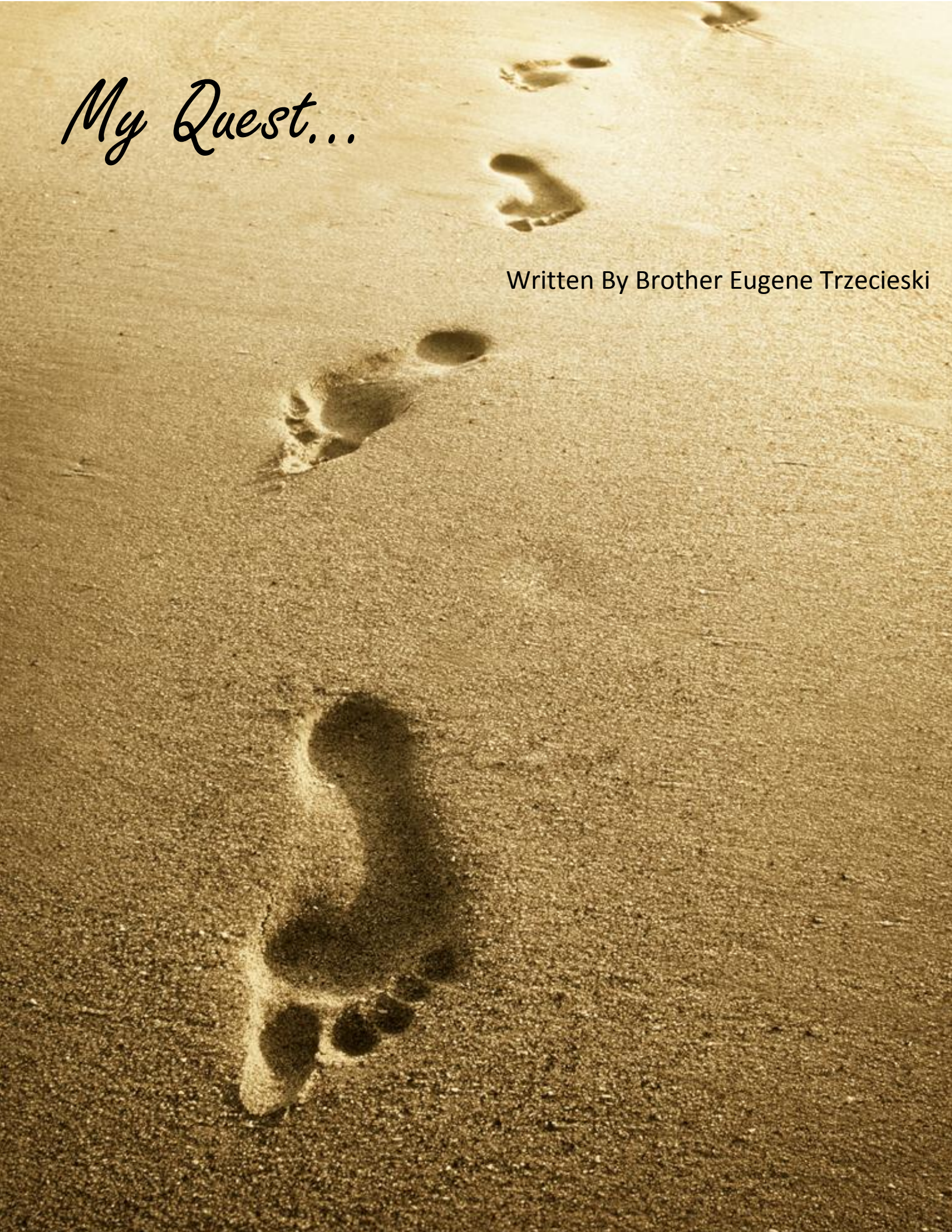
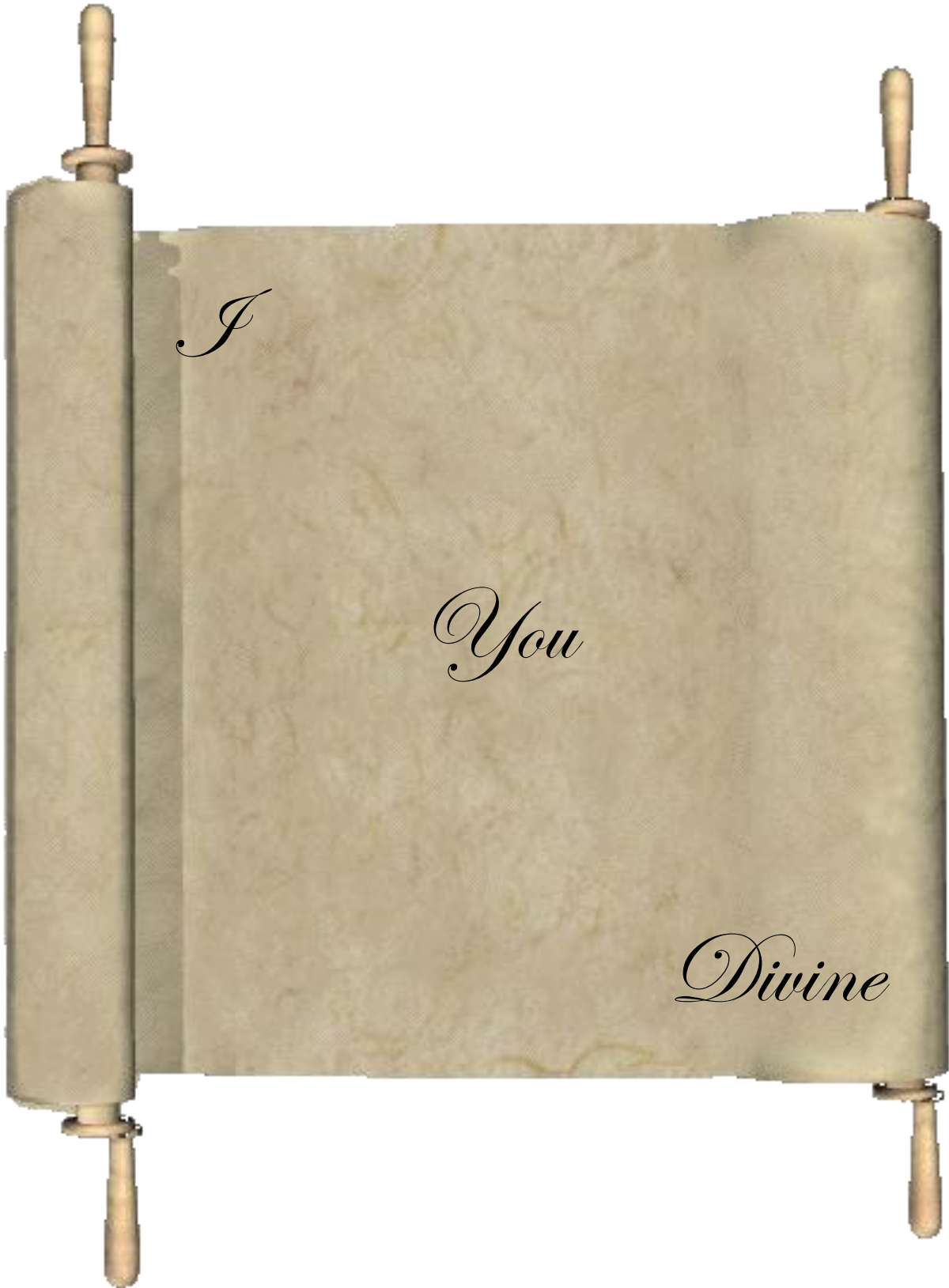


My Quest...

