

## **Sexuality, memories, dreams, evil suffered, forgiveness, and God**

Although we often are inclined to wonder whether we are where we need to be, we believe that the Father always brings about his will in those who are open; so we can say that we are where He wants us to be, whether we like being here or not for the moment. It can be said to be a normal experience to have at some point troubling memories or dreams which, though they seem utterly real, may or may not be related to actual events. Such things are part of our condition as human beings. Some people have more vivid dreams or numerous memories than others, and some are hardly aware of any at all; while others are troubled by some of their memories or dreams or images....

Are they real? Are potential witnesses denying the reality of what happened to me or am I imagining the event? There are only so many possibilities.

1. It really happened and those who know me and were around at the time of my memory or dream are consciously denying it. This is the most drastic and nasty possibility, because it gives them credit for nasty intentions.
2. It really happened and one or more of the potential witnesses are in denial, which means it is so terrible that they are not able to live with it and have literally blocked it out, either temporarily or permanently. Any way you cut it, as far as they are sincerely concerned, it never happened. When the psyche buries something, it is often for good, unless drastic measures are taken by those involved with a sincere motive to remember.
3. It didn't happen, but something else did happen, producing a memory. Here, there are almost an infinity of possibilities because of the complex nature of our psyche and how it works.
  - 3.1. Since the original sin, whatever it was, when the first human couple believed the lie that they were missing something by not experiencing evil, they and now we have lost our innocence, closeness with God, trust in God and in each other, harmony with God, with others, with all creatures, with the universe, and with our own self, including our body.
  - 3.2. Science has observed and religion teaches that the sight of the naked human body has varying degrees of harmful effects on the sensitive imagination, and this can be verified by our own experience. Although it is true that the human body and everything created by God is a work of beauty and wonder, it is also true that there is something about it that troubles our psyche, which is the point of Adam and Eve suddenly ashamed of their nakedness and feeling a need to cover it up.

It is a scandal that the current culture glorifies the human body with contempt for anything that traditional morality has to say and parents expose their little infants and children to the nakedness of their siblings and even of their parents in the bath or in swimming pool changing rooms. It is true that emotional reactions of people to nakedness itself leaves impressions on children, but so does the mere nakedness itself. Strong cultures that raise children well don't make any scenes over nakedness or the little games children sometimes play like running around naked, but they do carefully and gently teach children also by example a certain modesty that veils the human body with high respect, even reverence, as God's gift, and that unveiling the human body must be done with care and appropriately according to the circumstances. For example, it is possible to defy fashion and employ swimming trunks and suits that compliment the human form without exaggerating its features or revealing them.

All that to say that it is possible that something happened to generate our memories or dreams, or we saw something at a young age that left a deep impression on us, and in addition, it is possible that there was some emotional content that aggravated our memory. Let us say, for example, that as a toddler, or young child, or little girl, I stumbled upon either my mommy or daddy changing and saw in a flash a part of them normally concealed. The mere sight of it could cause a confusion of not understanding and curiosity to understand. Then it is possible that the parent reacted badly to being seen by me, and the intense adult emotions coming at me shocked me and left a deep hurt. Or it is possible that at some point I came across my parents in the course of marital intimacy, in which case I would have become intensely curious, or if one of them were making unusual sounds, it is possible I misconstrued those vocal sounds for hurt or fear, as though hurt was being inflicted. In any case, whether or not they noticed me, I could easily have walked away from that with deep and intense psychic trauma or confusion.

Whenever the human psyche experiences or perceives or feels anything that is too big or intense for it to process, then it throws up defence mechanisms in order to protect itself, in order to survive. It is very possible that our dream(s) is precisely that, a mechanism thrown up by our infant or childish psyche to protect itself from the observation of something that seemed to us at the time too terrible to endure.

3.3. Psychological defence mechanisms, I have been told, are with us for life. Kind of like a wrinkle in a garment that won't go away no matter how many times you try to press it out, or like a crack in a valued object that cannot be repaired but that you endure in order to continue possessing and enjoying the valued object. It's like the experiences we have of one another that change our impression of the other. When it is a good change it enhances our view and understanding of the other. When it is a distasteful impression, then it spoils somewhat our innocent impression of the other and it now requires work and effort on our part to work through that experience and impression in order to rebuild a new view of the other that is more freely chosen, maturely understood, and moderated by mercy, understanding, and forgiveness.

