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Charismatics

Articles of Spiritual Enlightenment for Christians

San Francisco *Charismatics*, the Halo on the Internet, at www.sfSpirit.com
Volume 9, Number 3 March 2002

Is Marriage Best?

By Bishop Michael Scott-Joynt

From many sides, people doubt that it is now wise, or kind, or even possible to support and to advocate marriage.

To do so in a classroom seems to discriminate against young people whose parents are not married, or who live with only one parent, or who worry that they may be homosexual. Politicians fear that if they speak

positively about marriage, they will invite media inquisition into their past, into their own marriage or the marriages of their colleagues. And when the Church speaks of marriage as among God's most precious gifts, the greatest blessings for a man and a woman, for their children and for all with whom they come into contact, even some Christians worry that we are showing ourselves hopelessly and alienatingly out of touch with today's culture.

For many people, unhappy experience of their own or



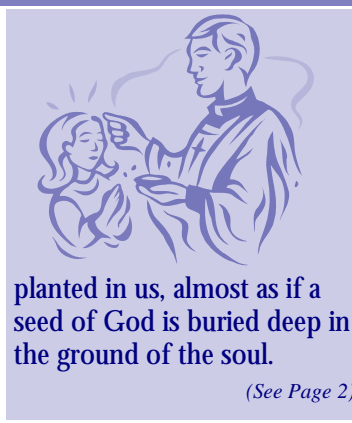
of others' marriages understandably makes it seem both impossible and irresponsible for anyone to commit themselves to another person for life. Such a commitment seems to promise more in the way of constraints and loss of independence than that of encouragement, delight and security.

Called To Be Holy by Rev. Vi to Perrone

In St. Paul's letter we hear him tell us how we are "called to be holy" (1 Cor 1:2). He states to the Church of the Corinthians, and consequently to each and every-

one of us that we are "called to be holy", too.

The time and place where we are given the opportunity to actually respond to the "Call to Holiness" is at our baptism, which St. Gregory called "God's most beautiful and magnificent gift." It is such a gift, because from the moment we are baptized, the Grace of Christ's Spirit is im-



planted in us, almost as if a seed of God is buried deep in the ground of the soul.

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None of us can avoid the powerful propaganda of every evening's television that depicts cohabitation, promiscuity, infidelity and adultery as not just normal but as mature, desirable, even inevitable—and certainly modern. On all sides there is a priority for choice and satisfaction, not acceptance and restraint; an impatience with anything that smacks of the past or of any

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First Friday Mass—
of the Sacred Heart
7:30 pm (Rosary 7:15)
March 1, 2002
St. John the Evangelist Church,
19 St. Mary's Avenue., (between Mission and San Jose Ave.), SF
Fr. Joe Landi
Principal Celebrant

Where Does Peace Begin? by Robert DeGrandis, S. S. J.

During the First World War, Europe was a political tinderbox. The armies of France, Britain, Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary began a war that would claim millions of lives. But during this war, a little-known miracle took place on Christmas Day, 1914. It was a miracle of human kindness and love.

In November of that year, Pope Benedict XV called for a cessation of hos-

tilities on Christ's birthday. Both sides said, "Impossible." What seemed impossible to those in high places is possible for ordinary soldiers, however, who often long for peace and home. The thousands of soldiers facing each other in the trenches that stretched from the Swiss border to the North Atlantic decided to call off the war themselves.

At sundown on Christmas Eve, the firing slowly died until every gun was silent. Ac-

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Our seed of Grace ought to be growing into a great tree—into a sturdy strong, faithful life full of Grace.

In light of the Baptismal Grace it is no wonder that Christ said: “The Kingdom of Heaven is within you,” for he was referring precisely to this seed of Grace implanted in the human soul. So, each and every one of us has the seed of Grace within us due to Baptism. Of course, this seed, like any seed, must be cultivated to grow and this is what the whole spiritual life tries to accomplish, for this seed is nurtured through a spiritual life that includes at the very least: self-denial, active good deeds done in Christ’s name, the practice of the theological virtues: faith, hope and love, as well as our following of the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.



All these, when practiced with the most important fostering of prayer and participation in the sacraments, become the tools and the water that is needed to cultivate the seed of Grace that grows within us.

Another Gospel story that helps bring our point home, is where Jesus uses the analogy of the “mustard seed”. So we can understand how this seed of Grace implanted in us at Baptism can grow in our lives. He says: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field which indeed, although is the least of all seeds, when grown is greater than the herbs, and becomes a great tree.”

The signs of growth and the fact of our being constantly sanctified by Christ’s Spirit are noticed as a “re-creation” of our whole being, when it begins to happen within us. Although cultivating the seed takes hard work, and is a process that entails dying and being reborn—dying and being reborn over and over again—with each step, painful as it is for the ego, we *can* be re-created.

