

My Walk With God

Responsibility



Ch XIII

All actions taken freely, have consequences; just as freedom, even exercised for the good, comes with responsibility. When I joined the Navy, I committed myself to living in close quarters among men, with whom I may or may not share any common interest or common heritage. Would we get along? I trusted in God for guidance on how I could live in this manner. When dating my future wife, it was necessary to consider her own unique personality when attempting to woo her. When we considered marriage, would I willingly give up my personal self interest for her and our future children? These considerations required, on both of our parts, the necessity of foregoing our own desires, for the good of our spouse. Would I willingly display LOVE in our relationship, by subjugating my own desires, in order to promote hers? I have become responsible for her well being, along with our future children's.

After struggling in retail sales for a few years, the business I was working for suffered a bankruptcy. It was only God who could help. In the previous year I had applied for a job at the local paper mill, to no avail. Now I looked to the largest population center in the county, Show Low, for any chance of employment. Finally, one day, I volunteered to clean up the grounds outside of our church at Our Lady of The Snow. Fr. Quintana came out and asked if I would be interested in doing some roofing for him at the church that he was having built in Heber, about 20 miles west of us in the forested area of the Arizona Rim Country.

This new church was a log building that would contain not only the church proper, but living quarters for a priest and a community hall. After finishing the roof, Fr. Asked me and another parishioner from Taylor to complete the interior of the structure. God was good!

My friend and I drove every day from our home in Taylor to the church site in Heber to work, I completed all of the plumbing and electrical work and my friend did the floors and carpentry work. This project took us about 3 ½ months to finish. On the 20th of December I called home from the Circle K to find out if Glenna needed me to pick up anything on the way home. This would be our last day on the Church project in Heber. Glenna told me I had a call from the employment office at the local APS power plant in Joseph City, about 10 miles west from Holbrook. I immediately returned their call. I had a job offer to start the next day if I wanted it. Luck could not have provided such a timely offer. God again, was at work. Of course, He is always at work, it is on us to take His work into account and seek His work in our prayer. The drive to work provided the opportunity for prayer. There was a lack of traffic, with which I might have become distracted, and I had at least 45 minutes of time to converse with God. I can't say that I took advantage of all of that time but I did try to use some of it each day.

In time things started to turn around financially for my family and after driving a loner car during my time working on the church in Heber, I was able to buy a new mini van that was much more reliable. After working at the power plant for about 3 years, my older daughter graduated from high school and was off to the University of Arizona in Tucson, seeking a degree in nursing. The Mormon influences in the local public school had started to affect my younger daughter who was now in 2nd grade. As a result, I applied for a transfer to the nuclear power plant 45 miles east of Phoenix. I was accepted and became an operator there and, we started preparing for a permanent move to the Phoenix area.



Throughout my life, I had always known who God is and who Jesus is and what my relationship with them should be. Sometimes, by exercising my own freedom, I would choose to ignore them and pursue my own desires. In most cases this was an exercise in dangerous arrogance and pride that lead to anxiety, depression or general selfishness. When realizing these feelings were a consequence of separating myself from Jesus and His guidance, I would attempt to return towards Him by reading from the Bible. Years ago, following my time with “The Grand And Glorious Physician” and My Cursillo Weekend, I consumed the New

Testament starting with Luke, The Acts of The Apostles, and then the rest. Then later in Australia I devoured Genesis, Exodus and The Psalms, as well as Isaiah, and the Gospels again. This became a great comfort to me.

I found Jesus everywhere. In Genesis when the Word said “let there be light!” In Exodus when God 'spoke', His Word said to Moses, in the burning bush, “I am the God of your father- etc.,” Isaiah Philosophized of Jesus, as did many other prophets, and finally John described for us who the Word is, 'In the beginning was the Word' etc., and again, 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us'. Again, Jesus said “When you see me you have seen The Father.” If I want to see God, I can see evidence of Him in His creation everywhere, If I want to know Him I will look for Him in His Son Jesus Christ. What does it mean to know Jesus? Knowledge can be extensive, but, without applying that knowledge to my own life, it might as well, be in a closed book. How do I make it meaningful to my own life with my family.?



I have had the habit of carrying a Rosary in my pocket for many years now. Before that, I had always kept one available for special occasions on my bedroom end table. The Virgin Mary had become my Blessed Mother even before I was born. At His Crucifixion, Jesus presented all of humanity, His mother when He told John, “This is your Mother!” Now my Blessed Mother told me to learn and say her rosary, in order that we might more closely unite ourselves with her earthly life and the Salvific Ministry of her Son Jesus Christ.

