

Radio Maria 10 10.3.23 Generally, Better Together (GBT)

Introduction.

Catholic Christianity is a religion of the AND. I mean, God is one and three. Jesus is God and man. Mary is virgin and mother. The church is laity and priesthood. The kingdom of God is here on earth and in heaven. Vatican II, in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, reminded us that Christ is present at mass in four ways: In the priest and the sacred species, and the word and the congregation. (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7)

At the start of Matthew's gospel, we read that the messiah is to be Emmanuel, God with us. (Mt 1,23) The Gospel ends with Jesus saying, "I will be with you always, until the end of time." (Mt 28,20)

Thus, wherever we are, we are together with God. However, because God loves us and thus not only values us - we are precious in his eyes- he respects us and thus does not force himself onto us.

We need to be open to his presence if we are to benefit from, even delight in, his presence, his relationship with us.

Hence going to mass, reading the Gospels, praying, sensing his presence in those around us.

A lover's , and thus God's, love is not just with us but in us, it is within us.

Conversely, to believe in God is to commit ourselves into God, it is to be within God and thus be eternal. To believe in God is to be - to be alive - in God. Thanks to God's love for us and in us, we are redeemed,

The motto of Clapham College, my secondary education *alma mater*, now no longer there, was "*Concordia Res Parvae Crescunt*" (In harmony, small things grow).

"Better Together" was the principal campaign slogan for a No vote in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, advocating Scotland continuing to be part of the United Kingdom. It worked.

Unitate fortior (Stronger by union) is the motto of the Army & Navy Club, London SW1Y 5JN. And, of course, The Musketeers' "All for one. One for all."

Unity. Community. Shalom, peace.

So,

1. Select a target (I) AND obtain motivation (E).
Tougher the goal, greater must be the motivation.
Longer it takes to reach the objective, the more enduring must the motivation be.
2. Have ambition (I) AND yet be realistic (S).
Wise to cut one's coat according to one's cloth.

Make plans and decisions that are based on what you have not what you would like. Given my height, it would have been foolish for me to aim to be an elite basketball player.

3. Tap into your potential or ability (PIES) AND develop and use your self-discipline (S): the ability to push yourself forward, stay motivated, and act, regardless of how you are feeling, physically or emotionally. Lacking self-discipline, all too many people end up with a great future behind them. You need effort and endurance to convert dreams into palpable reality.

4. Having enough work (P & I) AND enough time for family life (E), is vital for a healthy emotional balance.

5. When people and institutions have BOTH wealth and generosity great things can be achieved. However, to avoid doing damage, they also need wisdom: tapping into the advice of experts who know the facts.

6. A serious drive AND ability can convert dreams into reality, no matter how challenging these may be.

7. On earth, BOTH body AND spirit are essential for life.

To the title of this talk, I added the adjective 'generally', as there are exceptions. I have heard – alas, all too often, “I married him/her for life. Not for the impossible.”

Then, of course, being together can be one-sided, asymmetrical – as the Indian army in Flanders, 1915, found out. Good for Britain, not so good for all those soldiers from her vast colony.

You will, probably, have come across the phrase, "united we stand, divided we fall", a saying attributed to the storyteller Aesop (620-564BCE), both directly in his fable "The Four Oxen and the Lion"¹ and indirectly in "The Bundle of Sticks". Its truth, as taught by Jesus, “if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mk 3, 25), is still valid. Hence this talk.

In my later years, I try to be BOTH an optimist AND a realist. As Oscar Wilde would have put it, “we may all be in the gutter but I am looking at the stars.” Rather than competing with more gifted folk, I prefer aiming to achieve the best I can with what I have: pushing my PB - my Personal Best - ever upwards.

Our individualistic, materialistic, secular culture is decadence vectoring itself to self-destruction. I hope this talk, dear listener, will help you achieve a more united, peaceful and flourishing future in your neighbourhood.

Brexit has made it all too palpably clear that ‘going it alone’ has had – and will continue to have - massive negative impact on the UK’s fiscal life and much else.

I have structured my ideas around the framework of the PIES of our life: the physical and, intellectual, and emotional and spiritual components of our life.

So, let's go through the PIES.

Physical

You cannot tie a parcel with just one hands. You need the left and the right.

To achieve results, you need not only prayer but also action. To illustrate this point, I tend dot use the story of Janek!

Janek, a man of great faith, keeps praying to God "Please God, to help my family may I win the lottery!" Suddenly, in his prayer he hears God's voice. "Janek, if you want my help, strat by buying yourself a lottery ticket."

Look around your manor, where you live. Good buildings AND green spaces together work better for healthy communities. Green spaces improve air quality, reduce noise and enhance biodiversity. They also moderate temperatures during hot periods and provide cool and shaded areas, as well as play zones for children and dogs.