Written By Brother Eugene Trzeciecki



My Quest...



*“Question not to
Deny but to
Understand”*

- Br. Eugene

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To Wait...

“Dawn is the most significant moment of the day. It suggests freshness and newness; it engenders ideas of hope and promise. Dawn is a time when night and day meet. Sun, moon, and stars collaborate to give a soft and fragrant light to the world. Dawn is for harmony. It is an hour when many things converge and when everything is just about to begin.”

I am in the dawn of my life. My ideas, hopes, desires, all meet for a harmony to fulfill my manhood. Everything is just about to begin.

Nothing worthwhile in life is sudden. We wait for birth. We wait for love. We wait for life to reveal its meaning, year by year, experience by experience. Waiting is the law of life, the measure of love.

To wait for another person is to be willing to be alone for him. To wait for someone is to say that the present does not begin until he arrives. To wait for someone is to say that I am willing to share myself. To wait together with another is to form a community of hope with him and to affirm the need for another person or a further value essential to the togetherness of those who are vigilant for him.

The Divine must be awaited. He is not sudden. He comes to patient hearts, to those willing to be alone as they wait, to persons who count the present from his arrival.

Projects may be rushed; schedules can be accelerated; but life will not be hurried. No life happens without waiting. This does not mean that one must be quiet or that life comes to the inactive. Life transcends its present and compels the present to wait for its future. Time-tables serve the momentary and relatively unimportant events of life. Life, however, does not occur on schedule.

Patience is the restraint to the growth of a human person. We wait for life to reveal its meaning not knowing when this meaning shall become clear or even the specific circumstances through which this meaning will be seen. We wait in hope, not always aware of which event will justify our hope but unshaken in the conviction that hope will one day be justified.

As life waits to be born, there is silence and darkness, little perceptible activity, a certain aloneness. One might suppose nothing is happening and yet life, the greatest of all happenings, is happening. It is a time for waiting. Life is waiting to be born. It is enveloped in waiting. As human life awaits birth, the birth of a human person is awaited, in hope, by those who already love this child on his journey from darkness toward light.

“Waiting is the essential to the life of the spirit as well as to the growth of the body. The Divine must be awaited. Those who refuse to wait never become Christians. A Christian must wait with unaccustomed hopes and faith and unconventional love for even more than human love. For, love which comes to the waiting is not always human love. It can be Divine love. “

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Those who are unable to wait miss those who wish to give themselves to us but who cannot give themselves all at once. Those who hurry life refuse others the time they need to become themselves for us and to give all that they may become to us. Love may begin in a moment but it happens over many moments. It reveals its presence and power slowly, at depths neither lover nor beloved suspect in the beginning, through a history of expectation, disappointment, and eventual fulfillment.

Expectation allows hope to happen to love and allows love to justify not only its presence but also its promise. To wait is to proclaim that life is never all it should be or can be. It is to say that there is more. We declare our attentiveness and offer ourselves in waiting for that which is yet to come.

To believe one can have all immediately, so to speak, in a hurry, is to confine the mystery of life and the breath of the Divine to a moment or a year, or a decade. When men cease waiting – a type of faith – their hopes die, their dreams are dispelled and their life is over.

The life of us who wait is a life for us who remember. No man wants to be forgotten; no person is content to be but a moment in the lives of others, a negligible experience, an indifferent influence. As forceful as the urge to live is the desire to be remembered. As insistent as survival is the need to abide with another.

The haunting words of the man about to die: “Remember me.” And the Divine remembered him!

Those who recall someone to us do not inspire us unless their memory excited them. A spiritual bond unites those who tell us of someone who meant life itself to them. We are touched and healed by someone we have never met. Those who love another are anxious to remember; they know that no one truly dies until the memory of his is erased.

When we remember, we leave the present for the past. We bring the past into the present and give it life alongside the tangible realities we are compelled to consider. In our memory of another, we choose to relate to him even though, since he is not present, we need not relate to him. Not physical presence but love leads us to live with this remembered person even in his absence. When the love is strong, the memory of this absent person may be more dear and more real than the reality of those who are present.

Our memory of another confers the present upon him, gives him further life in our life, and keeps a moment of the past from drifting away or fading into death. We are fed and nourished by a communion of life in which two lives intersect in memory and merge into a common experience. No lover forgets. No beloved is forgotten. The memory of love is life; the memory of another becomes ourselves.

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Those who live without memories have missed life. They have nothing worth keeping alive beyond the span of its natural lifetime. They have met no one they wished to abide with forever.

We wait – we have memories – we have faith – in the Divine.

In this waiting for the Divine, we seem to be in darkness and our lives seem to have no light. We have to wait – have faith – knowing that life goes on in the darkness and strains for the light. Life creates its own light and its own love.

The gift of life – light – love – will come.

The Divine will come in the watchful waiting, in the memory and confidence of a mindful heart.

Let us not forget – for to forget is to allow ourselves to die.

Wonder of Life!

There has not come a day when the sun did not give light. Color has never gone from the earth. History records no day on which a baby has not breathed its first breath. Men have always found the sea when the sands have gone astray. No moment passes without lovers finding one another. Prayer is not forgotten. Friendship lasts; men celebrate somewhere every day. We have learned how to sing; dancing was a human invention. Bread and wine have been made by men who create ritual from the need for nourishment.

One might object that this description of life leaves out the darkness. It neglects the fact that the seas not only enchant but destroy, that love begins but it also ends; that men have rejoiced in the death of their brothers and sisters.

The wonder of life derives from the realization that so few of the really important things go wrong. Most of us suffer distress not in the fact that realities which truly matter go away but in the frustration of artificial goals, conventional values, and arbitrary objectives. This is not to dismiss tragedy but it is to put it into perspective. Few of us need to be reminded that there is terrible pain in life. No man lives long without hurting or bleeding.

“Almost every man conceals the scars and sometimes the bitterness of a lifetime of injury, rejection, and disappointment.”

This side of life, however, is less than half the story. The tragedies which break our hearts again and again are not more numerous than the healing influences which mend us. More important and impressive than the broken-ness of our hearts is the fact that we have a heart and that it is tender enough to suffer. Even a scar tells us of more than the wound we have sustained; it tells us that we have prevailed.

My Quest...

Human life is under siege not because so many important things go wrong but because men make lesser values the standard of what human life must become. Human life loses its sacredness not when men abandon an institutional Church but, more decisively, when they build life on values which betray the Father of Life.

