

ILEANA RADU

7 MINUTES
in the Family



7 Minutes in the Family

Praises for this book



These brief reflections are little gems. They are, in essence, meditations on life as a Christian. Not just any life, but a life lived of service to others as a doctor and psychotherapist. And behind that, as a daughter, wife, and mother. As a doctor, it is a life of healing the living, comforting the dying, and hope; of the sanctity of living life well, and the sanctity of dying well. It is a life facing her own mortality, with more in the rear-view mirror than through the windscreen; a shared unavoidable reality!

Never far away is the person of the healer, with her personal struggles and dilemmas, described with Ileana's characteristic humanity. As she might have said, along with Irving Yalom, "We are all in this together".

I challenge you not to be moved by her story of the monument that finally after thirty-four years since the communist fall, is erected for the son who died at birth; to be moved by the witness of a couple, both with cancer, ministering to each other in their home; by how our limitations render miracles impossible, like the beggar at the pool of Bethesda in the New Testament; or the fig tree, carelessly planted, that gives three harvests in one year; then the broken sculpture mended, like Japanese kintsugi, and now unique and more beautiful than before.

These are words to read, ponder, and return to – many times.

— DR. HUGH JENKINS
London Institute of Psychiatry



Ileana shares her daily life - from her practice, her home and her garden - not just as a narration but as a lesson in life, hope and faith. Page after page, I followed her through the joy and sadness of shared life, conversation and encounters. It was like stepping into a library, where moving your hand across the shelves of volumes, you suddenly discover a secret door that takes you out of your daily existence straight into the presence of the Divine.

—ANDREEA LUNCAN

English Intervention Teacher at National Tutoring Programme



Reading the Bible is magic! 60 years after I first started reading the Bible, I am amazed about its relevance!

7 Minutes in the Family was a surprise to me. It is relevant in another way! Ileana's reflections, relating God's word to real life around her, has been so refreshing! Her medical eyes, artistic eyes, her reflections about God and well people, inspired me to see the world that God created, with more curiosity and fascination! And her spiritual insight has been refreshing to me. Being a Norwegian, reading and getting insight into a Romanian believers' life with God, has been like taking vitamins! It has challenged me, surprised me, and been edifying!

— KAREN ELIZABETH – BERG
Navigators Mission, Norway

7 MINUTES *in the Family*

selections from Romanian printed edition

VOL. I:

Our Everyday Life

VOL. 2:

The time of life and God's time

ILEANA RADU



Scriptum®
Oradea

Published under the title
7 Minutes in the Family
by Ileana Radu

© 2023 Scriptum Publishing House®
General ISBN 978-606-031-155-3
Vol 1 ISBN 978-606-031-156-0
Vol 2 ISBN 978-606-031-157-7

str. Simion Barnutiu nr. 2, 410204 Oradea, Romania
Tel./Fax/Robot: +40259-457.428
E-mail: scriptum@scriptum.ro
Pagina web: WWW.SCRIPTUM.RO

Volume 1 The second edition in Romanian
Volume 2 The first edition in Romanian.

Unless otherwise noted,
Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, D. Cornilescu Version.

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Printed in E.U.

CONTENTS



Activism (volume 1)	11
Bearing Compasses (volume 2)	13
Being Light even when Dying (volume 2)	15
The Boastful Pride of Life and Our Daily Purpose (volume 2)	17
Defences of Clay and Comforting Sayings of Ashes (volume 2) ..	19
The Different Ways to Break (volume 1)	21
Edited Lives (volume 2)	23
Figs, Grapes and the Cross (volume 2)	26
Going up is hard, going down even harder (volume 2)	28
How and Why We Work	30
The Intermezzo... and the Samaritan (volume 1)	32
Irreversible isolation, possible connection (volume 2)	35
Lesson of the Curls (volume 2)	37
Love Squared, Square Root of love, or Simply Love (volume 2) ..	40
Miracles and Limitations (volume 1)	42
Motherhood in fire (volume 2)	44
New Normality (volume 2)	46
Noah and the Dove (volume 1)	48
Nurtured with the Bread of Sorrow (volume 1)	50
Our Days and the Lord's Days (volume 2)	52
The Risks of Amnesia (volume 2)	54
Words with Wings (volume 2)	56



*I dedicate this book to my children,
my children's children
and my relatives
scattered around the world*



ACTIVISM



Activism – our daily disease. From what I see, not only around me but also inside me, I’ve started thinking that activism can be this - a sort of disease and also an anesthetic. We run, we are pulled apart in a centrifugal motion by our full-up diaries and “to do” lists day after day. We reach the end of the day, month or year and, God forbid, we may even reach the end of our lives, only to realize that it’s no big deal at all to be, purely and simply, just an activist.

Activism came to my mind as my daily reading today was from Psalm 147 which says that his pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of the warrior; the LORD DELIGHTS IN THOSE WHO FEAR HIM, who put their hope in his unfailing love.

Now, without claiming to be and hermeneutics scholar, I believe that the psalmist refers to the running, to the feet which can’t be still and eat away road after road. I don’t know what your days look like but my own days are sometimes so full that, ironically speaking (irony being a survival mechanism as it helps you not to take yourself too seriously), I could exhaust someone by just telling them what I’ve been doing. The older I get, the more I realize you have nothing to boast about but rather you have something to feel humble for when you think that someone else would tire just listening to all the things you’ve done. Therefore, going back to the psalm that says that his

pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of the warrior; I see that He rejoices in something which is actually almost the antithesis of activism. The Lord delights and loves those who fear him and put their hope in his unfailing love. To fear God and to hope in his unfailing love is at the opposite end of our running. This starts only when you realize that running is not enough, that no matter how **hard** or **well** or **fast** you run, you can't get yourself to where you should be. It is only then that you turn to God and you start to put your hope in his unfailing love, in the fact that He comes, fulfils and completes, sustains and blesses. You are only then on the path of God's rejoicing in who you are and what you do.

To set time aside, to be able to stop, to have the wisdom of setting boundaries is a life lesson we can learn from the Bible.

Why on earth do we run the way we run? Why on earth do we run the lengths we run? Sometimes we run from ourselves. Sometimes we run from some realities of our lives. Being so active, so prolific, so successful, so admired for our achievements, we can satisfy our need for significance and fulfilment. However, activism can be a disease, our daily disease. And, like any other disease, it can have a cure. But in order to realize you have this disease, you must learn to recognize its symptoms. Several of its symptoms are that you get to a point where you no longer enjoy what you do, you end up being exhausted, a squeezed-out lemon, you are irritable – you've got a very short fuse – your face says it all and people start avoiding your company. The treatment can start with very simple and ordinary measures. Simply stop. At least every now and then, set a limit for yourself. Rediscover yourself, start a conversation with yourself and, even better, start a conversation with God to see what He delights in.

BEARING COMPASSES



Having just returned from a trip, I discovered how keen I am on ports. Probably because I can see ships and yachts. When seeing a cruise ship, I asked myself if there was a whole town there or just a ship. I love sailing vessels and high-speed ones. Now I can only see them in paintings. However, having designated directions when travelling implies bearing compasses.

I find it amusing that nobody visiting big cities does it without using GPS or Waze. Even the ones asking for directions to my office receive the recommendation to use GPS. We have become so dependent on electronic compasses! I also have some funny stories to tell connected to them. For instance, once the GPS kept repeating *Turn right!* ending up in a corn field eventually.

