

Holy Thursday – The Deeper Questions
St. Peter's 2017

The Journey... What is it with THE MYSTERY OF LIFE?? A Mystery that encompasses *The Past* in our "having been", *The Present* of our "being today" and the Hope of *A Future* in our "becoming tomorrow..."

To appreciate the TRANSITIONS of Life's Events that lead us towards discovering 'WHO WE ARE' as a people standing in the light of TRUTH, I invite you to join me as we **JOURNEY ALONGSIDE** a couple of caterpillars who, not so many years back, encountered each other for the first time:

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Let's now listen as two caterpillars talk:

"Hey there, why aren't you EATING IN A HURRY like the rest of us?"

"Cause I've got a plan in mind – I'm making my way over to that BIG TREE over there so that I can climb it!"
"REALLY? Why would you ever want to do that?" / "**Because I want to change – there's more to life than just running around eating day after day: *Why don't you come on up there with me?***"

"No WAY! **YOU'RE CRAZY!** I mean there's not even any food up in that tree – I'm staying right here; right where there's lots of food to eat."

So the little caterpillar, **propelled by SOME KIND OF FORCE DEEP WITHIN**, make's his way over to the tree and begins to climb. That's when he notices how for the first time – **he's all alone...**

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Along the way of life, we all reach a point whereby the DAILY HUMDRUM ROUTINE OF LIFE on earth coupled with the experience of taking in one thing after another, (*seeking to satisfy the hunger that dwells within each of our hearts*), along the way we reach a point whereby the questions that initially inspired us on our Quest. Questions like: "**WHAT'S NEXT? HOW DO I GET THAT? WHEN WILL ALL THIS BE MINE?**"

At some point, we get BORED asking these kinds of 'basic needs' questions – bored with living like a caterpillar that exists **only for the sake of EATING IN A HURRY and looking ahead for the next meal!** For the quest to acquire 'basic needs and freedoms' is kind of like Israel's quest to seek FREEDOM from the grip of the Egyptians that we heard about in our first reading.

The basic questions asked by entire nation for over **400 YEARS OF SLAVERY AND BONDAGE** was: "**HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET OUT OF THIS? WHEN ARE WE GOING TO BE FREE AGAIN? HOW WILL WE LEAVE EGYPT?**"

God himself answered their questions: "**Take a lamb without blemish and place some of its blood on the door posts and the lintel of your homes – you will EAT THE LAMB THAT NIGHT – and when the Angel of Death passes by, he will PASSOVER your household.**"

For some, the answer to those BASIC QUESTIONS was good enough at the time and continue to be good enough today. But for those of us gathered here this night, as it once was for **St. Paul**, there exists a still DEEPER FORCE that stirs within – a DEEPER FORCE that inspires us to ask **Deeper Questions** along our personal life journey...

"WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH MY LIFE? WHO AM I AND WHY AM I HERE? Am I called to the Married Life, perhaps a Religious Vocation – maybe even the Priesthood?"

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This HIGHER LEVEL of QUESTIONS could be likened to a Caterpillar being ***driven by a force deep within*** making his or her way over towards climbing the tree – and while doing so, noticing that he or she is ALL ALONE in their quest for the '**DEEPER ANSWERS.**'

By the time our Little Caterpillar is halfway up the tree, HE MAKES THE MISTAKE OF LOOKING BACK at where he came from: of looking down – and that's when it happens! Feelings of **DOUBTS** and **WORRY** start creeping into his mind: *‘What if I made a mistake? What if I fall? What if there really is no point to being in this tree? What are the other caterpillars going to say about me?’*

It happens to all of us at no matter what stage we are a long our walk towards the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. It doesn't matter if we're **children, teenagers, adults or well aged in years**, just like it has been for our Catechumens who will pass through the waters of rebirth in Baptism at this Easter Vigil, we all face moments in life that cause us to wonder about our Faith. *‘What if I'm not good enough for this? What are all my family and friends going to say about me?’*

Just as it is for **Mr. Caterpillar**, so it has to be for us, we must listen to that *‘Little Small Voice’* within calling us to step forward in Faith!