Local communities use green space for physical exercise – typically tennis – AS WELL AS social interactions and relaxation. Exposure to green space benefits health by reducing mortality and morbidity from chronic diseases, improving mental health, pregnancy outcomes and reducing obesity.

"We", as a team of individuals each expert in their field, is better than an "I" trying to be a jack-of-all-trades, master of none.

A team, of even just two, can often perform far better than a solitary individual can. Think carrying a ladder, hanging a picture, erecting scaffolding, pollarding a tree.

Together with another human, life can be far better fun. Think hitting a tennis ball or kicking a football. Think enjoying a meal or drinking alcohol. A fellow cleric admitted to me that he had bought a dog so he would not have to take his inevitable – he said - night-time tipple alone. Better together – even with a dog.

Think looking AND listening when crossing a road. Films took a giant leap forward when in 1923 they started to have sound.

I a successful relationship people have to use not just their mouth but also their ears – in their proportion. A number of times in my life people told me that, so and so thinks you are very intelligent. Those so and sos spent all the meal talking and I listening, just nodding my head.

We need sounds to hear AND silence to enable us to reflect on what is said or played. With any medical problem, it is good to treat the symptoms AND ascertain the case(s). People feeling depressed have low serotonin levels in their brains. - and this can be treated, with at least short-term improvements in moods with serotonin supplements.

However, the causes of their depression will be a mix of bad biological, psychological and social experiences. Perhaps a lack of sunlight, griefs - emotions associated with loss of someone - even 'just ' a pet - beloved. Some depressions stem from - almost initially

subconscious - memories of childhood traumas. These may have been physical, emotional or sexual abuse - maybe a mix of these.

In WW2 on the Eastern Front, it was better to have the inexhaustible source of Russian soldiers and the vast quantity of trucks, jeeps, tanks and much more supplied by the USA. TOGETHER these vanquished the Nazi Wehrmacht (meaning “defence power. Given its hideous aggression, a grim oxymoronic title for that army.)

Battle of Waterloo (18 June 1815) was won by the armies of the Duke of Wellington- who prayed “give me night or give me Blücher” - AND his Prussian ally General Gebhard Blücher. The arrival of the Prussians and their attack on the right, changed everything.

The Supermarine Spitfire, which first flew in March 1935 , a heroic icon of WW2, needed BOTH the inventor of the airframe, Reginald J Mitchall (1895-1937), AND the brilliant Rolls Royce, water-cooled, Merlin engine, if it was to perform as well as it did.

(In case you wondered, The Spitfire was named after Ann, the daughter of the manufacturer’s chairman, Sir Robert McLean, who called her “the little spitfire”.)

In WW2, it was Churchill AND Stalin AND the USA TOGETHER beat Hitler. UK AND USA AND Canada succeeded on D Day.

Currently – October 2022 – it is Ukranian courage AND USA and UK supplied arms that are forcing Russia to retreat.

To produce a top racehorse, its owner(s) need BOTH a top stud AND top trainer. Then, to win top races, they need that horse AND a top jockey.

For safe driving, a car needs an accelerator AND a brake.

Think Schizophrenia, a mental disorder involving a fragmentation of the relationships between thought, emotion, and behaviour. Working TOGETHER, these are fine. Disconnected, fragmented, they are grim.

Erotic desire is both good, even sacramental, AND dangerous, with its ability to damage and even destroy individuals and families.

We need wakefulness full of creativity AND sleep to help brain recover and minimise risk of dementia. Harvard researchers found that individuals who slept fewer than five hours per night were twice as likely to develop dementia, and twice as likely to die early, compared to those who slept six to eight hours per night. This study controlled for demographic characteristics including age, marital status, race, education, health conditions, and body weight.

Researchers in Europe (including France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Finland) examined data from almost 8,000 participants from a different study and found that consistently sleeping six hours or less at age 50, 60, and 70 was associated with a 30% increase in dementia risk compared to a normal sleep duration of seven hours.

It is good to drink BOTH coffee AND tea in appropriate quantities.

Coffee is a potent source of healthful antioxidants, it provides a short-term memory boost and helps protect against dementia.

Coffee is healthy for your heart and it may help curb certain cancers, as well as lessen your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Coffee consumption has been linked to a lower incidence of cirrhosis, especially alcoholic cirrhosis. It also guards against gout.

Coffee curbs depression.

Coffee is cool. I aim to drink two mugs of it a day

However, there are a few cons of coffee drinking.

