



Reflections on 'The Greater Things'

DECEMBER 2024
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"Amen, Amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12)

GET OFF THE TREADMILL OF STRESS AND KNOW THAT GOD IS EVERYWHERE

By: Michael H. Brown (*Reprinted with permission from <https://www.spiritdaily.org/Godeverywhere.htm>*)
Michael H. Brown is a Catholic author/journalist/speaker and website owner, spiritdaily.org.

Do you sometimes feel like you're hanging from a thread, that at any moment disaster could strike, that there are a million hazards out there and sooner or later one of them will get you? Are you afraid that genetic factors or exposure to carcinogens or the wrong diet is going to lead -- inevitably -- to cancer? Does every ache and pain cause fear? Do you figure that an accident of some sort, a breakdown, a heartbreak is just down the road? It is not. Much bad does not have to be. We all die. There is redemptive suffering. But at most points in our lives all forms of the above can be prevented by closeness with God.

There is no darkness in Him. Scripture tells us that. He pervades all. He is there for the intricate working of every cell in our bodies. And He can reverse damage and renew us both spiritually and physically. Without Him, there is entropy; things fall apart; there is doom. With Him there are blessings. We tend to think of Him as Someone Who created everything and then has let it spin on its own -- tick like a clock.

That's not the way it is. The Lord is what vivifies us. He is throughout our beings. And He can affect anything in our systems -- if we let Him (if we don't think life is mechanical). It is like the appliances in our homes: the fan that whirls, the refrigerator, the TV: we tend to think of them as units that are independent but they would not work without the force of electricity that is hidden behind them. God is our power and it's up to you to start thinking of Him that way. Begin seeing Him everywhere all the time, start seeing Him in the ordinary, start seeing Him in the extraordinary (knowing He can do that as readily) and you now are under the control of a being Who can erase all negativity to which you have been exposed and reverse any damage.

How's that for hope! And it's true: God is everywhere and does everything. Have you noticed how subtle most of His

miracles are? He will cause a candle to drip in just such a way that it could be seen as an angel. He will slightly inflect light. He will cause bark on a tree to grown in a fashion that resembles the Face of His Son. These are His little miracles, and they extend to our own bodies. His slight touch causes our cells and tissues and organs to go in the right direction.

We all age and we all grow ill and the body will eventually break down, but we do not have to speed up the process by stress. We are not destined for cancer. We are not destined for Alzheimer's. With faith, we are destined for the fullness of life. If the time comes when we need a doctor, we pray for God to come through the physician.

When God is on the scene -- when He is in control, instead of our "selves" -- we are no longer at the mercy of the capricious. The Bible says that the weapons of spiritual warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God. Let Him into every part of you. Let Him take over. Let Him permeate every cell in your body.

Life is not a roulette wheel for those who invoke Him with faith, and that means realizing that there is not a single illness or handicap that He can't correct. There is nothing He can't do. He created the physical laws; He can suspend them. The Lord is above all the forces of nature *and when we let Him* into our lives, He can reverse any physical damage. He will watch over the functioning of every cell. He will repair what needs to be repaired.

What if that sharp pain in my arm is a symptom of a heart attack? What if that pain in my abdomen is caused by an abdominal aneurism? What if that flutter in my chest is a dangerous arrhythmia? What if that occasional abdominal discomfort is a tumor?

We all go through this, and when we do we need to invoke the good Lord to take total control of the circumstances. Theoretically, with enough faith, we need

nothing else. He can halt anything bad. He can correct any situation. He will direct you if you need a physician.

In prayer, if something feels really serious, naturally, we should take advantage of God's gift of the medical community. But it is time to stop surrendering to stress. What causes stress? Wanting more and more -- more respect, more money, more prestige. Not having the time for anything. Trying to do too much. Whining. Complaining. Fretting. Receiving insults from others (instead of ignoring them).

