

THE NEW NOVEL FROM EDWARD DE VIVO

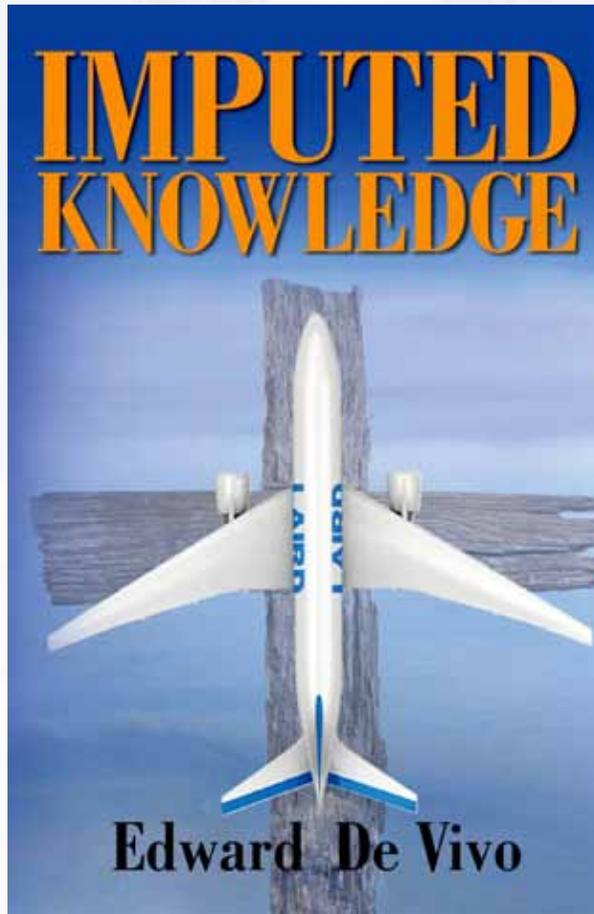
“A journey to find lost faith”

Where does innocent suffering come from? Does God use it to test our faith? Or is it so random that even an almighty being does not know when it will strike?

This is the question at the center of the personal conflict within Jude Priore, an aviation defense counsel who has just been dispatched to enter the cabin of a 767 that has been attacked on the tarmac of Islamabad International Airport. As Priore inventories the vestiges of a terrorist's footprint, the question mark hooking his soul tells him that reason has no answer for innocent suffering, and faith would not expose its mystical underside by entertaining so fundamental a question.

Priore's linear reasoning causes his logic to run interference with his faith and leads him to the question he does not want to ask: If God is all-knowing, then shouldn't He foresee and be able to stop incomprehensible affliction? Can omniscience be attributed—or “imputed”—to God? These questions take Priore back to the real message behind the story of the biblical Job. The key to Job's demise occurred when “The Satan”—a virtual prosecutor in God's celestial court—asked God whether Job would be so faithful if all of Job's riches were taken from him. The proposed question appeals to God, so He allows The Satan to “mark my servant Job,” setting upon Job a series of calamities. For Priore, God's very acceptance of The Satan's indecent proposal is what opened the fissure in man's belief system, well before any concept of the original sin of Eden was hoisted upon mankind. Perhaps, Priore reasons, the “original” sin was God allowing the temptation of God, not man, and this empowered evil to possess an unlimited right of passage into man's spiritual architecture.

The turbulence within Priore's shaken belief system converges with a storm of wariness that begins to emerge in the immediate



aftermath of the Islamabad hijacking, when the chief cabin crewmember, Teema Allaire, grabs Priore's arm and beseechingly says to him, “Find them, find them all!” Priore hears Teema's desperate cry reverberating in his mind even as he visits a special sanctuary, Sacred Heart Cathedral in Newark, New Jersey. There, not only is his waning faith cross-examined, but the stained-glass windows also reveal clues that raise certain suspicions about how the terrorist attack may have been staged with false airport security. What he can't see, however, is that he is sitting squarely in the cross hairs of a revenge plot against him, being accused of having known from the outset of the hijacking that highly touted security may have been a ruse. In an ironic twist of more than fate, while Priore “imputes” omniscience to God, the incendiary knowledge about the hijacking is imputed to him, leaving his soul undermined by skepticism, and his career stranded by perceptions rather than facts.

Reflecting upon Pope John Paul II's nomadic journey to attain impenetrable faith through the Holy Father's own personal suffering, Priore relives John Paul II's unlocking of the Third Secret of Fatima. The Secret, told to three children on May 13, 1917, was kept under seal by the Vatican until John Paul II revealed it after he was shot in St. Peter's Square on the Feast Day of Fatima on May 13, 1981. Through his own conviction in the Fatima message—a message that cannot be explained by Reason—Priore learns that logic cannot interpret innocent suffering and, as John Paul II had written, faith and reason must co-exist, each challenging the other, as the two wings on which the human spirit of all religions soars toward truth.

Imputed Knowledge is the chronicle of a “thinking” faith, a faith that challenges doubt, rather than avoids the difficult questions that reason simply cannot answer.

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