I consider compasses as an instrument that provides orientation. In order to navigate, you need a steering wheel. I tenderly recall the poor disciples being so frightened while Jesus was having a nap at the wheel and huge waves were raging around them. I'm wondering why they couldn't unwind knowing that their Teacher was sleeping at the wheel? The sails are important, and the wind too, since it is what you need in order to use them. The mast of the vessel is also needed, as structure line. When the storm was getting closer, the sails had to be tightened, and only the mast was needed to face it. All navigations

require compasses, in order to know the direction, you are heading. The map doesn't represent the territory, according to Korzybski's axiom.

You may have a map and think it represents your history. Especially in the personal marketing area, questions like 'What have you done for the last 5 years?' or 'What are you going to do the next 5 years?' are quite common. People like us, having lived under communism, cannot stand these kinds of questions, since they remind us of the well-known paradigm of 'the five-year plan'. However, this characteristic of optimization and personal marketing does exist, namely to plan the graduation from high-school, university, masters, PhD, and so on. Whether after all these educational achievements there is still room for getting married and having children, and your children having their own children reaching studentship, depends on the map we are striving to conceive for the sake of our own history.

It is important to know your starting point and what destinations you want to reach, and in order to do this you are in need of a compass. Especially during storms and seasons of confusion and ambiguity, what you need is the guidance provided by the revelations in Scripture. To be aware that you are a pilgrim, a passer-by in this world (although you may possess a three-story villa or live in rented accommodation). To know that there is an eschatological perspective of history which gives you hope, even if the war is raging so closely to your ears and a radioactive cloud may cover the whole of Europe soon. Only by possessing the special compass of scriptural revelations and navigating beyond the theories of conspiracy, being enlightened by these revelations from the Word of God for the history we are living in, are you able to start and complete your days differently.

Although this analogy may seem childish, compasses represent the revelation of the Scripture. You may wonder what the torn-down sails, the smashed mast or the uncontrollable steering wheel may stand for. Nevertheless, only when you have a compass in your possession, can you overcome such disorientation. Our navigation then seems to have a clearer course, regardless of the storms we may encounter on our journey, clearly knowing our direction towards the shore.

BEING LIGHT EVEN WHEN DYING



Use my messages to you from events I witness, inviting me to meditate on and build up something which can be passed on.

It's November and autumn is slowly taking over, being utterly astonishing, chromatically speaking. I'm gazing at two birch trees in front of my window bathed in light so wonderfully that I keep watching them and remind myself I have 2 birch trees and not two lights in front of my eyes. So much glow does it come out of their yellow and brown multitude of shades that I genuinely say, 'Look, my birch trees are glowing!' I wonder if you can lighten up while dying... Shouldn't I forbid sweeping their leaves (regardless of the desperation I bring to my family)? I haven't allowed them to sweep them and stepping on this autumn of leaves doesn't look negligent at all, but rather aesthetic. My birch trees are dying, and thus enter a different state and light. They help me remember what my friends tell me after attending funerals and talking about someone's leaving or someone else's self-introspection. They tell me how the children, the relatives were being searched themselves by the sermon at the funeral and I even heard statements saying that the prayers of the ones who died had been listened to, that God had shaken the ones attending the funeral.

Some trainings and courses I provide include certain modules in

which we discuss about death the way we manage mourning. There is an exercise a great therapist named Normal Powell performed during a conference. It consists of a series of quite difficult questions, such as ‘How do you think you will die?’, ‘How would you like your death to happen?’, ‘What’s your life legacy?’, ‘What would you like to be carved on your funeral stone?’. This is the type of exercise inviting you to have a stroll in a cemetery among funeral stones to read what is written on them. There is another question I dare to add, ‘What kind of death wouldn’t you like to die of?’

Speaking of myself, I concluded that I wouldn’t like to die in an accident. I’d like to be present at my death. I happened to go through an accident while I was sleeping. I entered a coma state directly and 24 hours later I miraculously woke up from it, having a completely clear mind. You cannot actually choose how to die, but if I did, this is how I would, being present, alert. I even pray to God to help me be aware of my dying time. And, like my birch trees, to be able to lighten up while I’m passing away. To offer a gift out of your death to the ones remaining. As a doctor, I consider that it’s a tremendous grace to stay besides some of your patients on their last journey. I have learned some things about the reality of eternity, too, regarding how real and touchable can the life beyond this one and eternity be. There are, obviously, tons of books about this matter. Death and life go together and if, when dying, you mention something about the Light, it is so priceless!

I cannot but imagine Christ on the cross. After uttering, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*, He has an intermezzo and talks to one of the thieves promising him, *Today you will join Me in heaven*. During those moments Christ was genuinely and paradoxically living both death and life intertwined. This promise had the temporal dimension of TODAY and the spatial dimension of the HEAVEN.

I’m gazing at my birch trees as much as I can and don’t cease from thinking what it is like to lighten up while dying little by little.

THE BOASTFUL PRIDE OF LIFE AND OUR DAILY PURPOSE



I'm thinking of what I call the *syndrome of the private room*. More exactly, when you sit in your own room what happens between you and God is of absolute discretion. There is exclusivity in your relationship with the Lord. This can be practiced in relation to other people, too. We see what the Scripture refers to about this matter and we also notice how daily the trumpets of boastful pride of life are blown away. Whatever is supposed to have remained private is shouted from rooftops. The Bible also tells us about Pharisees in their fine clothes who chose to sit in the most honourable places at different banquets. We can also notice the offering of the Pharisees, compared to that of the widow. These are just some examples regarding how tempting the boastful pride of life is.

We refer so much to our personal development, the optimization of our personality and coaching strategies, in order to become *the best of ourselves*. This is the philosophy of the world we live in and we observe this influence even in our mission field. You must promote your mission, in order to raise the funds you need.

Considering our scriptural role-model in Jesus Christ, He chose the foolish things of this earth. Twelve fishermen and a 'King', Jesus entering on a donkey into Jerusalem, turned our history upside down. Christ's foolishness proves to be wiser than the wisdom of the world.

Whenever we choose to build up on the philosophy of this world, we may pass the test of fire. The house built on rocks will prevail over all upcoming cataclysms. However, it is hard to go against the current. To make choices following Christ's model. It may appear that you lose at first, but in time everything changes into an immense eternal victory.

These days we are closely following the events in Ukraine. Geopolitically speaking, there are other explanations beyond this nation's heroism and core values. Nevertheless, the boastful pride of life can surpass our daily purpose, thus causing us to make unwise choices.

DEFENSES OF CLAY AND COMFORTING SAYINGS OF ASHES



This is a title-metaphor which doesn't actually belong to me, because I quote from the Book of Job and it is a conclusive analysis on what Job's friends were saying. When replying to his friends about himself, Job said, 'Your words are 'defenses of clay and comforting sayings of ashes', which basically means that the kind of help these 3 friends are providing to Job in his affliction is totally useless and worthless.

I found myself avoiding The Book of Job intentionally. I did it with what is called premonitory anxiety, which mainly means that I didn't read it for fear I may live something from Job's reality if doing so. I had been avoiding reading it while being pregnant and I even lost a baby at birth. During the same period of time, I avoided a book called *Affliction* by Edith Schaeffer, the wife of Francis

Schaeffer. This is a certain mechanism of coping, meaning a strategy of protecting yourself from something negative. During that period of time, I received lots of foreign literature, which I was literally devouring! I refused to read the mentioned books since I thought I would protect myself by refusing to equip myself for something that might happen. Nevertheless, once my baby died I did read Schaeffer's book through which I received a lot of comfort and insight regarding the affliction of my own and of my whole

family. I obviously ended up reading Job's book too, more than once, as a matter of fact.