A few weeks ago, I attended a friend’s Ordination to the Priesthood in Southern California. I want to share a bit of this man’s challenging journey with you. I met Matt about 12 years ago. He was in bad shape. When nearly finished with his seminary days, he abandoned this religious instruction. He had suffered from broken relationships, an unfocused career path and a nagging self-questioning of what he really wanted to do with his life. But he re-dedicated himself and went back to “work” through prayer, fasting, teaching high school, coaching and eventually decided to return and complete his seminary training. After an extremely successful deacon year, nurtured by the gentle re-planting of Grace’s seed, I proudly witnessed Matt’s ordination and saw before me a truly “re-created” person.

God’s dwelling within Matt was not merely mental. It was living and enlivening, for with the coming of Jesus Christ into the world, Matt had the opportunity to participate in the Grace of His Spirit ever anew. He was re-created as each and every one of us can be re-

created relative to our own lives, as well. For we possess a life greater than our own. It is Christ’s life that we can live, for it is

His Grace that sanctifies us and it is His Grace that makes us holy.

Our part is simply to cultivate the seed implanted into our souls at Baptism! That is how we respond to the call to holiness. That is how we become holy in the unique way God calls us to be holy. To nurture this precious seed of Grace within us that God has sown, we must come forward, as Matt did, with the renewed reverence and thanksgiving of all things holy.

—Father Vito Perrone is a Parochial Vicar at St. Cecilia Church, San Francisco.

The San Francisco Charismatics

(ISSN 1098-4046), on the web at sfSpirit.com is a non-profit, educational, monthly, faith publication of

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Johnnie Walker Reb

by Fr. Joe Landi, Editor



Joe Landi

It seems that most people have an opinion about what should happen to Johnnie Walker Reb, Marin County Taliban fighter, should he be found guilty of the charges brought against him. A recent Field Poll found that two-thirds of responses favoring “harsh” sentencing with 28% favoring the death penalty if he is found guilty. His attorney, James Brosnahan, in an apparent attempt to portray John Walker Lindh favorably, said recently, “Despite the government’s effort to

demonize him, he’s a nice young man. Like an awful lot of Americans you meet who are 20 years old, he’s got a sense of humor” (S.F. *Chronicle* 1/28/02). Thank you for sharing, James. Knowing that bit of trivia will be comforting to those 20-year old Americans who are still in Afghanistan fighting Johnnie Walker Reb’s buddies who apparently do not have a sense of humor.

The questions that many people are asking about Reb: 1.) “What caused a young man with a privileged upbringing to turn against his country?”

2.) “Was John Walker Lindh a Catholic?” The answers may well be found in looking at the parents who are supposed to be the first and best teachers of their children’s “upbringing”.

A recent article in the *Catalyst* (12/01), the Journal of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, objected to the *Houston Chronicle’s* (12/4/01) Catholic-bashing headline, “Catholic Teen Molded Into Bloodied Taliban Fighter” and went on to comment on his “middle-class Catholic parents”. Not So! The *Catalyst* sums up Reb’s Catholic background and points a finger at him as being, “A nominal Catholic brought up by irresponsible parents in a moral wasteland (who) turns his back on his religion, converts to another, and commits treason. So in the eyes of the media, he’s Catholic. But not to us.”

His father told the *S.F. Chroni-*

cle that he himself was “raised a Catholic,” suggesting he was no longer one.

Reb’s mother converted to Buddhism years ago (Sunday Telegraph, 12/12/01). According to *Time* magazine, a friend of his mother said of her that she “opened all doors for her kids” in contrast to “dragging her kids into

“Catholic Teen Molded Into Bloodied Taliban Fighter”

Catholicism like she’d been dragged into it” (*Time* 12/17/01).

First Marilyn Walker home-schooled Reb, then he went to Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School in Montgomery County, Maryland and graduated from an alternative high school where students are allowed to shape their own studies. In terms of formal religious training, he had none until he traveled to Pakistan to attend an Islamic school in the village of Bannu. The parents picked up the tab for that escapade in education and are now paying for his attorneys as the Reb has come home to roost.

Had his parents been nurtured in the faith they would have learned what the church teaches about their responsibility to hand on to their children a moral and spiritual education that will enable them to become responsible members of the community. The role of parents in such an education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute.

The church teaches that the right and the duty of parents to educate their children are “primordial” and

“inalienable.” (See CCC 1653,221,223) For parents, this may require an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery.

While there is no guaranteed perfect choice in many parenting decisions, there are some that are inherently wrong. Children need to know who’s in charge. The main wrong parents can commit is by not setting parameters in which children can discern the good and the evil, the truth and the lie.