As pointed out in an extremely useful book called *Stress Less*, by a Christian doctor named Don Colbert, we bring many maladies upon ourselves. Stress is deadly. It's a vicious cycle! "So many people today are far from experiencing 'perfect peace' because they do not trust God and their minds are not fixed on Him and His ability to protect them, provide for them, and guide them into every good path," writes Dr. Colbert (in a book packed with information, much more extensive than his previous). "They spend their days and nights worrying about the past or fretting about the future."

Dr. Colbert gives countless ways of attacking stress -- from what we eat to how we sleep, act, and pray -- but the bottom line is always trusting in God. "Anytime I see a patient whose health is deteriorating because life is spinning too fast, I explain to him that life is not a sprint, but a marathon," says the physician. "He or she needs to slow down and enjoy the slow jog through life. Those who race through their days at a breakneck speed are 'striving' -- they are in hot pursuit of things temporal that they believe they personally must own, accomplish, or make happen."

Are you on a treadmill? Are you too "busy" to enjoy life? Is it affecting you? Get off the treadmill of stress -- of fear -- and know that God is everywhere that we let Him.

O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

By: Kathy Wilcox

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY THE PROMISED SAVIOR, THE MESSIAH, JESUS, CAME AS A BABY?

Looking for an answer, I found myself in the Old Testament. As early as Genesis, it is written that God would send a savior, a Messiah. Isaiah was the prophet who made multiple prophecies related to the Messiah, whom he called Emmanuel, which in Hebrew means: God with us.

The Jewish people waited, prayed, and often discussed the coming Messiah for thousands of years. If human nature was the same as it is now, I can understand that people wanted the Messiah to answer their prayers. Did those who were experiencing persecution believe He would rescue them, coming as a warrior with an army to destroy their enemies? Did the political expect a royal entourage with the Messiah coming in a golden chariot who would be crowned the king of the Jews? This made sense since, per scripture, He would be born in the lineage of Abraham through the generations to the house of King David. Whenever times were tough, it would be understandable that they clung to the hope that their Savior would come.

Few could read, so Isaiah's actual prophecies were known to few. Some related to His birth include: *The Messiah would be born to a virgin* in the town of Bethlehem *He would be named Jesus *He would be the King of the Jews.

"Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." Luke 2: 4-7 NRSVCE

How many expected a baby? We will never know. But it is interesting that the scribes in the temples, who could read and should have been on top of things, had no clue. It was to the poor, humble shepherds, out in the fields tending the flocks, that the Angels appeared singing *Glory to God in the Highest*; announcing the arrival of the Savior.

"In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them." (Luke 2:8-19 NASRV)

Why the shepherds? God chose these humble men because of their modesty and trustworthiness. These men were not corrupted or influenced by the ways of the world, and they did not think more highly of themselves. These shepherds lived a life of humility and simplicity. They depended on God to provide for them. Praying and surrendering their lives to Him. Prayer and surrender to God leave us open to His truth and draw us close to Him. So when the angels appeared, the shepherds knew, believed, and praised God.

So why did God send a baby instead of an adult? To fulfill the prophecy that he would be born The King of the Jews, he needed to be born into the family line of King David? To protect Him? Can it be that God sent the savior a child to protect Him, as many were expecting a warrior on a horse? Only when the Magi came seeking a child did King Herod (who was Jewish) realize that the Messiah could be child or a baby. The Messiah needed to

be fully human and fully divine to bridge the gap between humans and God broken by Adam and Eve. Since man's sin shattered the relationship with God, only a fully human and fully divine Savior's sacrifice could redeem man from his sin.

God sent the Messiah as a child to defeat the serpent that tempted Eve in the garden and the devil was reminded in Revelations, chapter 12 that the offspring of the woman clothed with the sun would crush him.

God chose to send the Messiah to a family, which established the importance of the family unit. He chose a poor family so people would know he came to all, not just the rich and educated. What a beautiful way to show us God's love through the conception and birth of a child. God sent us a savior, not to conquer our physical enemies but to save us from our own sins and to bring us the incredible miracle of God's love for us.