For some people, coffee in high doses, can cause irritability, nervousness or anxiety and it can also impact sleep quality and cause insomnia. In people with hypertension, coffee consumption does transiently raise their blood pressure, although for no more than several hours, but no correlation has been found between coffee drinking and long-term increases in blood pressure or the incidence of cardiovascular disease in patients with pre-existing hypertension.

It takes about six hours for the effects of caffeine to wear off, so limit coffee drinking to early in the day.

On the other hand, tea also has its benefits.

Benefits of tea drinking.

Tea contains antioxidants that prevent the body's version of rust and thus help to keep us young and protect us from damage from pollution.

Tea contains less caffeine than coffee. Herbal tea blends have no caffeine and traditional teas have less than 50 percent of what typically is found in coffee.

Tea may reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke, it may help with weight loss and protect your bones.

Tea may keep your smile bright. Japanese researchers have found that tea can decrease tooth loss because it changes the pH in your mouth when you drink it and that may be what prevents cavities. Tea does not appear to erode tooth enamel.

Tea may boost the immune system and help battle cancer

Herbal tea may soothe the digestive system

Pure tea is calorie free.

So, enjoy that cuppa. However, remember that experts recommend that you should drink four cups of tea a day to be of optimal benefit to your health.

The title the February 2023 International Casinos Exhibition (ICE) was Stronger Together. Folk with gambling problems need support from their peers. Gambling Anonymous, like Alcoholics Anonymous, knows that what people alone cannot achieve, together with others, they can. And do.

Depending on how we observe it, energy - light - has a dual nature. It seems to act as both a particle AND a wave.

Nature and nurture are ubiquitous. The Cosmos, whose nature, conceived at the Big Bang (some 13.7 billion years ago) has needed the divine nurture – directed evolution – to arrive where we now are.

Farming in most of its forms benefits from having plenty of sunshine AND rain; plenty of winter AND spring rain, plenty of sunshine in summer AND autumn.

Fitness is a result of not just proper training BUT ALSO correct diet AND positive mind-set. Sporting success is a child of both ambition AND humility – some would call that realism.

There are able-bodied sports AND there are Parasports - sports played by people with a disability, including physical and intellectual disabilities. Experience has shown how able AND disabled sportspeople find each other mutually enriching.

Paralympic history began in 1948 at a hospital for war veterans in Stoke Mandeville, located 60 kilometres north of London. Since his appointment in 1944, German neurologist Sir Ludwig Guttmann - Jewish doctor who fled Nazi Germany just before the start of the Second World War - had been looking for a way to help his paraplegic patients, all World War II veterans, rehabilitate more quickly.

In parallel with the London Olympics 1948, he gave birth to The Stoke Mandeville Games. These Stoke Mandeville Games, in 1960 Rome, became the Paralympic Games; featuring 400 athletes from 23 countries.

Since then – in tandem with the Olympics - they have taken place every four years. (564 athletes from 46 nations took part in the Beijing 2022 Paralympics, 4 March 2022 – 13 March 2022.)

Able-bodied athletes are now taking part in para-sports, which is helping bring the two types of athletes together, the able-bodied athlete finding out what it means to live with a disability.

Now there is both male AND female professional elite footy on TV. Women's association football is played at the professional level in multiple countries throughout the world and 176 national teams participate internationally.

Although the "first golden age" of women's football occurred in the United Kingdom in the 1920s, with one match attracting over 50,000 spectators, The Football Association initiated a ban in 1921 in England that disallowed women's football games from taking place on the grounds used by its member clubs. That ban remained in effect until July 1971.

In 1972, the first official women's international in Britain was played at Greenock. England beat Scotland 3-2.

Until 1933, collaboration was a clean word. (A bit like my father's name when in 1909 he was baptised Adolf). Once again, for the younger generations, it is no longer a dirty word though in the context of World War II, the term "collaborators" applied to those who aided the Nazi.

The prefix *col-* is a variant of *com-*, meaning “together.” At the heart of the word is labour, meaning “work.” Competitors in any sport need not be enemies if they return to the origin of that word, “*com – petito*”: to strive together.

On earth, time is not only a threat – we might die any minute – BUT ALSO an opportunity to develop and grow.

I am both mortal AND immortal. My body is due to die. However, I am alive in eternity now AND will be there, with God, after my body has died.

My death will, I suspect, be BOTH negative(for my friends), AND excellent for me, enabling me finally to be born into divine eternity and see the face of God.

Intellectual

To get a handle on reality we need to look AND see, to listen AND to hear.

Recently, this was brought home to me as I visited a family. Seeing the lady of the house sorting out her daughter’s laundry, I joked, “Typical, getting her mum to do the work.” “Actually, she is clearing up after last night’s party at the parish hall.” I had made my comment before I had got the full picture. Easily done. In this case, without causing harm or pain. I am never too old to learn.