As I pray the Joyful Mysteries, the love of God for His creation, especially each and every person, is evident as He becomes one of us and shares our humanities trials, while experiencing the art of human relationships. Am I willing to walk in the shoes of my enemies as well as my friends in order to know their personal stories? In the Sorrowful Mysteries, I experience His ultimate love as Jesus presents Himself as the unblemished Pascal Lamb to be sacrificed for my and everyone else's sins, thereby purchasing our salvation from the eternal death. Will I offer my own life of comfort in order to help my neighbor? When I pray the Luminous Mysteries, it is like listening to Jesus parables, remembering my own

wedding vows, and the gratitude we should all express for His great gift of The Eucharist. As we pray the Glorious Mysteries, I remember that we will follow Jesus into our reward in heaven, for as He rose from the grave, our bodies will also raise on the last day, and by living as He taught, “*Love the Lord God with your whole soul and your whole might, while loving my neighbor as myself;*” we are assured of our communion with Jesus in eternity. When I fail to meet the mark, the forgiveness of Jesus Christ is always available when I express sorrow for my sins, and willingly confess them with the intention of turning over a new leaf, and starting again, to live in His will.



As I settled into my new job, we rented an apartment in a working class neighborhood in Phoenix and enrolled our younger daughter into St. Louis The King Catholic School in Glendale. Jessica was in 3rd grade and Jeanine was in her 3rd year at the University of Arizona in Tucson. We found St. Louis The King to be a clickish community, There was nothing like jumping our of the frying pan, *in Taylor*, and into the fire, *at SLK*. Even so, we were able to find a way into the community by volunteering in their RE program.

Jeanine, on the other hand was excelling at the Neuman Center at U of A in Tucson. When we moved to Taylor, her guitar performance had been advancing well and she upgraded to a professional model that she took to the university, where she now joined a group providing liturgical music at the U of A Neuman Center.



It was during this time that Pope John Paul II was making his first visit to the US. Phoenix was on his agenda. Each parish was allotted a certain number of tickets for his Mass at the AZ State University Stadium. Because Glenna and I were catechists, our family was able to obtain tickets. We were excited and the day came when we proceeded to the stadium. 77,000 people attended that Mass and it was an amazing thing to see John Paul II as he entered and circled the stadium greeting the crowd as they all erupted in applause. Being present as the Vicar of Christ celebrated the Holy Mass

was a very moving event.

There was another 'coincidence' that had to be another work of God. The line of people in the crowd waiting to enter the stadium was about a mile long when we arrived. All of a sudden a group of young people showed up



all together and entered the line behind us. They were from The University of Arizona in Tucson. All of a sudden we heard the call, "Mom,Dad,Jessica" I looked around and there was our daughter Jeanine in the group. Out of 77,000 people, we met as if planned by God.

The Mass was a very moving event, for now we could not only see Jesus in the Eucharistic Host but His vicar on Earth was presiding. What more could I ask for on Earth. When his visit was over in Phoenix, Pope John Paul II went on to Los Angeles. His entire visit was televised for the world to see. There had been a large cross erected in the center of the ASU stadium for the Pope's Mass and it was disassembled and moved to SS. Simon & Jude Cathedral grounds where it stands today as a reminder of that visit.

When Jessica was to start 5th grade, we transferred her to the Cathedral School at SS. Simon & Jude. We felt very much at home there as Glenna became involved with helping at school whenever the need arose. The entire facility was built in the 60's and was very much a post Vatican II structure. The neighborhood environment made it inconvenient for most parishioners to walk to church but the rear of the church provided ample parking for all Masses. As a result most of the congregation entered the church from a side entrance rather than from the main entrance that fronted on the main street. As we entered from the side, the door opened onto the space between the sanctuary and the congregation. Rather than side altars for The Blessed Mother and St. Joseph, there was a quilted modern art representation of Mary on the Left and three vials of (Holy Oils) on the right. The Tabernacle was offset to an alcove to the right of the altar with a small vigil light signifying the presence of the Holy Eucharist; There was no Crucifix but behind the altar was a massive sculpture, on copper, of the Risen Christ carrying His staff of victory, a cross. The Stations of the Cross were artistic representations, made from wire sculptures, requiring one's imagination to

discern them. This was the SS. Simon & Jude Cathedral of the Diocese of Phoenix, built in 1960 as a post-Vatican II parish church, prior to the establishment of the Diocese.

There were two small shrines on either side of the church representing, SS. Simon & Jude to the left and Our lady of Guadeloupe to the right. They were the only representations of the saints in this otherwise modern example of Spanish Colonial church architecture. There was stained glass in the windows, that is of glass bricks arranged to represent the earth, *green*, and the heavens, *blue*. I missed the angels and saints watching over us from the stained glass windows of the churches of my childhood. In addition to all of the liturgical changes in the post Vatican II world, there was a new emphasis, or lack of emphasis placed on Confession. It was now known as the Sacrament of Reconciliation and it seemed that many priests were trying to become more of a friend in the confessional rather than holding the confessor responsible for his sins. The confessor lost some sense of anonymity as the friendly atmosphere improved with a 'face to face', living room atmosphere within the confessional became more common. Sin became less of a condition requiring repentance in my life and Confession became less frequent. By this time my confessions only met the minimum requirements, of once a year or so. I was on my slide, towards mediocrity.

Form of Confession

I Confess to Almighty God and to you Father, that I have sinned; It has been (xx) weeks since my last confession, I accuse myself of:

Confess my sins - - - - -

For these and all the sins of my past life I am truly sorry.

O My God I am heartily sorry that I have offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of Hell; but most of all because they offend Thee my God who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy Grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and amend my life. Amen