Shelby Steele in the *Wall Street Journal* (12/10/01) called Reb’s upbringing a “fashionable relativism”. When we read that his mother trained him in Native American spirituality and Buddhism and encouraged him to dabble in Hinduism, her being “dragged” into Catholicism seems to pale by comparison of how she “drugged” her kid with relativism—a view that ethical truths depend on the individuals and groups holding them.

Newspaper columnists, talking heads, and even Phil Donohue have voiced an opinion on Reb and family. Donohue termed him “Johnnie Walker Red” saying, “he was raised by flower children and wound up a confused, filthy, hippie dippy treasonous lout.”

It may not take a village, but it certainly takes responsible parents to raise a child properly. So let us not jump on a bandwagon for a harsh sentence should John Walker Lindh be convicted. If Abdul Hamid, as he was known to his Taliban buddies, is convicted, there appears to be a Walker and a Lindh who should be charged as accessories for they trained and financed him.

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Is Marriage Best? (From Page 1)

kind of authority; and a rejection of any normative framework for behavior.

It is basic to Christian faith that marriage is a pattern that God has given in creation...so that the weakening of marriage has serious implications for the mutual belonging and care that is exercised within the community at large. The life-long commitment of a woman and a man in marriage, that "school of patience and forgiveness" mirrors not only for those married but for those around them the loving interaction and the persevering, suffering commitment that we believe to be characteristics of God.

It is basic to Christian faith that marriage is a pattern that God has given in creation.

There is a large body of research evidence that confirms these insights (which are not those of the Christian faith alone): evidence that marriage benefits the physical, psychological and emotional health and welfare of adults; evidence that marital breakdown and divorce has damaging effects on adults as well as on children; evidence that in general prior cohabitation does not make for lasting marriage; and as well as the costs to the people involved, there is the soaring cost to public expenditure of marital breakdown. Dr. Jonathan Sacks, a Chief Rabbi, has expressed the seriousness of our position by drawing an analogy with the effects of toxic emissions, or the destruction of rainforests: "by destabilizing marriage, and accepting casual sex, serial relationships, divorce



and single parenthood as norms, we are rapidly eroding the social structures on which humanity depends", he warns.

If this is true, as I believe it is; if supporting and educating people about marriage is at least as important (I should say that it is still more important) for the health of the nation as dissuading people from smoking or encouraging exercise and healthy eating; then it is simply negligent of politicians to refuse to support marriage in the face of so much evidence from research, as well as from the major faiths, of its unique value.

Married people, whatever their beliefs, need to be prepared to "talk up" their marriage; yet how often I hear "careless talk" that runs with the crowd and plays into the fashionable denigration of marriage, from people whom I know to be happily and fruitfully married and who seem unaware that they are undermining for others what is the central pillar of their own lives. It is vital that in the churches we discover the resources that exist in every parish for education and for encouragement

about marriage, and deploy them at every stage: in our schools, with young adults, for those who have made what today is often the brave decision to get married, and then with those who have been married for many years. And the last is as important as any other group; because we shall advocate marriage most effectively, if those of you that are married

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Book Reviews

Living a Gentle, Passionate Life by Robert Wicks
Stories, ideas and truths that show how to nourish the human spirit—our own and that of those we meet along life's journey.
(144 pp \$9.95 - The Paulist Press)

Sowing Justice, Reaping Peace by Michael Duffy
What happens when Catholic social teaching is taken to heart? A contemporary analysis of the roles played by individuals and groups in responding to major social conflicts over the past half-century.
(240 pp \$18.95 - Sheed & Ward Publishing)

The Psalms in Daily Life by John Rogerson. A leading Old Testament scholar offers a fresh translation of 41 of the Psalms, thereby bringing them to new life for the contemporary reader. Astonishingly appropriate in their own historical context as well as to the present day.. 104 pp \$10.95 - The Paulist Press

What Brings You to Life?: Awakening Woman's Spiritual Essence by Beverly Eanes, Ph.D., Lee J. Richmond, Ph.D. & Jean W. Link
Unlike many books on self discovery, this one is funny and joyous without sacrificing depth. Its whimsy sparkles from the very first page, and its short, fast-reading sections make it ideal for today's hectic lifestyle. A great hands-on tool for both individuals and members of a prayer group.
(192 pp \$14.95 - The Paulist Press)

Is this movie suitable for Children?



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love story

I wanna be loved like that!

That is what I often say to myself while gazing upon the big Hollywood screen of all the romantic movies! Boy meets girl, boy falls in love with girl, boy and girl get married, and all live happily ever after.

