

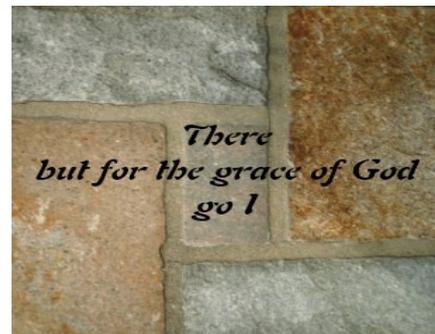
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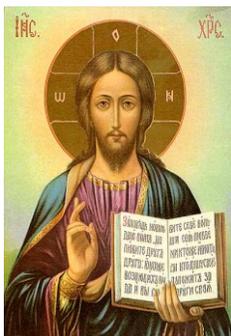
## THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD

### How to Deal with Life Issues

We meet today to discuss how empathy coupled with a different point of view can help one to deal with Life Issues, setbacks, troubles, travails and tribulations. What about Empathy for others? Adopting such an improvement in one's life is both quite dramatic not only personally, but to others nearby. More so, it helps one be a better follower of Jesus Christ.



We are all called to be a Blessing in other's lives. Let us explore how this can happen. Let's listen carefully as we consider the Wisdom of Holy Scripture and Catechism. May God give to each one of us the necessary means to complete His Gift of our Unique and Holy Mission.



#### **James 2:14-17** Faith and Works

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

#### **Matthew 6:25-33** Dependence Upon God

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin.

But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?'

All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.

The Word of the Lord

## **Catechism**

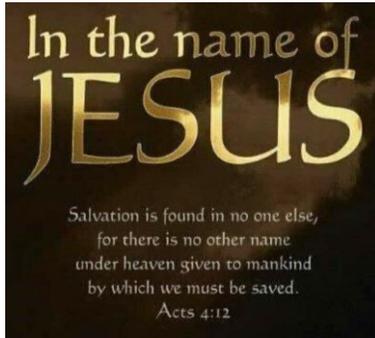
### **1912 - Who Christ is**

The common good is always oriented towards the progress of persons. "The order of things must be subordinate to the order of persons, and not the other way around." This order is founded on truth, built in justice, and animated by love."

## **THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD**

### **How to Deal with Life Issues**

**David Eich**



Once again the season of Lent is quickly approaching. Some would argue that it's the time of year when Christians are most cognizant about the blessings they have and the things they should give up during the 44 days. But for those of us who will struggle with what to give up during this period of sacrifice, perhaps we should begin asking ourselves what we should be thankful for. The following questions might help put everything in perspective:

**On Health...**Am I physically handicapped? Can I speak, see, or hear? Am I suffering from a serious accident? Do I have cancer,

heart disease, or some other crippling disorder? Am I addicted to smoking, drugs, alcohol, pornography, or gambling?

**On Family...**Are there any members of my family that have fallen victim to addiction, violence, or mental illness?

**On Economics...**Can I put food on the table? Am I homeless? Do I have access to medical care? Am I employed or employable?

**On Education...**Can I read and write? Do I have a learning disorder?

**On Fidelity...**Do I suffer from infidelity? Do I know anyone who is lonely, or has a broken heart?

**On Safety...**Do I live in a safe neighborhood? Is anyone in my family in danger because of where they live or the country they serve?

**On Love and Friendship...**Do I have friends I can trust? Have I lost someone in my family to violence, disease, misfortune, addiction, or the justice system?

**On Character...**Would others say I have integrity, a strong work ethic, or a moral foundation? Does it matter that I don't look like a movie star, play professional sports, have an IQ above 130, or not listed in *Forbes Magazine*?

**On Spirituality...**Do I have a spiritual foundation to fall back on in times of stress, heartbreak, or peril?

Maybe the statements that follow will provide us with a litany of choices we can focus on during the 2019 Lenten season and beyond:

- We can choose to count our blessings by what we have received or by what we have given.
- We can choose to be poor in spirit or accrue spiritual wealth by serving others.
- We can choose strife and chaos or peace and harmony.
- We can choose condemnation or forgiveness.

Supposedly from a mid-sixteenth-century statement by John Bradford, "There but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford", in reference to a group of prisoners being led to execution.

- We can choose what we want or what someone else needs.
- We can choose complacency or the courage of our convictions.
- We can choose betrayal or fidelity to family, community, and country.
- We can choose to find fault or common ground.
- We can choose to close our minds or open our hearts.
- We can choose to complain about our station in life or thank God for what we have.
- We can choose to say we are too busy or make time for what matters.
- We can choose to blame others or acknowledge what we have done or failed to do.
- We can choose to worry about our future or help others reach theirs.



We can choose to take for granted our Catholic faith, health, friends, family, fortunes, or freedom, or we can remind ourselves daily that, ***“There, but for the grace of God, go I.”*** Amen.

**You are God’s representative on Earth. When you Bless and encourage the people in your life, you are revealing God’s love for them.**

**Questions for Discussion:**

1. How do you deal with Life Issues, Setbacks, Troubles, Travails, Tribulations, etc? Give 1 specific thing.

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2. When do you feel happiest in your life?