Of all tragedies, the most destructive is the one which makes life the means to a lesser end. Of all blindness, the least curable is the sightless distortion of the grace of life, its resources, and capacity. The tragedy of life does not begin with suffering but with the dismissal of the poetry of life as irrelevant.

The force of love, the power of tenderness, the strength of gentleness, the glory of color, the warmth of touch are too often taken for granted and spoiled in our anxiety for power or property of wealth.

We are influenced by the values society sets as standards of excellence and achievement. Each man seeks a means by which he may measure his worth. Every culture, our culture, devises criteria for success and happiness which do not correspond with the gift of life. No criterion, except love or life, is adequate to life. The demonic influence in life is evident whenever an age or a culture takes seriously the non-essential elements of life and takes for granted the realities by which life reveals its presence and purpose. This reversal of values is our great and persistent tragedy!

We have become so beguiled with the compulsion "to do" that many of us consider it a waste of time "to be". So often it is argued that it is unproductive "to be", that one must always make something of himself, which generally means that one must make money. How do we judge a human being as a success or a person of worth? How many of us have the courage and candor to put into words what it is which makes us pay more attention to one person rather than another? When we speak our foolishness out loud it appears even more absurd. Why do we "cultivate" some people and disregard others?

Not only personal relationships but life itself is mishandled. Why is it stupid to walk in the rain? Why do we neglect autumn or await the seasons with resignation rather than anticipation? The luxuries we claim we cannot afford are the luxuries of existence, the luxury of sensing our aliveness and allowing it to express itself. If we would compose the epitaph by which we want to be remembered, many of us would realize the success we prefer in life is not the success we are seeking.

Deep thinking is impossible when life becomes an unimportant value. Devotion dies when love is desired but never given. Poetry perishes in the postponement of dreams until the day when they shall favor us with practical results. The fact that we have the capacity to communicate with another human being on the deepest levels of his life means less to some than the next promotion or a more spacious driveway. The message of the Gospel is this: no achievement is worth as much as the mystery by which one person comes to know and to love another.

*Christ lived life. He gave himself to those who needed Him rather than to those who had all they needed.
And who does not need Him?*

My Quest...

Christians are inconsistent when they maintain that the lifestyle of Christ was suitable for Christ but not for us. We are short-sighted when we claim we shall accept the doctrine of Christ but not his behavior. We seldom seek to correct the doctrine of Christ; we more easily refine and excuse his behavior. Yet Christ reveals less in his words than in his lifestyle. And he reveals not only who God is but what a man must become!

We have a tendency to dismiss Christ as a dreamer or to dismiss him as divine. We write off, at times, the human effort and the human achievement of the life of Christ by resorting to his sonship with God. Some of us disregard the human life of Christ so that we might remain complacent, calling ourselves his disciples, repeating his words, but avoiding his lifestyle.

Few today leave the Church because of the fact that they are troubled with an article of the creed. The crippling sinful, insidious heresy of our day has been the heresy by which we have denied the way Christ lived as normal for the way we must live. Many have affirmed the divinity of Christ as an escape. After all, one cannot imitate the divinity of Christ. As long as the divinity is made largely responsible for the human magnitude of Christ, we manage to hold ourselves excused from living as he lived.

Christ did not allow himself to be rendered ineffective by pursuing the pretensions of his day. He looked into the human heart and was careful not to neglect the color of the earth and the mystery of the heavens. These formed the values of his life.

We escape the demands of the life of Christ on us when we relate to him in prayer but not in action. Some are blinded to the vision of Christ because they are hypnotized by the pagan values of their culture. To transform the Gospel into a conventional value, to confuse the faith as an arbitrary objective, to confuse a confession of Christ with an artificial goal is to sin against the Spirit.

How many Christians have paganized the Church, have de-sacralized the Church by using prayer as an escape, by discoloring the doctrine of Christ?

We scarcely know what it means to give our lives for life.

We shall become Christians on that day when.....

- Sunshine means more to us than a further acquisition
- The children of the world excite us at least as much as its rulers
- We use our hearts to measure the worth of a human being
- Greed or pride do not lead us to friendship but only love
- We are joyful because so many people are in love rather than because so many people are affluent

My Quest...

- We learn to make music and poetry, make love and peace
- The sight of the sea makes us dance for joy rather than the purchase of a new car
- Christ speaks to us by his values rather than his words
- We laugh and sing for the right reasons and when we weep not because we have lost something but because we were given so much

Gift of Hope

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A WORLD OF FANTASY AND A KINGDOM OF HOPE IS A REALITY

Life is not hopeful because wishes are granted. Hope derives from a reasonable foundation; wishes are flights of fancy, often leading us to want the unattainable. Hope is the fruit of a mature heart; wishes are the uncertain expressions of that in us which has not yet come of age.

There is no problem in having wishes; there is, in building a life upon them. Although life is a serious endeavor, not everything in life is serious. Wishes remind us that life can be earnest without becoming grim, that our emotions may often desire things our reason knows we shall never have. Wishes make us playful with life and suggest that reason need not mean everything. Men wish because they choose to live with more than sturdy certitudes, reasonable desires, responsible hopes.

Wishes teach us that we could have been something or someone other than who we are. We become who we are not because we exhaust our potential in one direction but because we take one path and not another.

Hopes build upon who we actually are and, granting this, on what we are able to become. Wishes make us sensitive to the fact that we might have become something totally different from what is now possible.

God is not someone who grants our wishes; He is someone who fulfills our hopes. He does not make wishes come true; he makes reality work. He sustains us not in our whimsical desires but in our mature choices.

Wishes are beneficial as long as we do not build a life of hope upon them. Some lose hope because their wishes are not granted. This is ironically tragic because hope gives us strength to continue during those moments when our dreams are dispelled and our every wish appears impossible. There are times when we run out of wishes; it need not be the finish of all our hopes!

Christ died without wishes but in the hope that his father would not be absent in death. Christ took hope into death, which was once thought to be a force stronger than hope. This hope of Christ, which passed through death, was fashioned from the demise of all the human hopes of Christ. It was a hope strangely brought to life as Christ shed his blood in sacrifice and gave his life in love.

My Quest...

The cross was not a place for dreams; every wish for rescue and further life was rendered vain by the cross. This hope had no need of wishes; it was a hope stronger than death, a hope substantial with Fatherhood and absolutely unshaken in its conviction that death was but another way to come home. Christ is the Father's sign to us of how fully Christ came home, of how totally he fulfilled his destiny, of how deeply he was reconciled to himself and to us.

Hopes derive from a reasonable foundation and give life. Wishes are flights of fancy, momentary and inconsistent desires; they are conjectures of what might have been, fashioned sometimes at the precise moment when we know there is no hope of their fulfillment. Dreams refer to the visions of life with which we live, visions composed of hopes and wishes, visions constant and consistent enough for us to work for their realization and build a kingdom upon them.

Homeward...

Wishes need never be realized; hopes are always fulfilled; dreams or visions are worthy of faith, always capable of sustaining reality, but not always becoming reality.

The most painful of all betrayals is the betrayal which serves no purpose and is essential to no plan.

