

My Walk With God

Retirement



Ch XV

After 50 years of service to our country, in the military and the private sector, it was now time to retire, or so I thought. I had been with Arizona Public service Co. for 20+ years and my eyesight was beginning to fail, along with other parts of my body. I was looking forward to relaxing by the pool, with a cold beer, but that wasn't to happen.

My wife had been teaching on and off, in the religious education program at church. She first started years ago at St. Catherine Laboure Parish in San Diego, then in Australia, at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Ramona, Our lady of the Snow in Taylor-Snowflake, at St. Louis The King in Glendale, Arizona, and now at Ss Simon & Jude Cathedral in Phoenix. I had been involved periodically as my work schedule permitted, but now I found time to become more active with my wife in her ministry. We found it to be very helpful to begin religious education, that is, introducing God and His spiritual world, to children at an early age. They are very receptive to these concepts of the spiritual world in their early years. Of course, the home is the primary place for this education. The church, however, can be of great help to parents by providing grounding, and a communal aspect to the children's development.

When Jesus taught, He used examples from the everyday life of His followers. We call these examples Parables. If they were good enough for Jesus, who is God in the flesh, they must be good enough for me. My wife's lessons for the children were all based on the Gospels and the spiritual seasons of the year, punctuated by Jesus's Parables. There were sessions about Creation, Noah, Moses, and The Gospels. Each lesson contained some visual device, made by the students, that they could take home in

order to continue a discussion of the day's lesson within their family.

Researching material for these lessons, and incorporating then within the boundaries provided by the Religious Education Coordinator for the parish, became a great learning experience for us both. Anticipating the children's questions, helped in gaining insight into the real depth of the lesson. I could not, however, ever imagine the quantity or depth of the questions in the mind of a 6 year old. God had truly placed me in a new learning environment. This had become an excellent learning experience for both of us.

We continued on for a number of years, until diminished eyesight and forgetfulness in our 70's, forced us to retire from this calling. What to do now? All through my life, devotion to the Virgin Mary was always in the back of my mind. Not a good place for it, you might say. In my Navy days, I had kept a rosary in my pocket, or within easy reach. Occasionally it would encourage me to prayer, but preoccupation with other things kept me from regular devotion. Upon retirement, I found Christian radio with Dr. J. Vernon McGee, as I would drive to and from work in San Diego. Even though he was not Catholic, his presentation encouraged me to take up reading from the Bible more often. It was there that I found God to be real in my life. I, of course, knew Him in the Sacraments and the devotionals of the Church, but He became more relevant to me in the Scriptures. First I concentrated on specific passages of interest, but I soon realized that I needed to see the entirety of Scripture, as the whole of God's message to us. I began again with Genesis. I was not new to reading the Bible. Years ago before our time in Australia, I became interested in The New Testament, after reading Taylor Caldwell's, "Grand and Glorious Physician". At that time I started with The Acts of The Apostles, and then the Gospel of Luke. Now I began with Genesis.

Regular prayer had again become a part of my daily life. The Rosary, and its Mysteries are an asset to my familiarization with God, and His compassion for my family, and the overall human condition. I see His Love for humanity, by His announcement and becoming one of us in the Nativity of Our Lord at Christmas, When I meditate on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. In the Sorrowful Mysteries, His love for us is shown by the willingness of Jesus to suffer and die for us. We remember this in His Passion and death on the cross. In the Glorious Mysteries, of the Rosary, we consider His defeat of evil by His Resurrection and the gift of His Holy Spirit and the Eucharist. In my daily resitation of the Rosary, I see His committed

continuing love for us.

The Divine Mercy Chaplet had also become a part of my daily prayer. I learned of this devotion when reading the biography of Pope John Paul II, who acknowledged this devotion of Sr. Faustina, in Poland, during his life experiences of WWII. After seeing the Pope in Phoenix during his Pastoral Visit to the United States in the late 80's, his life became a guide for me, and I tried to live as if imitating him, but with a multitude of personal failings. Then came John Paul II's gift of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. Even with all of these gifts, not only I, but most of the human family continues to fail. The forgiveness of Jesus is the glue that holds us together in the family of God in Holy Communion. When I take comfort in His forgiveness, a light begins to shine again, at the end of a very dark tunnel. Again, I seek out the love of God and to know Him better. How can I, a mortal finite being attempt to know the infinite being of God? We pray in The Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven". How do we know His will and for that matter, what we are praying for. It is through faith that we acknowledge that God is Love and that is good. When He created everything, it was all good. He is the embodiment of Love and goodness, therefore what He is about, is always for the good of His creation. Even logic tells us that when a person makes something, that person cares for what they have made and tends to protect it. If mortal men do that, the almighty and omnipotent God must care even more than that for His creation.