I know that's what so many of us dream and long for. But as Catholics-as believers in God for that matter-we need to trust! Trust that God knows what He is doing with our love lives. Trust that His timing, not ours, is the best timing. Trust that He is preparing that prince or princess for us every day and we have to continue to prepare ourselves as well.

I know that it's hard in this "sex-driven" world that we live in. We must not give in to the pressures that say, "I must have a boyfriend/girlfriend!"... "I have to go all the way or he won't like me anymore."... "I have to buy her these things or she won't be my girlfriend anymore!" The temptations of our human body sometimes feel so strong, that we

can't help but give in to them. But be



strong faithful soldiers!

Pray, pray and pray some more you faithful lovers! Ask your Guardian Angel to help you keep strong and pure. Ask our Blessed Mother to watch over you and your future spouse to keep you holy and chaste. Pray for God's will, maybe He even wants you to consider a religious vocation as a sister, brother or priest. Be open to His call for you! God will grant you the desires of your heart. God is hearing your prayers and will answer them in His time!

We need to remember that the Ultimate Lover loves us more than we can ever imagine. God loves you more than any human ever can, so you better learn how to accept and return His love, before you can even think about accepting and returning the love of a spouse.

The next time you catch yourself dreaming about your Hollywood Love Story, remember that your Heaven Love Story will win more Academy awards than this world can ever offer!

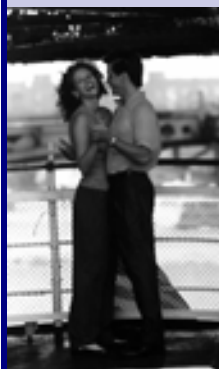
Dear Jenny-

I'm 15 years old and a virgin and I want to remain a virgin until I'm married. I've kissed and done some other things with my boyfriend, but I haven't done anything that I think is wrong. What are my limits?

-Remaining a Virgin

Your desire to want to remain a virgin until you are married is exactly what God wants for you. More and more teens are realizing it's the healthiest, wisest, and coolest way to go. Follow these guidelines to help you stay faithful to your goal:

1) Don't put yourself in tempting situations on a date. Choose places where you'll be around others.



2) Decide beforehand to keep things pure, and communicate that clearly to your date. If he violates that agreement, dump him! He's not respecting you-and you deserve better than that!

3) Avoid really passionate kissing and things that arouse sexual feelings. You don't stare at chocolate cake when you're on a diet; you

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You're On the Lookout For a Significant Other?

Everyone longs to have a deep soul relationship with another and to be loved thoroughly and exclusively.

But God says: "No, not until you are satisfied, fulfilled and content with being loved by Me alone, with giving yourself totally and unreservedly to Me, discovering that only in Me is your satisfaction to be found, will you be capable of the perfect human relationship that I have planned for you.

Stop planning, stop wishing, and allow Me to give you the most thrilling plan-one that you cannot imagine. I want you to

have the best. Please allow me to bring it to you.

You just keep watching Me, expecting the greatest things. Keep listening to what I tell you. Don't be anxious. Don't worry. Don't look at the things others have. Don't look at the things you think you want. Just keep looking at me, or you'll miss what I want to show you.

And then, when you're ready, I'll surprise you with a love far more wonderful than any you would dream of.

Until you are ready and until the one I

have for you is ready-until you are both satisfied exclusively with Me and the life I prepared for you-you won't be able to experience the love that exemplifies your relationship with Me, and this is the perfect love.

Psalm 37:4-5; Proverbs 3:5-6; James 4:15



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According to reports, it was a young British soldier who first sensed that a miracle had occurred. Standing guard at midnight in an isolated outpost, Peter Goudge heard the German troops singing "Silent Night, Holy Night." Goudge started singing, too. Before long, English and Irish troops began singing "O Come, All Ye Faithful." The singing continued until, all along the Western Battlefront, former enemies were singing Christmas carols with joy and peace in their hearts.

English and Irish troops then noticed hundreds of colored lights strung up by the German soldiers along the barbed wire fence in front of their trenches. At intervals along the trenches, brightly colored Christmas trees brought the solemnity of the season to the war-ravaged battleground. One lone German soldier leaned over the barbed wire of the British trenches and shouted in English, "Merry Christmas!" Soon the air was filled with shouts of "Merry Christmas" and "Froeliche Weihnachten."

The Germans then shouted, "Come out—we will not shoot for Christmas." Troops climbed out of their trenches and advanced unarmed to greet yesterday's enemies. Some laughed, others were near tears as they embraced. The Christmas spirit caught on quickly along the hundreds of miles of trenches. French troops shouted "Joyeux Noël" and a band serenaded the German troops with classical music. Belgian and German troops exchanged gifts of cigars and cheese given by loved ones at home. The spirit of Christmas overcame all. Toasts with beer and wine or tea and coffee were offered for home and family and friends. The most popular toast was to peace.



