



Boston Catholic Journal



NIHIL NISI IESUM

Dedicated to Mary, Mother of God

Salus Animarum Suprema Lex Esto (Canon Law 175)

The Salvation of Souls is the Supreme Law in the Church

Why we have Lost God



The Primacy of *Matter* and the Loss of *Faith*

We live in a world of matter

Matter is the substance of the senses. It is apprehensible. We touch it, feel it, manipulate it, make things of it, and even destroy it (yes, I know the principle of “the conservation of matter,” but you get the point.) It is tactile, sensuous, and often pleasing to the eye, the touch, and our other senses. It alternately excites us and repels us. It is what we see when we open our eyes, what we feel when we touch anything.

It is the world we know

Increasingly, it is the *only* world we know. Every other “possible world” has receded before the incursion of the senses and the accompanying demand for instantaneity: pleasure *now*, satisfaction *now*, information *now*, fulfillment *now* — and on a broader level, peace *now*, justice *now* and equality *now*. We have all heard the political and social mantra that first came to us from the tumultuous and purple-hazed 60’s by now, and we even know its cadence. The “cause” matters not, for the response has by now become childishly reflexive:

1. “*What do we want?*” (insert whatever here)
2. “*When do we want it? Now!*”

3. “*What do we want?*” ...

And so on — again and again, as if repetition will somehow produce what we want when we cannot obtain it through reason or persuasion. After all, it worked when we were spoiled children — who, largely, have grown into spoiled adults.

Our parents, regrettably, taught us by example, by collapsing before the incessant cries, not for what we *needed* (which they always provided), but for what we *wanted*. We learned that, by making their lives miserable, they would acquiesce to what we wanted — and demanded!

Do you want anything — however absurd? Then agitate, demand, and *never take “no” for an answer*, however unimpeachable the authority. Not even from God Himself. We want to “*feel*” justified, to be “affirmed” in our childish petulance — and if we are denied our desires, then we will *legislate* them, find some obscure or unbalanced “academic” to “authenticate” us, a celebrity “in solidarity” with our grievance to publicize us, and a venal politician to “empower” us ... until our *desires* become our *laws*.

Hence, we find that politics is the venue of power, not mind. Hollywood is the venue of *entertainment*, not *reality* which is only discernible through the *mind* and

that inconvenient faculty called *reason* that we abhor because it defies us.

The Parallax of Reason ... and Sensation

We do not want reason. We do not want mind. We want *sensation* — the stimulation and the satisfaction of the senses! What have we to do with inflexible reason? With God? With things less than rhapsodic, with lasting concepts ... even purported everlasting realities ... with the deliverances of anything devoid of tactility, before the contempt of the court of immediacy that governs the senses?

We ourselves are composed of matter — we recognize this even if we have forgotten that it is only *half* the equation of our being human. The other half is *spirit* ... the immaterial soul which is *not* apprehensible by the *senses*, only by the *mind*, a concept perhaps best expressed in the German noun, “*Geist*” that alternately denotes, “the mind”, “the psyche”, “spirit”, “soul”, (and even “ghost”.)

We are profoundly more than our appetites, just as God is profoundly more than the mind’s conception of Him. Eternity extends before us — and we *instinctively* know it ... but we treat it as we treat time: passing, changing, mutable, pliable to our desires. And for a while it is so.

But we know that it will not always be so. We sense “ending”. We *intuit* that there is a terminus to our being in time and that something must lie beyond it — even if it is the skeptic's cold, sterile, embalmed "nothing" that we nevertheless irresistibly perceive as *something* in what we persist in describing as “nothingness”. Because we are permeated with time and insensible (and this is not the same as “inapprehensible”) to the eternal, we even *perceive* “nothingness” — despite our insistence that it is otherwise — as somehow perduring. It is a tentative state of utter suspension — *even while we declare that nothing is suspended*.

When we lost God — whenever that might have been — we lost our *raison d'être*. We do not know it because we refuse to confront it and we do not confront it because we have not known God, or once having known Him have repudiated Him, even denied Him, in favor of our own temporal *desires* which, like their objects in space and time, will surely pass. Only God remains. History testifies to this.

Desistite, et agnoscite me Deum: “Be still and know that I am God!”

Our restlessness is both an invitation by God and a testimony to our blindness apart from Him.

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