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3. Geoff’s experience in Gabon changed his life’s perspective. Can you recall such a time in your life? Explain.

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**Men’s Group Calendar**  
**A Man who never quits is Never Defeated.**



2/23/2019	Leadership Meeting	8 AM Sacred Heart Library
<b>3/9/2019</b>	<b>Men’s Group</b>	<b>7 AM Mass</b>
3/16/2018	Leadership Meeting	8 AM Sacred Heart Library
<b>3/23/2019</b>	<b>CMFNEO CONF</b>	<b>8 AM Holiday Inn</b>



## Reflections From Geoff 22-year-old Peace Corps volunteer who served in Gabon, Africa

Since I have arrived I have had a chance to reflect on many things. I now realize what one is willing to eat when they are hungry; a good day for my students is when they have paper to write on; village funerals are a great way to meet people; and 75 students in a single class, many with AIDS, malaria, and bamboo shoots for legs, can be a bit of a challenge. Yet through it all, my toughest test will be the day I say goodbye.

My Peace Corps experience has me thinking about a lot of things I've never really thought of before, "pondering," if you will. I'll begin with the extraordinary woman who lives next to me. Neither of us have electricity, running water, or sanitation, nor do either of us care.

Every night at 7:00 I share a meal with her and six children. She has four sons and two daughters. As I finish my meal the two girls, stomachs bulging, stare at me with their endless brown eyes and wait for me to finish. When I do, they take turns licking my plate. I go to bed, usually hungry, satisfied with what I've given them.

"Mama," my hero, doesn't know it, but she feeds me in more ways than just food. As we sit on the dirt floor I look at what we have, or better what they have. I see our filthiness. I see our bamboo shack. But then I notice something. I actually hear something. I hear laughter coming from the same sick girls and her brothers about things I will never understand. And though impossible, I "hear" smiling as my adopted family shares the day's allocation of rice and beans.

**em-pa-thy**

noun

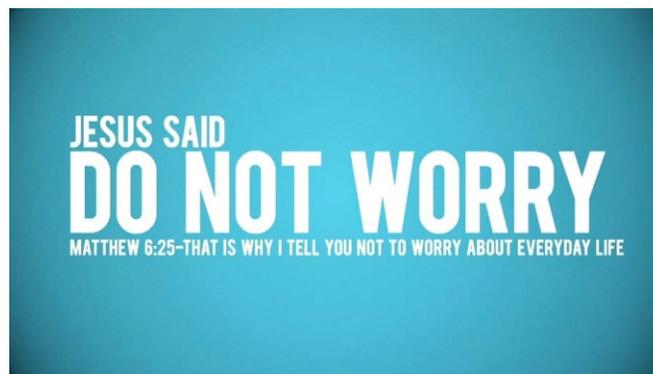
1. the ability to understand and share the feelings of another

I see people suffering, starving. But then I see them differently. It really ends up being beautiful. They don't ask for more, for there is no more to give. Because they find balance within their souls the simplicity of their happiness is nothing short of astounding!

Someone or something has given them happiness in a world drained of it. Something is making these people find joy in something we would find joyless.

Now I'm beginning to understand that God or Allah or whatever it is you believe in sometimes hides his answers in little villages days into the Central African jungle. And it is up to all of us to find them, no matter how hard that might be. Fortunately for me, I found Him in a little girl's laughter.

Geoff



**ACTION PLAN**

This week I will do my best to be a Man of Integrity by:

Creating a daily prayer practice

Seeking God in prayer and being quiet in His presence

Paying more attention to Blessing those in my life as God intends

Asking Jesus for help in becoming a better servant by being more empathetic

## Bring Christ into the Emptiness of Our Lives

- Spend time with Lord Jesus in Adoration. Silence fills the emptiness. Silence isn't an absence; it's presence.
- Spend time with those who bring joy to life. Family, friends, church...
- Invite Christ into your relationships. Acknowledge His presence in every moment, whether you're alone or with others; pray together.
- Ask God for Deeper Trust. Doubting is OK if we bring it honestly to Him. He can and will use that to bring you to a place of Deeper Trust in Him.
- Just be in the emptiness, not running from it, not trying to fix or fill it. Letting Him love you and do the work He wants you to do.
- Ask: What is Christ trying to teach me during this period of emptiness? How does He want me to grow from this experience?

WHEN I'M WORRIED, IT'S USUALLY BECAUSE I'M TRYING TO DO EVERYTHING MYSELF. WHEN I'M AT PEACE, IT'S USUALLY BECAUSE I REMEMBER THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL.



**Lord, God and Savior, by your love you draw me to yourself. Forgive me – the sinner that I am, and fill me with every good thing, not withholding even the gift of your most beloved son. Come dwell in my heart.**

**Send forth your Holy Spirit to guide me in your path. Make me worthy of your love, and teach me how to forgive as you forgave.**

**Thank you for your tender mercies. I ask you to bless my family, friends and those who you put into my life. Where there is joy, give them continued joy. Where there is pain or sorrow, give them peace and mercy. Where there is doubt, release in them a renewed confidence. Fill their every need and emptiness with your Holy Grace.**

**You are indeed my Lord, God and Savior. Amen**

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*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

*Jeremiah 29:11*

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