The only serious business on this day involved burying the dead. Both sides dug graves for those who had fallen, and the British supplied some wooden crosses. Then a party of Germans moved toward the British lines, carrying the body of a British soldier who had fallen behind their lines.

As evening fell, soldiers began to trickle back to their trenches to reluctantly resume the bitter business at hand. Tears and embraces marked the parting of thousands of soldiers who at last had found "peace on earth, good will toward men"—if only for a day.

The military high commands of both sides took severe measures to ensure that warring troops would not repeat such an event in the future.


Sometimes we come to church and pray for peace in the world while we are not at peace with ourselves or our

families and friends. Yet it must start close to home.

One of the most powerful ways we are healed is by being loved by other people. As we share with them our fears and disappointments; as we forgive each other; as we see goodness in them; as we love; as we are at peace with ourselves and those in our inner circle, then we will find healing. There is tremendous potential for healing as we gather together in community.

The sign of peace is not a social time, a time to run all over the church talking to friends. It is a time to express that Christian love to those on either side, lovingly, reverently, as representatives of the whole community. Because communion is a sign of our union with God and one another, we offer a sign of peace to those around us at that time. People tend to be drawn out of the reverence of the moment during the sign of peace, however. I will sometimes move it to the end of the penitential rite to

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 Today's Reflection: *"The Bullet"*

It was late March afternoon and Anya sat in the car memorizing verses. She did it every week while her little bother, Zeek, had his piano lesson. Her turn would come next, but memorizing meant repeating the verses out loud and that work best in the car. She was part of the Bible Quiz team and that required knowing a part of one of the books of the Bible very well. No problem, Anya loved the competition!

Their music teacher lived in a two-story house and the piano was upstairs. Just before the piano lesson began, Zeek told his mom, "I want sissy [Anya] to listen to my lesson." Mom reminded him that Anya needed the study time, and besides, she had been listening to him practice his piano lesson all week at home. But Zeek was determined, he went down to the car and to Mom's sur-

(Continued on page 15)

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You're In the Jail House Now by Fr. John S. Rausch

When Sr. Marge Eilerman entered the Atwood Federal Prison Camp near Lexington, Ky, she was greeted by a group of Catholic women bearing gifts of soap, toothbrush and comb. Sentenced to fourteen months for civil disobedience in 1998, Sr. Marge would need those health supplies till she got her account at the commissary. The women, part of the 200 plus population at the minimum security prison, appeared eager to befriend her. Most inmates were sentenced for non-violent offenses, mainly drug related or check fraud.

When I interviewed Sr. Marge with less than a month of her probation left, she seemed calm, centered and collected in spirit. "I never knew deeper peace than going through this," she said. "The peace came from having no doubt that what I did was correct."

In 1997 with a group of fellow religious Sr. Marge removed some letters and altered the sign at Fort Benning, Georgia, to read: "School of the Americas, School of Assassins." The demonstration intended to raise awareness about the U.S. Army's role in training foreign military officers responsible for the deaths of priests, Sisters and community workers in Latin America. "I saw it as telling the truth," she remarks. The action sent her to prison, but at the same time offered her a new kind of ministry.

Sr. Marge recognized that the entire prison system tears down a person's self-respect. It reinforces daily that all inmates are bad people. Women become numbers. They wear ill-fitted male clothing. Privacy evaporates like a summer puddle.

"My new ministry flowed from our Catholic social teachings," she said. "You are a dignified child of God, and no one can take that from you. Over and over again I talked to the women about their goodness and our oneness in the Spirit." Today prisons bulge with dysfunctional

people who seldom hear the acceptance of God's love. Nationally, more than a third of America's two million inmates have mental problems, more than half have learning disabilities, more than two-thirds suffer from substance addiction or problem drinking. A great number of people with personal and developmental challenges are locked away in America, not treated.

Currently women comprise about 6 percent of the people in jails and prisons, but their numbers are growing disproportionately. The overwhelming majority of the 120,000 incarcerated women are under 45 years old and suffer especially the loss of their children. They fret over the news of a sick child. Frequently the chaplain re-

Sr. Marge considered herself a political prisoner serving time for her Christian beliefs.

mains out of reach and the resulting worry deepens to depression. Sr. Marge could read the bad news in the eyes of an inmate, and with a smile or gentle touch connect in spirit. Occasionally people asked for prayers.

"I found a respect from the majority of women by word and action recognizing that I was a minister of God," she said. "I gave them a space where they could be good because they basically wanted to be good. I felt privileged being there to say that the Christian community has not abandoned you."

