It’s happened to ALL OF US — cause it sure happens to me — that small nagging thought while you’re up some 30,000 feet in the air pretending that it’s as normal as can be. Well back in 1991 that small thought became a REALITY for passengers on board an Air Canada Boeing 767 as many were enjoying their ‘on-flight movie’ when — without any warning — the Jumbo jet’s MASSIVE ENGINES STOPPED: DEAD!!!

At first only those without headphones noticed anything. But soon enough, everyone knew that things weren’t right… The Captain came on the speaker system and announced that Flight 143 would now be making an Emergency Landing. 69 people on board: TRAPPED in an agonizingly slow, inescapable, DESCENT DOWN to earth.

Minutes, which seemed like hours, of HEAVY, DESPERATE SILENCE hung over everyone till FEAR GAVE WAY to screams of anxiety as the landing neared. All the latest technology in the world couldn’t do a thing to keep that jet in the air. ACTUALLY, it was precisely because of a failure in technology that things had gone all wrong. The digital fuel gauge was broken and so the Refueling Crew MATHEMATICALLY figured out what they thought was needed - but they confused pounds with kilograms and put in nowhere near enough fuel for the journey. Thankfully, no one was injured while making the Emergency Landing.

A multimillion dollar airplane loaded with Priceless Cargo, human lives, ALL HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION — but running out of fuel… That just about SUMS UP a lot of people today. It captures the plight of countless families right here in our own neighborhoods. Seems like it was just yesterday: everything was going great for so many people – OIL PRICES were stable, got the new family car, beautiful home, kids are getting their education, a good job – and then without any warning: WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF FUEL!!

WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH: be they financially, physically, or emotionally — we are forced to look inside of ourselves and take stock of our landing gear. Problem is, the majority of people out there find that at the center of their lives, where the LANDING GEAR OF FAITH is supposed to be, there is nothing but a LIVING EMPTINESS — no idea as to why they are even WHO THEY ARE - forced to face how they've been living for years on end with nothing outside of themselves to live for…

RIGHT NOW: many people in Alberta are staring at the reflection looking back at them in the mirror in the morning FORCING THEM to face the fact that they've been living for years on end with NOTHING outside of themselves to live for…

A few months ago I asked one of our cities Funeral Directors what it is that they're seeing most these days. I was shocked to hear: “Your generation: around the 40 to 50 years old – SUICIDE.” So I checked out the Canadian statistics and sure enough, the highest percentage of suicide rates going on in this province is out of my generation. I mean one would think that by the time your 40, you’d have the pattern of life on earth and the reason why you exist pretty much figured out. But that’s not the case at least in this country. Cause in Canada, there is an average of 10 successful suicides taking place every day with over 200 other attempts every day… And now that we’ve legalized suicide at the hands of doctors I guarantee you that statistics are about to change.

"Whoever loves me will keep my word — and my Father will love him — and WE WILL COME TO HIM AND MAKE OUR HOME WITH HIM. Whoever does not love me, does not keep my words…"

KEEPING the Son of God’s WORD is synonymous with “obeying Jesus’ word”. It means literally ‘CLINGING TO and HOLDING FAST for DEAR LIFE’ to His teachings in such a way that we put them into practice in our own lives. Because Obedience to the Savior bears dire consequences in this life and the moment when we leave this world.

Salvation offered to all through Christ is not some abstract idea like visualizing how many Kilograms of fuel a plane might need… The OFFER OF ETERNAL LIFE over ETERNAL DAMNATION is a concrete reality that must be faced by every living person.
Let's look at it FROM A DIFFERENT LIGHT: back during the days of **Gladiator Combat** in the Colosseum of Rome, people would decide the fate of certain gladiators once they were injured. They would hold out their thumbs in such fashion until they **Pronounced a Judgment.** Thumbs down meant: "**THIS GLADIATOR DIES.**" While thumbs up meant: "**THIS GLADIATOR LIVES!**

ETERNAL LIFE offered to us by means of Obeying God's Word which has come to us through his Son – **who once was dead and is now ALIVE FOREVER** – is that which we stare at every day within the Colosseum of our Interior Existence. And through the decisions we make in life – to obey or disobey God’s Word – **we are the ones who pronounce Judgment over ourselves:** THUMBS UP proclaims our allegiance and obedience to the Master so that the Father and the Son, by means of the Holy Spirit, may come and dwell within us and make our homes within our hearts, our lives, and our families – reminding us of the world that is to come while making us ACUTELY AWARE that **we are simply sojourners across this land.** That where we live on this planet is not home!!! We are here today – gone tomorrow…

THUMBS DOWN and Judgment is pronounced **over ourselves** when we disobey, ignore, cast aside, and flat-out could care less about the offer of Salvation made possible only through Christ.

This isn't some kind of MATH PROBLEM that takes up an entire chalkboard to figure out - **loving Jesus is not an Intellectual Exercise that we can visualize like 3+2 = 5.** No one is fooling anyone: **MUCH LESS GOD!!!**

> "Whoever **LOVES ME** will keep my word: I AM the bread that has come down from Heaven – *The bread that I will give is MY FLESH for the life of the world!* Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood live in me and I live in them… Just as I have life because of the Father **SO THE ONE WHO FEEDS ON ME HAS LIFE** because of me." (John 6:57)

How many Catholics throughout the world live their weekdays **longing for and thinking about the PEACE** that awaits their **Interior Colosseum of Combat** after they will have fed on the bread that comes to us from Heaven in the Holy Eucharist? Loving Jesus means keeping his Word and when it comes to the INCREDIBLE Gift he left us on the night before he died, it means **OBEYING HIS COMMAND and bringing the family to Church on Sundays,** the DAY OF THE RESURRECTION, to eat his flesh and drink his blood for as the Lamb of God reminds us ever so clearly:

> "**Those who don't eat my flesh, those who don't drink my blood: have no life within them…**"

Does that mean we won't have Challenges, Problems, Tragedies and Sufferings when we unite ourselves with our Lord in such a way that he comes to live within us through the Holy Eucharist?

Not at all… As a matter of fact, St. Rose of Lima once wrote: "**Apart from the cross, there is no ladder by which we may get to Heaven!**” What it does mean is that when suddenly, we start running out of fuel and we check for our **Landing Gear:** those who **OBEY OUR LORD'S FINAL COMMAND** before dying out of love for us, the **Landing Gear of Hope, of Trust, of Inspirations born to us through the hands of Angels will be there to SUSTAIN US** in such a way that we will land through the storm with both feet on the ground.

But without the Spirit of Our Blessed Lord LIVING and DWELLING in us – doing the Father’s work – **we can do nothing… OURS THIS DAY IS AN INVITATION** to keep this thought at the forefront of our minds on a daily basis because the times in which we live are disturbing; **to say the least…**

When all is said and done, **ONLY IN ETERNITY will the distinctions of real happiness versus eternal misery be made clear before all.** From that vantage point looking back, we will finally understand the truth that our Lord desires for all of us to grasp today: **the ONLY ADVANTAGE in life is to DIE WELL** – all other things are of very small importance…

> "Whoever loves me will keep my word – and my Father will love him – and **WE WILL COME TO HIM AND MAKE OUR HOME WITH HIM.** Whoever does not love me, does not keep my words.”

And the Word that you are hearing is not mine, but is from the Father **who sent me…**