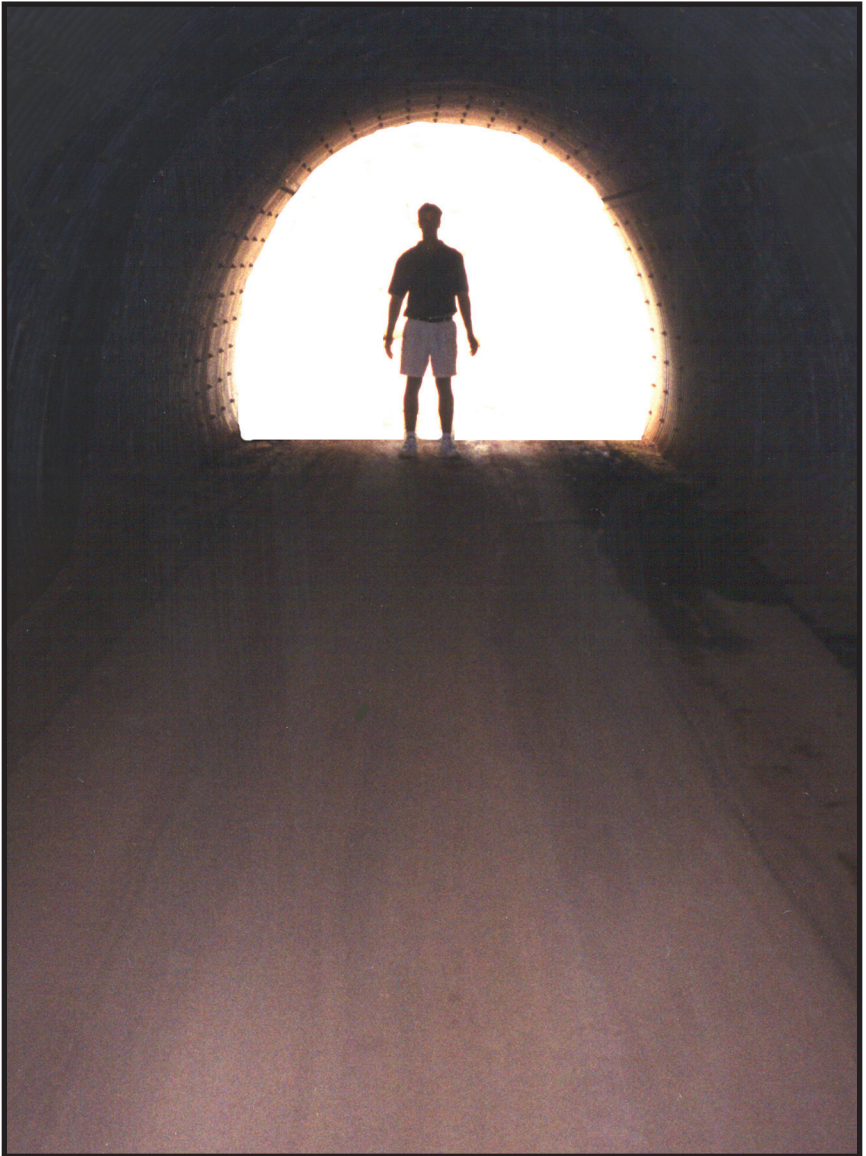


Life is *Worth* Living



by Fr. Cedric Pisegna, C.P.

LIFE IS *WORTH* LIVING!

God's Conversation With Your Soul Before Birth

Life is my gift to you. I have willed you into being and created you from myself. You will always have my divine presence within you. However, you must prove yourself worthy of eternal life with me. The joys and freedom of heaven are for those who respond to the call. You must justify your existence. Only the virtuous souls will live forever.

You are about to be given "the opportunity." You will be born. Your birth will be into another consciousness and reality. When you are born as a human, you will forget your prior existence with me as well as this conversation. As you grow, I will send you signs to help you remember who you truly are.

Conditions

You will be born into a time, place, and human history of my choosing. I will give you a family and a name. Your true dignity will lie in the fact that I gave you life. This family, place, and time in human history will be the context of your personal development. This background will be unique and chosen especially for you. I will take your entire particular upbringing into account when you return to me for your life's review. While your specific environment will provide the background of your formation, you will still have choices. You will be responsible for your own personal development. If you compare yourself with what I've given to another, not all beginnings and situations will seem equal or just, still all is a gift. Comparisons lead to confusion and seeming injustice. Rather, appreciate and focus on the gift I have given you.

You will have to orient yourself to your new environment. You must develop your own individualized way of coping and strive to be true to yourself. Always listen to your heart. Don't just follow the crowd. There will be negative and even abusive

people as well as challenging situations, but you can rise above these influences. I will be with you. Search for me; find me; cling to me. I will help you. I have put an inner compass within you so you can find me. Every person born will have to cope with negative influences in their life. Some will be abused; some will be poor; some will be disabled. Negotiating trials is a necessary part of the path to eternity. You will prove yourself worthy of life in the climb of the journey. It is in the process that you can discover your true self and come to maturation.

