

*[This article is but a brief outline of a treatment that I perhaps will pursue at a later date – it comes from prayer, reflection, discussion and experience. I hope that it sparks some positive and useful discussion.] [Suggestion: the slower this outline is read, the better the chance of letting the nuances surface and the power of the Holy Spirit to teach!]*

## **FAITH-REASON / RELIGION-POLITICS & THE MEDIA**

From a glance at the title, this seems to be a broad and scattered undertaking! How can and do all of these concepts fit together in a coherent way?

They can and do because they are already joined thusly – with or without the other’s knowledge or consent or approval.

It is all based on the pursuit for “truth!” – and so it is all related, on account of that pursuit.

Everyone wants TRUTH, FACTS, OBJECTIVITY – but it seems that at least 90% of the population *settles for* lies, conjectures and subjectivity. Not only that, but those who are supposedly in the business of discussing local and world events and reporting “reality as it happens” (“breaking news”) are caught in the web of falsehood, speculation and opinion – although they would, no doubt, deny willful misleading and misrepresentation!

Having said that we now look at the component parts of this article:

- a) God / Mankind reflecting on the Created World**
- b) Worship of God / Mankind Interacting with the World**
- or**
- a) Faith / Reason**
- b) Religion / Politics**

These are bound together at each level; and the two levels are bound together themselves.

- c) The Media / Responsible Discussion & Reporting of Objective Truth**  
- presupposes briefing in faith/reason/religion/politics

## **PART ONE - FAITH**

There exists a “supernatural level” which presupposes a “natural” level, of which it is “super” or “higher than, or above, beyond.” This supernatural level is a very real level, as real as the tangible, natural level – it is accessible, however, only by faith, rather than the senses. Faith is an intangible, but not inexperiential, spiritual tool used to access supernatural reality. Faith is a free gift given by God. No one can manufacture theological faith, no one would even know of its existence or usage unless it was revealed by God.

Why are faith and the supernatural needed at all?

The reason is that there are objective realities independent of creation – independent of human intellect – independent of human grasp – that can only be gotten to by means of divine help! It is so, because God made it so! Consequently, the order of the created world – which includes rational human beings, can only reach out so far to the heavens – to God! God must help to make the connection between his world and ours! Human reason can go very far in aiding mankind in developing a society that functions well and provides for the needs of its citizens – but reason alone cannot build a bridge to heaven – nor can it offer a true fullness of depth of earthly human interaction and experience! This just cannot be done.

Mankind knows, instinctively, that it is in many ways defective, weak, confused, unable to truly define itself and give meaning to its existence. It knows that it falls short of divine expectations (sins), no matter what kind of deity it places above itself to measure itself and its actions with.

It was God, himself, who chose to intervene in history, therefore – to clarify everything for us – and to build a bridge that could at last reach him – a bridge that would also connect us with one another! All of this would be a gift that is totally unowed to man, and for which mankind ought to be forever grateful!

Truth Itself then was sent to dwell among us to be the “bridge to God,” and to one another! This was so that we could see the glory of the One who sent it, and to have a deep insight into what everything is all about! This Truth Itself is none other than the WORD MADE FLESH – the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who took on a human nature so that we could benefit from his input and his

output: the life-restoring gift of grace that would flow from his pierced side as he hung dead upon the Cross: murdered simply because he was Good, simply because he was truly God's Son and our Brother.

Faith and reason, then, are meant to be together. In our case, as human beings, reason is the basis of believing; as nature is the basis of faith! For, if there were no nature, or natural level, there would be no need for supernature, or a created supernatural level. Faith does not exist where there is just and only God; it exists as a response to God loving and providing assistance where it is needed! Not only are faith and reason meant to be together, they also are dependent upon each other so that each can function properly. Faith without reason is "pie-in-the-sky;" reason without faith is aimless, rootless and earth-bound, unfulfilling.

## **PART TWO – MEDIA**

The first criterion of the media (here used to refer to the journalist and/or news analyst: this includes popular talk show hosts), therefore, ought to be a thorough understanding of the joint nature of faith and reason. This does not mean that each cannot be discussed and reported about independently, but it does mean that a complete discussion/report would bring in the complementary aspect to some degree. Especially in our American society, journalistically, there is a very unfortunate dividing wall between faith and reason! Each dimension can be reported upon separately, but the overlapping is rarely, if ever, mentioned – and this is not only unfortunate, but potentially devastating, as the lack of overlapping drags society lower and lower into a mindless factoid swamp. There is nothing more frustrating to watch on television than ratings-seeking antagonists promulgating ill-founded, unintelligent opinion. This does not contribute anything to anyone's welfare on any level. The foundation of life is God; not sex, not power, not greed!