What I would like to leave you with from the Book of Job is that the genuine essential aid for Job came during the times of silence on behalf of his friends. Not only did their presence, but also their silence help out. When starting to speak, they changed into apologists. They mentioned that actually Job deserved what was happening to him, and he should consider why God was punishing him so severely, since He never does something like this to the righteous ones! Their speeches may be considered patterns of philosophical thinking, each of them displaying a different mindset in their discourses.

Job declares that His Redeemer is alive and will come back to earth one more time. God Himself reveals Himself and makes justice to Job, because he was both the object and subject of some misunderstanding. There was a sort of divine bet illustrated there, a bet on history and Job himself.

The Book of Job and this kind of help makes me many times to ponder: what side of the mountain am I with my help? Do I happen to just display 'defenses of clay and comforting sayings of ashes' in critical situations or am I rather a comforting presence in someone's season of affliction and pain? What kind of discourse do I emanate? What about my own suffering?

Job's suffering was used as a pretext for analysing and revealing who God really is and what He does.

The world is full of defenses of clay and comforting sayings of ashes. Sometimes mere silence or someone's presence is healing, especially when springing out of love, care and loyalty or out of a fearful awareness that everything I do and say represent a discourse about God.

God doesn't need defenders; He can always defend Himself.

Being specially equipped when going through affliction may become a discourse about who God is and what He does.

THE DIFFERENT WAYS TO BREAK



Broken, not beaten. To be broken is to be torn, fractured, bruised. If you break a well vascularized or spongy bone, the healing process is longer and slower. As a doctor, I can't very well forget my knowledge of orthopedy, so of course I always think about when and how healing will happen.

In the context of neo-Protestant churches, there have been more than a few fractures. From blessed causes - and I'm not sarcastic when I say this. Something happens in our communities and we reach the point where a fracture can seem a solution. Sometimes what happens is not a fracture but a kind of transmutation, an amicable departure without any heavy music.

Fractures come in all shapes and forms and so do their cures.

My home is host to one of Liviu Mocan's works, a seed from his series of seeds. In a careless moment, this sculpture fell off the bookshelf. Surprisingly, despite being made of bronze, it broke. This led to a big telling off by my husband (who can't stand when something around the house breaks and always needs reminding that, in this world, entropy is a universal law).

The solution we found was to take it back to Liviu to glue it back together. It took about two years for the sculptor to find the time to repair my broken seed. The act of mending has made this work truly

unique because it now has a consolidated fracture. Its uniqueness is given by the fact that it now has something extra, something very different to all the others.

One of my psychotherapy professors has once said: “Her brokenness is her uniqueness”. Each of us is of course unique but this uniqueness also manifests itself through the ways in which we break and the ways in which we heal (even though this healing can be a long time coming).

The way you accept your brokenness and your healing can equip you with an extraordinary resource. Without undergoing this stage of acceptance, you can't turn the breaking and the healing into resources and are forever stuck in a stage of mourning. Questions starting in “why?” are not the best ones we can address to God. He knows why, when and, especially, how healing can take place.

The seed sitting on the windowsill provides a daily lesson to me. It's a space where I can interrogate my own breaking and fracturing and those of the people I meet. It seems that the march of history has led to more and more breaking. If only we could let the healing turn into a trumpet that proclaims something of the Creator's work and the way in which He heals us.

EDITED LIVES



Without any doubt you are familiar with the process of editing books. The first edition appears, then the 2nd one, a revised and improved one, followed by editions 3, 4, 5, provided it's a prestigious work. The number of editions becomes a criterium for the value of the book.

It happened to me, too, while getting ready to change *7 Minutes in the Family* from the oral broadcasted form to the written form, to enjoy both the encouragement I'd received from my listeners, but also certain corrections from some friends of mine. Therefore, I thought I should ask my mother-in-law for help (an absolutely remarkable lady, Mrs. Radu senior, a genuine talent regarding Romanian language. Whoever was tutored by her in Romanian grammar and literature gained a lot of fundamental knowledge for a lifetime). So, I was thinking what it would be like to transform the publishing of this personal project into a family achievement. I also included some drawings done by my friends and my children. When handing in the manuscripts to my mother-in-law, she became extremely annoyed. Since she's extremely gentle, she didn't ever tell me anything about it, but started asking around about my writing skills instead. I reckon she wanted to know how come my writing is not according to the basic rules of the Romanian syntax, morphology and grammar. At

the same time, she was wondering why I hadn't quoted from precise extracts of the Bible, including accurate references. So, this pious woman started adding them, as expected! In the end, I discovered that she had actually written another book!

Can you guess what I have decided in the end? Well, obviously, to publish my version, not hers!

It's both sweet and funny the fact that when I handed her my book with a special dedication and thanksgiving message, she asked me, 'But where is my work?'. I have never felt like explaining and being accountable for my decision.

However, I've learned something new out of it. Sometimes editing is possible, some other times, it isn't. Sometimes it crushes us, it sabotages the act of writing a book on your own. There could also be writers and co-writers. There could be more volumes with different writers. But editing a book can change it so much, that I end up being a different book.

Now, being already used to my parallels and analogies, when thinking of our own lives, our chapters, our seasons, what do we keep repeating, what do we correct, what do we edit?!

There is this term named *family script* in psycho-therapy, defining the mythology of our family, family values which become repetitive from one generation to another. Other times we see the opposite of the family script: never ever will we do what our parents have done. We can also encounter the replicative script: what the family you come from has done is what you do and most probably what your children will be doing. It is not in vain what the Scripture says that *parents have eaten sour grapes and their children's teeth are blunted*. We also have a totally different variant of script, a creative and transforming one, resembling the process of editing. The 2nd edition can be better than the first one. Especially if it's been improved, revised, proof-read in detail. This is what happens with our lives too. Peter himself was a certain man before he met Christ and became a totally different one afterwards. He became another type of man after the rooster crowed 3 times and he wept bitterly. Furthermore, he became another sort of man after Jesus' resurrection and another man in John 21, after the dialogue on the Sea of Tiberias.

Considering my book, very close friends and loyal readers told me, 'Ileana, let's have a second edition.' I replied, 'Meekly I regard the mumbo-jumbo from the 1st edition and I'll strive to publish the 2nd edition including the 2nd volume, focusing on different qualities.' The core message remains and this is all that matters. The peel is just a peel.



FIGS, GRAPES AND THE CROSS

As you may have already realized, I come before you with an image, a story, a narration, something that has happened in our lives. There are things which we can either take heed of or pass by without a second thought, or learning anything from them.

I'm looking out of the window and I can see a fascinating scenery. But I had to look multiple times until I could really 'see' it. The grapes had to become ripe and change colour from greenish yellow to the unmistakably leaden one, as grapes turn into before the first frost. They were almost looking back at me, saying, 'Dear lady, just admire the way we're hanging as if on a string!' How wonderful God's creation is! And wonderful are the things surrounding us! I'm saying this on a hard day for me. The kind of day during which death lurks the streets and bad news is overwhelming us.

And after grapes, what do you think I'm gazing at? Figs, at their third harvest. Hardly had we imagined that three fig twigs planted without too much care, will change into an overwhelmingly large fig tree laden with fruit, which invite you to pick them over and over again.

Admiring this majestic fig tree, I felt like reading the biblical story of the fig tree again.

