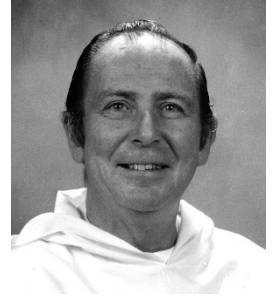


A Message from Fr. Roberto

Fr. Raftery, RIP

I am sorry to inform you that **Fr. Paul Chrysostom Raftery, OP**, passed away last week. He was pastor here at Holy Rosary during the 1970's. To the right is a picture of him from about that time. May he rest in peace.



Did Jesus Really Exist?

It is amazing what one can find on the Internet. There is a website entitled "JesusNeverExisted.com" run by a man named Kenneth Humphreys who purports to have proof that Jesus never existed. According to Mr. Humphreys, Jesus' life was entirely made up by religious fanatics 2,000 years ago, and the Christian faith has been maintained by religious authorities through the centuries as a "highly profitable business." So, Mr. Humphreys' website was established for the purpose of "exposing the tragic fabrication of a savior of the world."

The reality is that one cannot prove – or disprove – Jesus' existence, just as one cannot prove or disprove that God exists. In a way, Mr. Humphreys is simply a product of the world's current fascination with science and the scientific method which compel us to want physical, "scientific" proof of anything before we decide to believe it or not. But actually, this is nothing new. St. Paul encountered the same resistance to faith in his time:

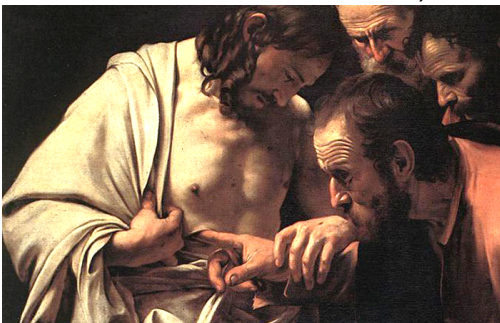
"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the learning of the learned I will set aside.'

For since in the wisdom of God the world did not come to know God through wisdom, it was the will of God through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who have faith.

*For Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God"
(1Corinthians 1:18-19; 21-24).*

In other words, God wants us to believe in him and come before him as an act of faith, not because we have scientific proof. In some ways, our world, and we ourselves at times, are like Thomas, the doubting apostle, who said that he would not believe Jesus had risen unless he put his fingers in Jesus' wounds and his hands in Jesus' side (see John 20:24-29). Unfortunately, there is no DNA evidence, no physical remains, not even any writings left behind by Jesus that might help provide some of that tangible evidence that Mr. Humphreys and others like him demand.

As Jesus said to doubting Thomas in the Gospel story cited above: **"Because you have seen me, you have believed;**



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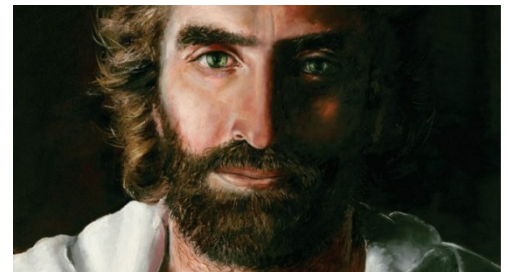
blest are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29). If there were proof of God’s or Jesus’ existence, we would not need faith. One of the greatest gifts God has given us human beings is free will: we can choose to believe in him and in his Son, Jesus, or not. People like Mr. Humphreys and the recently deceased famous scientist and atheist, Stephen Hawking, have chosen not to believe, and that is their human, God-given right. God will never force himself on us or force us to believe in him; but he will always invite us to take a leap into the darkness that is faith.

Still, we can be confident that our Catholic Christian faith stands on the solid ground of centuries of belief, witness, profound theological and philosophical thought, art and culture. In fact, the greatest proof of Jesus’ historical existence is the continued existence of the Christian Church. In other words, if Jesus never existed, why have so many people – going back to the apostles themselves – given up their lives for him through the centuries? There have certainly been many charlatans and quacks throughout the history of Christianity, but the ultimate foundation of our faith comes from the great testimonies of those who have gone before us – people who have lived remarkable lives because of their faith. In addition to this, many of us have our own experience that backs up our faith. How many times have you and I experienced God’s care, Jesus’ compassion and forgiveness, or the Holy Spirit’s power in such a profound way that we know they are real even though we cannot prove it. How many times have we seen miracles, big and small, where something amazing has happened to us that we cannot explain in any other way than by saying that there is a God?

So, my brothers and sisters, don’t be afraid of websites like “JesusNeverExisted.com” or of the doubters and the naysayers who not only question our faith but even denigrate and attack it and attack us for believing. And don’t be afraid of your own doubts about faith, about God’s goodness or whether God and Jesus really exist. It is normal for us to struggle to believe at times, especially when we are going through difficulties. If you do have questions

about your faith, you can go to the following websites:

- <https://www.catholic.com/>
- <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
- <https://bustedhalo.com/>
- <http://www.ewtn.com/>
- <https://www.osv.com/>



<http://enlightened-people.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Jesus-672x372.jpg>