Faith: the real and vital relationship between God and the world – adds richness, depth and meaning to life; it adds vitally needed information – as it guides and directs the "earthly kingdom" to its intended fulfillment in the "heavenly kingdom."

The faith content of the overlapping between "faith and reason," of course, to be authentic, genuine and as inerrant as possible needs to be bound to the One True

Source of Truth: Truth Incarnate: Jesus Christ. **He is Truth-in-the-flesh.** And although Jesus lived historically 2000 years ago – he is just as alive now in his Mystical Body, the Catholic Church. And it is by the power of the Holy Spirit – his and his Father’s parting gift to us as he ascended to take his place at the Father’s right hand – to intercede for us until we are safely home with him – that the One Truth continues to be proclaimed, offered and taught!

Admittedly, Jesus is not the sole “possession” of the Catholic Church. Jesus can be “located” wherever he wants to be located, and wherever he is invited to be located. There are elements of “truth” in countless arenas and classrooms. But the systematic fullness of his presence – as Word-Made-Flesh, as Truth-Incarnate – with all of its ramifications and conceptualizations is located in the Church he founded (the Vine he established) and which has progressed (and grown) into the contemporary age in a spiritually unbroken chain of events.

A responsible journalist/media-jockey then would need to become familiar with the true doctrines of the Catholic Church, the working of the Holy Spirit and the life of the truly faith-filled members of the Church – in order to have sufficient “briefing” to compose and objectively relate and discuss news stories and pertinent issues facing society! This may sound unrealistic, to say the least, but if one is really and truly seeking truth, fact and objectivity – then, what other preparation work can be more fitting?

Does anything at all on any newscast (or talk show) at any hour of the day or night sound like it comes from this type of research?

Not only is the content often essentially subjective and opinionated, but the manner of delivery is, frankly, unappealing at times.

Most of the news – delivered in the same exact liltingly annoying melodic cadence – sounds like it is being read at story time to a group of elementary school children! Tornadoes destroying entire towns are reported with the same “music-based scripting” as the coverage of a Sunday School Picnic; a scandal involving local government officials is reported in the same tone and tenor as the reporting of the announcement of a local Summer Fair!

And when the announcement involves the Church – the report is generally sketchy, with negative overtones and quite obviously written without in-depth research. Church-based articles need to be written in collaboration with someone who is knowledgeable with the inner-workings of the Church and Church language. The “world of the Church” is an entirely different world than the “secular world.” The same words can have quite different meanings in each “world.” A journalist who describes Church issues using ordinary words applied inappropriately may be seriously misrepresenting the truth of an issue!

Talk shows are conducted in a manner that present them as the “be all, and end all” of discussion on any given topic at any given moment. They spin and fashion a perspective that is, in addition to being hypnotic and mesmerizing, also shallow, misleading and often-times just plain untrue! There are exceptions, at times, but for the most part this pattern is quite predictable.

The bottom line here is this: if the media could truly be a servant of truth and facts, if the media truly became objective – with no agenda of its own (however unintentional) in reporting FAITH and REASON / RELIGION and POLITICS - then the media could help people truly make up their own minds and hearts and choose the good as they perceive it!

### **PART THREE – RELIGION AND POLITICS**

This, then, leads directly to and connects with “religion and politics.”

Not only are the media called to be servants of truth; but it is the role of policy-makers and enforcers of policy – it is the role of elected government officials to be, above all else, servants of truth – truth that, as we have already said, is rooted in Christ Jesus, who is Truth. No one can have any kind of relationship with any kind of truth who does not also have a relationship, wittingly or unwittingly, knowingly or unknowingly, with Him. It cannot be done. This is a fact given to us by God; and it matters little what we think of his gift: it is what it is!

Not only does the nature of truth as derived in Christ bind religion and politics together, but also the fact that the same “subject” - the human being who, as described above, (being invited to a fully meaningful life by a conscious decision

to incorporate the gift of faith that God offers him/her into their rational everyday life) – participates in both worlds (the worlds of religion and politics) – necessarily confirms the joint nature of the two. Politics is policymaking and enforcement of policy for the masses in both arenas. Conscience is conscience in both arenas. Truth is truth in both arenas. One does have to be, and ought not to be a “watered-down” (generic) version of the other!

So much energy is placed in separating absolutely religion and politics that the sterile, generic, watered-down version of ethics, morality and law is threatening to destroy society as we know it! This ought to be an alarming fact for everyone!

The self-imposed “glories” of the ancient cultures no longer in existence are examples of politics attempting to exist without religion, without God – they thought only of themselves, their glorification, their greed for power – and now they no longer are alive! This means, of course, that the inhabitants of the cities and towns tried to go it without “religion,” without “God.” Or, they instead, became gods themselves, and their non-religion became a true religion for them. They thought only of themselves, their own gratification and glorification and greed for power – they would not have a truly object standard – given from above – to truly help them reach their real goal – eternal life. And now they are suffering the results of their truly sinful lives!