Something deep inside Mr. Caterpillar urges him on – he can't explain it, **he can't even make sense of it**, but he knows that *this must simply BE DONE!!* Propelled by some force deep within, our little caterpillar finally reaches the branch he's been looking for. He crawls to the edge of it, glances all around for a split second – and then **LEAPS OFF OF THE BRANCH and HANGS IN THE AIR SUSPENDED BY A THIN THREAD**..

Once he finds his balance, the little caterpillar then begins to *spin a cocoon: a COCOON that will keep him safe for the next little while...*

The cocoon phase of our FAITH LIFE can be likened to the months, the years, the decades we spend tending **The Garden of New Life** that has come to us in Christ by means of living out the demands of the Christian Faith in the concrete reality of the events we face in everyday life.

To be in a ‘COCOON’ means that we have insulated ourselves from all those things in the world that seek to take away that which is most important to us. And when we live a life of Faith, what is most important is **our relationship with Jesus Christ**. IT'S OUR PRAYER LIFE. IT'S OUR LOVE FOR GOD!! It takes years – it takes a lifetime – to allow for the **transformation within a life of Faith to affect EVERY DIMENSION of our being**.

And once we're inside this COCOON OF UNDERSTANDING that we are ‘TRULY alive’ thanks to the Gift of this Faith – then we're ready to receive the answer that our Lord gives to his Apostles this night, (it takes all that to get to this point!) The answer to the **DEEPEST QUESTIONS** of all questions: ***“WHY DO I EXIST and WHAT HAPPENS TO ME AFTER I DIE?”***

It's the seeking to understand the answers to those questions that brings someone face-to-face with that which will unfold over the next three days. But it begins tonight. **Holy Thursday is the MOUNTAINTOP EXPERIENCE of seeing with our own eyes the taking shape of LIFE'S DEEPER ANSWERS**. Holy Thursday marks the bursting out of one's cocoon that leads one **into the experience of Transformation**. As a Caterpillar becomes a Beautiful Butterfly, likewise the Old Order of Creation over the next three days will give way to the breaking through of a New Order in Creation.

One that deals with the **DEEPEST OF QUESTIONS** and reveals the **MOST PROFOUND OF ANSWERS**...

‘WHY DO I EXIST?’ – “You call me Teacher and Lord and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. I have set an example for you.” We EXIST to love and serve one another as Christ has loved and served us – **TO THE END!**

‘WHAT HAPPENS TO ME AFTER I DIE?’ – This night marks **The Institution of the Holy Priesthood** of Jesus Christ and the GIFT of **The Most Holy Eucharist**. A gift that marks the most solemn expression of love the world has ever known – the Savior's DESIRE to remain with us, His beloved children is SO STRONG that he pours His very life into the elements of Bread and Wine thereby changing them into His Flesh and Blood – **all for the sake of NOURISHING US WITH WHO HE IS: ‘LIFE – ETERNAL LIFE’...**

It's by the Ministry of Priests that **Saints are formed on earth** through the Celebration of the Sacraments – **it's the Eucharist that MAKES SAINTS!!**

The Priesthood is a Gift that comes from the Heart of God – a Heart of Burning Love for His people – **a LOVE SO STRONG that He continues to invite Young Men in this world to forsake their own will, their own lives in exchange for the Pearl of a Vocation to the Priesthood.**

As St. John Vianney once exclaimed: “**If we TRULY UNDERSTOOD who and what a priest is – we would die – not out of FEAR, but out of love!**”

Asking the ***DEEPER QUESTIONS*** and DISCOVERING the ***DEEPER MEANING TO LIFE...***

UNDERSTANDING the answers to that which matters most: ‘***WHY DO I EXIST?***’ / ‘***WHAT HAPPENS TO ME AFTER I DIE?***’ that's what these Sacred Days are all about!