Through her baptism Sr. Marge heard a plea to walk with the people of Latin America and spent a year serving her sentence for civil disobedience. Once inside prison walls she heard another call to walk with dispirited sisters and used her time to listen compassionately.

As we finish the interview, her eyes twinkle and she smiles: "Without a doubt this is the best thing I've ever done."



Fr. John Rausch, a Glenmary priest, teaches at the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center, Berea, Ky.



The Scar Study

A scientist researcher gathered 10 volunteers for a special psychological study called the Scar Experiment. Separating the volunteers into 10 different cubicles without mirrors, she explained that the purpose of the study was to examine how other people would respond to a stranger with a physical deformity, such as a facial scar.

Using makeup tricks straight out of Hollywood, the scientist put bloody and gruesome scars on each volunteer's left cheek. She showed each volunteer the new 'scar' with a small hand-held mirror and then put the mirror away.

The researcher's final step in each cubicle was to tell each volunteer that she needed to put some finishing powder on his or her scar to prevent it from smearing. In reality, she used a tissue to wipe off the scar. The volunteers, however, believed they still had scars on their faces. Each volunteer was then sent out into the waiting rooms of different medical offices with instructions to notice how strangers in the office responded to the scar.

After the appointed time, all 10 volunteers returned with the same report. They noticed that strangers were more rude to them, less kind to them, and stared at their "scar."

Preoccupied with our personal flaws (physical or otherwise), we often assume that other people consider our flaws as repulsive as we do. In reality, most people hardly notice the things we think are wrong with us. Because our flaws may consume us, we may act toward others as if they disapproved of us. That makes it hard to form friendships.

On the other hand, having a healthy self-image or taking a positive view of ourselves frees us to enjoy healthier relationships.

Ultimately, of course, a healthy self-image comes from knowing that God thinks highly of you. He created you and loves you as His child. When you take time to listen to God's voice telling you who you really are, you will be less likely to worry about what others think of you.

—Author unknown

Dear Grace by Grace MacKinnon

Decisions of Conscience

Q: I am confused about something. If the Church teaches that we should follow our conscience, but then turns around and teaches us that we must obey Church teaching, then what is the difference? Who am I supposed to follow, the Church's teaching or my own conscience? How will I know what is the right thing to do?

Yes, it is true that the Church teaches that no person must be forced to act contrary to his/her conscience. Nor must they be prevented from acting according to their conscience, especially in religious matters (*Dignitatis Humanae*). The reason that the Church can teach this, however, is because she knows that "deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment.... For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God.... His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths" (CCC 1776).

What the Church is telling us is that when we truly listen to our conscience, we will hear God speaking to us. We do not belong to ourselves. We belong to God; He made us and we are on a journey back to Him. He



Grace MacKinnon, a syndicated columnist, writer, and public speaker, holds an MA in Theology and teaches in the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas.

wants for us to be very happy, and, because He made us, He knows best all that is good for us. So, He builds inside us this conscience through which He will try to guide and lead us to do what is good and right. In this life, we will face many serious, moral decisions, and we will

have choices to make. These choices cannot be made blindly. In other words, our conscience must be informed. This means that we must first take certain steps to learn everything we can in regard to what we are trying to make a decision about. This is called discernment.

Let us say that you are a parent, and your son or daughter has come to you and asked you to help them to have an abortion. This would certainly be a grave moral decision requiring the formation of conscience. What do you do? The first thing to do is to listen to what the Church has to say on the matter and why. Remember that the Church was established by Jesus Christ (who was God Himself) and given authority by Him to teach in His name. So, when we listen to the Church, we hear God. In a case as grave as abortion, what the Church teaches should be what we follow because she speaks for God and teaches infallibly in matters of faith and morals.

In making decisions or choices that are less grave, there are additional steps we can take to inform our conscience in order to do what is right before God. We should consult professionals and get expert advice. Find out what is involved in any procedures that will be required. Then, seek advice from trusted friends and family or anyone who might have gone through the same experience. Finally, take the matter before the Lord in prayer, asking Him to reveal to you through your conscience what you should do. When you have done all these things, make

1978 Revisited! A Look Back at the Charismatic Renewal

An enthusiastic movement borrowed by some of the high churches (most notably Roman Catholic and Anglican) from fundamental Protestants. The movement is marked by spontaneous prayer, faith-healing, and speaking with tongues.

Some charismatics argue that it is actually the Holy Spirit who speaks in the glossolalia, while others, more responsible, suggest—with considerable social science evidence to support them—that the glossolalia is enthusiastic nonverbal speech. One might call it happy and harmless babbling. Because of its enthusiastic nature, the charismatic movement is prone to anti-intellectualism, synthesisism, rigidity, sectarian internal conflict, and authoritarianism. None of these traits need be irresistible. The research of Father Joseph Fitcher has raised the possibility that for many Catholics the step into the charismatic movement is a step on the way out of the Church to an even more enthusiastic fundamentalist Protestantism.