We are used to inviting our friends to sit with us outside under


the vine and from now on we'll be calling them to sit under the fig tree, too. To enjoy the view of the fig tree growing so fast, so large and never growing tired of bearing fruit!

I gather the figs were watching me before I started 'seeing' them and my reflections about the sweetness of life during a day during which the news is bad, death has a stroll on the streets, and my phone is full of digital screams for help. The figs are an invitation to perceive life as full of beauty and sweetness.

Apart from figs and vines, I have another image. A sort of restitution which I and my husband have offered to our family. Thirty-four years on, we eventually had a funeral monument done for our son who died at birth during the communist régime, when these kinds of ritual were impossible to have. This monument may have a name: *Tears under the Tear and under the Arch of the Divine*. It resembles a rain of tears under an immense tear which represents God's tear, since God was mourning him too. This tear was placed under an arch symbolizing God's protection. His protection is also over grapes, figs and the afflictions of our daily lives.



GOING UP IS HARD, GOING DOWN EVEN HARDER



This is another long title in which I've tried rephrasing what old age is like. Reading Ecclesiastes 12, I found it to be a profile or self portrait of old age. An age when you are afraid of your own shadow, telling your days to end whilst being afraid they will end indeed. The passage is fully accurate for the time when you near the other end of life's journey. Going up is easier, as you look towards the summit. You have an aim and a reason to be. No matter how hard it is, you know your direction of travel. Just like apostle Paul says, you have your eyes on your reward, you don't go punching the wind but you run towards your goal, knowing you want to receive the heavenly reward.

Even if going up you can get bruised, pant with the effort of the climb, fall on your knees at times, you can look towards your destination and keep running. However, once you've reached the top, going down is unavoidable. Old age is like going down.

The Bible says the strong live up to 70 years of age. Those who live to be over 70 are very strong indeed. What can we say then about those who live to be over 90? What can we say of those over 60 – 70 years of age who have compiled catalogues of complaints about everything that no longer works and everything that isn't as it used to be?

Going down is difficult even after a literal mountain climb. When

you descend the mountain, you can fall down and roll over, you can get hurt or be hit by falling stones. The descent has its own risks.

I've once heard a reportage about a glorious ascent on Mount Everest. However, coming down, they were caught in a snow storm and buried under. The accomplished climbers did not live to enjoy their reward in this world.

How do we finish? I wonder. After we climbed to the top (sometimes taking tree steps forwards, two steps backwards, a climb, a fall) what is our descent like? Some of these descents make me sad. I can see how things that were left unresolved during life's summit, have now become bitter, sharper and more painful. I have seen that a divorce can happen after 25 years of marriage. I have seen that after financial glory, the end of a career can bring bankruptcy. During family life, things that have been left unresolved can fester, bringing bitterness, sadness and a kind of yeast of life that stuck to the bottom of our cups.

I remember King David in his old age. Even then he made very wise decisions. Solomon's mother looked after things, ensuring all his political promises were turned into historical realities. His courtiers had the idea of bringing him a virgin to keep him warm (a treatment he did not avail himself of). Still, I assume his old age and his descent were pretty difficult for a king.

I wonder what Moses' old age was like. Moses, the one buried by the Lord himself, hidden. The Lord hid him, protected him from the glory the Israelites would have heaped on him. I then looked at Jacob's old age, when Joseph brought his two sons to him so he could bless them. Jacob crossed his arms, inverting the blessing despite his son's Joseph protestations. This is how Jacob followed into the footsteps of the one before him. As he was holding his brother's knee while they were being born and the blessing did not come in chronological order.

The ascent and the descent are directions of travel for each one of us, one way or another. Those of you who are like me, closer to your descents, please take the time to engage in this exercise. Ask yourselves: "How would I like to die?", "How would I not like to die?", "What funeral would I like?", "What would I like people to say about me, when both my ascent and my descent are over?"



HOW AND WHY WE WORK

pity you if resembling me and also have 3 organizers on the table! I believe we must ask ourselves this humble question from the title and have this kind of dialogue with ourselves.

One of our traditional sayings' states that laziness is a grand lady. When the ones from my house or my office are not obedient and don't strive too much in their tasks, I have a gentle, yet mischievous line and tell them that there's a lion wandering freely on the streets, as in the Book of Proverbs.

Some pious people from my proximity reply with Psalm 127 and tell me that God gives us our daily bread in our sleep, and then I reply back that it is true, but He doesn't put it under our pillow.

We're oscillating between extremes, which can be dangerous.

I remember when, in my youth, being a doctor and a mother of four little ones, my very kind and pious friends were preaching on me, saying that I had chosen 2 curses for my life: painfully giving birth to children and raising them the way I could, followed by my extremely demanding profession. My defense was that my vocation is a missionary one.

I was beside a dear colleague of mine, a genius surgeon in malformative surgery, in his last months of fighting with cancer. There was a time when he believed God would heal him, after which

he started considering the alternative of passing away. He asked me once. 'Ileana, but what am I going to do there? What can I do in heaven if all I'm specialized in is malformative surgery?' 'Maybe St. Peter will send me to mow the field (He was a 'Moț' too, meaning an inhabitant of the Apuseni Mountains, and during his studentship he would make some pocket money out of mowing the fields).

I don't actually know, but I believe there is a sort of continuity between our lifetime on earth and what the Lord has in store for us in eternity.

You may have heard some lines such as, 'What, to work only for 1500-2000 lei?' But if you don't get employed for this salary, where will you get your money from? From parents, most surely. Maybe it wouldn't be such a bad idea to go and work even for such a low income. Other people consider the dynamics of cryptocurrency instead. You have no idea how much money you can make if you are smart, financially educated and know the market! We also encounter the philosophy of the hippy generation, having well-positioned parents, 'Love above war!', a generation wondering about the worth of all this strife for money.


We'd better return to the Scriptures, although it may be confusing. You can notice that the ones coming to work at 11:00, having not endured the heat of the day, received the same reward as those who started working early in the morning. How does God actually decide upon payment? He ultimately ponders *what* we do and *why* we do it.

Work can become existential anaesthetic. You don't know how to handle yourself, so you go to work. Why would you spend time with your wife and children when you can spend long hours at work? Even more noble it seems when working as a missionary. You are managing 5 churches and so many impactful things to do! How come both your wife and children don't understand the calling of the Lord for your life?


Everything we do should be an act of worship towards our Creator, the One who conceived us in His image, in His liking.

A decorative illustration on the left side of the page, featuring a stylized plant with a large, multi-petaled flower at the top, a long, flowing stem, and several smaller leaves and buds along the way. The style is elegant and artistic.


THE INTERMEZZO... AND THE SAMARITAN

A small, simple illustration of a leaf, positioned to the left of the first paragraph.

Whatever does she mean by this?” you might ask. “What’s she going to talk about today?”

A small, simple illustration of a leaf, positioned to the left of the second paragraph.

The intermezzo represents a space which is more often than not contained in a musical piece between two important parts. To make it simpler (as I’ve been happy to discover my listeners come from all walks of life) let me add the Samaritan to my title.

A small, simple illustration of a leaf, positioned to the left of the third paragraph.

It must be said that the Samaritan, who took pity on the fallen man who was in obvious distress, was someone who had a lot of things to do. The priest, as well, had a lot of things to do. And finding – on the road, just in front of you – a fallen man who has been robbed is, no doubt, an obstacle to going about your important business. The priest had a mission, he had a ministry, he had activities worthy to be spelled in capital letters. He just didn’t have the time to see to someone who’d been robbed – and who had probably deserved his fate.

