

Silence, Humility, Faith, Hope, Charity: Speak

Sequels to *Handouts* n. 58, “Shonky” and to *Handouts* n. 150, “Christ conquers Confusion and Corruption”

CARDINAL SARAH hopes the readers of his book, *The Power of Silence, Against the Dictatorship of Noise*, will thereby grow in **humility** (see p. 17).

Hence the aptness of the **Litany of Humility** quoted by Nicolas Diat in the Introduction. It is from Cardinal Merry del Val (1865-1930), who recited it daily after Mass. He was Vatican Secretary of State to Pope St Pius X. See text in column 2.

“Speak only when it is more necessary to speak than to be silent,” said St John Chrysostom.

Litany of Humility

by Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val

O Jesus, meek and humble of heart,
Make my heart like yours.
From self-will, deliver me, O Lord.
From the desire of being esteemed, deliver me, O Lord.,
From the desire of being loved, deliver me, O Lord.
From the desire of being extolled, deliver me, O Lord.
From the desire of being honoured, deliver me, O Lord.
From the desire of being praised, deliver me, O Lord.
From the desire of being preferred to others, deliver me, O Lord.
From the desire of being consulted, deliver me, O Lord.
From the desire of being approved, deliver me, O Lord.
From the desire to be understood, deliver me, O Lord.
From the desire to be visited, deliver me, O Lord.
From the fear of being humiliated, deliver me, O Lord.
From the fear of being despised, deliver me, O Lord.
From the fear of suffering rebukes, deliver me, O Lord.
From the fear of being calumniated, deliver me, O Lord.
From the fear of being forgotten, deliver me, O Lord.
From the fear of being ridiculed, deliver me, O Lord.
From the fear of being suspected, deliver me, O Lord.
From the fear of being wronged, deliver me, O Lord.
From the fear of being abandoned, deliver me, O Lord.
From the fear of being refused, deliver me, O Lord
That others may be loved more than I,
Lord, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be esteemed more than I,
Lord, grant me the grace to desire it.
That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase
and I may decrease, Lord, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be chosen and I set aside,
Lord, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be praised and I go unnoticed,
Lord, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be preferred to me in everything,
Lord, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may become holier than I,
provided that I may become as holy as I should,
Lord, grant me the grace to desire it.
At being unknown and poor, Lord, I want to rejoice.
At being deprived of the natural perfections of body and
mind, Lord, I want to rejoice.
When people do not think of me, Lord, I want to rejoice.
When they assign to me the meanest tasks, Lord, I want to rejoice.
When they do not even deign to make use of me,
Lord, I want to rejoice.
When they never ask my opinion, Lord, I want to rejoice.
When they leave me at the lowest place, Lord, I want to rejoice.
When they never compliment me, Lord, I want to rejoice.
When they blame me in season and out of season,
Lord, I want to rejoice.
Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
**Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** (Matthew 5:3)

ON SALE NOW

The Power of Silence

Against the Dictatorship of Noise

by Robert Cardinal Sarah with Nicolas Diat

Ignatius Press 2017, translated from the French by Michael J. Miller 2016 — — — 247 pp **\$28.95**

HONESTY AND GENEROSITY

In *The Screwtape Letters* (1942), C.S. Lewis says we should not, as we might with other virtues, seek humility directly, lest we fall into the sin of pride over our small successes and thereby negate them.

Lewis says the secret of humility is to seek the virtues of Honesty and Generosity. Their convergence will make us humble without our knowing it.

Thus senior devil, *Screwtape*, writes to *Wormwood*, who is assigned to inveigle his “patient” to Hell:-

Your patient has become humble; have you drawn his attention to the fact? All virtues are less formidable to us once the man is aware that he has them, but this is specially true of humility. Catch him at the moment when he is really poor in spirit and smuggle into his mind the gratifying reflection, “By jove! I’m being humble”, and almost immediately pride — pride at his own humility — will appear. If he awakes to the danger and tries to smother this new form of pride, make him proud of his attempt — and so on, through as many stages as you please. But don’t try this too long, for fear you awake his sense of humour and proportion, in which case he will merely laugh and go to bed.

By this virtue, as by all the others, our Enemy [i.e. Christ] wants to turn the man’s attention away from self to Him, and to the man’s neighbours... The Enemy wants to bring the man to a state of mind in which he could design the best cathedral in the world, and know it to be the best, and rejoice in the fact, without being any more (or less) or otherwise glad at having done it than he would be if it had been done by another.

The Screwtape Letters is dedicated to J.R.R. Tolkien who at that time (1942) was writing *The Lord of the Rings*, a book about **Good and Evil**. Much **humility** is displayed by its noble characters and much **pride** by its evil ones. Many make their own application to **Christ and the Devil**. See next page.

Christ and Our Lady are humble (Matthew 11:29, Luke 1:48) and it is basic for repentance and faith (Mark 1:15).

Lewis and Tolkien

C.S. Lewis was a convert from atheism to Anglican Christianity. J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *The Lord of the Rings* (LOTR), was a childhood convert to Catholicism, later a daily communicant, always counter-cultural, never "politically correct", and a Christian cultural leader.

