

William Somerset Maugham, was a British author, playwright, and novelist. He was allegedly the highest paid author during the 1930s. Growing up, he avoided the family law practice and instead became a doctor. His first novel in 1897 was so successful, that he abandoned medicine to write full-time.

During the First World War, he first served with the Red Cross as an ambulance driver, later working with the British Secret Intelligence Service. Following the war he traveled in India and Southeast Asia.

His last major novel, published in 1944, is titled *The Razor's Edge*. Its protagonist is a disillusioned war veteran who abandons his wealthy friends and lifestyle and travels first to Paris and then to India seeking wisdom and enlightenment.

The title of the book is taken from the epigraph which reads:

*The sharp edge of a razor is difficult to pass over;  
thus the wise say the path to Salvation is hard.*

In the first reading, we hear: “*Immense is the wisdom of the Lord.*”

And in the second reading, St. Paul continues this same theme, telling us that, as followers of Jesus Christ, we,

*speaking a wisdom to those who are mature,  
not a wisdom of this age, ...  
[but] God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, ...  
[and] for our glory.*

In the Gospel, Jesus takes the law as it was understood in His time, and raises the bar. The law, He tells us, is not so much about following external rules, but rather it is more about a change of heart ... an inner conversion.

At first glance, it may appear that Jesus is taking something that is already a difficult thing to do ... and goes on to make it even more difficult. Yet He is calling us to focus in on the details - “*the smallest part[s]*” ... in order to remind us that “*the Spirit scrutinizes everything,*” and we should live our lives in integrity - so that our outward actions are motivated by an inner drive ... motivated by God's love, and our own relationship with the Almighty.

Indeed, while the world and the pundits of this age would surely encourage us to abandon the difficult task of salvation at the behest of their own wise men ... we hear instead, in the first reading, the encouragement to “*trust in God*” so we might live.

Through Baptism, we become incorporated into the Divine Life of God ... and God “*abide[s] in [our] hearts*” ... so that we “*become [the] dwelling*” place of God ... provided that we remain “*righteous and true*”.

God’s in His wisdom “*understands [our] every deed*” and He “*has revealed to us through the Spirit*” the Way, the Truth, and the Life ... not in a book, but in the Person of His Son. And it is for this very reason that God has sent His Son Jesus Christ as our Redeemer ... our Savior.

Through Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross, we are “*cleanse[d] and renew[ed]*” so “*that we [might] be ... fashioned by [God’s] grace*” into the image of Jesus Christ.

Left to ourselves, we walk on pins and needles ... the razor’s edge ... trying to fulfill every jot and tittle ... by our own power. But we are called to live out our lives through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ.

It is through our relationship with God in Jesus Christ that we are transformed into the holy people of God ... and given the supernatural grace ... the supernatural strengths ... so that our righteousness can surpass our our own understanding and power ... and so that with God’s help, we can take our rightful place in the Kingdom of Heaven.

God’s wisdom surpasses our wisdom ... and His power surpasses our own power. Left to our own wisdom and strength, we fall short.

But with God, all things are possible.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for an openness to the graces God desires for us to receive at this Holy Mass. Let us renew our strength and receive anew the graces of our own Baptism ... through the graces we receive today ... in the Most Blessed Sacrament.