Being a retired person, there is always time to sit and think of such things, and I hope to use this time productively. One question always appears in the skeptic's mind, "If God is so good, why does evil exist?" The answer is always the same, FREE WILL, but this answer does not satisfy many people.

We pride ourselves as independent people and look to the self-made man, as not only a good in this world, but something to strive for. When we exercise our freedom, we do so in order to help in the development of mankind for the good, or do we consider the comfort of self the most desirable. Actions taken in the sole pursuit of self-interest eventually progress, to be, to the detriment of others and evil takes shape. The more self-interest is preferred, rather than the well-being of our neighbors, or of the society as a whole, the deeper into the realm of evil

possibilities we travel. The hole that we dig becomes deeper and deeper until it becomes impossible to climb out of it. If God prevented evil people from exercising free will, we would be no more than robots, taking instructions from the supreme master programmer. I have often prayed for God to take away my temptations, but, He never does. If He did, I would be like a child's toy soldier. How could God be excited about his unresponsive toy soldier. He does, provide us the free will to choose and the grace to see how that choice might affect us. What might truly excite Him would be, if I were to follow God's will in spite of my temptation to seek self satisfaction or importance.



Traveling through time, while considering God's view of His creation, as presented in the Bible, I came to realize the concern that God has for all of His creation, not only for the universe as a whole, but for all created beings individually, whether they be animals or Humans. I am, but a small part of His work, and He knows even the number of hairs on my head. How could I ever think that I can keep anything from Him? God lives outside of time, so everything that takes place within time, past present and future is known to Him simultaneously.

The Gospel of John begins at the beginning. The beginning of what? If it was the beginning, what was it the beginning of? The Universe? What was there before the beginning? Something had to cause the beginning to take place. In the nothingness of pre-existence not even time existed, for time is the measure of the distance between the happening of events, and events cannot take place without the existence of something for which the event can take place upon. What is that something, that part of the essence of non existence that is the cause of creation.? I have no scientific or theological pedigree with which I present these thoughts, only my own rational experience of existence and my reliance on God to guide me as I ask in prayer, for Him to show me His purpose.

The something of creation, I will call him GOD, announced the Big Bang, "Let There Be Light," and the universe came into existence. John tells us in Chapter 1 of his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and The Word was with God, and The Word was God,, in Him was Light and the Light was the Light of the world." What came into existence? Light, Time,

and Matter, the building blocks of the universe, along with the spirit of His creation, the Angels, all came into being as God conceived of it in His mind. Time, the most obscure of all of His creation is the measure of the motion of matter between events. We speak of speed as distance that matter travels in a period of time, that is, *miles per hour*, for example. The force of the Big Bang caused an explosion of created matter to move outward from the center of the force at a given rate. This rate is also measured in time, 186,000 miles per second, the speed of light. This requires the measure of two different created facts; matter and distance. We use for a reference the Earth we live on divided into 360 deg. And each degree further divided by 60 sections, each one of which becomes the distance of 1 nautical mile. This makes the earth 21,600 miles around. Therefore light could travel around the earth more than 8 ½ times in 1 second, that is, if it could follow the curve around the earth. Light only travels in a strait line, so, at creation light and the universe expands continuously in a strait line in all directions from the point of creation at 186,000 miles per second forever. (***BUT***)



God existed before time and now He exists within and outside of time. He sees time as all events instantaneously. It would be as if a motion picture of the entire creation of God from the beginning until the end of the world comes, if such a film could exist. Each point in time is represented by one frame of the movie. We experience the movie one frame at a time as history unfolds, but God sees the entire production all at once from beginning to end. He does not cause us, the characters in the story, to act in a particular way, even though He has given us a guide on how his creation should perform most effectively. (A RATIONAL FREE WILL) Later on, the 10 Commandments outlines His will in writing, so there would be no doubt, in the minds of men, of how their actions might benefit or harm one-another. He knows all, because He sees the whole movie all at once, while we experience it only one frame at a time as we go about living our lives. God, even though He can observe our actions and desires at any given time, He does not interfere with our own desires and will allow us to proceed however we want. Remember, God is the creator of time but we are the makers of the movie, therefore even men who have been corrupted with selfishness are able to take advantage of

others so sin enters the life of men.