NO SITUATION ETHICS, no New Morality

Tolkien's background theme is the **battle of good against evil**. And that it is **never right to do evil as a means to achieve a good end** (cf. Romans 3:8):

Eomer: "How shall a man judge what to do in such times?"

Aragorn: "As he ever has judged. **Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear**; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among men. **It is a man's part to discern them...**"

LOTR vol. 2, bk 3, ch. 2

NOT ALLEGORY

Tolkien insistent that his epic was **not allegory** but had **applicability** (see his Introduction to LOTR).

In allegory, an author dominates the reader's mind and imagination, but applicability leaves the reader free to make his own applications. And readers of *The Lord of the Rings* do just that. They range from Gold Coast hippies through to very devout Catholics like Tolkien himself.

A few of our Separated Brethren opposed LOTR as a rival to the Bible, instead of reading it as a persuasive parable supportive of the whole Bible.

APPLICABILITY of Tolkien's "parables"

Leading characters like heroic Frodo, Gandalf and Aragorn enrich us with glimpses of Christ, and thereby can help us grow in humility, faith, hope and charity:-

- **Gandalf** the Prophet, who guides by his wisdom.
- **Frodo**, priest-like, offering himself for others.
- **Aragorn** the King, the true and virtuous.

Free will is a central theme. The greatest evil is the lust for power, to dominate other free creatures.

There are the incorruptible Elrond and Galadriel and less noble characters like Theoden and Denethor.

Diabolical characters are **Sauron** 'Lord of the Rings' and his Nine Ringwraiths led by the Witch-King of Angmar. They lead retinues of orcs, wargs, trolls, and corrupted men, plus the increasingly corrupted wizard **Saruman** and enigmatic hobbit-like **Gollum**, corrupted by his own vices and by Sauron's evil Ring. He perishes in seizing the Ring for himself.

On the good side are other vital characters like Sam Gamgee, Legolas the Elf, Gimli the Dwarf, Tom Bombadil, Treebeard the Ent, Barliman Butterbur, Eomer, Eowyn, Arwen Evenstar, Faramir "less self-regarding than [his brother] Boromir", and always looming 'in the front of the background', Bilbo, from the preliminary saga of *The Hobbit*.

Fortunately for the reader, the author introduces this imaginary world of feigned history only gradually, so that one can cope with its multitude of characters. This can hardly be said of his *Silmarillion* and its bewildering pedigrees of the Valar.

FRODO is aghast at the prospect, that the mission to destroy the Ring seems to devolve on him:

I wish it need not have happened it my time.

Gandalf the Wizard guides him to humble acceptance:

So do all who live to see such times. But it is not for them to decide. All we have to do is to decide what to do with the time that is given us.

This is one of many veiled references to God Who, in *The Silmarillion*, is named as Eru and Illuvatar.

Theoden, King of Rohan, has had his mind slowly poisoned, and his will to resist evil weakened, by heeding Wormtongue, a spy planted by Saruman. But he is humble enough to be rescued by Gandalf, and then fights evil heroically even unto death.

Saruman himself was head of the Order of Wizards and of the Council against Sauron. He betrayed the sacred cause of all free creatures, not by surrendering to Sauron, but by setting himself up as a rival, while "pride and anger were consuming him".

He gazed into one of the seven Palantiri, 'the Seeing Stones' — a prophecy of mobile phones not invented when Tolkien wrote. These Palantirs had enabled the Free Creatures of Middle Earth to communicate by sight and sound in a defence pact against Sauron. But Sauron captured a Palantir and used it to weaken the will of the virtuous to resist.

SAURON, Dark Lord of Mordor, was not evil in the beginning but became so under Morgoth who, as Melchior, had rebelled against God. They are totally without humility. Morgoth reminds many of Lucifer, who became Satan; and Sauron of the Beast, the infamous "666". Remember, this is not allegory: but the reader is left free to apply it to his own understanding of things.

The lies of Melchior, Mighty and Accursed, Morgoth Bauglir, Power of Terror and of Hate, are a seed that does not die and cannot be destroyed, and continues to bear evil fruit even unto the latest days.

Denethor, Steward of Gondor, a mightier lord than Theoden, is only a viceroy, but lacks the humility to step down when the true King of Gondor arrives.

He let himself be engloomed into evil by Sauron's insinuations via another Palantir. He was not totally corrupted, but damaged, impotent in the face of evil, radiating gloom and defeatism, sneering at Gandalf, refusing help and committing suicide.

LISTEN TO GOD in silence and humility

READ rather than view *The Lord of the Rings*. *Reading* allows inner listening to God's promptings. Read Tolkien's *Tree and Leaf* to contrast literature with drama and to link fantasy and Scripture.

And a final word from two Cardinals:

Never less alone than when alone [i.e. with God].

Blessed John Henry Newman

The virtue of silence does not mean we should never speak... [The Christian] should be silent when it is not necessary to speak, and he should speak when necessity or charity requires it.

Cardinal Sarah (page 239)

Father James Tierney