

The following printed material on *Confidence the Only True Worship* has some good food for thought. You will also probably like the way that Father John Kearney explains confidence. Therefore, I hereby present an MP3 file extracted from his book *You Shall Find Rest*. <http://www.jmjsite.com/k/confidence.mp3>

Anthony Michna with *Our Mother of Our Savior / Refuge of Sinners Publishing*

<http://www.JoyfulCatholic.com> has already re-published some of Father John Kearney's books. I would encourage you to buy the books and read from them every day if you are interested in obtaining a higher degree of glory for eternity. Thoughtful and attentive reading from these books will help you to live a spiritual life and thereby obtain an increase in sanctifying grace and save your soul. Please note well that you can hear all of these books by Father John Kearney as well as many, many other books as MP3 files at <http://www.JMJsit.com>. You can obtain printed copies from *Our Mother of Our Savior / Refuge of Sinners Publishing* by calling toll-free 800 – 451 – 3993. I will say that I and practically everybody I know is lacking in confidence in God and living as a true child of God. Father John Kearney's books are all centered on our total dependence upon God and becoming the little child we must become to enter the kingdom of heaven. The lack of childlikeness and having confidence in God causes us many, many problems in properly accepting the cross that God sends us every day. We neglect to pray well because we do not have the child's confidence in our heavenly Father. We inwardly and often times outwardly complain about the many trials, temptations, and contradictions our kind loving Father in heaven sends to us because we do not apply the knowledge we should know concerning childlikeness and confidence in God.

You might also find it helpful to your soul to listen to these MP3 files:

WHAT CAN WE DO? Order No. 56. This tape has been made available to all at the urgent request of those for whom it was first recorded, and from those who first heard it. It explains about the Power of the Prayer of Petition; what it means to become as little children; and some examples of how to apply to our lives the aspiration: "O God, come to our assistance; Jesus, Mary, Joseph please make haste to help us!" One Tape read by PH.

T1S1 <http://www.jmjsite.com/a/56/56t1s1.mp3>

T1S2 <http://www.jmjsite.com/a/56/56t1s2.mp3>

WE BELONG TO GOD. Order No. 91. This is a tape I made some years ago rather than write a letter to a friend. It explains by comparisons with things of God's creation how extremely much we belong to God. Many things such as trees, leaves and seeds are used to explain some very important truths. It helps us live in the presence of God and it explains how everything helps us to pray and live in, with, and for God. One tape recorded by PH.

T1S1 <http://www.jmjsite.com/a/91/91t1s1.mp3>

T1S2 <http://www.jmjsite.com/a/91/91t1s2.mp3>

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Please note that the following is not part of Father John Kearney's books but it does have helpful information for the soul.

Confidence - The Only True Worship

What has God done, that His creatures do not trust Him? We cannot trust ourselves; neither can we do without trusting. We cannot hang suspended in space from nothing and over nothing. It is plain we cannot trust each other. Confidence in God is meant to be the creature's life. Without it, we had better disbelieve whatever we do not see, while we can do no better than acknowledge that all we see is a burdensome enigma. But how is life to be lived without confidence in God? We came out of His Hand. It is true He has in some sense loosened His hold upon us, but it is only for a while. He will take us up again. We came from Him. We are going back to Him. There are but two eternal homes. They are both the work of His justice. One or other of them is inevitable. But one of them is rather an endless end than a home. We cannot fly from Him. We cannot hide from Him. What shall we do, if we cannot trust Him?

Yet confidence in God is far from common, and an adequate confidence most rare. It would be a terrible thing to say that the worship of God was rare among men: yet confidence is the only real worship. Our

confidence is our religion. It is the sweetness of life. It is worth our while to have lived, if it were only to have known the delight of trusting in God. But it is not our joy only. It is our absolute necessity, and therefore belongs to the lowest of us. It is our only true perfection, and therefore belongs to the highest of us. Let us try to bring this home to ourselves. It is one of those commonplace things which are of the greatest importance and yet need continual repetition. When we look even at good men, we see that what they want is confidence in God. Bishops want it, priests want it, religious want it. Our very confidence in God is wanting in confidence. Yet, if confidence is the only true worship, things must be very far from being what they ought to be, even with the servants of God.