What is “2 + 2?” “Are we buying or selling?”

Remember that we each have three brains. The “head” or cephalic brain, the heart (cardiac) AND a gut (enteric) brain. With age, I have learned that to get the best possible take on reality it is wise to listen to all of our three brains: the head, the heart, and the gut.

The cephalic brain has two hemispheres; one of which tends to be dominant though BOTH TOGETHER do a better job.

The right brain is creative, intuitive, artistic, non-verbal, emotional, musical, and imaginative AND left-brain is logical, analytical, linear, factual, verbal, and sequential.

Our second brain is located not in our head but in our tummy, or to be more specific, in our digestive system which operates independent of our head brain. As they say, “trust your gut feeling!”

The third is in our heart. Being aware of and listening to all three, in wise.

To excel, we need to use BOTH of our brain hemispheres. The two hemispheres are – like the right and left ventricles of the heart – equally important.

Left-brain people are more organized and systematic. Right-brain people are more creative and intuitive.

Functions of the left side of the brain are analytical, logic, and computation skills. The right side of your brain is in charge of visual awareness, imagination, emotions, spatial abilities, face recognition, music awareness, 3D forms, interpreting social cues, and left-hand control.

Left-brain functions are deemed to include understanding the sum of any situation - getting "the big picture", large muscle movements like walking, sensing where one's body is in space, balance, nonverbal communication, emotional functioning, sensing smells, sounds and taste as well as regulating avoidance behaviours.

According to neuroscience research, the left side of the brain is positively stimulated by new experiences. It controls the immune system and is responsible for the involuntary bodily functions, like breathing, heart rate, and digestion.

The Chinese philosophical concept of yin AND yang, ("dark-light", "negative-positive"), describes how obviously opposite or contrary forces may actually be complementary, interconnected, and interdependent, and how they may give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another.

Yin is the receptive and Yang the active principle, seen in all forms of change and difference such as the annual cycle (winter and summer), the landscape (north-facing shade and south-facing brightness), sexual coupling (female and male), the formation of both men and women as characters and socio-political history (disorder and order).

Yin is a symbol of earth, femaleness, darkness, passivity, and absorption. It is present in even numbers, in valleys and streams, and is represented by the tiger, the colour orange, and a broken line.

The term "dualistic-monism" or dialectical monism has been coined in an attempt to express this fruitful paradox of simultaneous unity AND duality. Yin and yang can be thought of as complementary - not opposing - forces that interact to form a dynamic system in which the whole is greater than its parts.

According to this philosophy, everything has both yin AND yang aspects (for instance, shadow cannot exist without light). Either of the two major aspects may manifest more strongly in a particular object, depending on the criterion of the observation. The yin yang symbol shows a balance between two opposites with a portion of the opposite element in each section.

When making a choice or deciding how to act now, it is wise to consider both the past AND the future to remember the consequences of past actions and avoid making the same mistakes again.

In 1959, while working in Argyll on a civil engineering project a ganger fell ill. I suggested to the manager that Bill, who had been working for the company the past 32 years, could take over. He answered, "Oh no. Bill does not have 32 years' experience. He has had one year's experience 32 times." I realised Bill had learned nothing – and kept making the same mistakes each year. That conversation has stayed with me ever since.

Natural to see the world in terms of "us" and "them". For millennia, tribes were welded into unity by fighting the enemy, the other. No wonder races see other races as threatening. Deep

down in our reptilian brain we are racists. Good to admit and compensate for that centrifugal, xenophobic instinct.

In his Good Samaritan parable (Lk 10, 29-37), Jesus made patently clear that in the Kingdom of God there is no 'us' and 'them' but a global 'we'. We are all in it together, in one divine family. Not easy, but so life enriching when we manage to see and embrace this reality.

For me, men and women – both made to the image and likeness of God (Gen 1, 27) are radically equal and clearly different. Thank God. Otherwise how would there be the next generation?

In the Kingdom of God, which Jesus Christ came to inaugurate, teach and live, there is equality of all. St Paul caught this clearly in his letter to the Galatians (3, 28), “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

To make sense of life we need to consider BOTH the present AND remember the past. To make sense of what is said, or written, we need words AND take care of punctuation. The classic: “A woman, without her, man is a savage.” “A woman without her man, is a savage.” May both be true.

Top people are both serious thinkers AND have a sense of humour. Laughter is a personal serious medicine AND a powerful communal glue. It is also a non-violent weapon of resistance to tyranny, sustaining hope.

Science AND faith, like yin and yang, as we saw a few weeks ago, are complementary. Science studies the parts to see how they work. Faith unites the parts to see what together they mean. The left side brain, being analytical and linear, deals with science: investigating and explaining what and how things are. The right - holistic and integrative - side is interested in relationships, meaning: The why? Moreover, by whom? God.

