

RESPECT LIFE HOLY HOUR REFLECTION FOR MARCH: Restoration of the Communion between God and Mankind

We started the year reflecting on “Choices”. In January we reflected on how Adam and Eve’s choices led to Original Sin and a severing of the relationship of trust between them and God and between one another. In February we reflected on the consequences of those severed relationships - lives centered on the ego, the “I”, and manifested by such viewpoints as “My Body My Choice” and “I’ll do it my way!”

Unfortunately, the “I’ll do it my way” approach seems to have given rise to much confusion, isolation and often despair among it’s followers, for weren’t we originally made for communion? Weren’t we made for communion with God and, through Him, with one another? Fortunately, 2000+ years ago, the communion lost by Adam and Eve’s sin, was restored through an act of willful obedience and a gift of pure love... Jesus’ incarnation, passion, crucifixion, death and resurrection. Of course, we have to accept Jesus’ gift through our own act of the will manifested by an act of faith. Pope Benedict XVI summarized this process when he wrote, “The *I* that has been redeemed finds itself again in a greater new *I*, for which faith has liberated me, I find myself united not only with Jesus, but with all who travel the same road.” (*Co-workers of the Truth, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, p 77 e-book*)

I read the above quote two weeks into Lent in a previously unread book, long lying dormant on my bookshelf. At the same time, the creators of the Hallow app were offering a Lenten Challenge (<https://hallow.app.link/cNyK4q8MIHb>) based on Fr. Walter Cizek’s life in a Russian Siberian prison camp during and after World War II. During the first week of the challenge, we learned about the physical, psychological and emotional hardship which brought him to unimaginable depths of despair. What makes his story so amazing was that at the very darkest moments of his life, he was led to a deep conversion and liberation through a willful act of faith which allowed him to find God in all things and thus surrender himself to what he thought God was asking of Him in every circumstance. Equally amazing is that his story was accompanied by testimonies of others whose lives had followed a similar path, suggesting that such a path is open to all who seek it and are open to God’s grace. Could this path that Father Cizek and others have found be the “road” to which Cardinal Ratzinger referred?

They say that God’s timing is perfect. In what way do you ask? I find the timing of my “random” finding of Cardinal Ratzinger’s quote, Hallow’s Lenten Challenge and an upcoming Maryland referendum to be quite providential. Both Cardinal Ratzinger’s quote and participation in the Lenten challenge might help Marylanders prepare for a fall referendum which will ask them to choose between accepting or rejecting enshrining in Maryland’s Constitution the right to reproductive freedom, “including, but not limited to, *preventing, continuing or ending ones own pregnancy*”. When choosing, one might remain mindful of the communion between God and mankind and among individuals, and how the passage of such an amendment might impact that communion. One might also consider whether such a right might conflict with more fundamental rights, such as the right to life and religious freedom? One might even ask oneself whether there is ever a time when the right of an individual might be sacrificed for a greater good? Hmm... Jesus crucifixion on a cross, anyone?

St. John Paul II pray for us!
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