Never to dream, not to have visions is not to live. To dream what shall never come to pass is an indication that we have more life in us than one lifetime can exhaust, enough hope in us for infinite dreaming.

All the yearning of man points home. Wishes, hopes, and dreams come home with man. But what does it mean to come home?

Home is not a place; it is an attitude. It is an attitude which depends upon how much we are able to feel at home with ourselves as well as with others.

Home is something which happens to a person; homecoming has less to do with geography than it has to do with a sense of personal integrity or inner wholeness. The most important of all endeavors in life is to come home. The most terrifying of fears is loneliness. It means that one has become a stranger to himself and, consequently, to others. To be lonely is to feel fear, to be forever unsettled; never at rest, in need of more reassurance than life can give.

Someone truly loves us when he brings us home, when he makes us comfortable with ourselves, when he takes from us the strangeness we feel at being who we are. We are loved when we are no longer frightened with ourselves.

The human heart was made to be at home with itself. It is this aspiration which is at the heart of all yearning. We wish for home as our first wish, hope for home until our last hope. Dream of home with every dream we form. We cannot bear to be strangers. We are able to be pilgrim people for a time but not forever. Should this occur, our wishes would cease, our hopes would die, and dreaming would stop.

My Quest...

Yearning for anything would become a mockery since that for which we yearn first and most would be denied us. We would despair with a despair from which there would be no recovery.

The most redemptive of all experiences is that by which the human heart is reconciled with itself. Evil comes from fear and fear comes from an inability to live with oneself, to make a truce with one's own life, to settle the conflict which goes on inside the person who cannot find a home and who never comes home.

Our sins begin when we are unable to feel at home anywhere. We rage at the world because we are angered at ourselves. We exploit others because we do not know how to recognize the limitations of our own hearts. We abuse the bodies of others with sex or violence because our own body is not sacred to and for us.

Christ gave us a promise when he taught us to say, "Our Father" – He left us not homeless, but, as he said, to prepare a home for us. "Come, you, friend, blessed, happy, to my home – Come, for you are not home."

The difference between a man of faith and a man who has no faith depends upon how much of a home one hopes to discover.

The difficulty some of us encounter in feeling at home with ourselves comes from our wishing life to be what it was never meant to be. We have to see the real attitudes which form a path home. Life is an experience of patient expectation and vivid memory. It sets its own standards for coming home, standards which deny home to those who subjugate life to lesser values than life itself. Possessions, social conventions, earning power are the playthings of fools when they are used to take the measure of the human heart in love or the magnitude of human life in grace.

One never comes home until he prefers a gentle heart to mastery of other lives. One comes home when he learns how to bring a gift and to receive one. One is home when he gives mercy, makes peace, hurts for justice. One is homeward-bound when he is more tormented by the death of innocence than by the frustration of his ambitions. One makes a home every time he allows a man to feel at home with himself.

One is on the right road, not far away, close enough to run the last mile, when he realizes that the greatest of all gift to give another is home and that the most surprising of all gifts to receive is home-coming!

Faith in

Unless he is spoiled, man is a natural poet. Life sings in him, rejoices and glorifies in him. Man is poet enough to count the stars although knowing their number can do him no good. He is forever struggling up a mountain and plunging into the sea so that he might behold the wonder and greatness of things.

If man is left to his own resources, he is naturally religious. Something in him makes devotion necessary. This devotion may not always deal with God explicitly or with formal faith. Man, however, needs devotion to someone or something for his own completion.

The human heart responds to beauty with the amazement of its own sensitivity and with the marvel of its own beauty. Life overwhelms us as it surrounds us with safety and suffering. It forces us to sense its sheer massiveness. Life leaves us inadequate before the immeasurable adequacy of energy which it radiates.

What are the raw materials from which I can form an act of faith? What are the forces which are at work in the human heart to provide sufficient matter for faith, forces which are active because the Spirit renews our restlessness for the Divine? If man is to be responsive to the Divine in this century, how shall he respond? How is modern man an object and a means of Divine's grace in a way which makes him sacramental in his being and contemporary in his existence?

The forces of poetry, devotion, and contemplation and thought aspire to an act of faith which affirms the religious meaning they contain and leaves the person free to develop simultaneously self-expression and integration into the tradition, doctrine, and worship of a believing community. The stronger the poetic, devotional, and thought dimensions of man make themselves felt, the more he wishes to talk, to share, to come upon a community which will take seriously what he has come to know as he learns to take a community seriously in what it already knows and seeks to learn.

Life never really begins for the human heart until it beholds beauty and truth and deems it worth remembering.

Americans once began life with a sense of wonder. But as our history developed we tended to lose it. The vestiges of its presence can still be felt. Once we believed in freedom, in the paradise we had inherited, in the God who marked our violence with regret but who gave us a new land, a continent, in which to wonder. Americans sought the expansion of their experience with the pragmatic method and with technological ingenuity. Now, however, we need someone to save us from the religious pretentiousness of the things we have made, a savior to rescue us from the lesser saviors we manufacture. We must see what technology once sought to enhance but eventually supplanted. Technology has taken us from the naturalness of life.

We have become like the child who has too many gifts and who no longer plays with any of them. We must put aside our toys and touch life again. We no longer can be strangers to tears, laughter, affection, joy – the joys of the beauties of nature, music, reading, poetry.....

My Quest...

In our day, sexual experience has become so important because for many it is the most meaningful natural reality left in a world of steel and calculation. For many, it is the last touch with nature, the greenness of life in the midst of the asphalt of our existence. Some become desperate about sexual expression because they sense that if they lose this, they may lose the experience of what it means to feel like a human being.

We must establish ties again with life, growing reverent with the forces of life which surround us in the universe.

Aristotle once wrote that the nature of man is not what he is born as but what he is born for. Man was not born to wonder at technology but to sense life, to become devoted to it, and think about it.

Man does not sing alone nor create beauty alone. He writes, sings, for the sake of his fellow-men.

The meaning of life depends not on what one possesses but on what one sees in that which he possesses.

Every man is a lover or else he dies. His love is found in his faith or else his faith dwindles into doubt and denial and with denial comes rejection.

Speak to...

Prayer is an act of faith which allows hope to limit. Prayer is not a question of words; it has little to do with frequency or formulas. Prayer is an abiding influence, not because one perseveres tenaciously with a specific spiritual exercise; it is an abiding influence because something permanent has happened to the human heart. At times we need formal prayer so that we might verbalize what has happened to us and so that we might focus explicitly on the Divine.

Prayer is the simultaneous recognition of limitation and the limitless. Before one can pray well, he must come to terms with the limitations of his resources and the limited objectives of his life which he can achieve.

Hope requires of us the humility of knowing that the dreams we have for mankind and for ourselves depend upon the resources of life rather than upon the achievements of one lifetime. Prayer is the expression of a heart which has devoted its resources to the Father in commitment to the human family; it is offered in the unshakeable hope that life will accomplish its meaning and achieve its destiny.

Prayer comes from the awareness that one need not be present to behold the effects of his life on others and yet it derives from the conviction that one's life has already made a difference.

My Quest...