To understand life, we need both faith AND science. In fact, science needs perception-faith to accept the existence of the unseen cause of a palpable fact. Things fall. Scientists accept there must be gravity.

Though molecules were always there, that fact was discovered only in 1926, by the French physicist Jean Perrin, who received the Nobel Prize in physics for proving, conclusively, the existence of molecules.

Dark matter AND dark energy are names for phenomena we cannot see yet believe must be there because there is more gravitation than our theories predict. The first real evidence for dark matter came in 1933. Scientists became convinced – they believed – that there must be a source of gravitation we cannot see. The only source of gravitation we know is matter. What we cannot see appears dark to us. Therefore, we call it dark matter.

The universe is expanding faster than our theories predict. Thus, scientists believe that there must be an invisible force that does that. The only source of force we know is energy.

Discovered in in 1998, we don't know what dark energy is and therefore we call it dark energy.

Many years ago, as I studied the human brain, and then much later the DNA, I realised - I became convinced – that there must be a magnificent intelligence shaping that brain which had been evolving for billennia. There had to be a creator God.

It is good to have a strong personal faith AND respect the faiths of others. Reality is one. Perceptions are personal and affected by intelligence, education and culture. Belonging shapes believing, with its values, and that in turn influences our behaviour – with its virtues and, alas, vices.

Intellectual Intelligence (II) AND Emotional Intelligence (EI) AND Spiritual Intelligence (SI), are better together.

Mensa measures II and a person's IQ. EI is the ability to control your own emotions and understand those of others. SI is the ability to access deeper meanings, values, purposes and your own unconscious; maybe even that of others.

It seems to me that there are many 'conceptual disjunctives' which can become conjunctives shaping a sharper, more truthful take on reality.

My education has enabled me to enjoy life AND others to enjoy my company. Or so it seems.

Everyone can teach me something. Life has taught me that, like stopped clocks, even fools can be sometimes right.

History shows that to progress, humanity needs to continue to not only look and discover BUT ALSO to think, imagine and invent.

An inventor AND a business brain - working together - are more likely to succeed than a brilliant inventor on his or her ever is.

To succeed as an entrepreneur, you need not only invention but also production. Samuel Colt, an inventor, needed Eli Whitney Jr., an engineer-businessman, successfully to set up The Colt Armoury in 1855 at Hartford, Connecticut: the world's first mass production assembly line factory - a model picked up and developed by that friend of Hitler's, Henry Ford.

For success, F1 and indeed F2, F3 cars need BOTH a great car AND a great driver AS WELL AS an intelligent, experienced and committed management team.

To thrive, a half-decent country needs BOTH independent legislative, juridical and executive branches of government, AND ALSO a free press.

In a country, there is the state AND there is its civil society: with its families, communities, charities, philanthropic associations, religious congregations, neighbourhood groups and the like. When discussing politics, it is wise to bear BOTH in mind.

In law it is better to have BOTH legal AND restorative justice. When I was looking after St Patrick's parish, Wapping (2014-15), a young man who had been arrested for stealing a car, burst into tears when its owner, a mother of a three-year-old boy, told him that her son had not slept for weeks because in that car he had lost his teddy-bear.

A man who had been a burglar for twenty years suddenly stopped. He learnt a very tight restorative lesson. His own home had been burgled and – until then – he had never realised how painful to the victim that crime had felt.

September 2022, when visiting the University of North Carolina, Greensboro (UNCG) I was introduced to “Restorative Youth Sports: An Applied Model for Resolving Conflicts and Building Positive Relationships” in the department of Kinesiology.

There is legality AND there is morality. They are not the same. What may be legal may not be moral. What may be moral, like professing your faith, may not – in a tyranny or dictatorship – be legal. In a liberal culture, abortion may be legal but, to my Christian mind, it is not moral. For me, - and I hope for you, dear reader – morality trumps legality.

There is an inner-directed society AND another-directed one. The inner is steered by its belief. The outer by what others are doing. Whatever the cultural weather, remember, you are captain of your ship whose destination should be eternal life with God.

To be born, a great opera needs BOTH a great composer AND a great librettist. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was blessed with meeting Lorenzo Da Ponte, a Roman Catholic priest, who wrote the libretti of three of Mozart's most celebrated operas: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*.

To discover meaning it is essential to see AND to talk. If you see three people eating the same salad at a restaurant, you might wonder whether they are vegetarians, maybe trying to lose weight, or because of their religious dietary laws. Ask AND they might tell you.

Unless you ask questions AND hear answers, you can only guess what is going on in anyone's mind and heart.