The Levite passed by, as well. The Levite, too had important things to do, let’s not forget he was helping God’s work as well, he had God’s things and thoughts in mind, he was engaged in spiritual, high-level preoccupations. He just couldn’t think of someone who’d been robbed and was now lying on the road.

Unlike them, the Samaritan (from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 10),

who also had things to do and who didn't enjoy the best reputation in the cultural and geographical context of the time, stopped to do that *intermezzo*. Samaria wasn't a place of high repute; the Samaritans were not held in high regard. The woman at the well was a Samaritan and the only Leper (out of 10) who returned to Jesus to thank him for his healing was also a Samaritan. This Samaritan who had things to do met something serious, dramatic and consequential – a man who had been robbed. He lifted him, he took care of him, he took him to an inn and then he carried on with what he had to do. I understand it to be so because he said that he would pay the additional costs (and very probably there were indeed additional costs) on his return from his journey.

The Samaritan had things to do as well – they could have been less important or spiritual to some – but not to him. However, while he was on his way towards accomplishing his things, he stopped for the *intermezzo*. In doing so, he did something very serious, something that can inspire and serve as an example.

I believe that I myself have important business to attend to every day. Every day I have a lot of things to do and they are all very significant (especially to me). At the end of each day, all of these things I do give me a sort of self-satisfaction, a self-enchancement about the good things I've achieved. It's the Samaritan's lesson that I should stop to do an *intermezzo* – something that's neither in my diary, nor in my nature. Just stop and do that thing. Because maybe that thing is exactly what God calls me to do, exactly what He lays before me and maybe that thing is a test that will reveal my understanding of my mission and my gifts.

Such an *intermezzo* is a kind of check-up if you have indeed heard the voice of the Lord, if you have indeed listened to it. This voice could have been just a gentle whisper. You might have expected thunder and lightning but there was a whisper instead. It came by you but you didn't hear it. Were you awake, were you attuned to him so that you didn't just ignore something that you were meant to do? Were you aware of him so that you didn't neglect that *intermezzo* between diaries, projects, people and very important things on your agenda? Were you as the Samaritan, the only one who did what God

meant him to do? The intermezzo can give your life, your faith, your choices, truth and harmony. It can add God's music to your words, turning your life into a genuine symphony.

IRREVERSIBLE ISOLATION, POSSIBLE CONNECTION



I believe this is a very suitable title for nowadays. I don't know if it has happened to you but some families are experiencing what we may call „irreversible isolation”. If we isolate ourselves because of a disease and are quarantined, this isolation may become irreversible. It is something we are not used to talking about, something we avoid even thinking about in the hope it will never happen to us. But death roams the streets and has become part of our lives' landscapes. No matter if it happens sooner or later, timely or untimely, the Creator knows its timing.

However, when this irreversible isolation happens, we stop seeing those we love, those we need. This isolation may be surprising, sudden or even absurd. In these situations, it would be therapeutic for us to think that connection is still possible. There is a connection beyond the separation of death – which is revealed in the Scripture to be just a threshold. Eternity is a reality we can enter (so help us God!). Having some of our own already in this eternity represents a bridge for us who are still struggling, hanging on to hope and fighting on.

I had the idea to speak about this possible connection because in my profession, especially these days, I encounter irreversible realities. Some of my patients have passed away. I knew some of them would. As a doctor, one can see the signs announcing that the end

is near. However, in some cases, the separation has come suddenly, surprisingly, unexpectedly. This experience is almost a privilege. Being close to people who are on eternity's threshold, you can learn and experience realities you wouldn't encounter in any other situation.

The Lord has recently granted me such an experience. I was sitting with a patient who I knew would be leaving us (though you can never be sure of this). She had a vitality, a strength, a sense of humour, a light that firmly set her on the side of life. She told me and her carer off for only feeding her boiled vegetables when her freezer was full of veal and lamb. We had a right laugh! She told us off for only giving her a tiny bit of coffee. She was amusing in these protestations which proclaimed how alive she was even whilst fighting a serious pathology. I remembered a cliché which I want to share with you. The last time I saw her, I remembered her scolding's and I told her: „If we get to the other side of this together, we'll have a big meal in the garden, we'll devour both the veal and the lamb just like we did in the good old days. However, if we don't manage this, we'll do all we can to eat together at that table, you know which one!" She smiled. Her face was so full of light that I thought she could really see that table. What if that table was much closer to her than the table in her garden?

This connection we shared on her last day on Earth is a fantastic lesson to me. It teaches me what it means to create connections and links and to build together as long as we are still here and with those who are part of the Hebrew 11 procession. The Protestant do not pray for the dead. However, I believe it is possible to build a connection that transcends this irreversible isolation.

THE LESSON OF THE CURLS



The title is pretty funny, but it draws its roots from a family story. Our youngest daughter is super-curly, taking after her dad! Regarding curly hair, we have a lot of funny stories in our family.

Her father used to tease her by telling her that she has ‘ the wrong type of’ hair. He has it too! However, nowadays the hairstylists would clearly contradict us, so many customers coming to have curls made, the large ones being more trendy.

This story brings us back to the times when our daughters were learning to go to school and come back home by themselves. The journey was pretty long from Lipovei Area to the Union Square, although you don’t need to change trolleys. I had already instructed them to follow ‘the prayed route, meaning that on that route they used to go with us, their parents ,who were praying on the way, so they would be safe. It was the period of their childhood when 3 of our daughters were at-tending Lenau School in 2 shifts. It was a constant concern to leave on time, to arrive on time, and most importantly, to reach home on time. One day the youngest one, the super-curly one, was be-ing quite late. I started panicking when seeing she hadn’t arrived home yet. 1:00p.m. had passed, then 1:30p.m. and that was the time when children were wearing their key from home around their

neck, instead of their mobile phones. My anxiety increasing more and more, I left home, heading towards the bus stop, and we eventually met half-way, my daughter walking with big tears rolling on her cheeks. After her taking a deep breath and swallowing her tears, I asked her what was the matter. She told me that she hadn't followed the 'route prayed on', meaning that she got on the wrong trolley that took her in a totally different part of the city. She obviously panicked when real-ising it and started crying. A kind stranger offered his help and took her back to the station she had got on the wrong trolley, so she could get off there and take the right one. That's how she got back on the 'prayed on' route.

Sometimes parents pour out their anxiety and anger on their children: 'Why weren't you more careful? Why didn't you open your eyes widely, to see what number the trolley is, since you know how to read figures?' As a caring mother, I could have had this kind of a discourse. I don't really know why I didn't, since I'm not such a wise mom (which I hope I have become meanwhile). What I told her was the following, 'Look, Laura, things like this may happen. You may get on the wrong bus or trolley. It may happen. Maybe because you're easily distracted and don't pay attention too much. If it ever happens again and you start panicking, what you should do is to take one curly hair and pull it down (and I did show her how to take it, swirl it and pull it down). So, this became the lesson of the curls. In order to calm down and think that there's always a way out. There's always a solution to follow, just don't lose your temper.

This lesson of the curls has become a family lesson, but it may be extended to a universal lesson. We may replace the curls with something more solemn, like Liviu Mocan's Anchor, which, paradoxically, is not thrown down in water, but thrown up to the sky. The need of finding our anchor, in regaining our peace, our balance, our capacity of functioning during crises is absolutely real. Well-known theoreticians discuss about it.