POPE JOHN XXIII'S CHRISTMAS PRAYER

O sweet Child of Bethlehem, grant that we may share with all our hearts in this profound mystery of Christmas. Put into the hearts of men and women this peace for which they sometimes seek so desperately and which you alone can give to them. Help them to know one another better, and to live as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father. Reveal to them also your beauty, holiness and purity. Awaken in their hearts love and gratitude for your infinite goodness. Join them all together in your love. And give us your heavenly peace.

Amen.



THE NEW MORNING STAR By: Msgr. Stephen Rossetti

(Reprinted with permission from <https://www.catholicexorcism.org/post/exorcist-diary-306-the-new-morning-star>)

In the midst of a recent exorcism, we included in the session praying the [Litany of Loreto](#). It is a beautiful litany in praise of Our Lady with her many titles. I chanted my favorite part: "Mystical Rose, Tower of David, Tower of Ivory, House of Gold, Ark of the Covenant, Gate of Heaven" and then I said; "Morning Star." The demons jerked and reacted strongly to it. Hmmm.... My ears perked up.

Then I recalled that earlier the demon had identified itself as Lucifer. His name means "Light Bearer." He was supposed to be the Light Bearer, but he rejected God and thus he rejected his heavenly role. The light was taken from him. Now, Mary is referred to as the "Morning Star," whose coming precedes Jesus who is the light of the world. She, as the new Ark of the Covenant, bore the light in her womb and thus she is the new light bearer. When I saw the reaction of the demons, I stayed with it. I exclaimed

over and over: "She is the new light bearer"; "Mary is the new morning star." A huge demonic reaction! Lucifer was enraged; he had been cast out and replaced by this humble radiant woman.

I spent some time with the Team chanting these Marian titles over and over: "Ark of the Covenant", "Morning Star." Then I read from Isaiah 14:12-15 which explicitly reminds Lucifer of his fall:

"How you have fallen from the heavens, O Morning Star, son of the dawn! How you have been cut down to the earth...In your heart you said: ...I will be like the Most high!...No! Down to Sheol you will be brought to the depths of the pit!"

Clearly I had hit a demonic "nerve" and a particular vulnerability of this demon. An exorcism, very simply, reminds the demons of the Truth. It is precisely the

Truth, which ultimately is Jesus, which they cannot stand. They live in the darkness; they are steeped in lies; and they cannot face the Truth. But for us, it was a grace to proclaim these beautiful titles of Mary. Just the thought of this radiant woman and her Son brings light and joy to the heart.



Si-
lent

A Christmas Carol

By: Beryl Myers

Choirs of angels sing the story, Of a savior born for glory.
Cradled in his mother's arm, Resting gently, safe from harm.
Shepherds with their flocks awoken, Startled by the sight and shaken,
Fall down on their faces frightened. Blackened night has ever brightened
Wise men traveling from afar, Following that bright bold star.
Searching for the King of Kings. The babe of whom the angels sing.
The world has waited for this night. God's promise born in glowing light.
Emmanuel, the Christ, is here. Shepherds, wise men, gather near.
This is God's promise for us all. This is our hope. It is God's call.
Just bow our heads and say "Yes Lord". "You will be mine, and be adored".

MERRY CHRISTMAS

ADORATION HOLY HOUR

Sponsored by

St Joseph Church

Bread Of Life Catholic Charismatic Community



Do whatever He tells you

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

DECEMBER 12TH 7PM-8PM

ST JOSEPH BREAD OF LIFE- 147 WEST 24TH

Fr Steve Schreiber Presiding - Contemporary Worship

We were living on West 9th Street in a huge house. Our bedrooms were on the third floor and living space on the second floor. There was a lady named Eleanor from Philadelphia. She and her son lived with us for a number of months. Her parents came to visit us. I had a station wagon and spent a day or two showing them all around Erie. Eleanor had to work. We visited the Peninsula, the dock at the foot of State Street, and the playground at the “top of the World,” and we even drove out to Northeast to see the vineyards and fruit orchards. I enjoyed showing them Erie.