Looking, seeing, talking AND hearing are vital for community cohesion. Hearing is simply the physical process of perceiving sound. Listening involves understanding what is being said. That may take time. It certainly calls for thought.

I accept that I am learned AND ignorant. I do not know what, both in quality and quantity, I do not know. The more I read and talk, the more I realise my ignorance. I know so little about nature with its trees, shrubs, flowers, butterflies – and so much more.

In any human head there are both reason AND intuition. We have BOTH a mind thinking AND heart AND gut feelings. Good to use them all.

C of E has shown that women are as capable as men are in their hierarchical roles. C of E convert married clergy has evidenced that as RC priests they are no less committed than their celibate confreres. Why not have both celibate AND married men ordained? *Viri probati* - with years of experience working as laymen, could resonate with the Pauline description of priesthood there in his letter to Timothy (1 Tim 3, 1-7).

When making choices, the wise – the enlightened – bear in mind life both before AND after death, birth into, and then berth in, divine eternity.

The English language is both relatively rich AND at times for a foreigner, confusing. An advert that claims the product is “great on quality AND great on price” uses the word ‘great’ to mean on the one hand ‘high’ AND on the other ‘low’.

Both Hebrew AND Greek philosophies have shaped Christianity’s belief system.

In my trade as priest, I need to constantly repent, so as to change myself, AND I need to work on helping others to turn their own lives round.

Years ago, I came across The Serenity Prayer. Handy for anyone keen to help God. “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, AND wisdom to know the difference.” (Written, probably, 1932/33, by the American Reinhold Niebuhr.)

For a successful surgical operation, we need competent surgeon AND anaesthetists AND nurses, as well as an efficient cleaning/sanitising team.

A film or play needs a Director AND cast AND producers, AS WELL AS that long list of people whose names appear on the credits.

Emotional

Antonio Damasio - a Portuguese-American neuroscientist, currently the David Dornsife Chair in Neuroscience, as well as Professor of Psychology, Philosophy, and Neurology, at the University of Southern California, said in 'Descartes' error' – you can't make good decisions without consulting your emotions. 'Our feelings are often decisive in what we want and what we do, whether it is devising a scientific programme, buying a home or choosing a partner.'

Left brain is dominant for thinking, and the right brain is dominant for emotion.

I need BOTH friends, which include my family, AND allies-in-life; colleagues and associates.

A strong and healthy relationship of love, generated by a harmony of values, is built on the three As: Attention, Appreciation and Affection AND 3Cs: Communication, Compromise and Commitment. When backed up by equality, fidelity, gratitude and honesty – and each living to make the other’s life a joy – marriage can indeed be mutually, enduringly, life enhancing

Remember, both joy AND sorrow shared, unite. Bereaved? Cry AND get over it. Life is too short to waste it on moping. At times, life is BOTH beautiful AND sad. *C'est la vie.*

Sport spectators suffer, or is it enjoy, BOTH excitement AND nervousness. To be honest, and perhaps pathetic, I admit I feel nervous rather than excited when watching England play football, unless that is, they are at least two goals ahead

In love there has to be a lover AND a beloved: the “I” AND the “you” generating a “we”, as in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. I am inclined to believe that the Roman Church was right to insert “*filioque*” (father and son) into the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The Holy Spirit is the outcome of the Father’s AND the Son’s mutual love. Their ‘I’ and ‘You’ generating the Holy Spirit, the ‘we’.

As the song says "You're nobody unless somebody loves you". To live life to the full, we all need someone who does love us. Underpinning love are two virtues. As water, whether it is a river, an ocean, steam or ice is always a compound of hydrogen and oxygen, love - whatever its intensity and texture - is underpinned by appreciation AND respect. ‘I love you; I need you - as you are – not as I might wish you to be.

We need to aim for respect AND appreciation (R&A) for self AND others AND nature if we claim to appreciate AND respect the giver of it all, the One we call God

We need to develop both sympathy AND empathy if we want to become an attractive human being.

Empathy is shown in how much compassion AND understanding we can give to another. Sympathy is more of a feeling of pity for another. Empathy is our ability to understand how someone feels.

At work, as indeed in any part of society, there should be equality AND diversity AS WELL AS inclusion. At its core, equality means fairness: we must ensure that individuals, or groups of individuals, are not treated less favourably because of their characteristics.

Diversity is recognising, respecting and celebrating each other's differences. A diverse environment is one with a wide range of backgrounds and mind-sets, which allows for an empowered culture of creativity AND innovation.

Love, like the heart and lungs, needs both to receive AND to give. My vocation to serve others, nature and God was born when, for the first time aged 15, I palpably experienced God’s love.

