

## Conference 2: Confidence in God -- Fr. Quan Tran

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have Mercy on us.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

All angels and saints, pray for us.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

### Confidence in God

Welcome back! I hope you had a good rest. We left off on humility, and our next conference will be on confidence in God. Because we are humble, we can't trust ourselves or rely on ourselves, knowing our weaknesses and limitations -- we rely on the Lord.

What is confidence in God? The Latin word, "confidere" means to have full trust in somebody. So to have confidence in God is to trust in God completely. This time is especially applicable for this virtue. We don't know what's going on -- Covid-19, and so many things are changing. We can't move about, some of us are laid-off or furloughed, we can't see our family or friends. We don't know when this is going to end. So this is when we need to trust in the Lord more than anything else -- that things will work out, that things will get better; to use this time wisely, to grow in grace, confidence, and humility; to learn, and to not waste this precious moment.

These words are all interchangeable: sometimes I'll use "confidence," or "trust," or "faith," or "hope" -- but these are all the qualities of trusting and believing in the Lord, and surrendering to His Divine Providence. In the Bible, many times when Jesus would heal someone, He would explain to them what it is about them that caused Him to be able to heal them. Usually, He will say, "**your faith has saved you**," "**your faith has healed you**" -- faith has allowed this miracle.

So likewise with us... He looks for that disposition first: it is your *faith* that will allow Him to accomplish incredible things, to pour out an abundance of grace in our life. But if we're lacking in faith, then in a way it's kind of difficult for Jesus to help us. And so He's always emphasizing the importance of faith and confidence in Him.

Conversely, we hear in the Bible that Jesus did not perform many miracles in His hometown of Nazareth. Why? Because the people did not believe; they doubted Him. They think they know Him -- they say to themselves: wait, isn't this the son of the carpenter? Who

does he think he is?! (Matthew 13:55). It was their lack of faith, their lack of faith! -- He was not able to perform many miracles.

It's up to us. God gives us the grace to have faith in Him. Believing in Him -- the more He will show Himself. But if we're afraid, anxious, doubtful, don't have faith -- then He can only do so much. We should be like St. Paul who says (in Philippians 4:13)

*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!"*

It's confidence not in ourselves, but in the Lord. What I talk about in this retreat will be very counter-cultural. As you know, our culture tells us to be confident in *ourselves*, to be assertive; that we can do anything we want. Well, that's not true, that's not true!

When I was younger, I wanted to be Michael Jordan, to fly through the air and dunk the ball! But I'm not able to do that, I wasn't able to do that. And so we have limitations -- we cannot do *everything* we want, but we *can* do everything through the Lord. Same thing with St. Paul -- anything is possible. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." So if God wanted, He could have allowed me to be like Michael Jordan -- that wasn't part of His Plan. So, I accept His Will.

So, likewise with us. During this time, we don't have to give in to fear, worry, or doubt. But have faith in the Lord, we can have that peace; He really *wants* us to have that peace: **"My peace I give to you... not as the world gives, do I give it to you" -- but have My peace** (John 14:27). So when we have confidence in the Lord and we're humble -- we do have that Peace, especially during this difficult time.

Mary went through a lot of difficulties and challenges, and she had to have faith in the Lord. And she was at *peace* -- she trusted in God. She never gave into doubt, anxiety, or fear; she trusted in the Lord, and maintained that peace.

**Ask and you shall receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.**

**Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him. (Matthew 7).**

## Conference 2: Confidence in God -- Fr. Quan Tran

Jesus tells us that the Father is incredibly generous, loving, caring, and providential. So even with us in our fallen human nature, we know how to give good gifts to our children, how to take care of them, how to give them what they need. So how much *more* does our *Heavenly* Father love us! He knows what is best for us, He looks out for us, He doesn't abandon us. Even though we may not experience His closeness, though we may feel that He's far away, though we're not close to Him -- nevertheless, the reality is: He is close to us; He is God, and He loves us and cares for us.

So Jesus is telling us not to be afraid or give into anxiety, but to trust in the Lord, because God is good, and He will give us what we ask -- *if it is in accordance with His Will*. A lot of times we say "no" to our children as well -- they want certain things that we know may be harmful to them. We have to tell them "no" or "not yet." Even more so does the Heavenly Father know what is best for us. He knows us even better than we know ourselves. He knows what is best/ or harmful for us. Now we may be praying that this may be over soon -- and it's good to pray that, but God knows what is best.