Let us see then, first of all, whether this idea is anything more than a devout exaggeration. There is nothing in the world of so much importance to us as God and God's favor. Rather, it would be more true to say that there is nothing in the world of any importance at all except that. But in order to gain and keep God's favor, and especially in order to be able to return His love, we must learn and understand Him. He is not simply a collection of all possible perfections, a resplendent object of worship. He is a living Being, who is not only in the most intimate relations with us, but who has a peculiar character of His own, upon which the whole of our love and worship of Him is molded. Now, if we look at His character as it is implied in any one of His Attributes, or again in the entire assemblage of His Perfections, or as it is manifested to us in action in the pages of Holy Scripture, or as we see it for ourselves in the romantic providences of life, the result of our study is, that confidence in Him is the only true worship of Him. But this is not merely the doubtful result of our own investigation. He has actually told us so by His prophets again and again. The gospel is defined by St. Paul to be an access with confidence to God. God Himself vouchsafes to seem as if He made a boast of His fidelity. He is perpetually calling the attention of His creatures to it, lest they should not appreciate it rightly. It is out of His extreme compassion for us that he lays this stress upon that perfection which most invites our confidence.

If we consider the results of confidence, we shall see how impossible it is to exaggerate its importance. Without it there can be no living faith, because living faith, in the religious sense of the word, must inevitably lead to trust. There can be no hope unless we have confidence in the truth of Him who has promised. Charity is equally impossible unless there is also confidence. Thus without it there can be no exercise of any of the three theological virtues. It is worship in itself without any further act, because it is an acknowledgment not only of some perfections in Him whom we trust, but of perfections adequate to the amount of confidence we repose in Him, and that amount is only measured by fortunes and interests which are eternal, and as nearly infinite as anything belonging to the creature can be. Moreover, confidence in another is the surrender of self. We sit down no longer under our own shadow, but we go and rest beneath the sovereignty of God. Confidence in Him is the legitimate expression of our sense of responsibility to Him. It is the perpetual loyalty of conscience. *The interior dispositions which it produces in us are childlikeness, simplicity, and calmness of spirit.* Without these dispositions perfection is impossible, and without confidence in God these dispositions are impossible.

Now, it must be remembered that we are not treating at present of the sweetness of this confidence, or of the beautiful motives to it which multiply themselves daily on the path of life. The subject is so attractive it is hard to keep from it. The mysterious delight which the Creator is pleased to take in the trust of His creature would fill a volume by itself, if we took it up, and turned it round, and held it in different lights, and touched with it all the affections of our hearts one after the other. But at present we have a drier task before us. It is to show the importance of this confidence in God.

Few persons are aware of the extent of their own deficiency in this respect. Most persons take the matter so completely for granted that they do not suspect themselves, and therefore do not examine themselves on the subject. There is something so monstrous in not trusting God, that we should have thought it must be a rare thing among good people. But experience teaches very differently. Many aim at perfection, and few attain it. In almost every case the reason of the failure is the want of confidence in God. Many persons live for years always intending to begin to form habits of prayer, or habits of particular examination of conscience, and never really begin either the one or the other. The real cause of this procrastination is want of confidence in God. Men try to give up habits of sin, and either intermit their efforts, or abandon them entirely, through want of

confidence in God. When a man is scrupulous, it is mostly from want of confidence in God. Our knowledge of our own misery, which makes us brave when we have confidence in God, makes us cowardly and mean-spirited when we are destitute of that confidence. Many persons take up supernatural views of things as intellectual convictions; and yet, when they are thrown into circumstances which, as it were, compel the acting on these principles, we behold not a vestige of them in their conduct. This also is a result of want of confidence in God. We really, far more than we believe, look at religion, at prayer, and at grace as if the whole was a lottery, or something like it. *A real believing prayer is by no means common.* This is probably the reason why such an immensity of prayer seems unanswered. Many men content themselves with a mere indeterminable hope, which can never carry heaven by storm as confidence does. Let us look into ourselves and see if we really have true and solid confidence in God. Many remain beginners all their lives, because they have not confidence in God.

I have said that in our position it is the only true worship. First of all, we are ignorant not only ignorant of much which we should like to know yet can do without knowing, but ignorant also of much which it deeply concerns us to know. What can we do but trust our ignorance to the light of God's wisdom? He knows what He wants of us; He knows what He intends to do with us; He knows the evil we might do, and the evil we shall do. We know hardly anything of these important questions. We must trust Him. Even if there were any risk in trusting Him, there is no help for it. We are also feeble. We have to cope with three tremendous worlds, the huge material planet, the crowded world of men, and the invisible world of spirit. Besides this, we have the management of our own selves at best a perilous and dubious affair. Our means are so limited as to look absurd. Our strength is little more than infantine. What can we do better than trust our weakness to His stupendous power? Then, again, our unworthiness is more in excess than our weakness. It is hard to vilify our nature as it deserves, yet dangerous to vilify it at all. Self is deserving of our uttermost contempt, only that no contempt is safe. It merits our hearty, honest hatred; but we must trust God first before we can hate ourselves aright. It is only when we are sinking overhead in His mercy that our un-worthiness does not impair our confidence. Yet what can we do with the comparative infinity of our unworthiness but trust it to the absolute infinity of God's compassion? Our sins are in one sense indelible. They are objects of fear to us even after they are forgiven. They are not forgotten. We must hear of them again one day. We must be confronted with them. The nearest approach to getting rid of them is to trust them to God's justice. It is a fearful venture; but there is the Precious Blood. As to our eternity—an interest almost too big for creatures so little, an interest which we cannot think of without trembling He knows already what it will be; yet we must trust it to His silence. Thus it is that confidence meets the necessities of our position, while it comes nearest of all things to satisfying the requisitions of God's magnificence.