Love is BOTH a noun, “You are my love” AND a verb, “I love you.”

I need to love myself as I am AS WELL AS aiming to improve my PB (Persona Best), transcending my current state by becoming the best version of myself across my PIES.

I am both God’s lover AND His beloved. Lover because beloved. Therefore, alive in my right brain, I move into action through the left. I know I am here to help God heal the world.

In real life, some people – and I include myself in this cohort – are hybrids: accepting BOTH rights AND responsibilities.

Music, which directly affects the way we feel, is like love, both sound AND silence.

It is good to feel BOTH love of the good AND anger at the bad. Anger as Jesus showed when symbolically clearing out the Temple (Mt 21, 12-17; Jn 2, 13-22) was a powerful motivator. Interesting, that in the Gospels, the only object Jesus is described as making was a whip (Jn 2, 15).

Maybe it is due to my early years under the Nazis that I hate bullies. I cannot stand bullying, as some tough lads, even Sixth Formers, found out while I was Head of RE and Chaplain at Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School (1973-85). Whenever I became aware of a touch of bullying, I would approach the bully and offer to shake hands.

Thanks to my rowing - and lots of DIY – my grip would tighten until the bully's knees started to buckle. "Don't ever do that again. You are worth much more than a bully." No violence. No child protection issues. "Your honour, I was just shaking hands." No bones were ever broken. Though the numbness wore off, the memories, it seemed, endured.

Emotions have very broad spectrums on temperature, intensity AND depth. Beyond their infra-red area lurks passion and lust, capable of anaesthetising the intellectual and even knocking out ambition in the spiritual so as to delight in sex.

To avoid that self-destruction, we need a positive and attractive motive AS WELL AS self-discipline.

As long as we know which is which, fact AND fiction TOGETHER enrich lives. Myths have the power to inspire and motivate. I remember how moved I was by films such as High Noon, Casablanca, The Cruel Sea and Lawrence of Arabia.

SPIRITUAL

God is love and thus respects AND appreciates everything AND everyone. That appreciation guides evolution. Respect prevents God tinkering with creation and thus God has to allow what we call natural disasters AS WELL AS the evil deeds of mankind.

To hear what God is saying to us, we need Sacred Scripture AND tradition. To fulfil our vocation, we need prayer, planning AND providence.

It is good to be BOTH grateful for what we have AND ask for help with what we need. It is best to say both sorry for past mistakes AND repent to use them as a rehearsal for the future.

The Church is here to comfort the disturbed AND disturb the comfortable.

'God', being love (1 Jn 4, 16) is a noun AND a verb (Ex 3, 14). Grammatically God is a noun. We speak about God both apophatically - saying what God is not: God is uncreated,

infinite - AND cataphatically, what God is: creator, spirit, love. Like beauty, God is hard to define. Experience goes beyond the reach of words. "Come and see" (Jn 1, 39)

However, ontologically, God is ALSO a verb - well three verbs. God is isness - the *actus essendi* that sustains everything and answers the questions "Why and who is behind it all?" God is wisdom - the *actus dirigendi* - directing evolution these past 13.7 billion year – as well as conscience right now. God is Compassion - the *actus amandi* as demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ: God in our human vernacular.

Like gravity, dark matter and dark energy generate unity throughout the universe, God is there in our planet earth AS WELL AS in all the myriad galaxies that constitute the Cosmos. Like gravity, God is ubiquitous, unseen, and even when ignored, always there. Thanks to Jesus Christ's Paschal resurrection which declared his divinity, AND then fifty days later the palpable effects at Pentecost (Acts 2, 1-4), we know that God is relational. After all, to love you have to relate.

Whenever I am reading the gospels, I try to imagine how people saw Jesus while he walked on earth. As a runner becomes the victor only once he has crossed the finishing line first, Jesus was seen as divine only after his death and resurrection. During his life on earth, I do not believe he ever felt 'divine'. He merely tried to bring the Kingdom of God down to earth

We read in Genesis (1, 27) that we are made 'to the image of God.' We are male AND female so, coming to the word God from that perspective, in God there is Father, Son and *Ruach*, the feminine (in Hebrew) Spirit. Like God, we give, know and love.

Solitary confinement is a punishment, all too frequently ending in suicide. Research has shown that social isolation and loneliness can increase mortality by up to 30%.

Not surprisingly, life has taught me that living by giving is the best way of living.

Living by loving (Deut 6, 5; Lev 19, 18) is more than 'doing God's will. It is living God's incarnate life (Jn 14, 6) "No one can come to the Father except through me (Love incarnate)."

Jesus is man and thus sexual, AS WELL AS God. His resurrection showed he was divine.