So what good is my prayer? When I pray I mostly pray that I will be changed to conform my life more closely with God's will. My prayer, when I am looking to God to change a situation, or to change other people in my life, usually would require my will be done, rather than the will of someone else or of God Himself.

At some points in time, God has injected Himself for the benefit of humanity or to show His presence and validate His concern for His creation.. These events are usually regarded as miracles. When these occasions take place, the normal rules of nature, as set at creation, are temporarily suspended specifically for that event. For instance, Sodom & Gomorrah, Moses & The Exodus, Jesus hearings and the raising of the dead in The Gospels, or changing water into wine, etc. are some of the physical miracles where God interrupted the natural law and entered into a particular point in time to display His compassion for man as well as to display His Glory by mastering the physical world. God does not interfere with the free will of the recipient of His miracles or any one else when He enters into our world. He does, however manipulate the natural law, which is His to change at will in order to achieve His goal. Remember God knows all things because He sees the entire movie instantaneously. He does not predict the future, He knows it instinctively. In this knowledge, He also knows what will bring us closer to Him if we desire it for eternity. He gives us what is going to achieve His goal, taking into consideration all the possibilities of actions that might be taken by all of the other people on earth. He will always give us what we truly want whether it brings us to Him or not. The freedom of choice in our life is always ours. If we were not capable of sin, we would be His pawns on his game board of life. Nothing but slaves to an unloving master.

The plan for my life is determined by me alone, and that includes the plan of my afterlife, whether in Heaven with God , or in the kingdom of the damned without God. If I do not wish to choose God's will for me, He will not force Himself upon me or anyone else. We have professed in Baptism, "I Believe in God The Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth ", etc. What does that mean to us?



My wife and I have lived in the Phoenix area of Maricopa County for the past 38 years; first at St. Louis The King in Glendale where our 2nd daughter attended school for two years. I was working at the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station west of town as an operator monitoring the operation of all auxiliary equipment in support of the Nuclear Reactor for the purpose of generating electricity. The job was a good fit for me because during my regular monitoring rounds in the plant, I was alone with the steam generating equipment and God. I could see His greatness in the engineering design of the plant and the great power generated as a result. Some people say that religion and science don't mix but, I disagree. As God created everything it is a physical and spiritual universe. Science tells us about the detail of the physical universe He created and it's life and expansion. Without God there would be no universe or living things to study or people to do the studying. Science does not compete with true religion; but complements it, as humanity seeks to know more about the creation.

During this early time at Palo Verde I was able to pray the Rosary every day on the way to work. The bus ride took about 30 minutes, just enough time to meditate on the life of Christ in the Rosary. I think that learning all about nuclear fission and the steam cycle of an electric generating station encouraged me in my faith and allowed me to see another side of God as He provided all the material and chemistry for man to accomplish this feat.



My daughter transferred to St. Simon & Jude Cathedral School in the 5th grade and my wife and I began to support their CCD program. After she graduated from High School and my retirement from the power plant we were living in Avondale and started to attend a new parish at St. Thomas Aquinas. As my wife and I have been aging, I missed my time at Palo Verde, but with failing eyesight, it had been time to go. Eventually I had to give up driving as cars and trucks disappeared on the road before my eyes. Mass and Confession had kept me close to Jesus but now I had to rely on someone to drive me. Glenna happily drove to Mass each Sunday and Holy Day.

Finally, we gave up our house in Avondale and moved into a senior independent living community in Peoria and settled on St Thomas Moore Parish in Glendale. I was 82 and my wife was 76 at the time, to young

to give in to our age but still unable to take care of our house by ourselves. Glenna still drove to Mass at St. Thomas Moore and we settled into our new parish. Life was fine, no more cooking or cleaning, it was like a vacation,. Now I could really settle down to retirement. I started with my daily Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. I progressed to writing and producing a few slide shows for YouTube on what it means to be Human, considering the immortal character of our souls. (No one seems to care)., Finally, age overtakes us and we had to sell the car. Now UBER is our primary mode of transportation. We don't get out much any more but the church provides Holy Communion once a week, and there is Mass here once a month. Now is the time to take inventory of my life and record some of it so hope might still remain in the reader, Regardless of the circumstances the world provides, we are still on our way home with God in Heave. Always remember, *“God made me to know Him, to Love Hem and to be happy with Him forever in Heaven.”*