But what is this confidence? What is its nature? How do we define it? It is not a mere feeling: it is rather a faith. But it has something more than faith in it. It is a kind of sight. It adds to hope the character of assurance. It goes beyond a common habit of charity, and appears to have some distant affinity with confirmation in grace; and, however distant, such an affinity is incalculably precious. It is rather the result of our whole religion than the offspring of any one virtue. It makes us familiar with God; yet, rightly considered, it is rather a form of reverence than a form of familiarity. It is what comes of the fear of God when that fear is wholly a grace. It is the beauty of heavenly fear. It is also no less a form of humility. It is humility in its exact balance, not sinking into cowardice on the one hand, nor mounting into presumption on the other. Confidence is the "manliness of an humble soul." It is also the strength of love--not its effort, or its impulse, but its abiding, constitutional strength. It is love chastised, and therefore equable and steadfast. It is so eminently its nature to be practical that it can never remain only a sentiment, or a pathos, or an inward smoothing of the soul. It breaks out into action, as if it could not be kept in; and, like the bodily vigor of youth, it is often scarcely conscious of its own exertions. Moreover, it is the happiness of religion, that sunshine in which perseverance is comparatively easy, that light in which all the virtues combine properly and have ample room and fair play, the atmosphere in which delusion, discouragement, and indiscretion are to our relief least at their ease. It has also the same irresistible tendency to prayer which it has to action. It is almost prayer itself, that unintermitting prayer of which the gospel speaks, and which of all things commanded looks the most like an impossibility. But, more than this, it seems to make

direct prayer the necessary center of the soul. It is always gravitating to prayer. A soul possessed with this confidence feels an uneasiness, and has a sense of being held back, when it is not at prayer. No sooner is the pressure of distracting occupations removed than it almost insensibly glides into prayer. It has no vacant time, because its spare time is, as it were, naturally prayer. It does not so much strive to pray as it lapses into prayer. Last of all, although it is more congenial to some natural dispositions than to others, it is peculiarly a gift of God; and not a natural disposition; yet, more than most gifts, it has to be earned like wages. It is essentially a grace, yet no grace has more of the nature of an acquisition.

If this be so, how, then, is it to be acquired? We will see--remembering all the while that it is a grace, and not a pure acquisition, of which we are speaking. We might almost say that all the practices and experiences of the spiritual life concurred to form this confidence in our souls. It is true. Nevertheless there are certain things which have more to do with it than others; and we shall now enumerate some of these.

The thought of God is very broad. It is not so much a thought as a world of thought. It cannot be thought in one thought. Hence the importance of systematic and formal meditation on the Divine Perfections. *We have seen that our confidence in God depends greatly on our knowledge of God.* We must have made His character familiar in prayer, in order to ground and root our confidence. *Meditation on the Attributes of God is, therefore, one of the chief means of acquiring the grace of confidence.* To this we must join meditation on the mysteries of Jesus. Neither thought nor reading nor theology will ever adequately bring home to us the breadth of redeeming grace, or the depth of the unsearchable riches of the Incarnation. Is it not our own experience that the more we think, the harder salvation seems, while the more we pray, the easier it seems? In order to have confidence, we must know God. But this is not enough; we must know Him in Jesus Christ. It is only eternal life to know Him when we know also His Son whom He has sent.

All our spiritual exercises, of whatever nature they may be, are so many means of acquiring confidence in God. They all let us deeper down into Him. They all unfold more and more of the nature of grace and of the poverty of our own nature. They all bring experiences of Jesus in the soul; and each of these experiences is a new ground of confidence in Him. Our simple perseverance in anything good is a process of augmentation of our confidence. Outward temptations help us. They frighten us away from self-trust. They make us better acquainted with our possibilities of sin. They reveal to us in an alarming manner the vigor and the unweariedness of the spiritual powers which are arrayed against us. They lead us to try all methods of keeping right, and we exhaust them, and find that only confidence in God wears, endures, and succeeds. Inward trials lead to the same result, only still more swiftly and more infallibly. God's arms are more closely folded round us in interior trials than in the sensible sweetesses of His consoling visitations. A much-tried man is always a man of unbounded faith, and of a confidence in God which looks, to us of lower faith, superstitious in little things and presumptuous in great ones.