Their “garden” was three tomato plants in a 6 x 6 foot front yard. They were overwhelmed by all of the greenery. They were very nice people and I enjoyed spending time with them. A few months later, I was trying to get ready for Christmas. There was never an abundance of money, and I always had to do a lot of thinking, praying, and using my imagination for Christmas gifts for my seven small children. We were making a few presents; a chess set made out of old wooden spools, a crocheted red, white, and blue afghan, wooden baby doll cradles, etc.

When thinking and praying, I felt I should “make a list” and figure out what it would cost for a “nice Christmas” for my children. When I added it all up, it came to \$130, a little less than twenty dollars per child, a modest sum by today’s standards. So, I said, “Lord, if you want this, you will have to provide the money”.

A few days later, a card arrived in the mail. It was a thank-you card from Eleanor’s parents in Philadelphia. They were thanking me for spending so much time showing them around Erie. **ENCLOSED WAS A CHECK FOR \$130!** There was a note saying, “*We thought this would help with your Christmas shopping.*” I can’t imagine how the Holy Spirit worked it out to not only lay it on their hearts about my need but even the correct amount, or did the Holy Spirit lay it on my heart to “ask” for the “correct amount”?



24 Hour Adoration

January 10 –11, 2025

8:00 pm - 8:00 am

St. Joseph Bread of Life
147 West 24th St, Erie PA

- Worship - Mass - Rosary -
- Prayer - Sung Chaplet -

Worship by Harmony's House
11pm to midnight ending with
Eucharistic procession.

By The Word of Their Testimony

*“But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.”
(Revelation 12:11)*



Amy Smith

A memorable Christmas that sticks out in my mind would be the Christmas of 1998. I was living in a village town just outside of Liverpool, England. I was a young woman living alone in a rented apartment. I was in my 20s and had been having a difficult few years. I could **not** travel back to the United States to be with my family for the Holidays, and as December 24th and 25th approached, I began to get a sinking feeling. I had friends, but all of them were very busy and caught up in the hustle and bustle before Christmas. I did not have the courage to insert myself into their plans.

I saw a flyer at my Parish advertising a Christmas Dinner to be celebrated on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Great! I have a place to go! As I read the flyer more carefully, I realized that the advertisement sought volunteers to serve food to the Homeless at a nearby shelter. I thought about it and decided I had a place to go for Christmas. I signed up to serve dinner on Christmas Eve.

The weeks soon passed, and it was almost Christmas Eve. I began to have second thoughts. I felt a little afraid. I was a young woman in my twenties, and I found some people that are homeless scary and kind of creepy. I began imagining frightening scenarios and situations. I don't mean to sound critical here, as I myself had been homeless for a month. I knew all too well some of the people who frequented shelters. I also knew that anyone can find themselves homeless.

I was a working girl who was lodging with an Australian family who had decided to go back to Australia. I only had two weeks to find a new place to live. During that time, I did everything I could to see if I could temporarily lodge with friends, but two weeks was just not enough time. I had been living in England for less than five years, and sadly, the British take time before they "let you into their hearts." Once they do, you have a friend for life. Nevertheless, this takes time, and I wasn't fortunate enough to have a beloved friend who was willing to be inconvenienced during that chapter in my life and so I found myself at a homeless shelter.

I was given a social worker who, by divine providence, looked exactly like my dad. He was also named Danny, which was my dad's name. God knew what he was doing

when he handpicked this man as my caseworker. Trust was not something I had a lot of, but I immediately trusted him. Long story short, he helped me get into a rented apartment and secured a slot at the local Community College so that I could change careers into a profession that suited me. He also got me into Tony Blair's New Deal Plan giving me the opportunity to attend college and provide for myself. Everything was falling into place after a month of homelessness. Sadly, my apartment was in a drug neighborhood, and I was robbed after starting college. After recovering from that, I was placed in another apartment/flat that was still in the same neighborhood but on a second floor. I was told I would be safer, and I was.

