

identify themselves as spiritual, but not religious. This non-religious spiritualism is a new paganism, where God is not the God of revelation who makes Himself known to us, but a god or gods that are fashioned in our own image to re-enforce our own desires. Dreher gives his assessment of the status of Faith in America: “. . . God may not be quite dead, but he is in hospice care and confined to bed.”

### III. A CRISIS OF FAITH

Our culture is indeed experiencing a crisis of Faith that leads to a denial of truth. Once the relationship between man and God is severed, man becomes just a highly developed organism. Human life becomes just another thing in a world of things. Materialism reigns and breeds utilitarianism—our value is determined by our usefulness. We no longer possess inalienable rights that are God-given and from which no human being can deprive us.

The pursuit of pleasure becomes the highest goal. This hedonism is a futile seeking of greater and more intense pleasures that in the end leave us more and more empty. Suffering and death become the great enemies that we strive futilely to eliminate or at least impede.

It is this loss of a sense of God that also leaves us vulnerable to lose sight of the innate value of each and every human being. We consider those who are profoundly disabled as more vegetable than human. We experience their care as a burden rather than an opportunity for the expression of the noblest form of love.

We begin to see human life at its earliest stages as something too tiny to have rights, but something very useful to destroy in order to exploit its components in the hope of healing or restoring youth to those already born. This loss of a sense of God also leaves us helpless to find meaning in suffering. Suffering becomes the other real evil and thus to be avoided at all costs. If it is impossible or perhaps difficult to eliminate the suffering, then it becomes acceptable to eliminate the one suffering.

### IV. THE ESSENCE: AN ENCOUNTER WITH A PERSON

Pope Emeritus Benedict, in his writings and speeches reflecting on the essence of what it means to be Catholic declared it is not our dogma and doctrine. Obviously, it is not that he thought these to be unimportant, after all he had been the Prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith—he was the architect of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Yet, important as they are, they are not the essence of Catholicism. Similarly Pope Benedict maintained that living an ethical life is not the heart of what it means to be Catholic. Again, he was not claiming this is insignificant, but it is the fruit of our Faith, not its essence.

Pope Benedict asserts the essence of Catholicism is an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. Without that personal encounter, our dogma and doctrine makes no sense. Without this encounter we will not have the capacity to persevere in living a virtuous life.

### V. JESUS, THE MAN WHO LIVES

Malcolm Muggeridge—the late BBC television personality, while an agnostic, filmed a documentary on Mother Teresa of Calcutta entitled *Something Beautiful for God*. Muggeridge made Mother Teresa a household name in the English speaking world. Muggeridge's experience of Mother Teresa's selfless love changed the trajectory of his life.

The BBC subsequently assigned Muggeridge to do a documentary on Jesus. In Bethlehem at the Church of the Nativity

while observing the prayerfulness of Christian pilgrims venerating the spot commemorated as the birth place of Jesus, Muggeridge was inspired to name his documentary—*Jesus, the Man Who Lives*. Muggeridge realized Jesus was not just another historical figure, but he was still alive and animating the lives of his disciples like Mother Teresa and millions of other saints canonized and uncanonized for the past 2,000 years.

It is this same Jesus we encounter every time we open our hearts to His presence in prayer. It is this Jesus, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, who conquered death and is alive, whom we receive in the Eucharist.

It is this Jesus who transformed Peter from the coward of Good Friday to the martyr in Rome, who changed Paul from a persecutor of His disciples to the greatest Christian missionary, who inspired Francis of Assisi to abandon a frivolous life of comfort and through simplicity and poverty to awaken the world to the Gospel. It is this same Jesus who motivated Thomas More to resign as Chancellor of England and die a Martyr's death rather than betray his conscience, who emboldened the North American Martyrs to make the perilous crossing of the Atlantic to evangelize Native Americans well aware that they would meet violent deaths, who led St. Damien to provide pastoral care for the lepers of Molokai knowing the probability that eventually he would succumb to the dreaded disease, and who gave Blessed Stanley Rother, a farm boy from Oklahoma the courage to stay with his flock in Guatemala despite being a target of the death squads. This is to name only a tiny fraction of some of the more well-known disciples who found abundant and eternal life in losing their lives following Jesus, the Man Who Lives.

