

A frank talk with God

Jimmy Breslin

April 25, 2004

www.newsday.com/news/printedition/newyork/nyc-nybres25a3772477apr25,0,4806164.story

In the still-dark part of the morning, I went up to the coffee wagon on Columbus Avenue and, finding nobody on duty, I called out. There was no answer, but I caught some motion in the street alongside the cart.

The coffee man was on his hands and knees, his forehead touching the street. A Muslim prayer. A bus went past him, just passed him, maybe missing him by a foot.

"You'll get killed," I told him.

He waved a hand to get me away.

When he resumed selling coffee, he said, "Once you start a prayer, you can't stop."

"And you do this five times a day?"

"Yes. We're not like you. We believe that to get to heaven, you must die first. You people believe something different. You try never to die. You fight in Iraq against people who know they must die. You fight to live."

For a year now, our temporal authorities have tried to keep all signs of war dead out of our sight. Act like nobody dies. God is on our side and none of us die. Suddenly, pictures of many coffins with flags on them were published. The country reeled. The president's people said this was a terrible thing, using dead bodies to let the country see that the war is real. God is on our side. You cannot show pictures of the new dead. One of their cheap yes-men, publisher Rupert Murdoch, did not print the picture in his New York Post newspaper, nor allow it on his Fox television network. Thus committing the one most blatant fraud we have had in decades of news in America. Deny it if you can.

All this comes out of a religious crisis in this nation. We have a president who says he talks to God. When he was asked if he had gone to his father to discuss starting the invasion in Iraq, George Bush said, no, I talked to a higher father. What he was saying is that God personally told him it was all right to send our soldiers into Iraq and start the War of the Children.

I can't believe that Bush is so dumb that he thinks he actually talks to God.

When I am the only one I know of who talks to God.

I can prove that because God told me that no one else in America speaks to him directly.

I became involved in the religious crisis because I plan to run a religion to take over the Roman Catholic church that has failed so miserably. Let Bishop Breslin be your guide. He can talk to God. Not this cardinal in Rome running for pope, Francis Arinze, who wants to suffocate American temporal life by refusing Communion to any Catholic politician who does not oppose abortion, meaning John Kerry. Already, a past Arinze campaign speech at Georgetown had students leaving and a dean apologizing.

It shows how much I am needed. For I do not take these issues to some dim, musty Vatican.

I talk exclusively to the top of the sky.

"If I were to choose a people from these days of our tiny history, who would be the most favored?" I asked.

"I favor no country or group of people," he told me when all this started. "I am for all children, not just American whites.

"I have love for all my children."

"Still, just tell me one group that has somewhat of an edge. I mean, after American Catholics, that's what I am, as you know. We are the best. Aren't we the best?"

"No."

"How can that be? Catholics are the best because Catholics are against same-sex marriages."

"Not quite."

"Then who is really good?"

"Rwanda."

"With all respect, how can you say that? What do they mean? America never even sent any troops into Rwanda."

"They suffered."

"What do they have in Rwanda? Muslims."

"And Catholics."

"And they each pray to their God?"

"There is only one God," he said.

"I didn't think Muslims knew that. I thought they just take off their shoes and pray to a sand dune. You tell me that their God is as good as an American God."

"I am the same."

I had one thing I wanted to know right away. "In Iraq, there were five suicide bombings in one day. How can we possibly handle a populace that fights like that? Is that part of their religion? Do they pray and then go out and kill themselves?"

"They pray. But they have free will. There is a wisdom to this that is beyond your understanding now."

"So when we pray to bless us against them in a war, and they pray to you to bless them against us in a war, who wins? Who do you listen to?"

"Women praying for their children."

"But whose women?"

"All the women and children."

"Catholic and Muslim?"

"Everywhere. All of Palestine. All Arabs. All Jews. My son was a Jew. China."

"China? What do they do? They pray to a peaked roof. Do you ever hear them?"

"Yes."

"Then let me ask you something. What are we going to do in America? All our speeches end with 'God bless you, and God bless America.'"

"When you pray," he said, "best leave all pride out in a bare field."