Prayer does not occur in the heart of a man who thinks God will do it all or who supposes he himself can do nothing

Prayer is a willingness to admit we can do something although nothing is done without God!

What are we waiting for in life? What in life are we willing to be patient about until it comes to pass? Have we ever waiting for anything which has taken time to become what it has to be for us? Is there yet something in life worth a lifetime of waiting, something or someone we will wait for all the days we have left to us?

What do we remember about life with love? What do we recall when we become thoughtful, nostalgic, joyful? What are the memories which help tie our lives together, memories which make us realize that life does not begin to be significant in the future? We have lived through childhood, sunshine and evening, every season of the year, love and tenderness, faith and tears. We have already laughed. We know what that means. What makes us intensely happy? Is it life? Is it friendship? Is it the human heart or the accuracy of a computer and the winning of a game? Are we encouraged because we have someone believing in us or because we have won a point? Do we rejoice because we have denied ourselves for the sake on another or because we have outwitted with our cleverness a fellow human being?

What do we wish for? What are the hopes which stir us, the dreams that inspire us? Who is at home with us? With whom are we at home? Do we hope that we might be for each man what he needs us to be for him?

To become sensitive to prayer we must become attuned to the mystery by which God reveals himself.

Prayer is man's way of declaring that the boundaries of life and the limits of hope cannot be drawn with the crayons of time and space.

Prayer gives strength and insight. It supports those who go beyond human hopes and human reasons. Unless one prays, he is likely to dream not at all or to dream only what shall actually come to pass or to dream only of what is humanly possible. Hence God, who is not humanly possible, becomes unreal; providence is dismissed as magic, heaven as medieval, hope as wishful thinking, life after death as the invention of the emotionally weak. Prayer helps us wait for the right things and never to forget them when they are given.

Prayer is a unifying factor in our lives, transforming wishes into hopes, hopes into dreams, and dreams into reality. Prayer inspires us to serve the mystery of man and the mystery of God. It makes us reasonable but not with human reason, volitional but also grace conscious.

My Quest...

Prayer is a venture beyond boundaries, an exploration in search of beauty, an expedition in eagerness for something or someone worthy of more devotion, more love, more sacrifice, more hope and more faith.

How does one learn to pray? He learns with his flesh, and with his blood, with his eyes and hands, with his heart and the breath of his body. He learns to pray reaching for love in the night, by not wasting the sunlight, by never allowing Spring to pass unnoticed. We learn to pray when we give freely – in this we love!

My Words

On the day when we first utter a word, something significant has occurred. We struggle an entire lifetime to say what is inside us.

As life goes on its way, we use everything at our disposal to make ourselves clear. Gestures and words, touches and tears, sexual love and poetry, labor and flowers, music and candles, and embraces tell others we are here. In these efforts, we say what we are like, ask for understanding, remind others that we love and hurt, that we need and dream, that we are bewildered and joyful, decisive and immediately uncertain, desperate and suddenly independent!

No struggle is equal to the struggle to let ourselves be known and to learn in the process who we are. We speak of our memories and scattered wishes, our broken hearts and unfulfilled marriages, our disappointed children and our better years.

We recall our younger days, wonder out loud about age, bring forth photos, show a ring, tell where we wish to be buried. Sooner or later, we say it all.

We describe a painful operation, a close call, a foolish fear, a deceased friend, a lost lover, an unforgettable movie. We speak with stardust in our eyes, with beginnings of tears, and with the faint suggestion of a smile. We speak with our hands and with our body, with an excited voice or a sorrowful face. We try at times and the words choke us, begin again and look helplessly for others to understand that sometimes words are impossible and that we need so much compassion that we cannot devise a word or a sign to call for it.

We never seem to have said it all! We wish to live so that we might sit someone still and tell it all....

The struggle to express ourselves begins in a dramatic manner when we learn how to speak. Most people sense the significance of that first day when we utter a word. Parents are thrilled and friends coax the infant to speak again. As each one hears the infant use words, he knows that something worthwhile has happened.

My Quest...

On the day when we first utter a word, we begin a history of countless words, listening to ourselves, hoping others will hear. We begin by calling the names of those we love - our father, our mother, brothers and sisters. We say our name and understand how much it is ours. We learn that we can speak our own name but that we cannot call for ourselves. No one else comes when we say our name. We are beginning to become aware of the being "I" - the awareness, "I am."

An animal makes the same sound - to declare its presence in every age and in all cultures. A man is different. He reveals the concreteness of his life and its historical dimension by his manner of speech. As he speaks words, those who hear him sense a communion, a new bond, with this hitherto wordless person who now formulates familiar words. And so the sound of a person's voice becomes dear to us. Our voices are so distinctive that no one of us speaks the same way as another. The sound of our voice becomes a blessing to those we love.

In moments of crisis, the sound of a person can give us strength and fill our hearts with hope. In an hour of desperation or loneliness, the voice of the right person can transform us.

No less arduously, Christ struggled his entire life to say what was inside of him. A great deal was at stake in his self-expression. And self-expression is never easy, never cheap, never sudden, and never effortless. The human words of Christ become means of self-identity but also sacramental realities. Therefore through them, grace was given, revelation clarified, redemption achieved. Though them bread and wine became a sacramental mystery, a bond between him and all of us!

There is an intimate relationship between the words we speak and the fidelity to which we aspire. A man's word is sacred. It guarantees the promises he makes, the vows he confesses, the oaths he takes, the commitments he honors. We receive a man's word as the expression of his inner worth, his character, his identity. When people accept our words, we know that they have accepted us. We are deemed worthy when men trust our words, even without proof and belief in our promises merely because we have made them.

On the first day we utter a word we create on that day the raw material by which our fidelity will be signified and the elements which will enter into the substance of our promises and vows, our oaths and commitments.

We begin in a distinctive manner the history of our self-expression, a process which demands the mystery of fidelity for its completion.

Fidelity is the consistency of a person with that which is most himself. The nature of man is other-oriented. Everything in him cries out for completion in someone else. No man is faithful to himself until he has achieved fidelity with another. The consistency of a person with himself is, therefore, inseparable from his unity with another.

My Word – A Trust

Although promises and commitments are part of our lives, they are not as fundamental a reality as fidelity. The validity of every promise we make is premised on a prior commitment to our own fidelity. Our words become the means by which we help create consistency in ourselves and express fidelity to others. The words we utter are so sacred that we offer them to the Divine and invite man to trust them, even to build a life of meaning on them. Every man who loves a woman gives his word as his sign of love and declares that word, if he be a man of faith, in the presence of God, inviting his fellow-men to witness how much he loves this woman and how deeply she trusts his word.....

This matter of fidelity is bound up with conscience. It is an area of life where we are liable to self-deception, where selfishness can wear the mask of nobility or purpose, where rules are difficult to apply, norms not easy to set, advice almost impossible to give.

There is a deeper fidelity than the fidelity of our first commitments. It is the fidelity and consistency of ourselves with that in us which allows more self-fulfillment, more self-donation. One's first commitments often allow fidelity to develop. When they do, they must be maintained at all costs. To fail to do this is to become self-serving with life. A person is faithful to himself and others when he is in harmony with that which is best in himself.