Back to my thoughts on that Christmas Eve and feeding the homeless. I was a little nervous because of some of the characters that come into shelters. Regardless of my hesitations, I decided to offer it up to the Lord and pray for His blessing. I saved up my money to afford the taxi on Christmas Eve to get to and from the shelter. When I arrived, I was helping to set up the food that would be in the assembly line. Once the people began coming in, I was put on mashed potatoes.

I was feeling anxious, but all of it melted away when the big, loud man from the kitchen parked himself right next to me to serve. He was the main person who made this whole operation seamless. He had food all over his shirt and was very sweaty, but his extroverted nature and Christmas spirit brought joy into my heart. The anxiety was gone. I found myself scooping potatoes and saying, "Happy Christmas." Sometimes the word 'Thanksgiving' was on the tip of my tongue. But I MADE the word 'CHRISTMAS' come out of my mouth! In England, they say "Happy Christmas!" It definitely was happy in there.

After dinner, I worked in the clothing room. Men and women would come in and I would go through the donation bags to get them socks, scarves, or a better coat. I remember another volunteer telling me off for giving out too many socks. My thoughts were "Ahhh, it's Christmas, and we have a whole bag of them here." But I did as I was told, smiled, and said okay. Later on, we pulled out mattresses and covered them with sheets and blankets. The time flew.

I will never forget the taxi ride home. In England, the sky seems much lower. It was like you could reach up and touch the moon. That night, as I looked out of the taxi window, I felt love. Perhaps, I hadn't felt that emotion for a while. Things had been so hard. The moon was full and so was my heart. I felt like God could see me and it felt good.

upcoming events

First Saturday of the Month Mass in honor of Our Lady

9:00 AM at St. Gregory's, Northeast, PA
Sacred Music beginning at 8:50 AM
Music provided by:
Soloist, Jacqueline Phillips;
Celebrant: Rev. Jerry Priscaro

Son of God Prayer Group

Holy Rosary Church
2701 East Ave, Erie
Tuesday's 6:30PM

December 12th, 2024 Adoration Holy Hour 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

St. Joseph Bread of Life Community
147 West 24th Street, Erie PA
Contemporary Worship

January 10-11, 2025 24 hour Adoration 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

St. Joseph Bread of Life Community
147 West 24th Street, Erie PA



Jesus, Son of God, in whom the fullness of the Divinity dwells, You call all the baptized to "put out into the deep," taking the path that leads to holiness. Waken in the hearts of young people the desire to be witnesses in the world of today to the power of your love. Fill them with your Spirit of fortitude and prudence, so that they may be able to discover the full truth about themselves and their own vocation. Our Savior, sent by the Father to reveal His merciful love, give to your Church the gift of young people who are ready to put out into the deep, to be the sign among their brothers of Your presence which renews and saves. Holy Virgin, Mother of the Redeemer, sure guide on the way towards God and towards neighbor, You who pondered his word in the depth of your heart, sustain with your motherly intercession our families and our ecclesial communities, so that they may help adolescents and young people to answer generously the call of the Lord. Amen.

—John Paul II—

You Can Help Make a Difference

Word of Life is *completely* dependent upon your donations to spread the fire of the Holy Spirit in the Diocese of Erie.

Your donation, no matter how much, makes a big difference!

Contributions can be made by check, text, Tithe.ly app, and on the website.

Checks can be made payable to:
Faith On Fire Charismatic Renewal Center
St. Mark Catholic Center
429 E. Grandview Blvd
Erie, PA 16514



Contributions via text:
Text the word "give" to our dedicated giving number: (570) 536-9187



Tithe.ly app on your phone:

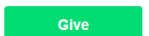
Apps for Tithe.ly are available for both iPhones and Android Phones In the app store search for "tithe.ly" - "create account"

In 'find a church' search for and select "Faith On Fire Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center"



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<https://www.faith-on-fire/donate.html>
Click on the green "give" button



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Office open by appointment only

The purpose of this newsletter is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to provide teaching, news, and calendar of events, which help to foster Catholic Charismatic Renewal throughout the Diocese of Erie.

This newsletter may be copied to put in churches or shared with others.

CHIEF EDITOR

Jacqueline Phillips-Sabol, PhD

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