Esther Perel says that structure is a balm in times of chaos (times like the ones during the pandemic or the war being so close to us!) Having a structure, being able to predict is like a balm for us.

Daniel Siegel talks about the "milk of human kindness". How can

we be as Christ teaches us to be? In the end, love conquers all, love is above everything. Being able to reach this state in which to manifest love, kindness, even if we value the Truth, but we utter it in love, in a way that wouldn't inflict the others, in a way that would refrain you from throwing your brother or sister against the wall, even if they may deserve it. The anchors we possess are found in the revelations of the Scripture.

In my family, starting from the lesson of the curls, we ended up declaring 'I know how to manage critical situations.' It did prove to be extremely real and something we are very proud of, as parents.

Why don't you think today if you can make an anchor of what you've read here, thus living the rest of your day, of your life, with that inner joy and peace that transcend all understanding?



LOVE SQUARED, SQUARE ROOT OF LOVE, OR SIMPLY LOVE

For such a complicated title, I may be reprimanded and I willingly accept. I was considering this topic since what I have noticed more and more is that conversations in general, and phone conversations, in particular, end with “I love you” followed by such a diversity of endearments. Being a ridiculously solemn person, I find it quite annoying, to be honest. It feels like we cheapen such a love declaration, which doesn’t have to be uttered, but rather demonstrated.

Having finished reading the Epistle to Romans and revising that list of names and families provided by Paul, I thought how present were they in Paul’s daily life and ministry. So strongly does Paul underline this love bond which should be present within the Body of Christ! What I’d like to add is that our distinguishing characteristic in this world is ‘loving each other’, as the Saviour Himself declares. Love is an extraordinary force, moving the whole universe. The Songs of Solomon mention that ‘love is stronger than death’.

We should have our love squared or I don’t know what power calculated to, in order to cleanse it from all the cheapness of our modern life and implicitly, our modern vocabulary. A love relationship implies its constant gardening. Should you not garden the soil by planting, weeding and renewing your emotions, it will be devastated by weeds. If you are not careful enough to apply what the Apostle Paul

mentions in 1 Corinthians 13, you can't enjoy the fruit of love. What we are actually masters of is *découpage*, performing square root of love, simplifying and extracting the essence. As modern individuals, we label five minutes as 'quality time', since one hour is too much for our busy time schedules. We hide ourselves behind specific strategies, missing the essence. Love needs time to be preserved. Love needs sacrifice. Love is eminently sacrificial. You must give away something from your inner being, you must give up on something from you, to place the other one on a podium in your life, in order to exercise the authentic type of love.

Love simply is the one which has been demonstrated to us and, having the discipline and meekness to analyse it, it speaks to us day in and day out.



MIRACLES AND LIMITATIONS

Sometimes we seem extremely smart in limiting miracles by our personal constraints. As the crippled man from the Bethesda pool did, so do we. We are waiting for a miracle to happen, we desire it, we pray for it, but having our eyes fixed on the limitations. What are we waiting for? The stirring of waters... (this saying is so approved of...) We are waiting for our kind God to align the circumstances in such a way that a miracle can take place. Especially in impossible situations, in times our resources are overstretched, we are waiting for a miracle, for the waters to be stirred.

However, like the crippled man from the biblical story, we are more focused on our limitations. When talking to Jesus, the crippled man, waiting for the stirring of waters, said that there had been no one to look for the opportune moment and throw him in the pool immediately after the angel stirred the waters. How else could the miracle happen if there was no one who could closely watch the state of the waters and facilitate throwing him in? The answers of the Lord are very precise and right to the point, as they always are. *The question He is asking is if he wants to be healed. Simply, directly, straightforward: Do you need this miracle?*

Yes, Lord, but how can I be healed if no one throws me into the pool when the angel is stirring the waters?

I don't know if you are waiting for your miracles. I do, in many areas of my life and I can identify myself with the reaction of the crippled man, saying *Of course I want to get healed, of course I am waiting for a miracle*, followed by training myself to enumerate all the limitations preventing the miracle.

Almost outrageously, this miracle happens on a Sabbath day. Sometimes the way God intervenes in performing a miracle has this nuance of outrage. Something that hasn't been encountered before suddenly makes its way in our story. This may become a limitation too, since miracles are not performed in this manner, God doesn't intervene like this, and we find ourselves being extremely creative in limiting, and even denying, the miraculous by relying on our own experience and thus interjecting our limitations. God's grace is greater though, and able to surpass the limitations we impose. After all, whether the waters were stirred or not, whether he was assisted or not, the crippled man was healed.

What is our personal approach, where do we stand? On the side of limitations? Or on the side of the miraculous which we believe will happen?



MOTHERHOOD IN FIRE

What happens to me inspires me and makes me talkative and willing to share with the others whatever goes through my mind and heart.

It happened to me during an intense day, while 'riding seven horses', as I am used to saying, when a work of art made of wood and representing motherhood fell from one of my bookshelves. Through my office and the whole house, I have this kind of representations of motherhood. Most of them are either made of wood or ceramics. God forbid for the fragile ones to fall down! As the one referring to previously did take its fall, it almost broke into pieces. My husband is good at fixing things, since he cannot stand having them broken in the house. I was gazing at that piece of art lying on the floor and thinking he would trim it one way or another. Afterwards, I looked around and noticed that I was having more of them, so I thought I should leave the broken one there. I even took a picture of it, as the image was actually bearing deep significance. This incident was closely connected to a song I had just listened to (not in church), saying 'My palms are hurting me from so much wiping my tears!' Both these lyrics and the broken statue made me so anxious, that I considered throwing it in fire, eventually. We do have a beautiful fireplace in the yard, with logs nicely piled up, like the Austrians, so I thought

I would be throwing it there with the proximate occasion. What I actually did was hiding it instead, like a child who did something wrong, so my husband couldn't see it in the wood pile. We still haven't decided if we're going to burn this representation of motherhood yet.

Provided you're Romanian, you remember our saying 'I throw the fur cap on the ground', meaning we wrestle with life (by throwing it away to the ground).

I recall my father and his extraordinary way of bringing us up. He was often travelling with his huge barrels through the whole country as a genuine hard-working 'Moț' (nb. Inhabitant from the Apuseni Mountains of our country). When he fell short of money, he would spit in his wallet (which I still have as part of my dear belongings) and say, 'Now it's really high time I left.'

In my pondering whether I should throw motherhood in fire, I considered the Pentateuch. Moses simply fascinates me. I was wailing when reading how he tried to appease with God to show him the promised land, and from the top of the mountain, he was gazing at Canaan. The Lord told him that he wouldn't step into the country because... And we remember that God buried him and the archangel fought for his body. Moses did something abominable, namely he broke the stone tablets bearing God's handwriting. Moses, the meekest man in the world, threw the tablets away and smashed them.

If you ever find yourself throwing to the ground and smashing motherhood, sisterhood, mother-in-law-hood, daughter-in-law-hood and the enumeration can easily continue, you may find yourself legitimately passing through the season of throwing away, smashing, cutting, ... but it's definitely worth thinking that you must pay even a higher price at that very moment. Even if you throw away whatever is broken or torn apart, you should take some time to also throw it in the fire.



THE NEW NORMALITY

I pretty much refrain from using the terms ‘normal’/‘abnormal’ in my discussions with the patients. I rather use ‘natural’ instead. When entering the ‘normal’ category, there are some coordinates we can rarely find thoroughly.

