

Catching up with Lewis Rayapen

January 18, 2013



Lewis Rayapen

Cardinal Newman who converted to Roman Catholicism, when asked why he did not try to convert his elderly mother to RC, apparently said: “She is a good Christian.” As I move into the community in small Mauritius, it is fitting that I proceed as an instrument of God to do His will for every person sent my way.

The Catholic Church organises, among other activities, occasional weekend workshops on spiritual life, personal development and group therapy. In small groups, people share matters of the heart and identify impediments to their growth. Each person is called to pray for his/her neighbour. What is novel to me, is that each person prays in a whisper into the ear of the neighbour. You are thus a direct witness to what is being asked of God for you. How uplifting is it to hear “Please, God keep Lewis in good health. Make me like him. Thank you Jesus. I’ve finally found a father figure I’ve never had. Now I can open my heart fully.” Then there is this lady of 33 who confessed “My father was murdered when I was 5. Only now do I feel able to unburden myself.” I realized it was necessary to create a sense of trust, to listen attentively, to be nonjudgmental, and support spiritually before making appropriate principled comments. The person I am, the things I do had to precede the things I say.

In the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, there is the sacrament of absolution through confession accompanied by repentance. One is thus called, in the kind of workshop mentioned above, to function as a priest. I prepared myself for this particular task by conversing with the chaplain: “You must be powerfully equipped through your ordination to listen to confessions, to confront such shocking sins and take responsibility for the redemption of sinners,” says I. “I listen in prayer but do not take responsibility for the sins of others,” says he. “I provide them with the means to forgive themselves and renew their partnership with Jesus, allowing the Almighty to bestow His grace as He so pleases.” It occurred to me at that point that I needed to revise my Christology. I turned to my copy of DP, autographed by none other than the master himself, if you please. Just then, my spiritual daughter informed me that the French family had recently published a book, in French, on Jesus. Exactly the tool necessary for French-speaking communities like Mauritius.

It seems to me that to be a good disciple of Reverend Sun Myung Moon, who has never asked anybody to follow him, by the way, one has to discover the mission congruent to one’s personality and situation. And to embark resolutely upon it. For some of us, this could take the form of a solitary course providing an opportunity to catch a glimpse of the loneliness of God and that of the True Parent. It is my considered opinion that no one, nay, not even those closest to him, has really understood the loneliness and sorrow of the True Parent. Unrivalled for generations to come as THE expert and champion of the heart of God. Because no one has followed the gruelling course he has followed. All that in order that we may be redeemed.

Now it has come to my attention blessing ceremonies are on the horizon. The evidence seems to suggest that it is not enough to be born of blessed parents to stay blessed. To all intents and purposes, the war of attrition against principalities in high places is not over. And the perversion of the blessing and the blessed is probably the main target of the enemy. It seems to me that what precedes the blessing, the preparation leading to it, is like the vigil of crusaders before going to war. This most powerful sacrament, like all sacraments, is a means to an end, not an end in itself. You can receive the blessing as a special grace, a gratuitous gift from the True Parent. But are you able to keep it and make it bear good fruit? Thus what follows the blessing too is of paramount importance. The sacrament needs to be consolidated by constant personal effort to fortify the original mind that it may never sway, whatever the circumstances. There exists an abundance of literature on empowering the mind, be it through such secular practices as recommended by a Robin Sharma, for example, in his bestseller *Mega Living*.



I also hear of schisms in the Unification Movement, of betrayals, of abdication of responsibility and abandonment of mission. It could very well be that some gods have “feet of clay,” like Ozymandias, says the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. But the same poet talks of “a jealous interchange of good” (not of goods, mind you). I, for my part, must focus on doing God’s will as I understand it. There are others who are similarly engaged in God’s Providence, and that includes Europeans and Americans of other faiths. They cannot be all junk, since God has chosen to advance His providence through them too. Who am I to ostracize and shun? Each and everyone can be called to bring a stone to the cathedral of God.

In this process, I personally feel the urgency to protect and defend the God within, to keep immaculate that “inner sanctum,” professor Warren Lewis used to talk about. If you happen to be so fortunate as to have as spiritual father none other than David S.C. Kim, you heed his injunction when you go to say goodbye. You make sure you obtain his blessing before embarking on your own solitary course. “Never betray your principles,” said he. By the grace of God, so far, I have not betrayed, principles or people. I have shared with Robin Graham how my spiritual daughter, bless her soul, “miraculously” brought my wife and me the “blessing,” all the way from Italy to distant Mauritius. We have no children of our own but it is music to our ears to hear the laughter of many less fortunate children, shouting for joy as they jump and splash in our swimming pool. And I spend time in my garden too. “Il faut cultiver son jardin,” says the philosopher. Some of us have pledged to “transfer to the creation peace, happiness, freedom and all ideals in the world of the heart.” In this spirit, I purport to create here, in my own backyard, a little piece of the kingdom of Heaven where love can reign. I do not tell everybody that I strive to make of my work a prayer, of my life a small song of praise to the Almighty.

Lewis Rayapen lives on the island of Mauritius