On the other hand, the Charismatic Renewal is clearly the most vital and active movement in American Catholicism today, and responds to the religious needs and aspirations of many, many Catholics. Some groups are quite sophisticated theologically and quite restrained psychologically and emotionally while others are fanatics of the sort that the late Monsignor Ronald Knox described in his famous book, *Enthusiasm* (which ought to be read by every Catholic *charismatic* just to make sure that he/she and his/her group are not going the route to enthusiastic self destruction).

The Catholic hierarchy in the United States is cautiously supportive of the charismatic renewal because of the apparent piety of so many of its members and because it seems relatively harmless. This writer, who believes that the Holy Spirit can speak in English if he wants to, wishes the hierarchy would be more cautious and discriminating, more aware of the history of enthusiastic movements and more conscious of the human and institutional damage that can be done by unrestrained and unguarded enthusiasm.

—Condensed from "Everything You Wanted to Know About the Catholic Church But Were Too Pious To Ask," by Father Andrew Greeley. © 1978 by the Thomas More Association, Chicago, Illinois.

(See page 11)

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There is the story of a Pastor who got up one Sunday and announced to his Congregation: I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets.



A Sunday School teacher began his lesson with a question: "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?" A hand shot up in the air. "He is an artist!" said the kindergarten boy. "Really? How do you know?" the teacher asked. "You know - Our Father, who does art in Heaven..."

While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage. The owner of the carriage obviously had a sense of humor, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand-printed sign reading ...

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Somebody once figured out that we have 35 million laws trying to enforce 10 commandments.

6 RULES to be HAPPY

Remember these six simple rules to be happy:

1. Free your heart from hatred
2. Free your mind from worries
3. Live simply
4. Give more
5. Expect less
6. Include God in all that you do

"A joyful heart is the health of the body..."

Proverbs 17:22



It has been well said that there are only two kinds of people in the world.

There are those who wake up in the morning and say,
"Good Morning, Lord!"

and there are those who wake up in the morning and say,
"Good Lord, it's morning!"

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Is Marriage Best ? (from page 4)

The most effective and the most compassionate way of supporting families in the long run is to support marriage.

look to others like people for whom marriage is the greatest wonder and blessing of your lives.

None of this, of course, is to argue against compassionate care, by the Churches as well as more widely by society and government, to people in all those kinds of distress that are caused by marital or family breakdown, or by their own or others' sexual behavior, or by the prevailing attitudes to all these.

But what we must not do is to go on giving way to the very strong pressures to be active and vocal only about this compassionate care, soft-pedaling to the point of extinction our advocacy of marriage. However hard it is in today's culture, I remain convinced that the most effective and the most compassionate way of supporting families in the long run is to support marriage. It follows that we need to remain clear as a society, for the sake of generations to come, what marriage is and what it is not. If marriage, the mutual exclusive commitment to each other for life of a man and a woman, is indeed "fundamental to human flourishing", as Christians and very many others believe it to be, then we owe it both to those growing up today and to future generations not to equate even the most loving and committed same-sex relationships with marriage.

I am convinced that today support for marriage requires us to renew our wrestling as Christians with the difficult, divisive questions that surround marriage in church after divorce.



I appreciate that some Christians, some Churches, think that in current conditions "marriage in church after divorce" can only undermine the Church's witness to marriage; and I am sensitive to the danger that any attempt to make more coherent the Church's teaching and practice around the marriage of divorced people could have the effect of softening still further people's will to persevere in marriage and to resist the corrosive cultural influences that make divorce seem inevitable.

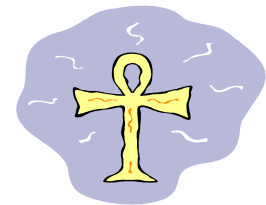
So the Church of England's House of Bishops' teaching document "Marriage" holds to the conviction that "a further marriage after divorce is always an exceptional act"; and its discussion document "Marriage in Church after Divorce" argues that the Church should establish criteria and procedures which will allow it to say "yes" to some couples asking it to solemnize a marriage after divorce, but "no" to others for the sake of our witness to the character of marriage itself. Are they determined, for instance, that their marriage will be a life-long, faithful partnership? Do they seem to have explored together each other's past? Has everything realistically possible been done to fulfill the responsibilities that remain from the first marriage? Is it clear that the new relationship was not the cause of the breakdown of the previous marriage?