We pray, but at the same time -- we surrender, we trust in the Lord. Remember Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane: **"God, if it be possible, take away this cup from Me. But not My Will, but Your Will be done."** (Luke 22:42). Likewise, we imitate Jesus and we say the same thing: Lord, take this away from us! But not our will, but Your Will be done. And so we continue to trust in the Lord.

A lot of times I hear that we ask for *too little* -- God wants to give us so much *more* than we ask for. The things we ask for are so short-sighted, so limited. Sometimes we'll ask for good health, or wealth, or things like that -- but He wants to make us saints, He wants to make us more like Him, to fill us with more graces. What He wants for us is *beyond* what we want; we should ask for *bigger* things, with greater hope and faith.

We should ask to become saints, to live according to His Will perfectly, like St. Therese of Lisieux. She said, "Lord, I want to love you like you've never been loved before! In the history of humanity, I want to love You the *most*." So *that's* what we should be striving for -- not our own selfish and superficial needs and worries. We should pray to become saints -- in harmony with God's Will -- to become the person He wants us to be. To be like Mary and the saints!

We know that Mary had strong faith, she was confident in God, always trusting in Him. St. Augustine said that Mary conceived Jesus in her heart before she conceived Him in her

## Conference 2: Confidence in God -- Fr. Quan Tran

womb. He's referring to her faith in the Lord -- never doubting St. Gabriel, but already loving Jesus... We also know from Elizabeth that Mary had faith during the Visitation: "Blessed are you who believe that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." (Luke 1:45)... So let us learn from Mary -- we should believe in the Lord -- never doubting, or giving in to fear or discouragement, but have faith in the Lord.

So during this time, our faith is tested! I can see this around me too, even among other priests; there are some priests who are scared! But there are others who trust in the Lord; they're at peace, they're even joyful. Of course, we feel for others and the circumstance -- but no, we don't have to give in to anxiety, worry, and fear. This is a time where our faith is tested and we can grow in confidence in God.

Many of you know of Mr. Robert Spitzer. I worked with him at Christ Cathedral, that was my last assignment... We shared the same office buildings, so often I'd see Fr. Spitzer, and when I saw him I'd also see Joan, which is his assistant. Many of you know that Fr. Spitzer is blind, so whenever he moves about, he needs Joan there with him, leading him around. So I always say "hi" to them.

My point is that Fr. Spitzer is completely dependent on Joan, to guide him because he is blind. And the thing is, Fr. Spitzer trusts in Joan... he can trust her with his *life*. He knows that she's not gonna push him down the stairs, or lead him into a wall, or anything like that. He knows that she is there to take care of him -- to be his eyes. We should be like Fr. Spitzer; we should know in a way that we *are* blind -- we have to be completely dependent on God -- we let Him lead us, and not be afraid.

That was just an example of trust. And Jesus tells St. Faustina this: "**The graces of My mercy are drawn by means of one vessel only, and that is — trust. The more a soul trusts, the more it will receive.**" ([Diary of St. Faustina, par. 1578](#)). That's really the main message of Divine Mercy -- is to trust. This message is so important, that's why Jesus appeared to St. Faustina, to have her create this Image of Divine Mercy. It was so important to Him, He made sure she had these words on the Image:



Every time we see and venerate the Image, we remember to say those words from our heart: "Jesus, I trust in You." This is nothing new; this is just another theme that is repeated over and over again from the Old to New Testaments and to all these devotions. With the revelation of the Sacred Heart to Margaret Mary Alcoque -- He told her to say:

**"Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I put my trust in Thee!"**

So this is a repeated theme with all these private revelations, that confirms what Jesus says in the Bible -- is to trust in the Lord. Proverbs 3:6 --

**"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."**

Trust is key. The opposite of trust is fear and doubt; they really become obstacles, barriers to grace. That's why Saint John Paul II's motto was "Be not afraid!"

Because he wants us to trust in the Lord, to receive all the graces that he has received. Somebody asked him: *you know, you say that all the time, why do you say that?* And he answered: *Because of the Resurrection, because Christ has risen. He has defeated death and sin; He has conquered -- Goodness has conquered evil, so we have nothing to be afraid of.*

## Conference 2: Confidence in God -- Fr. Quan Tran

And so especially now during Easter, we should be reminded of that... Goodness will prevail, and Evil does not have the last word. Trust in the Lord; He has overcome everything, and He will overcome everything, with us.