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall...

I will give you a body. Your body will be a great gift, but also the source of much frustration and distress. You must accept your capabilities and looks as a gift. Do not reject your body. No one gets to choose. Your body will influence your view of yourself but must not define you. You must learn to cope with your body, take responsibility for it, and grow in wisdom through your body. Your body will have much to teach you. You will spend a lot of time with personal hygiene, eating, and resting. The body and its desires, urgings, and cravings will be the downfall of many. Countless people will reject the way they look and constantly compare themselves to others. Accepting, appreciating, and making the most of your body is of utmost importance. Exercising self-control, thanksgiving, and living with balance will demonstrate the virtue I am looking for. If you are truly thankful, gratitude will show in how you care for yourself. If you can't appreciate and make the most out of what I have given you now, why would I ever give you more in the age to come?

You will not have a choice regarding your race, sex, or even the way you look. I will encode your height, hair, size, face, eyes, and mental aptitude. While your body will have limits, you will also have great potential. Your body will be sacred and very good. You will be my temple, and I will dwell in you. While this body will be the major way you come to

know yourself and be a source of self-identity, you must come to the realization that you are more than your appearance and abilities. Self-discovery and the realization of your true identity beyond your body will be a major component of your journey toward nobility and wholeness. Most will live on the surface. You must learn to transcend and go beyond what you see, hear, and feel.

You Are Mortal

It won't take long before you will need to come to grips with your own mortality. I have given you life only for a time. Growing older, the aging process, and its effects on your body and mind will be a major source of exasperation and suffering for you. The mystery and fear surrounding your own death will cause you great worry. You will have many questions such as, "When will I die? How? Where? What will death be like?" You must let these questions motivate you to live well and search for wisdom.

You will enjoy health but will also know disease. The body is designed this way, not as a source of punishment, but because you have fallen from me. You must not view the trials, limitations, and sufferings as a punishment. Rather, I will be at work in all of your troubles making them work for your good. Primarily, I have given you your body as a gift. It is your temporary dwelling, as well as providing you with the opportunity to live forever. Your body is the vehicle that can move you toward life with me now and forever. In order to come to the fullness of the life I will for you, you must experience the body and all it will teach you. Your body will also be my temple. When you believe, you will have the comfort of knowing I abide with you and will never leave you.

Because of the fall, your body will only last for a certain amount of time. You must make the most of the time I give you. It is the noble who will strive to realize their potential, reach out to others, and seek me. Show me that you appreciate my gift

to you! The sum of time given will be different for everyone, and will be taken into account when you return to me. You will be required to account for your deeds in your life review.

The Great Search

The meaning of life on earth is not necessarily to be happy, but to discover and develop a relationship with me. You will find happiness, however, as you find me and live within my will. You fell because of independence, self-reliance, and disobedience. Your redemption will come by trusting in me. Those who search for me, find me, and are faithful to me are the ones who will prove themselves worthy. Eternal life will begin when you develop a relationship with me. This relationship will demand time and must be nurtured. The comforting feelings won't always be there. I am looking for faithfulness and commitment. Your faithfulness, trust, and determination will be tested.

I will love you and providentially take care of you. No matter how it may feel, I will never, ever forsake you.

While on earth, you will encounter a wide variety of ideas and philosophies. These will frequently confuse you. However, I will put an insatiable desire for truth within you. This inner "homing device" is in everyone. Your responsibility will be to listen to your heart and make a firm decision toward what you know to be true. I have already gone before you and made a way for you. Finding my ways and my presence will be within your reach. The sign I have given to guide your way will be readily apparent. Noble hearts will see, hear, and find the way. It is the noble heart that will embrace my way. The journey back to me is the meaning of life.

Free Will: Choose Life and Live

Many will deny the truth and even try to sway you away from your destiny. You must navigate through all these options and ideas then choose what you know is right. It is the choices

you make that will define you. These choices will sculpt your destiny. Evil, which caused your fall from me in the first place, will be present on earth. He will tempt you, deceive you, and try to turn you away from me. Even your feelings will confuse you. Evil's desire is to master you, but you can master it. Your ability to recognize and resist these deceptions is crucial for you and will make you worthy. Your choices away from vice and darkness toward virtue and light are the path of the noble soul. Many will stray and fall through numerous temptations, but you can be more than a conqueror by making the right choices. I will be your help.

While many givens such as your body and your circumstances will be beyond your control, you will still have many choices about your life. I have given you free will. Your ability to decide is a dangerous but necessary gift. You must prove yourself worthy through what you decide. Your choices for or away from virtue will either ennoble or disgrace your soul.

