen here and now (on earth). Theologically, the belief is akin to postmillennialism as reflected in the Social Gospel of the 1880-1930 era, as well as Protestant reform movements during the Second Great Awakening in the 1830s and 1840s such as abolitionism. Modern usage of the phrase started with Eric Voegelin in *The New Science of Politics* in 1952. Conservative spokesman William F. Buckley popularized Voegelin's phrase as "Don't immanentize the eschaton!" Buckley's version became a political slogan of Young Americans for Freedom during the 1960s and 1970s. Voegelin identified a number of similarities between ancient Gnosticism and the beliefs held by a number of modern political theories, particularly Communism and Nazism. He identified the root of the Gnostic impulse as belief in a lack of concord within society as a result of an inherent disorder, or even evil, of the world. One of the more oft-quoted passages from Voegelin's work on Gnosticism is that "The problem of an *eidos* in history, hence, arises only when a Christian transcendental fulfillment becomes immanentized. Such an immanentist hypostasis of the eschaton, however, is a theoretical fallacy."
7. Russell Kirk, *"Enemies of the Permanent Things"*, 157.
8. Charles J. Chaput, Archbishop, OFM, Cap., *"Things Worth Dying For: Thoughts on a Life Worth Living"*, (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 2021), 8-11.
9. *Ibid.*, 17.
10. **MEDIA:** Most Evil Demons In America.
11. G.K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong With the World*, (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1910), 142-44.
12. *Ibid.*, 148-49.

13. Not to be confused with gender neutral "birthing person" and "other person" as currently proscribed by law.
14. **Filiality:** *noun*, the dutiful sense "owed to a parent by a child."
15. Confucius, *Analects*, 15.





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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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