
« SOURCE OF LIFE, WHAT IS YOUR NAME? » (2)



The 2003 Lenten season is a good time for us to deepen our Christian life, and so, in company with our schoolchildren, their parents and religious educators, I, too, follow Danny and Carrie on the first leg of the family- and parish-based religious education. It is such a joy to recognize the Source of Life and to Celebrate His Name!

LIFE MOVES IN ME!

Before going to sleep at night, Carrie and Danny tell their parents about everything they've discovered on their hike together. Even in winter we saw many bird and animal tracks, we saw water run even in the frosty cold. Danny exclaims: "It's full of living beings all around us!" "Yes," his mom answers, "and you, too, are a living being, and you can do many things." "It's true," Carrie responds, "I can walk and run." "And I can play ball," Danny answered. Their mom replied, "You can listen, laugh, and cry." And their dad put in, as he hugged them all: "And I love the whole lot of you!" That night, Carrie and Danny fall asleep thinking of everything they can do, and of life moving in them. "I can admire things, with my eyes! And with my mouth, I can smile! With my ears I can listen to music, I can breathe through my nose. And with my hands I can touch and do things," Danny and Carrie toss out at each other.

REDISCOVERING THE POWER OF LIFE

We are so used to doing certain things automatically and of having particular aptitudes that we risk forgetting a large part of our lives. Unfortunately, it is when we are deprived of life's riches in us that we discover them: sight, the sense of smell, hearing, speech, a sense of taste, in other words, the wonderful gift of life. This is something we must discover and rediscover at any age. If only we could discover the Source of life through the power of our senses! Even surrounded with countless wonders, we risk no longer recognizing "the Author of Life"...The prophets even had to remind the first believers of some basic elements. We read about this in Psalm 95: "Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation. Let us greet him with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him, for the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods; in his hands are the depths of the earth, and the tops of the mountains are his. His is the sea, for he has made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord who made us" (verses 1-6). And Psalm 100 echoes the same truth: "Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you lands; serve the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful song. Know that the Lord is God; he made us, his we are; his people, the flock he tends. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise; give thanks to him; bless his name, for he is good; the Lord, whose kindness endures forever, and his faithfulness, to all generations."

DAILY VIOLENCE

One phenomenon which surprises and may even "scandalise" is atheism... How can it be that a person deny God's very existence, that even seeing all of life's riches, a man and woman refuse to admit that a Supreme Being has brought this about – this creation – by the sheer force of his might and intelligence... It is certainly very difficult to admit the possibility of such atheism, but what is equally strange is that some humans act

exactly as if God did not exist: they claim to be believers but they can go for days at a stretch – weeks and years, even – with no awareness of God’s presence in their lives... This is a truly strange mystery... We are so caught up in countless activities that we risk forgetting about the very first one, an awareness of God’s loving presence in our lives!... In this era of advanced technology and of advanced reproductive technologies, cloning included, we risk forgetting about the first article of our faith: “I believe in God, Creator of heaven and earth.” It isn’t a waste to once in a while profess our faith and pay close and even daily attention to our lives of faith.

“SEARCHERS AFTER GOD”

One of the important conditions to really experience the religious education experience is certainly to become real “searchers after God” with all of our brothers and sisters on earth; this is the common vocation of all humankind. And we can repeat to all those who seek the real face of God: “We can’t do other than meet you! Your way is ours! Your paths are never strange to us. We are the friends of your vocation as searchers, allies of your weariness, admirers of your successes and, if needed, consolers of your discouragement and your failures.” These words spoken by Cardinal Paul-Émile Léger at the end of the Second Vatican Council to the men and women of science, we can adopt as our own as we also recall those words of Saint Augustine: “Let us search with a desire to find, and let us find with a desire to search again.” Happy are those who, possessing the truth, still continue seeking it in order to renew and fathom it and pass it on to others! Happy are those who, not having found it, approach it with a sincere heart: they are seeking the light of tomorrow with the light of today until they attain the fullness of light! If thinking is something great, it is first of all a duty; woe to the person who wilfully turns away from the light! Thinking is also a responsibility: woe to the one who turns away from the light through what brings on depression, pride, falseness, and deformity! What is the basic principle of people of science, if not a concern for thinking right?

PAYING ATTENTION TO LIFE

In the company of all our young people, and with Danny and Carrie I want to pay special attention, in the days to come, to the life surrounding us and in us. There are so many opportunities for us to marvel at all those living beings, especially at the discovery of the abundant riches found in those who journey at our side. “I invite you to open your eyes slowly, quietly: there is so much life, my friend! I invite you to open wide your hands, carefully and quietly: there is so much joy, my friend! I invite you to open your heart quietly: there is so much love, my friend!”

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