### VI. A GOD WHO DIED BUT IS NOT DEAD

The Original Sin was the decision by our first parents to push God out of their garden in order to become their own gods. This is the archetype of every sin. God's response to humanity's rebellion is mercy. God does not abandon us to dwell in the darkness created by our rejection of His love. Instead, God comes to rescue us just as he saved Israel from the slavery of Egypt. Sin masquerades as freedom but in reality enslaves us to disordered cravings. Jesus came to liberate us from the bondage of sin and to vanquish death destroying its power to rob life of its meaning and render it absurd.

The method of this rescue was not to use His almighty power to force us into submission to His will, but it was through His incarnation to become one with us in all things but sin. Like a special operations soldier dropped behind enemy lines, Jesus entered fully into our humanity, enduring unspeakable suffering because of our sin.

Jesus defeats humanity's twin enemies, sin and death, by walking through death to eternal life. We believe in a God who died but is far from dead. The triumphant, risen Lord is still animating the lives of those who open their hearts to encounter His love. Thus for the Christian, we are never without hope.

In recent years, I have been drawn to read the memoirs of former atheists who have become Catholic. Two of my favorites in this genre are Jennifer Fulwiler's *Something Other Than God* and Sally Read's *Night's Bright Darkness*. Both of their conversions illustrate, if we just open a crack in our hearts, God's amazing grace will come rushing in.

### VII. A NEW GREAT AWAKENING

In our prayer this morning, let us pray for a religious revival in our nation, another great awakening. For those of us who have encountered the Risen Jesus we have a responsibility to bring His love and mercy to others, especially as Pope Francis so often

reminds us to those on the peripheries. We are called to be Missionary Disciples, communicating the love of Jesus to others and bringing others to encounter the Risen Lord.

We have no permanent enemies, but only confused brothers and sisters who have yet to encounter the Lord of Life and to experience His unconditional love and amazing grace. We are called to renew our nation, not primarily by enacting laws, but by announcing the Joy and Hope of the Gospel of Jesus to individuals in desperate need of its good news. It is our task to reclaim our culture one mind, one heart, one soul at a time.

### RECOGNIZING THE INSPIRING LIFE OF EVA SCHLOSS

#### HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 25, 2018*

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Eva Geiringer Schloss, who lives such an inspiring life as a Holocaust survivor of Auschwitz. Ms. Schloss is the stepsister and good friend of Anne Frank.

Ms. Eva Geiringer Schloss was born in 1938 shortly after the annexation of Austria by Germany. She studied art history at the University of Amsterdam and went on to become an accomplished author detailing the experiences of her family. Mrs. Schloss is also the co-founder of the Anne Frank Trust UK, and recorded virtual reality answers to numerous questions for museums everywhere in the world ensuring we never forget those tragic events. Ms. Schloss is an inspiration to all of us in remembering the Holocaust and honoring the lives of those lost.

It is because of dedicated women such as Ms. Eva Schloss that I am especially proud to serve in Congress. Mr. Speaker, I would like to again formally honor Ms. Eva Schloss today as an inspiration to us all.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 25, 2018*

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, on May 24, I missed Roll Call vote 229. Had I been present, I would have voted NO to reject the motion to table the appeal in order to allow the House to debate Mr. Thompson's timely amendment to strengthen the gun background check system.

### CONGRATULATING DR. LINDA L. M. BENNETT

#### HON. LARRY BUCSHON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 25, 2018*

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Linda L. M. Bennett as she retires as the third president of the University of Southern Indiana.

Dr. Bennett's steady leadership, wise counsel, and dedication to academic excellence