Because once there was nothing except God – and then God made everything – there is such a thing as an objective, God-fashioned, God-given standard law. It is, point blank, the Law of Love. Everything that exists is derived from God’s Love – and basically is love! This Law of Love applies in both the world of “religion” and “politics.” And just as there is one Law of Love, there is only one appropriation of Justice: God’s Justice is the only real justice – and it too applies in both worlds!

Just as a responsible journalist would familiarize his/her self with TRUTH INCARNATE – Jesus and his loving Body, the Church – so too, the responsible politician would do the same.

Here is the rub. For those with an immovable wall set up dividing religion and politics, this is almost an impossible assignment. But for the open-minded, inquisitive or truly searching politician – it could be quite helpful.

In many ways there are parallels in religion and politics – and politics, in limiting itself to the natural realm can find corresponding and supportive conceptualizations in the religious realm – and it settle for watered-down “generic” versions in other. But for many vitally important issues, only the “supernatural” vision that faith can give, can make correct and lasting solutions possible.

The goal of “religion” is eternal life in the Kingdom of God. The goal of politics, whether it knows it or not, or agrees with it or not, is to safely guide the candidate for eternal life, through life in its own earthly realm as a preparation for smooth transition to that one, eternal kingdom to which all are invited. The City of Man will be transferred on the Last Day – to Jesus Christ: King of Kings – who will be its sole ruler – and it will become what it was always intended to be: THE CITY OF GOD!

It would seem that if the Law of Love: self-sacrificing service to prove our love for God who loves us first – loving others as we love ourselves (all the way across the board – all the way across the world) – prevails, as much as possible – then the Way of Truth will lead quite assuredly to the fullness of Life in God!

We, therefore, all of us – need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus who called himself the Way, the Truth and the Life – because he truly is these things! In his humanity he is the Way; in his divinity he is the Truth and Life. And he is the Bridge that God the Father gave us in order for us to reach not only him fully, but also one another fully.

It is on the Bridge that all of the great, complex and burdensome problems of the world can make great strides at resolution. If only men, women and even children understood the depths of the meaning of the Bridge itself, the Cross of Christ; the depths and heights of God’s tremendous love for all those he calls to be his people, his family – it would be a different world, a new world – a new creation – even now - and the Last Day would be an anticipated Day of rejoicing! The concept of Jesus, as the Bridge was given to us by God the Father, through the instrumentality of the cooperation of St. Catherine of Siena, a venerated and noble Doctor of the Catholic Church, who wrote down in “The Dialogue” the answers to questions that she posed to him! It is not only from Scripture but from the writings of the Fathers of the Church and the Doctors of the Church, and

many of the saints that we have true, authentic and genuine revelation of truth as it comes from its source: GOD!

I congratulate those who, after reading this short tract, find themselves securely or at least essentially on the Bridge – I speak of a small number of lay persons, journalists, talk-show hosts, politicians who are doing their best to integrate faith and religion into the broad spectrum of their lives and occupations in an educated and spiritually informed way. I also congratulate those who are trying their best to climb up onto the Bridge, and remain on it. I encourage and invite those who think they do not need the Bridge - and can swim the torrential, shark-infested, river of worldly concerns by themselves (to reach their eternal destination on the other side) - to consider taking the bridge: it is there for you: all you have to do is believe it, choose it, find out all you can about it, and live like you were truly on it!

May God in his Goodness, have mercy on us all and may he lead us to everlasting life with him! Amen!

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N.B. This article suggests the importance for everyone in general, but journalists and those who work in all types of media positions, as well as those in administrative positions in both church and state – to not only get to *know about* the Source of all Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Justice: Jesus; but also but actually get to *know him* in person! Having an academic understanding is one thing; getting to know the person is quite something else. A person-to-person relationship in this regard can produce amazing results for a better world today, and tomorrow – and into eternity!

This article in no way wishes to force anyone to believe or not believe anything at all – or to proclaim any one way and approach as the best and only approach for any one individual – it is simply an attempt to present a comprehensive package for consideration, analysis and perhaps, implementation to varying degrees. Truth is truth – but since no one on earth possesses it completely – the journey to fullness of understanding is always open to more complete, full and more easily comprehensible participation!

May the Spirit lead us all into the riches, the depths and the beauty of TRUTH! to the glory of God the Father!

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The Feast of St. Anthony of Padua – Priest, Doctor  
also, the day on which Tim Russert, an outstanding Catholic American journalist  
died unexpectedly!