St. Catherine of Siena too, a mystic, a doctor of the Church, wanted to grow in perfection, purity, and holiness. And so she asked God the Father how she could do that, and the Father tells her --

“With the eye of your intellect, see My affectionate Charity, how unspeakably much I love you.” To know, by faith! When He says “the eye of your intellect” He’s talking about our faith. With the eye of our intellect, see how much He loves us. This infinite Love! When we know how much God loves us, we would not give in to doubt or fear or worry, right? So let us take these words to heart! The Father is pleased to give you -- the Kingdom! Don’t worry! He handed His own Son over for us, why would He not give us everything else? He’s with us, He protects us, He loves us, He wants our greatest good.

There’s this image that I saw on Facebook... that I share with other people -- there’s this image of a young girl wearing a beautiful dress and a crown on her head, and there are these words: *“On the darkest days when I feel inadequate, unloved, and unworthy -- I remember Whose daughter I am, and I straighten my crown.”* So sometimes we go through dark days -- we should remember Whose sons and daughters *we are*, and we adjust our crown. God is Our Father -- the Creator of the universe and of everything -- why would we fear? We are part of Royalty, we are prince and princesses, and so we should hold our head up high, confident in Our Father...

Here’s an example of what trust looks like. Many of you know of Saint Pope John XXIII -- he had a sense of humor... and it was said that every night when he went to bed he would pray, “Lord, I did the best I could today. It’s *Your* Church. *You* take care of it. *I’m* going to bed.” :) You can imagine being pope -- all the weight of the world on your shoulder, it could be unbearable, right? We’re not popes, and so we should not feel the burden. But take on the disposition of Pope John XXIII’s levity. So at the end of the day, we can say the same thing, “Lord, I did the best I can today. You take care of everything. I’m going to bed.” And so we don’t lose any sleep. So that’s what’s pleasing to God -- is this trust, surrender to Him -- and this joy and peace that He wants to give us.

There are many obstacles to faith -- one is pride. People who are prideful tend not to grow in faith. I don’t know if you’ve noticed that, but I’ve noticed that. Intellectuals tend to

become prideful -- and pride and faith do not go together. Because they think they can do and handle it all, that they have all the solutions and answers. Well guess what -- they don't. And we don't. This goes back to humility... let us avoid being prideful, and then we can grow in faith and confidence.

Another obstacle to faith is attachments -- to the world, to sin, and to ourselves (our own will, our own agenda) -- then it's hard to have faith. There are people who are attached -- they want their life to go back to "normal." They want to go back to work, they want to hang out with their friends. That's what they want. ... But during this time, God is teaching us to be detached -- detached from our own will, desire, agenda; and to have faith.

St. John of the Cross compares attachment to a bird tied down -- even tied with a string, a bird cannot fly if it is tied down to the ground. Birds are made to fly, and they cannot become who they are made to be if they are attached. Likewise with us -- when we're attached... we can't become who God made us to be. So we need to be detached; cut that string. Let go, so that we can fly, and soar to great heights.

Another obstacle to faith is apathy. Some people are very apathetic -- they don't care, they're indifferent. During this time, we should see a separation from those Christians who have faith, and those who don't. Some people give in to doubt and fear because they don't have faith, they don't know the Lord. But you're different, you have faith, you're listening to this retreat right now -- that means you have faith. And when you have faith, you live differently -- you're not apathetic or indifferent, you have zeal, you trust in the Lord. So get rid of apathy, indifference, and lukewarmness -- and we can help, and God will help us to grow in faith.

Remember from Revelation how God feels about those who are lukewarm! He says, "Because you are neither hot nor cold, I am going to spit you out of my mouth!" (Rev. 3:16). God hates lukewarmness. God wants us to have faith, zeal, and fullness of life, and not be apathetic or lukewarm.

I want to share with you a story when I was in the seminary I went to the Holy Land and I found out that the Holy Sepulchre Church opens at 4 a.m. in the morning. So my friend and I went there and we had the church basically all to ourselves. So I was "on Calvary" and pouring my heart out to Jesus in prayer (I was going through some problems then). And then I could hear Him speak to my heart: "Courage. Take courage!" Then I remembered the passage where

Conference 2: Confidence in God -- Fr. Quan Tran

Jesus told His disciples: "In the world, you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world." (John 16:33). So likewise, I think He is saying to *all of us now*.

Lastly, I would like to make a suggestion: entrust everything to Mary. Not only to imitate her quality of trust, faith, and confidence in God. But also, *surrender* everything to her... I hope many of you have heard of "consecration to Mary" (or, "consecration to Jesus *through* Mary") and hopefully many of you will do that. We surrender to our Blessed Mother, who is also always with us, loves us, and cares for us. She's teaching us right now -- to grow in faith, grace, and holiness.... She can help us to take on her disposition, and the disposition of her Son, and to be pleasing to God the Father, through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.