I am here to live AND to learn AND to love or even – as I like to put it -to live to learn to love, in all six sequences of these three verbs.

I know my life is shaped by both intentions – the steering wheel – AND motivations – the driving wheels of my life.

To make a success of our stay in space-time - to live in the Kingdom of God - we need both a moral accelerator AND a moral brake.

Our identity is generated by not only our name AND family BUT ALSO our nationality, culture, track record, language and values. "It is no longer I who live; it is Christ who lives in me."(Gal 2, 20)

When I was aged around four, and dropped my sweet-wrapper on a Prague pavement, my father taught me that “We Felzmanns don’t do that” My identity ruled my ethics. My father God sees what am doing. I have tried not to drop sweet-wrappers as I have grown up. When I fail and do drop them, there is an act of contrition, or even the sacrament of confession, to pick them up.

As priest and social-entrepreneur, I am a leader AND, as someone trying to do God’s will, I know I am led. As priest I act out of duty AND love (Mt 25,40). It is often duty that gets me out of bed in the morning and love that keeps me keeping on fulfilling my roles.

Being human, I admit that though I am tough, I am ALSO vulnerable.

Thanks to Brexit, I have both a Czech AND a British passport: at home in the UK, I am welcome on the European mainland.

I am both a priest and thus set apart and considered ‘holy’ (“Father, your prayers have a direct link to God”) AS WELL AS human – with humanity’s needs.

Thanks to what the Japanese call ‘bio-rhythms’, I have good days AS WELL AS bad days. These are more challenging but help me understand the weaknesses of others.

We are made to the image AND likeness of God. (Gen 1, 26)

As image, or ikon, we are, well at our best we should be, a window to the divine. Our likeness, *omoiosis* or *omoousios* makes us like God. We have a human AND a divine life in the Kingdom of God on earth.

Human life is both serious and humorous, comic and tragic, individual and communitarian; with jokes and a sense of humour welding people together.

Consider appearances, including accents, AND values AS WELL AS actions before assessing anyone.

Christianity needed both Jesus AND Paul to start spreading worldwide.

Thank God for science AND technology; religion AND spirituality; science AND religion; technology AND spirituality.

The reckless needs to bring in a cautionary character; the optimist needs a pessimistic court jester warning him or her of dangers overlooked. I am an optimist – who carries an umbrella. We need to be as little children (Mt 18, 1-5), innocent as doves AND as wise as serpents (Mt 10, 16).

Life, for me, is both a pilgrimage AND a sport.

Jesus Christ is human AND divine: a sacrament of the divine in our human vernacular.

We have freedom AND responsibility. As a child of God *noblesse oblige*.

Thanks to God’s generosity, I know I have the embryos of the three theological virtues: faith and love and hope

My life needs laughter and gravity; love of the good and hatred of evil. The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for *good* men to do nothing.” (Erroneously attributed to Edmund Burke. More likely a precis of philosopher John Stuart Mill’s 1867 inaugural address at the University of St. Andrews.)

I am – we all are – shaped by both nature AND nurture.

An ‘I’ and a ‘you’ in love, generates a new identity, a ‘we’, and ‘us’. Trying to understand the Trinitarian mystery of God, I asked myself “Which comes first, a parent or a child?” The answer appeared. “Neither. BOTH.” Without a child there is no parent. Without parents there is no child” (Think handclap. Which hand claps the first?)

We need satisfying answers to not only our identity, BUT ALSO value and role: who we are, what we are worth AND why we are here: the purpose of our existence. I am here to embody, as well as I can, the Kingdom of God. Christ.

The answers that more than just satisfy me are: I am a child of God, I am worth the infinity of God’s love and I am here to help God improve creation and – through that endeavour - live to learn to love so as to become *capax Dei*, capable of life with God once I am – at death – born into divine eternity; currently a total mystery. “No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor human heart imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.” (1 Cor 2, 9)’

I need to bear in mind the message of both Ash Wednesday – I am just dust AND Good Friday - I am worth the life of God incarnate in our human vernacular.

We, well I do, need BOTH victory AND defeat, to strive AND to fail, so as to become more Christlike: compassionate, understanding and forgiving the failures of others.

As Winston Churchill put, “Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm.”

John Donne (1572-1631) put the unity of our humanity rather beautifully in his’s “For whom the bell tolls”.

No man is an island,
Entire of itself.
Each is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thine own
Or of thine friend's were.
Each man's death diminishes me,
For I am involved in mankind.
Therefore, send not to know
For whom the bell tolls,
It tolls for thee.

I have enjoyed giving these ten talks. I hope you also have done that. If you missed some you will find them on my website

fathervlad.com fathervlad one word all in low case.

Please pray for me. Thank you.