Chronologically speaking, when considering the calendar of the past 2 years, we can say, ‘Thank God we got rid of the pandemic!’ Was Omicron the last widely spread variant? Are there going to be other pandemic waves following? We have perceived the pandemic geopolitically, apocalyptically, but also eschatologically, in accordance with clear references from the Scriptures regarding our times. Have we managed to learn our lessons about our frailty and about eternity? Death is having its strolls on the streets. Eternity has become proximity for many of us. Have we learned anything about solidarity? How to be supportive of each other? About courage? About heroism? What can we do to in order to fight wisely, to help each other and be overcomers? If we haven’t succeeded in learning all these lessons, history will repeat itself, because *repetition is the mother of learning*, as a well-known Latin proverb states (n.b. English variant: *Practice makes perfect.*). Without catastrophising things, I do believe there are some repetitive lessons some of us have already learned.

It has been said that the world won’t be the same after the pandemic.

What is going to come next, I wonder? What will the digitalisation bring to us, to our children and education? What will metaverses generate? What about virtual reality and artificial intelligence?

One of these mornings, reading that *He untied my mourning sackcloth* in Psalm 30, a saying from our Romanian literature came to my mind, *You've seen yourself with the sacks in the wagon*, meaning that you've reached your goals. What if these sacks of yours are full of mourning? What is the state of our wagon and our sacks in the new history we are living? Every single day I can see wagons full of tragedies, pain, affliction, trauma, pathology. Each family has its own sacks of mourning in its wagon and it carries them one way or another. However, the psalmist states that God untied his sackcloth and belted him up with joy!! (nb. Romanian translation). Therefore, there is healing in putting on a belt of joy. And accordingly, a heart-felt song is to follow, as the psalmist says: *My heart is not silent anymore*. Don't remain silent, since your sackcloth has been untied and the belt of joy has been put on. This seems to be a scenario we may not even dream about, but it is a different kind of reality we can enter.



NOAH AND THE DOVE

This is not a story for children. It is mainly about the flood and what happened next. Reading the Book of Genesis and the way God punished the earth by flooding it, but ensured the continuity of history through Noah and his ark, and the way his family was preserved together with each species on this planet, I find it quite difficult to imagine all this scenario. How was it possible for Noah to build his ark in the middle of malice, irony and cynicism, then embark and save everyone and everything God told him to bring on his boat?

No less fascinating and instructive seems to me the moment in which Noah explores the ceasing of the flood. So curious and educational do all these stages of his exploration seem to me! I reckon Noah and his dove should speak to my heart, as I am quite a quick and precipitous person, always on the move and not allowing myself to breathe in between life stages.

Do you remember how, being saved from the flood, when the horizon lit up, Noah sent a dove and after a while it returned and still nested in its safe spot, on the ark? Thus, Noah understood that the waters hadn't receded. He sent it again later on and the dove eventually turned back with an olive twig in its beak. Noah concluded that time that the waters had indeed receded and vegetation started

to grow. He sent the dove the third time and it didn't return to him. What is the conclusion? It seemed that they could descend from the ark on dry land and their lives could follow their course. So, Noah and his family took this message as it was, and acted accordingly.

This story with Noah and the dove speaks to me about the stages of exploration. It refers to the messages which we must listen to when crossing different life stages. I encourage you to be patient and understanding, to have the wisdom of deciphering the messages of each particular life stage without despairing, without precipitating things and catastrophizing, since there is a specific unfolding of stages we need to understand.

Release your dove, wait for it not to return and then get off your ark. Absence is an invitation to a new step.



NURTURED WITH THE BREAD OF SORROW

How is it to be nurtured with tears? It is written that sorrow can be changed into joy. The bread of sorrow is sometimes mentioned in the Book of Proverbs. It is also mentioned that through the sorrow on your face, the heart becomes better. And a quite difficult recommendation is to rather go in a mourning house than in a house of feasts, because in a mourning house you have a more real and lucid perspective upon life and there you may become wiser.

This summer I had the opportunity to visit a home where both the husband and his wife were struggling with cancer. For about 2 years, high level private hospitals had been their homes, living there for quite a long time. What remained imprinted on my retina was the moment I entered their home and he was brushing her hair. He was actually brushing her wig, since she had no more hair, due to chemotherapy and radiotherapy. It was such a unique visit during which I had the privilege of seeing how God was speaking to them about life, about themselves, about this world... These people are highly educated, with high positions (just mentioning Foreign Ministry would give you a clue). However, during this journey of sorrow God offered them some special gifts. We discussed together some intriguing topics like praying in tongues, what it is like to

bear this extraordinary gift and they were extremely encouraged when seeing me willing to discuss such matters. They confessed that the wife was praying in tongues extensively and he had the gift of interpreting the tongues. He was actually interpreting what the wife was praying. They told me extraordinary things about geopolitics and the war in Ukraine, for instance.


Paradoxically, it is generally accepted that prosperity can be barely connected with creativity. The great works of art don't seem to have been conceived out of prosperity and abundance, but rather out of suffering and pain. Through pain the post-traumatic growth named resilience is born. The only matrix for it are affliction and sorrow.

These thoughts bring us closer to the One who bore our suffering on the cross. In His righteousness reconciling His love for us, Christ bore our suffering, our sorrow. I find this in agreement with what Job stated (hoping to be able to see His Redeemer) that you will have forgotten your sorrow and recall them as some waters who have drained away.

If you sit at a table with the bread of sorrow in front of you, I encourage you to think that this is the only way you can grow within.



OUR DAYS AND THE LORD'S DAYS



All days belong to the Lord, but so easily can we forget this truth! We read it in the Bible that for the Lord 1000 years are like a day. How can this compression be even possible? How come this day, my day, may represent 1000 years in heaven's calendar? I've read that our years can pass by like a sound, so how can our lives be compressed in a duration of a sound?

So rarely do we consider *Cronos* next to *Kairos*! More exactly, I refer to putting the clock, the day, the years, everything that unfolds chronologically, next to that time representing significant events. *Kairos* represents the time God intervenes in a specific way and time has a different connotation. Our days can be different, particularly because they include *Kairos* moments.

We are living times at high speed. Everything is supposed to be fast, even instantaneous, one click away. But we are still complaining we fall short of time. Apparently, it has been astronomically proven that we have less than 24 hours a day. On the other hand, we can perceive opposite trends: from fast food to slow food; *home-made* (n.b. in Romanian we say *as at your mom's home*) doesn't refer only to the cooking style, but to the warm welcoming atmosphere of a home, and has changed into a trend.

May it be possible for us to anticipate prophetically what is going

to happen in matters of time and history? I remember reading the interrogation of the Lord regarding Sodom and Gomorra. *Shall I hide My plan from Abraham?* Is it truly possible to find out something about the future that is currently hidden? Not that I would recommend such a pursuit, but some anticipation and expectation are good for our soul. The Apostle Paul stated that he was fighting the good fight as if he was preparing for the Olympics. He knew what to expect and rewards were waiting for him. He had a goal, an ideal, he did know where he was going and what he was fighting for.

Thinking how Peter, Paul, Steven and other disciples ended up when finishing their race, we may rather build up different expectations. But wisdom and lucidity invite us to include this kind of reality, too. Anyhow, God is the Great Architect of history. All our days are actually His.

I confess I sometimes have days I wish I could escape. It's something foolish, actually, not to consider that even these wretched days are meant to be considered gifts. I hope I will remember this and be more pious next time I consider my days.