There was a day when we once learned to speak a real but uncertain first word. It said little of us. It had some significance, nonetheless, because we expressed ourselves in a uniquely human manner. As life progressed, we gave more solemn words, words of love in marriage, of vowed commitment. The mystery of fidelity demands a total self-expression in total self-sacrifice. No one of us does this perfectly and yet all of us must strive to honor this responsibility. It is not our first solemn words but the exhaustion of our hearts in love which makes us faithful.

Words are the inner expression of "I" – My concepts, my aspirations, my love, my hope, my faith in all.

Words are so sacred – and tell so much to me and to others about myself.

Words are the expression of all my humanity.

The words of a child do not transform the lives of men; they are heard but we do not attend to them. A man comes of age when he realizes that people listen to his words and can be profoundly affected by them. The difference between the words of a child and the words of a mature man is the mystery of fidelity.

A child speaks not always aware of how much is at issue in his words. He is too young to know that one pays the price for his words. He is not yet sensitive to the sacrifice demanded of the man who makes promises, the fidelity expected of the person who seeks to live with hope and devotion.

A child has little awareness of the fact that the words which bind him to others may also cut him off from his loved ones, his friends, from those without whom life is barely manageable. A child senses that

My Quest...

his words make him one with the community of those who speak the same language, and that words enable him to call upon those who teach him not only to speak but to love.

A child does not yet realize that the same community which supports him today may crucify him tomorrow. A child knows that some may hurt him but he does not understand why they choose to do this. He is not yet old enough to suspect that some may one day seek his life not because of something he has done but because of something he once said. A child is too young to know that one pays a price for his words.

FIDELITY and faith is the reality created by a man who has come home to himself with devotion to others. When such a man speaks, one is aware, intuitively and surely, that he hears a faithful man, a just man, a man who can be trusted. One feels in the very words the presence and strength of a man who is consistent with himself and trustworthy with others. Such a man speaks and we know we are dealing with someone who has suffered and endured, someone who has taken the shock of life without stumbling in compromise and weakness. He has been faithful and his words convey his fidelity.

A faithful person is someone whose life has been consistent with himself until now but also someone who shall remain consistent through all the pain and doubt, the flattery and joy, temptation and resistance he shall yet encounter. Fidelity is, therefore, not only a demonstration of where a man has been, it is already a prophecy of where he shall always be.

FIDELITY is linked to an uncertain future, uncertain in its specific events but not uncertain in terms of the fidelity of this man who shall not falter but prevail. Waiting and patience enter into the process of faithfulness. The just man has more than memories, more than harmony with himself in the present. He has patience for the future not far away and for the future which shall require a long time for its arrival.

Men sometimes need a measure of darkness to behold the light. There is tragedy but truth in realizing that we must sometimes behold the death of a man before we learn to treasure his life. So much of our knowledge comes too late. For some of us, it is only when a man can speak to us no more that we become conscious of his words. We understand what a man wanted to say when are painfully distraught at the thought that we shall hear him no more, never again shall we hear this familiar voice. It is often in the loneliness of our desperate situation that we first become aware of how a faithful man sought to keep the loneliness away.

We hurt others more often in our blindness than in our maliciousness. The tragedy of human life does not derive from the fact that we are corrupt but from the fact that we often fail to see. So often we strike down those who come to us with visions and dreams!

Every affirmation of value we make in life is built on a measure of self-denial. A man comes of age when he suffers precisely because he has seen the right things. He suffers not because he is physically assaulted or emotionally tormented. He suffers not because others seek to injure him. He suffers because of his beliefs.....

My Quest...

A man of faith suffers from his choices. He suffers because of his freedom. He suffers because he loves. He suffers because he has SEEN AND MADE A DECISION. He suffers because he is devoted, because he has made a decision, promises, because he must give in order to live.

Freedom

A CHILD sees no limits. He wonders why anything is impossible. A child believes in infinity more easily than he does in barriers. A man whose vision is composed of prayer, devotion, hope and faith, sees beyond the limits men set around life in selfishness, in fear, in cowardice.

A CHRISTIAN does not accept the fact that love needs sexual expression in order to be love, that friendship must be utilitarian, that faith is measured by reason, or that hope is the equal of human potential. He does not accept the notion that man's whole meaning can be perceived in his lifetime or that death is the end of each man's future. He has little time for death and no faith in it.

A man of faith is a man of peace, waiting for peace, working for peace. He does not waste his life on conventional certitudes of human logic, on worldly prudence and self-serving caution. He does not squander his life in the fear of death, or in the terror of pain. He is faithful to himself, to life, in the deepest recesses of his being, faithful with the energy of his heart and with the vigor of his inner justice.

HUMAN FREEDOM COMES FROM MAN'S DISCOVERY OF VALUES WHICH GIVE FREEDOM

Freedom does not come from the unrestricted use of our wills or from the opportunity for unlimited options. It comes from an affirmation of the right values and from the incarnation of values worthy of sacrificial love.

Man is not bereft because there is no beauty in life but because he so seldom attends to it. We become so preoccupied with ourselves and so anxious about the success or failure of the accidental circumstances of life that we lose sight of the total reality in which we are situated.

To notice the beauty of the flowers in the field is to relate to more than one's own concerns and goals. It is to be mindful that beauty is not our making. Beauty is made as we give and receive simultaneously. It is created by the union of sacrifice and gift.

THE HUMAN HEART IS NOT BUILT IN A DAY. IT TAKES A LIFETIME TO MAKE A HUMAN HEART.

IT TAKES ALL:

Birth,

Learning how to talk,

Making wishes,

Living with hope,

Dreaming dreams,

Striving to find a faithful lover....

The human heart is not built in a day nor can it be built alone. It loses its way unless it receives the promises of others and gives its trust in return.

A Decision.....

The decision moment in a man's life is when he determines what to do with his freedom. The fullness of his "yes" is known only when he understands the implications of his "no" and the freedom he has to utter either. A commitment to any ideal, any action, any way of life, or to love, is rich and authentic when it is done with the fullness of the human act. His humanity, then, takes on a new dimension and, not circumscribed by the instant, plunges him into the cosmic reality far greater than himself, individually or collectively. He sees a new man, the full stature of man – the Mythical Body of Christ.

Man's journey in his vocation is to participate as a being in the fullness of life. This begins at his creation and stretches into the eternal. Beginning in time, man becomes eternal. His mission is to be one with the Divine, "Thou in Me as I in the Father."

Real presence in the world involves contact with eternity. The rhythm of time in ever widening concentric circles, spreads throughout all mankind, regardless of the age. A Christian's impact on man goes far beyond the immediate environment of circumstantial situations. It penetrates to all – there are no bounds. In fact, it is boundless, shattering the past, the present, and the future. If this were not so, relationships would crumble and separation would be the condemnation and destruction of each man.

Man is not alone in time. His every action reverberates, affecting the greater, more universal reality...mankind. The distortion of time, the failure to put his action in proper perspective, resulted in the tragedy of failure. A Divinity had to rectify the tragedy. This makes evident the magnitude and the dimensions of responsibility man has for his actions. And thus the Incarnation, the Redemption, and Resurrection.

