

CONVERSATIONS WITH  
BROTHER LAWRENCE  
THE AFTERLIFE  
PART 2



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## The Afterlife – Part 2

That night I couldn't get to sleep. Even though I was beat, my mind just kept whirling around, my stomach gurgled (probably because of eating that left-over chicken) and it just seemed like the clock in the meeting room down the hall was right in my room. Tick! Tock! Tick! Tock! Tick! Tock! I got up and took a couple of pills for my indigestion. The hallway was deserted as I made my way through the meeting room. Maybe if I just sat upright in one of those overstuffed leather chairs, my stomach might settle down a bit. With a start I saw something in the shadows. At first, I thought I was seeing a ghost but then I made-out a familiar gray beard and detected a very slight nasal “wheeze.” Brother Lawrence. I think I startled him as much as he me because as I approached, he jerkily sat up straight and turned toward me. My face was in the moonlight so he knew who it was immediately. Choosing the chair opposite him, I plopped down noticing his upright posture resumed its thoughtful reclining. We sat there for a few moments not saying a word.

“Can't sleep?” Brother Lawrence asked me.

“Not a wink. I think it may have been Brother Dominic's spicy chicken. I still think he uses a bit too much oregano. But it may also have been the television special that has my brain whirling around. You would think, living here in a monastery, that I would get comfortable thinking about eternity. But then again, I have always thought about it coming years from now. When we saw that young boy, who had already

experienced Heaven...maybe I don't really know if I want to go to Heaven; just yet.”

“I wish it were up to us my Brother, but it's not. It is in the Lord's hands and we have no say in it. I should say we have little say because, as you saw, some are destined to taste their rewards early. For most of us we must continue in these our mortal threads, toiling away with what God gives us to do.

Brother Lawrence started speaking low and I had to focus to hear him. “Do you remember the one man who, while his story was not that spectacular, [I did not include this one in my earlier synopsis] told us how he coped with having to remain in this life. He lived each day, each moment with a new sense of wonder and purpose. He had no out-standing work like our brother the pastor had, nor did he speak much of what he experienced “there,” but now he knew how to live “here,” where ever “here” is.”

“Here is **HERE**, in the monastery Brother.”

“Yes, or course. But sometimes I wonder if I am here...or there.”

“Have you ever had one of those “out-of-body experiences Brother?”

“When in prayer, whether with the Brothers or alone, I sometimes experience the same wonder of the eternal those others spoke about. I think that I would love to just continue on in prayer for all eternity. There are no time schedules in Heaven, that I know of, and the scriptures say that is what we will do in Heaven anyway; praising God. Have you not read in the Apocalypse of John, how in his vision of Heaven, we will all bow before our Great God, casting our crowns before him, and continually sing His praise? That is the best kind of prayer. We are so concerned with the present, bearing all our hopes and griefs to Jesus, that we lose sight of 'the prize that lies before us.' as Saint Paul says.

“We all too often think of the eternal as something

pertaining to when we die. Actually, it is all around us, in us and through us. We are the conduit of the Eternal to this world. When we say we are follows of Jesus we are saying that we believe in the Eternal and will set aside the present to serve as the legs, hands and mouth of the Eternal One. In order to do that we must have access to Him, we must be In Him and He in us.”

My tired mind was trying to warp itself around this bent logic, something like a Mobius strip where it bends on itself and when you trace the surface it never ends. In fact, I was on the verge of the eternal myself as my eyes dropped and my wakefulness disappeared. All to soon the chimes woke me, still in my chair, to prayer.

Afterward, I had no trouble sleeping the rest of the night. But that morning in the kitchen I was, shall we say, not at my best. Stumbling. Dropping. In all not quite all there and I don't mean any “out-of-body” experience “there” either. So, it was a very tired me that gathered for our agreed upon meeting that evening. Brother Prior was there and most of the other Brothers who did not have other ministries to attend to. While my body was there, I was not entirely alert even though I wanted to hear what was said.

However, by battle was soon lost for immediately after Brother Prior began the discussion, I was out. I heard not a word after that. But I did dream and the dream nothing like I had before. Quiet meadows. Grazing sheep. Just like the small farm I grew up on. There was Mom baking pies; cherry pies. And Dad was milking cows as my brother shot hoops. I was on a hill, high above yet I could smell the pies and hear the milk squirt in the pails and feel the thud of the basketball against the backboard. How long I watched I don't know. Then I was shaken awake. The meeting was over and it was off to prayers. My little nap had revived me enough that prayers was not a battle to stay awake. So, I was alert when,

after prayers were over, I sat down with Brother Lawrence again in the Meeting Room as the day turned to night.

“Well sleepy-head, I see you are awake now that we have finished discussing that television special.”

“And I so wanted to listen to the discussion. But, while my spirit was willing, by body was weak to paraphrase our Lord.” I smiled at that one as I remembered Brother's last quote.

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