THE RISKS OF AMNESIA

We all hear how the Alzheimer (this disease of the elderly) is coming closer and closer to earlier generations. Our forgetfulness, the pressure we are working under, may cause our brain to play tricks on us. I comfort my patients complaining about memory losses with the help of what we calling psychotherapy as self-revelation. I share with them afterwards a funny story of mine about me not being able to find the office laptop, so I got so scared that it might have been stolen, that I actually called the police. Luckily, I have patients working in police and willing to come to my rescue. The laptop hadn't been lost, but my forgetfulness was self-protective. I was having an extremely difficult therapy session, so I previously told my assistant to take the laptop with her, but I simply forgot I did it, especially due to degree of difficulty of the therapy session. Before the police would show up to take our declarations (since I was thinking we had been robbed), my assistant entered the room, having the laptop with her.

The risks of amnesia may become more serious. We may become forgetful in our stressful days, or when we undergo some crisis and we are so fearful! We end up under the siege of reality! As soon as some hardship comes to an end, another one appears. As in Job's case from the Scriptures, you aren't even able to swallow your saliva,

that another affliction is waiting for you! Being forgetful can become extremely risky. Using another register, it unfolds from wandering in the desert to the Holocaust. Just think of this: you have exited Egypt, you walked through the divided Red Sea, you've encountered all the plagues in Egypt, you got free from slavery and making bricks, so how come you started craving for cucumbers and pots full of meat? How come such amnesia stroke you suddenly, so that only your taste memories were revitalised? And God did send them quails (but not the cucumbers).

The same way, the fascinating narrations about the Holocaust. I visited the Museum of the Holocaust and I spent half of the day there, with my husband. It represents a chapter of our history that we must never forget. And they did get what they had been warned they would if not obeying God's will, without being too cheap and superficial in my judgement.

Then Moses climbs the mountain and the people remaining at the bottom of it start making their own idol - a golden calf which they use in rituals and dances until Moses returns in their midst. How is it possible, I wonder? Then I turn my interrogation towards myself and say, 'How is it possible for me to be so forgetful? How much kindness, faithfulness, gentleness has God showed me along my whole life! How can I find myself thinking that it has come to an end? That there is no escape, no deliverance?! How is this possible when I do know that when entering blackout, you literally forget, the file has been erased! So, life-saving is it when this amnesia is temporary! When you have someone around you that could help you to do memory exercises, namely to look in your own history or to fetch your Scriptures. You may even consider what I'm telling you here about the risks of amnesia and it may get through your head, so help you God!



WORDS WITH WINGS

You shouldn't think that there are word birds just because words can have wings. Words with wings can be defined as this type of words that encourage flying, sustain flying, talk about flying or about a certain sort of flying. Maybe some of you have heard me answering the question, 'How have you been?' with 'Well, I'm a bit hit in one wing.' Or 'I'm a bit nose down.' Sometimes I quote my husband, saying 'Not so good as I show it.' *Being hit in one wing* is, obviously, a metaphor and draws our attention to the type of flying when being hit, which is pretty chaotic. How can you however still fly, having been hit in one wing? In such a situation, you dress up in such a way that you may hide what's happening on the inside and what you should do is to look for someone who possesses words with wings.

Words can bear wings if they have a particular ingredient, namely the Word from John 1, which, in fact, is the Truth, the embodiment of Jesus Christ.

We should be concerned with what we utter. In a recent conversation with a lady who, like me, is a mother of adult children, we were encouraging and advising each other about what we tell our children and whether it is always the case to

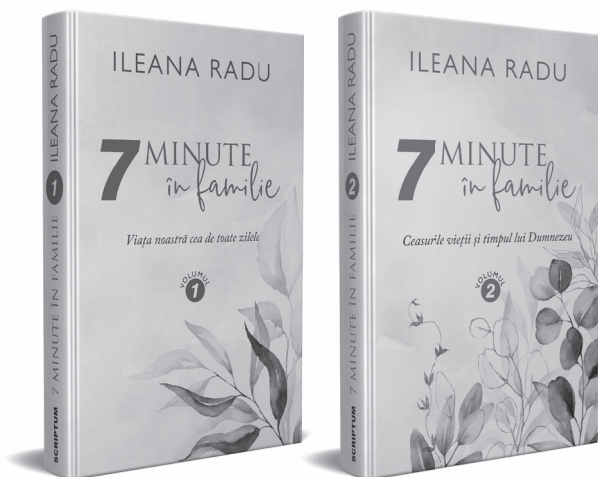


share with them certain things. If yes, what are we going to say? When exactly is the right time? In what manner? What would be the selection criterium of topics we can share?

I always quote my son who, while having a discussion with him as a result of his asking me a question, would say, 'mom, the short version'. The essence. The core truth.

When reading the gospels, I realise that every time that Jesus was speaking as someone with authority (His listeners were admitting). They also said, 'No one has spoken like this before.' Never had the pharisees and scribes spoken as Jesus did. I wonder how He was talking to the rabies in the synagogue when his parents had lost him?

Sometimes when talking to people who have their nose down, we don't quite know what to say. There are times when words aren't actually needed. Other times you may answer things you haven't been asked about. I recall the scene with the road to Emmaus. Jesus having departed from them; the disciples remained alone and were wondering how come they hadn't been able to recognise Jesus earlier. The 'stranger' was answering their naive questions by explaining the Scriptures and the prophesies to them. And they admitted their hearts were burning while He was talking. In fact, Jesus words were words with wings. We should learn to wing our words. We should learn to conjugate the verb 'to wing', thus speaking up words containing the Word as the core ingredient. The embodiment of the Word wings our words, inspiring and sustaining the flight of the ones around us.



7 MINUTES IN THE FAMILY IS THE KIND OF BOOK THAT TOUCHES YOUR MIND AND SOUL! IT BEARS YOUR HEART THROUGH ALL STATES OF MIND. IT SHOWS YOU WHAT YOU CANNOT SEE AT FIRST SIDE AND REMINDS YOU THAT EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON. IT IS PERHAPS THE MOST TOUCHING TEXT IN WHICH PSYCHOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY JOIN HANDS TO HELP YOU TRULY DISCOVER LIFE. PERSONALLY, I ENJOYED EVERY CHAPTER AND I RECOMMEND THESE BOOKS TO EVERYONE WHO INTENDS TO DISCOVER THE #POWEROFRELATIONSHIPS AND WHO BELIEVE THAT TOGETHER WE CAN BE BETTER!

—GÁSPÁR GYÖRGY,
*clinical psychologist and psychotherapist,
author of Revoluția iubirii and Suflete de sticlă*

MEDITATIONS FOR YOUR soul

What you keep in your hand and in front of your eyes is a flow in years, in the hours of life and in God's time. He is the Architect of history and the Creator in Whose image and likeness we were fashioned. How long we remain image and likeness is another story that I try to tell with humility and courage.

I travel in this world with my beloved man, our children and grandchildren - quiver full of arrows at the gates of the fortress - as a woman of this world, as a doctor and psychotherapist, encountering shipwrecks, but also enjoying rainbows; survive the seas in the storm, travelling with the One who commands the wind.



After all, we are traveling together if you read these volumes.

In this book with a wide and diverse palette of topics, I invite you to look at the world without prejudice, sometimes with a critical spirit, a good dose of humour, a mind purified by the Words of Scripture and a heart softened by the beauty of the details that we can capture and by which we can be delighted and healed.

SCRIPTUM®
space for thinking!
www.scriptum.ro



ISBN 978-606-031-156-0



9 786060 311560