

Create Your Own Future

By Father John Catoir, JCD

“All the way to heaven is heaven,” - St. Catherine of Siena.

We gradually become what we think about. The thoughts we dwell on enable us to become what we want to be. They have the power to transform us into extraordinary human beings. This is good news for saints-in-training.

Most of us think worthy thoughts most of the time. Sometimes fear and toxic thoughts barge in uninvited. In moments of exhaustion or sadness we become vulnerable. No one is perfect.

Not to worry; you are not your thoughts. You are the observer of your thoughts. More precisely, you are the editor of your thoughts. Delete the dark ones; affirm the light ones, and your life will be a lot happier.

Jesus is the Light that comes into the darkness. When you feel like you're in a dark tunnel, instantly change the channel. Imagine yourself in heaven, at the beach having an adult beverage with the Lord. Life will be a lot easier if you manage your thoughts with a sense of humor.

“Don't be afraid,” said the Lord.” Those words appear 365 times in the Bible. It means that you have the power to banish needless anxiety. Jesus would never have uttered them if they were not true. You have the power to reject fear. You can imagine yourself as Joan of Arc or the Angel Gabriel.

On a more intellectual note, the following ideas may be of help. They are taken from Dr. Abraham Low, M.D, the psychiatrist who wrote, Mental Health Through Will Training: “The will plays a crucial role in controlling your thoughts. It is vital that you reject upsetting thoughts.

The will is the center of the personality. St. Thomas Aquinas and Dr. Low agree on this point. It is a belief that is very much in harmony with Catholic thinking. The key is in the word: habitual. Make a habit of collecting uplifting

ideas. Write them down. You can control your emotions better by controlling the thoughts you allow yourself to think.

You are responsible for your own actions. You know the courts will send you to prison if you commit a crime. Therefore, you must reject any thoughts or temptations that will lead to criminal behavior. And if you want to go further and become a saint, press the same reject button for thoughts that can lead to immoral activities.

Multiple addictions can develop in the life of a good person, if he or she has no long-range plan. Therefore, plan for the attainment of salvation. If you feel weak at times, don't be discouraged. Be like St. Paul, who boasted of his weakness, "For when I am weak, then I call on Christ to make me strong." With prayer and determination, you can do this.

If you're already suffering from an addiction, check out the Third Step: "Turned my life and my will over to the God of my understanding." For Christians, that would be Jesus. Millions of alcoholics, druggies, gamblers, overeaters and sexaholics have found salvation and sobriety through the twelve-step program. Turning control over to the Lord takes great faith, but it works.

Either way, you can control your thoughts, your feelings and your actions. Suicidal thoughts be damned. Replace them with the thought that God wants you to make others happy, not miserable. Set a good example, be brave.

May the Lord be your strength and your joy.