We also acquire confidence in God by exercising confidence. It produces itself, and multiplies itself while it strengthens itself. Direct prayer for the grace is likewise an obvious means of its increase. Examination of conscience, which burrows under self-trust and takes the ground away from under it, increases our confidence in God by the vivid manner in which it shows us the necessity of it, through the vision of our own nothingness and sin. Sacraments, especially carefully-prepared confessions, have a peculiar power to increase and reinforce this gift. The same may be said of spiritual sweetness, the tendency of which is to produce a holy languor, wherein self-trust is distasteful and we long to lie down and rest in God. "Stay me up with flowers; compass me about with apples; because I languish with love. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand shall embrace me." Such is the language of the Spouse in the Canticle. A special devotion to the Providence of God which seems to have possessed the souls of some of the modern saints as a scarcely-conscious protest against a false philosophy, is another means of acquiring confidence in God. Even temptations against the faith, which trouble it so terribly, leave an increase of it behind them when they go, like a legacy from an unkind relation. *But, above all, the habit of working for God only, of doing our good for Him, and caring little about its success, and of doing it secretly--which we instinctively do when we do it only for Him--is the royal road to confidence in*

Him. Here, you see, are a variety of means by which we can acquire great riches of this blessed and indispensable confidence.

Let us think a little of the practice of it. The constant profession of it must be a great part of prayer. It is so completely a part of the worship due to God, that we must profess it even when we do not sensibly feel it. It must be in us, if we believe. We must extend it to everything which happens to us. All the events of life, all the things of this outer world, must come under its influence. In truth, there is good reason for it, because, after all, human wisdom and worldly prudence are nearly as impotent in the common affairs of life as they are in our spiritual welfare. Is it not our experience that it is always God who does things for us, even those things which we seem to do most for ourselves? Much more, then, must all our interior life, with its mysterious phenomena and fluctuations, be brought under the sovereignty of this tranquillizing yet animating confidence. It must overflow in our hearts from God upon all His appointments, as our Blessed Lady, the sacraments, the blessings of the Church, the office of the priest, and the like. We must trust with a special trust all that belongs to God or looks like Him. Our trust must be incessant, universal, prudent, and bold. In divine things there is no prudence which is not bold. It must live and work in the dark as briskly as in the light. It must distrust itself. It must be gay, playing blithely with difficulties; for difficulties are the stones out of which all God's houses are built. Of a truth, our whole generosity with God is nothing more than the measure of our confidence in Him. To sum it up in one word-in the pursuit of sanctity confidence is progress.

Now, how does the matter stand with ourselves? We have been trying to get rid of some tiresome habit of venial sin. We resolve against it; yet, while we make our resolutions, we do not believe we shall ever be able to keep them. We accuse ourselves of it at confession, and make not only a distinct act of sorrow about it, but a distinct purpose against it, and yet we feel sure, down in our minds, that we shall bring the same self-accusation to confession again. So the habit clings. All this is because we are lacking in confidence. If, from confidence in God and not in self, we believed we should never commit the sin again, probably we should not commit it again. We have fallen for want of faith in grace. Let us take another case. We desire to form certain habits of devotion-it may be, the habit of particular examination of conscience. Now, no one can tell how burdensome this is, until he has tried it. It is a great restraint, and a continual one. Some considerable amount of mortification is often necessary in order to persevere in it under adverse circumstances. We give it up, as if the original taking of it upon ourselves had been an indiscretion. We give it up, and thereby forfeit untold graces, simply because we have not confidence in God. So it is with bodily mortifications. We abandon those we have begun, because we cannot believe we shall ever persevere in them. Or we exercise an infelicitous discretion, and shrink from committing ourselves to trifling austerities, whose grace would have been anything but trifling, simply because we are deficient in confidence in God. We thus alter our standing in heaven forever. Indeed, as I said before, all generosity with God depends upon confidence in Him. It is the same with our outward works of mercy when they are environed with difficulties. Saints made their way through impossibilities; we turn aside rather than attempt to brush a cobweb away. We turn out disappointingly under temptations, and in interior trials, for the same reason, we do perhaps a tenth of the work for souls which we might do. All this happens because of our insufficient confidence in God.

O that we could inspire each other with more confidence in grace as a certain aid and an unfailing foundation! Happy is he who makes one other man trust God more than he did before! He has done a great and influential work in creation. Happy we, if we know how to trust God as He should be trusted! A child with his mother is full of innocent, respectful liberties. He never doubts of gaining his end. He never anticipates a refusal till it actually comes, no matter how often it has come before. He was refused yesterday; so he feels sure today. If refused, he persists with the persuasions of a not disobedient love, and argues with a playful smile. When he is definitely refused, he goes up to her, and kisses her, and runs away as happy with his mother's affectionate will as if he had got what he wanted. So must we venture to be with our eternal Father.

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