If the Lord allows us to continue to experience memories, dreams, flashbacks, and all sorts of unpleasant links to the past, it is always because He wants to sovereignly deal with them, to walk among them with us, holding us by the hand, to show us that with Him to protect us, we can pass through all kinds of evil and all manner of harm; for He only allows us to go through that which He intends to make us of in order to bring us to greater perfection of ability and willingness to accept and to give love. For it is the love we give in particular that makes us into the person we are becoming until our last breath on this Earth.

One thing is certain, whether others have truly harmed us or not, we do them no harm and ourselves much good in forgiving them as often as any memory of hurt awakens within us. Although it may seem to be the very same memory that keeps recurring, it actually isn't, because today I am a somewhat different person than I was yesterday, and the memory is coming to me as I am today, and is being generated from within me by experiences I am having today. So when I renew my forgiveness of others and my entrustment of myself into God's loving care, I allow the Lord to penetrate ever more deeply into my psyche with his love and tender mercy and healing grace.

Then, when we have accepted to live through all that has been given us to live through, and we have been patient to live out our body to its final breath and heartbeat, only then can we finally be received into the final transformation of his love and the resurrection of the body.

Our memories are what they are, part of our experience, however related they may be to what really happened. Under any circumstances, there are as many views of an event as there are people, since our experience is composed of sounds and movements in the physical world around us, as well as actual gestures, words, facial expressions by others on the one hand, and our physical sensations and individual experiences and impressions of those elements on the other hand. That is why there can be such divergent testimony about the same event.

Anyone can make mistakes as well as sins. It is God's will and desire to forgive them. He also wants us to forgive them, because it is the only way we can become true children of our Father and become perfect as He is and as Jesus commands us to be. However, my forgiveness may or may not become effective for the sinner or perpetrator, who must repent for God's forgiveness to become effective.

God will not judge our offenders based exclusively on how we felt then and have come to feel now, but also on an absolutely objective view of what happened, in each incident from which we have taken offence, as well as their knowledge and realization of what they were doing and free consent to do it. This is the way in which we shall all be judged.

Forgiveness is about letting the offenders go into God's hands, from which there is no escape, and in which alone are to be found true forgiveness, healing, salvation, and life. By releasing the offenders, we also release ourselves from repeating to ourselves the injury, which is what happens when we keep going over and over again our memory of the injury sustained as our brain represents it to us. If the offence was a single incident, blow, or hurt, by stirring the pot, it's as if I re-injure myself all over again each time I dwell in the memory without having recourse to God.

We cannot help the generation of memories or recollection by our psyche, but we do have freedom of will to decide how to live through any future recollections whenever they arise or are triggered. This is where our faith comes in and we can appeal to the Lord to deliver us from the memory's hurt and do our part, which is to release the offenders yet again to God's mercy and justice, obeying Jesus' command to pray for them and sincerely ask God for their reform, good, forgiveness, and salvation.

It is clear that harbouring anger and hatred keep us trapped in the injury and close our soul off from God's love even for ourselves, hindering our ability to receive love from anyone else and to give love to anyone else. In short, there can be no life for us and whatever life we have dries up slowly or quickly unless we forgive from our hearts. Only then can the juice of God's divine life flow freely again in and through us. Anger and hatred clog up the works and prevent God's love and life from flowing freely in us.

As soon as we become aware of anger and even hatred emerging within us directly or indirectly generated by a memory of past hurt or threat of new hurt, we must have immediate recourse to the Lord, and like the beggars we are - poor and relying totally on God for life and love and peace and goodness and beauty and joy - plead with Him to deliver us from all evil, not to abandon us to our temptations, and to grant us the grace and will to forgive as He forgives us, and lift us up and carry us into his love and forgiveness; so that in one and the same movement we can receive his forgiveness and pass it on to others. This is freedom for the children of God and it is all contained in the prayer Jesus taught us to pray everyday.