

Sunday, May 2, 2021



Greetings!

Dog-walking in the neighborhood is a great way to get to know your neighbors, and I met one of mine the other day as his dog stopped to chew on what remains of the grass in our front yard. (The Florida heat is hard on grass, but Fido found some tender shoots.)

I'm still not sure how we went from the subject of his Portuguese water dog to talking about *incarnation*, but there we were, at the foot of the lawn, **engaging in a theological discussion of sorts**. It can happen to anyone.

### "Raised Catholic"

During the course of conversation, my neighbor casually announced to me that he had been "raised Catholic" (sigh), and then proceeded to expound on why he was open to all beliefs and felt that there were many **intriguing "points of contact" in all religions**.

I'm guessing you've met people like this too.

One of the things all religions hold in common, he declared, was the sense of "universal consciousness", which was basically, in his words, "the unity of all things" – **whoa!** This is about as intellectually nebulous as it gets.

I've read a lot of scripture and Church teaching, but, honestly, **I cannot say I've ever heard the Catholic Church say anything about "universal consciousness"** (or that we hold that idea in common with other religions). This abstract concept of how the world works is not Christian. It's some kind of Buddhist/New Age/esoteric, church-of-what's-happening-now theology.

### Keep Them Talking

I know my neighbor to be a good man, so I wondered, with some sadness, what influences in his life had derailed him from the Truth. But I didn't contradict him because I wanted to hear more of his story. I guess it was a kind of strategy to get a glimpse into his soul.

As Christian teaching gets watered down by tsunamis of "**fake faith news**" these days (particularly from false prophets and public displays of scandalous Christians), it's critical to understand where these ideas are coming from and to kindly point out to people who have lost the faith what we *really* believe.

As he talked, his theology casually shifted from "universal consciousness" to the **equally amorphous concept of reincarnation**. Hmmm. This was more than I bargained for on a Wednesday afternoon in the Florida heat.

There's no need to explain the ins and outs of his "logic" here. I'll just tell you what I told him after I had heard him out.

## Resurrection or Reincarnation

To set the record straight, we must try to *tostay out of the New Age fog* and get clear about a few things:

- Catholics and other Christians **do not believe in a detached or universal consciousness**. Consciousness always comes personalized in a living being or in a distinct personal spirit like an angel. It can't be found in the atmosphere or the wide universe but only in a being with a soul (we believe animals have their own types of souls and therefore they too have a *certain type of consciousness*). When Christians speak of "consciousness", **it is always consciousness of something** – something real and identifiable in this world – otherwise, it's a meaningless term.
- To be sure, we believe in **God's divine Mind**, which fills and encompasses the universe, but we call it His Omniscience. It is not "universal consciousness" or even the sum total of all the elements of the universe. God knows all things with perfect and complete knowledge because **the universe is the creation of His Mind**. He is not part of His creation.
- Catholics believe in Natural Law and Personhood. Natural Law means that God has given everything in the universe its own nature/identity with moral and physical laws to regulate it. **Personhood means that each created person is an individual, unique center of identity** and yes, of consciousness. Without Natural Law, nothing in the universe has a stable existence (which leaves us open to the doctrine of reincarnation, as we will see.) Without Personhood, there is no human dignity, no fixed sense of morality, and – consequently – no *human rights* either.

(You and I may have a doppelganger lurking somewhere in the world, but as much as that person may *look like us* externally, he or she can never *be* us. Our souls make us unique persons. We're special. Isn't that special?)

It is these realities that root us not only to this earth but also to eternity in a very real and healthy sense. On the basis of these beliefs, let's briefly look at why the Resurrection and reincarnation are incompatible.

Here's the most important point of the whole discussion: You can only believe one of the other; not both.

## Mosquito Theology

I once attended a talk by a Buddhist who claimed that he could not even kill a mosquito because **it might be the reincarnation of his uncle**. This is a summary, but not an exaggeration, of his words and his belief.

I, on the other hand, have no compunction about killing mosquitoes because I don't believe a human being with an immortal soul can ever turn into one at any time. That's because I believe in the Resurrection. My Resurrection theology explains more about this world and the next than the reincarnation doctrine.

- **Resurrection** tells us that each unique human person is created in love by God; lives a particular span of life; dies a physical death; has his soul separated from his body at death; **will undergo judgment** for his behavior during his lifetime; and eventually will be resurrected and reunited with that body – in a place of eternal happiness or eternal punishment.
- **Reincarnation** says that a human being comes into existence out of the amorphous universal consciousness, lives and dies, and then when separated from the worthless husk of matter known as a body, either **melts back into the universal consciousness** or gets re-formed into another creature's body until he gets more in line with the harmony of the universe.

## Hope for Eternity

I hope you can see how the Resurrection just tells us so much more about life and death and is also **much more positive as an outlook** to help us get through the challenges of life.

At the final judgment, we will be the same person God created at the moment of our conception. Furthermore, **we will be reunited with our own previously death-bound bodies**, which will be transformed into incorruptible and imperishable bodies, according to St. Paul (I Corinthians 15:52-54).

I think that's preferable to fading into the ether, don't you?

**How blessed we are to be able to say in the Creed:** "*I look forward to the Resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.*" We call that **the virtue of Hope**, and Christians have it in abundance

to meet the problems of this world.

In this Easter season, we proclaim that Christ has been *raised* from the dead and opened the way to Heaven for us!

Remember that the next time you meet someone who says he was *raised* Catholic.

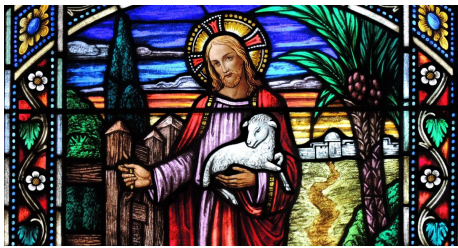
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## Our Feature Articles

Last week's liturgy reminded us that our Lord Jesus Christ is **the ever-present Good Shepherd** in our lives. The featured articles are both commentaries on the same exquisite hymn of famous English composer, John Rutter. They will be **an exercise in attentive listening** for all who take a few moments to feast on this marvelous composition about the Good Shepherd.

## John Rutter's Glorious Psalm 23

### Part I - The Good Shepherd



### Part II - The Sheep



Easter blessings to all!

Peter Darcy

Kindly do me the favor of **forwarding this email to others** who may be interested in their own spiritual development.

You can also spread the good word by sending out the **links to individual articles**. Each article on the website has a newsletter sign-up form for new subscribers. Thank you!

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[Visit the Newsletter Archives](#)

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## *The Hits Just Keep On Coming!*

Speaking of websites, I received news this week that *Sacred Windows* was named the **Winner of the 2021 international Web Excellence Award** in the category of Religion & Spirituality.

I consider that a huge win for the Kingdom! The competition drew 800 websites from 30 countries as participants.

The winners of Web Excellence Awards are selected by a group of top-tier professionals consisting of web experts, communications specialists, advertisers, creative and marketing gurus, graphic designers, and academics focused on web science, marketing, and design.

Thank you, thank you, once again, for your support! We could not have won this award without your involvement in the project of evangelizing souls through Beauty, Truth, and Goodness.



***Another reason to forward this email to your friends!***

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