Further, your decisions toward your particular vocation will occupy a lot of your time. A major portion of your life will involve work. Your work will be a source of suffering as well as joy. Your work will require effort and creativity. The work you do can contribute to the value of others and release your inner potential. Your work will reveal your heart. Will you be selfish? Will you be generous? Will you have integrity in your work? You must answer these questions for yourself. I give you work, not to punish you, but as an opportunity for your contributions to others and the realization of your potential.

Relationships

One major life choice will be concerning marriage and having children while some individuals will choose to remain single. How you respond to your family will reveal who you are. I will look for faithfulness, kindness, love, and generosity. Others may not seem to notice, but I will be aware of how

you handle your relationships. Whether in your initial family, or the one of your choosing, you must show yourself worthy. Your vocation will be of inestimable value to me. Your relationships will cause you great joy and growth, and in some cases, tragedy and sorrow. You will meet many people in the course of your life. You will have close friends who will help you develop the capacity to love and be loved, but there will also be those who will cause conflict and unhappiness. You will have to learn acceptance, forgiveness, and compassion. Because of your life choices, there will be times of joy and celebration. In addition, divorce, separations, and grieving will be part of the human experience. I will be there to help you through it all.

Yourself

Even with your formal education, consultation with others as well as various learning experiences, your own life will be mysterious. At times you will wonder how you look to others or how they perceive you. You may not understand yourself or your own actions fully. Most will struggle with self-esteem and self-image. Your inability to understand your own heart will cause confusion, sadness, and frustration occasionally. All of this is a result of your fall.

You will encounter problems in your life. There will be problems in every realm: emotionally, relationally, physically, psychologically, financially, and spiritually. Death will be a constant concern. Because of dilemmas and hurts, many will acquire addictions of every sort.

The inner struggle will be a major source of energy and confusion. Some will grapple with shame, guilt, and self-rejection. Fear will seek to dominate you. All will deal with depression, guilt, sadness, and anxiety of one form or another. You must meet every challenge you are confronted with. If you face your issues and don't run, I will be there to take you through them.

Redemption

I have made a way for you to cope with your sins, failures, and mistakes. I will bear these and forgive you. I will redeem you and make a way for you to come to new life. The sign I will give you will be clear and unmistakable. My suffering love will be the clear beacon to guide you home. You must learn to surrender to me.

Life is Worth Living!

Despite the circumstances that you must accept, the evil in the world and the problems that will plague you, life is a precious gift and is *worth* living! You will encounter astounding beauty in what I have created. Your mind will not be able to grasp the height and depth of my creation. I will give you animals to enjoy and befriend you. You will meet people who will love and support you. You will know the joys of being loved and of giving love. You will have the opportunity to achieve, become, and make a difference in peoples' lives.

Life will be full of adventure. Travel will be an education. You will discover artwork, poetry, and read books. I invite you to revel in music, flowers, and parks. Exercise will lighten your heart. Enjoy gardening, sports, and taking walks. Let wine make you joyful. Allow the sun to brighten you. Savor food. Seek me in prayer. Touch a rose. Breathe deeply and let various scents in life intoxicate you. Jump into the ocean and splash under a waterfall. Hug and kiss people. Hold hands. Stand wordless beneath the stars. Notice that life is in color. Life will be delicious. Move, communicate, and enjoy. Reach out to others. Live with awe and wonder. Life is yours to take pleasure in and appreciate.

Life is full of meaning, purpose, and significance. Your relationships, work, and sufferings all have significance. You will choose to be positive or negative. Your choices will determine your destiny.

Final Words...

It is time. On the day that I have determined, I will call you back to me. You must justify your soul. Love your life. Demonstrate that you are worthy of life with me. Make your mark. Make your life count. Realize your potential. *Live with passion!* Life *is* worth living. Know that I am with you and that I will never fail or forsake you. One day soon you will come before me again.

Although you will forget this conversation, when the time is right, I will remind you of it...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fr. Cedric Pisegna, C.P. is a Passionist priest who professed vows in September 1985. He was born in Springfield, Massachusetts and graduated from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst with B.S. in social work and a minor in Business. In addition, he has studied Philosophy at Southern Illinois University and has studied Speech and Drama at Northwestern University in Chicago. Fr. Cedric graduated from the Catholic Theological Union at Chicago in May 1990, receiving his Master of Divinity degree with Bible Specialization. He was ordained a priest on June 29, 1991.

Presently, Fr. Cedric preaches retreats and missions throughout the United States and Canada, ministering out of the Passionist retreat complex in Houston, Texas. He has preached over 500 missions for 30 years. Fr. Cedric produces a program for TV and Radio, *Live with Passion!*, which presently airs nationally and internationally on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), Daystar, ETWN, and other networks. He has numerous CDs and DVDs on Christian living and has authored twenty-five books.

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