Together, again, in the divine community, man seeks the quiet, gentle, and deep love hidden in himself, wondering how to share it with the Divine. And this is the crux of his problem – of his relationship with Christ. He realizes that his love is impersonal, a "He-I" rather than a "You-I" understanding.

Outward signs are only outward. How to make them inward – how to penetrate the inmost being, giving it life, action and love? If a smile, a handshake, a kiss, all outward signs, can convey the warmth, the tenderness and the love of one person for another, certainly outward signs between the Divine and man could accomplish the same. The corporeal reality is present in the former, but not in the latter. Faith must be a bond that cements, energizes, and activates these signs.

To give one's love to the Divine, this Divine Unknown, in the fullness of one's humanity, is the living testimony, the outward sign of inward conviction. Human love and divine love were welded at the first agape. And because time and eternity were brought together, the two loves live on and on. Man's participation in this reality brings him in direct contact with all men. The liturgy is no longer symbolic. It is our life – our growth – our love. We experience the Divine and the human and become divinely human. And this overflow prompts our attitude to all – family, friends, associates – for we are one community in this realization and only this realization. This beauty – ever ancient, ever new!

Consider.....

- MAN'S most terrible delusion – believing he is virtuous in the process or act of destruction.
- WE want to be identified with a flower. This has become the symbol of “peace people.” Are we afraid to be identified with the sublime beauty of colossal mountains, surging waves, and ecstatic lightning? Is it because these are bordering on the eternal?
- CONSIDER the dress of the French prior to the Revolution of 1792: pompous, ornate, baroque, manicured. After the revolution – natural, back to nature, as life really is. The dress of an era tells us so much about man's deeper convictions of man. Consider the dress of both a man and a woman today!
- STANDARDS are contagious. They spread throughout an organization, a group, or a society, if an organization or group cherishes high standards, the behavior of individuals who enter it is inevitably influenced. Similarly, if slovenliness infects a society, it is not easy for any member of that society to remain uninfluenced in his own behavior. What that grim fact in mind, one is bound to look with apprehension on many segments of our national life in which slovenliness has attacked like dry rot, eating away the solid timber.
- THERE is nothing more arduous and difficult than the apprenticeship of liberty.
- LIFE owes us little; we owe it everything.
- FOR a work to be considered a work of art, should it not express a conviction?
- MACHINES are no longer tools – they give us direction demanding our complete subservience to them. Man no longer enslaves another man – he is enslaved by the tools he has made.
- WE have no idea of where we are going – just go.....

It makes no difference whether a thing be old or new – so long as it is true. Truth is not contingent upon the calendar or an age or era. It is!

- THE stripping of religion from our lives leaves man a naked materialist.
- NOTHING impairs our humanity more than opinion polls, computers, and condensed news. The many are judged by the few. The machine denies our freedom to change our mind. The summary news puts into pabulum form and we are told what is “important news.”
- THERE is almost communal sadism in the destruction of public property. And this is done in the name of freedom and love.
- MAN is caught in mass panic and hysteria. The papers think for him; the television sees for him; the movies portray life for him. He isn't allowed to think for himself.

My Quest...

- OH, the artistic dullness of our newly built churches – so utilitarian – so functional – so plush and comfortable. It almost wishes that the worshipper could remain in it forever rather than transcend to the eternal.
- THE creed of today: one crowded hour of sensuous living is worth a lifetime of melancholic virtue.
- TEAR away from the past. Why must we have a heritage? Who wants pickled traditions? Man is born to be free, to explore, to experience – tradition is not relevant.
- GIVE to your community and country what you can keep for yourself.
- SHOULD we not sprinkle cool patience and reason on hot actions?
- IT is a tragedy to allow myself to drift through school without effort, without growth, and without a goal. This is a real scandal. I have met the enemy and it is I.
- WE are in the world of the “instant”. Turn on to instant cure, instant joy, instant sensory awareness. If you get a breakthrough, you are cured.
- HOW money prompts man to forget his conscience!

Poems

Home is where the heart is,
You have often heard it said.
Home is where the songbirds sing
Their sweetest, overhead.

Home is like the rainbow's end
That beckons in the blue.
Home is where your brightest dreams
Take root and all come true.

And yet it's more than just a place
Where people sleep and eat.
A home that's real has something
Indefinable and sweet.

It may be just a cottage
Or a castle with a dome,
But if God dwells within its walls
It really is a Home!

Do you ever think at close of day
Of kindly words you meant to say –
But didn't?

Do you ever think when day is done
Of errands kind you could have run –
But didn't?

Do you ever think at daytime's leave
Of flowers you meant to give –
But didn't?

Do you ever think when skies are red
Of hungry mouths you could have fed –
But didn't?

Friend, do you think at life's set of sun
You'll think of deeds you could have done –
But didn't?

My Quest...

A heart without love
dances without song
and burns without flame
like shimmering sand
in a desert wasteland.

Some strive for power
But often in vain,
Some thirst for glory
So hard to attain.

Some crave possessions
That wealth alone brings
But these, alas, are
Transitory things.

The wise are they
Who while on earth's sod
Seeks first in their lives
The kingdom of God.

We walk in a world that is strange and unknown
And in the midst of the crowd we still feel alone.

We question our purpose, our part and our place
In this vast land of mystery suspended in space.

We probe and explore and try hard to explain
The tumult of thoughts that our minds entertain...

But all of our probing and complex explanations
Of man's inner feelings and fears and frustrations

Still leave us engulfed in the "mystery of life"
With all of its struggles and suffering and strife,

Unable to fathom what tomorrow will bring
But there is one truth to which we can cling

The great giver of life...

My Quest...

Life is too short for grievances –
For quarrels and for tears,
What's the use of wasting
Precious days and precious tears.

If there's something to forgive –
Forgive without delay –
Maybe you too, were part to blame,
So make it up today.

Be generous – forget the past
And take the broader view,
Cast away all bitterness and
Let the sunshine through.

If it's within your power
A broken heart to mend,
Remember – Love is all that
Really matters – in the end.

There's no skill in easy sailing
When the skies are clear and blue.
There's no joy in merely doing
Things that anyone can do.
But there is great satisfaction
That is mighty sweet to take
When you reach a destination
That you said you couldn't make.

If there is righteousness in the heart,
There will be beauty in the character.
If there be beauty in the character,
There will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home,
There will be order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation,
There will be peace in the world.

My Quest...

It is sharing and caring
Giving and forgiving
Loving and being loved
Walking hand in hand
Talking heart to heart
Seeing through each other's eyes,
Laughing together
Weeping together
Praying together
And always trusting
And believing
And thanking God
For each other....
For love that is shared
Is a beautiful thing –
It enriches the soul
And makes the heart sing!

Do something today to bring gladness
To someone whose pleasures are few,
Do something to drive off sadness –
Or cause someone's dream to come true.

Find time for a neighborly greeting
And time to delight an old friend;
Remember – the years are fleeting
And life's latest day will soon end!

