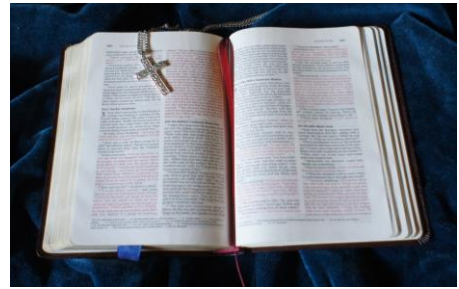


A God of Surprises

By Father John Catoir, JCD – 10/17



A reader of my columns wrote me this interesting note: “We certainly have a God of surprises! I have a story to tell you. Every week I go to my local library, and often find a treasure. Today, I found an old Catholic Bible, which I couldn’t resist. I took it home, and guess what fell out of it: an old column of yours.”

She continued, “As if this surprise wasn’t enough, when I read the article, I realized it was meant for me. Even though it was written many years ago, it touched my life right now. Wow!”

She sent the article to me, but didn’t indicate the problem she was dealing with. Nevertheless, I saw the substance of it was generic enough to help others. Titled: Depend on God, it was about assigning a specific role to God, in the solution of any problem. There’s a difference between praying for God’s help, and assigning Him a specific role in the solution of the problem.

Coping with any troubling problem should always begin with a prayer and a question: “Am I really going to rely on God’s strength? How much will I depend on God, and how much will I depend on myself? Too much self-reliance can get you into trouble. Those who think they can go it alone, are dead in the water.

It’s quite normal to roll up your sleeves to do battle; however, if you try to do too much on your own, you may regret it. Some problems are merely irksome, but others are beyond your direct control. For instance, an alcoholic spouse is a problem you must treat with care and wisdom.

There's no way you can make another person change. With the help of God, they must change themselves. Alcoholics, and all others who are chemically dependent, know that they cannot rely on their own will-power. Only when they call upon God to supply supernatural strength can the recovery process begin in a meaningful way.

First, they must volunteer to practice the Third Step. Here's my paraphrase of it: 'Because I am powerless over my addiction, I am turning my life and my will over to the God of my understanding. God is all-powerful. With that in mind, I hereby turn over to Him, all responsibility for my sobriety. I know that He will do for me, what I am not yet able to do for myself.

Does that sound too bold? It isn't! Millions of sober men and women, who call themselves 'recovering' alcoholics or addicts, can attest to the fact that God took away the cravings that obsessed them. Somehow, they shed the pain of constant failure, and began to feel free again.

If you feel powerless over a problem, turn it over to the One who has all the power. "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." - Matt. 11:29.

Let go of it, and hope for the best. I will be keeping you and your intentions in Mass and prayer. Please say one for me. Thank you and God bless you.

May the Lord be your strength and your joy.