Do something today that tomorrow
will prove to be really worthwhile;
Help someone to conquer sorrow
And greet the new dawn with a smile.

For only through kindness and giving
Of service and friendship and cheer,
We learn the pure joy of living
And find heaven's happiness here.

My Quest...

When faith in God goes,
Man, the thinker, loses his greatest thought.
When faith in God goes,
Man, the worker, loses his greatest motive.
When faith in God goes,
Man, the sinner, loses his strongest help.
When faith in God goes,
Man, the sufferer, loses his securest refuge.
When faith in God goes,
Man, the lover, loses his fairest vision.
When faith in God goes,
Man, the mortal, loses his only hope.

It is in loving,
Not in being loved
The heart finds its quest;

It is in giving,
Not in getting
Our lives are blest.

I went into the church today
To pray on bended knee
And when I spoke in prayer to God
I know He answered me.

He banished all my doubts and fears
And told me what to do
Though not a word He spoke aloud
His thoughts were loud and true.

I felt His presence there with me
He dispelled every care
I felt His warmth envelope me
With love beyond compare.

My Quest...

If you think you are beaten, you are
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win but you think you can't
It's almost a cinch you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you're lost,
For out of the world we find
Success begins with a fellow's will –
It's all in the state of mind.

If you think you're outclassed, you are;
You've got to think high to rise;
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win a prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man;
But sooner or later the man who wins,
Is the one who thinks he can.

It matters not
How often you kneel
In attitude of prayer
So true,
Unless inside,
Where no man sees,
Your very soul
Is kneeling too.

My Quest...

There's a special art to living
And you need a frame of mind
That can overlook the showers,
'Til the sun begins to shine.
To develop to the fullest,
You have got to understand,
That things don't always function
In the way that they were planned.

There's a special art to living,
And the challenge must be met,
But the longer that you try it,
Why the better you will get.
Don't waste your time in waiting
For the world to come to you.
You have to climb the mountain,
To appreciate the view.

You never walk alone my friend
Though you may think you do,
For in your sorrow and despair
God always walks with you.
There is no hour, no passing day
He is not by your side,
And though unseen he still is there
To be your friend and guide.
Whene'er you think you walk alone
Reach out and you will find,
The hand of God to show the way
And bring you peace of mind.

YOU are writing a Gospel,
A chapter each day,
By deed that you do,
By words that you say.

Men read what you write,
Whether faithless or true;
Say, what is that Gospel
According to You?

My Quest...

DO not despair, that you cannot change
The world in just a day or two.
Instead, just give your very best
In the little things you do.

Then you will find in days to come
When taken all together,
These little steps did change and make
The world a little better.

The polite part
Of speaking
With God
Is to be still
Long enough
To listen.

I AM only one,
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something;
And because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do the something
That I can do.

Forgive me Lord, for all my wrongs,
I need Your help, to keep me strong.
I need Your love from day to day,
To show me how, to find my way.

The night is dark, and I am sad,
I pray to Thee, to make me glad.
In heaven above, I hope to be
To worship You, for eternity.

My Quest...

We worry about our tomorrows
Oft missing the joys of today
Troubled about what may happen
Yet tomorrow, may not come our way.

Life's pathway is ever uncertain
"Right now" is what's yours and mine.
The future is safe in God's keeping
We can live but one day at a time.

Don't look for the flaws – as you go through life;
And even when you find them,
It is wise and kind to be somewhat blind,
And look for the virtue behind them;
For the cloudiest night has a tint of light
Somewhere in its shadows hiding,
It is better by far to look for a star,
Than the spots on the sun abiding.

The world will never adjust itself
To suit your whims to the letter,
Some things must go wrong your whole life long,
And the sooner you know it the better.
It is folly to fight with the Infinite,
And go under at last in the wrestle.
The wiser man shapes into God's plan,
As water shapes into a vessel.

LOOK to this day,
For it is life,
The very life of life.
In its brief course lies all
The realities and verities of existence,
The bliss of growth,
The splendor of action,
The glory of power –

For yesterday is but a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision,
But today, well lived,
Makes every yesterday a dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.

My Quest...

Rich, rich indeed, am I this morn,
For hope has come to me.
No more is mine a restless soul,
With hope it could not be.

Rich, rich indeed, am I today,
For faith has come to me.
No more I walk with downcast eyes,
Instead, the Light I see.

Rich, rich indeed, am I tonight,
His love has come to me.
No more the ache of a lonely heart,
For lo! Its Mate is Thee!

Rich, rich, forever am I,
For All has come to me.
I would not ask another boon,
Mine is Eternity!

About Brother Eugene Trzeciecki



Eighty-two year old Marist Brother and teacher, Br. Eugene Trzeciecki, has worked at Christopher Columbus High School for the last 43 years. Br. Eugene became a Marist Brother at age 17, as soon as he graduated from high school. He started his teaching career in 1950 at New York's St. Ann's Academy and later taught at Archbishop Molloy High School, NY, and worked at the Marist Brothers Training House in Esopus, NY, as the Director of Novices. Over the years he has served Columbus as Academic Dean, Treasurer, Teacher of Latin, Philosophy, Humanities, and English. He was also a key leader in Columbus extra-curricular activities, moderating the National Honor Society for 25 years, creating the school's Student Activities Committee, and founding the Columbus Arts Society for Adults and the Erasmus Culture Club for students. For years he also was in charge of the gardening and landscaping of the school's campus, a job he loved

because of his great passion for nature.

Br. Eugene taught at Columbus from 1968 until 2010. Thousands of alumni from the last five decades remember him most for his famous 12th grade "Philosophy of Being" class, which he taught for 43 years straight. In fact, Br. Eugene holds the title of the teacher who taught at Columbus for the most number of years. Many alumni will also remember that Br. Eugene enlivened the campus with his beloved pet, Brandy, a St. Bernard that won the hearts of all the students and became the school's mascot.

Although he no longer teaches, Br. Eugene is still very actively engaged at Columbus, handling all of the school's paper copying and keeping the school archives, a collection that he started in 1968 and that today contains hundreds of bound books and files which he neatly organizes. It was Br. Eugene who came up with the idea to publish the school's first history book to commemorate the school's 50th Anniversary in 2008. He wrote the book entitled "50 Years Exploring Christopher Columbus High School" with co-author and fellow teacher, Mr. John Lynskey.

Around Columbus Br. Eugene is respected and loved by faculty, alumni, and students. He is known as a wise and gentle man who is demanding, kind, and inspiring. He always referred to his students as gentlemen, and never found the need to send a student to detention. Early in his career he came up with a quote that he began teaching to his students; "A mind made noble, leads a noble life." It has been his motto ever since.

“SOMEDAY, AFTER
MASTERING THE
WINDS, THE WAVES,
THE TIDES AND
GRAVITY, WE SHALL
HARNESS FOR GOD THE
ENERGIES OF LOVE, AND
THEN, FOR THE SECOND
TIME IN THE HISTORY
OF THE WORLD, MAN
WILL DISCOVER FIRE.”

- Teilhard de Chardin -