Very difficult though all this is (and I judge that the New Testament shows the Church struggling with these questions even before the completion of the canonical gospels), I do not believe that we should retreat from this particular front line. When so many people, and therefore so many people who are seeking to marry, are divorced, the Church

cannot escape the questions that this situation poses to its evangelism as well as to its pastoral care and to its teaching of the faith.

For God, I believe, has given us the task of witnessing both to his gift, fundamental to humanity's welfare, of life-long faithful marriage, and at the same time to his character to enable fresh life through forgiveness – in this case, forgiveness of those whose marriages come to grief and who want to make a new marriage. I see no escape today, for any Church, from this tension; and I trust that God will guide us through what I know only too well to be its hazards.

Michael Scott-Joynt is the Bishop of Winchester, England and chairman of an Anglican bishops' working party on marriage and divorce. This article is reprinted with permission of *The Tablet*



Healing Mass

With

Fr. Peter Sanders, Orat.

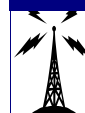
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Traditional understandings of marriage and family face formidable legal and cultural challenges from a hostile secular mindset.

Are marriage and the family in trouble in the United States? Consider this: A *Washington Post* report on how welfare reform is working spoke of what it called “a new line of thinking.” This was the new line: “Reform must be tied to stabilizing family life.”

Wonder of wonders! Very likely some expert will soon be solemnly telling us savages that the earth is round. This would be kind of funny if it weren't troubling.

What's most troubling is precisely the fact that pundits not uncommonly voice surprise verging on denial whenever someone or other newly makes the discovery that family life is important.

In a sane cultural environment, of course, there would be no surprise. Few things in life are more obvious than that kids are healthier and happier when they live with a father and a mother who love them and care for them and are married to each other. Maybe one of these days the experts will stop being surprised about that and lend it some support.

As Pope John Paul II often points out, something profoundly hostile to marriage and the family is at the heart of Western secular culture. The results are deeply troubling.

They are visible, for instance, in the finding of the 2000 U.S. census that the households composed of married couples with children under 18 had fallen to fewer than one in four for the

first time ever—23.5 percent to be precise. That compares with 25.6 percent in 1990 and 45 percent in 1960.

Among the various factors accounting for that, of course, not all are bad news for marriage and the

family.

Furthermore, the rise in two of the major causes—divorce and illegitimate births—actually slowed down during the last decade.

But even so, there is no arguing with the conclusion of a Family Research Council policy analyst who remarked, “People are disregarding the importance of having a mother and father who are married.”

Here, too, there are undoubtedly many causes at work. But one cause of fundamental importance lies in the emphasis placed upon a highly individualistic version of personal fulfillment. This way of thinking pervades the secular ethos.

It hardly needs saying that personal fulfillment has always been among the reasons why people married. But treating it as if it were the sole reason has the practical effect of eliminating the communal rationale. Marriage and family exist to

transmit life and values—for procreation and education, that is—and those purposes continue to be crucially important even where the degree of individualistic fulfillment in a particular marriage may not be so great.

To put that another way, when people used to speak of “staying married for the children's sake” they were expressing a valid insight into the purpose of marriage.

The phenomenon of disbelief and denial mentioned above turned up again in the reactions to data that suggest a link between day care and aggressiveness in some children. It was pointed out that most kids aren't adversely affected (apparently), that a casual connection had not been demonstrated (none was claimed), etc. Anything, it seemed, to get day care off the spot.

It was a reminder that for decades Americans have been involved in a vast social experiment testing the effect on young children of having their mothers work outside the home. When findings came along suggesting negative results, they are treated as inadmissible because they challenge secular orthodoxy.

Yet American parents today spend far less time with their children than

(See “Family Life Failures” Page 15)



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A Reflection on Sirach by Pope John Paul II

The supplication addressed to "the Lord God of the universe" (Sir 36,1) is contained in the book of Sirach, a sage who gathered his reflections, counsels and hymns probably around 190-180 B.C. on the threshold of the epoch of liberation that Israel lived under the guidance of the Maccabees. In 138 B.C. a grandson of this sage translated into Greek, as he tells us in the prologue of the volume, the work of his grandfather in order to offer these teachings to a wider circle of readers and disciples.

Though it was not included in the Hebrew canon, Sirach, along with other "sapiential books", ended up setting forth the so-called "Christian truth" ("*veritas Christiana*"). Thus the values proposed by this sapiential work entered into Christian education in the Patristic age, above all, in the monastic world, becoming a manual of practical behavior for the disciples of Christ. The invocation of chapter 36 of Sirach, incorporated in a simplified form in the prayer of Lauds of the Liturgy of the Hours develops a few key themes.

Above all, we find the supplication to God to intervene in favor of Israel and against the foreign nations that oppress her. In the past God showed his holiness when he punished the sins of his people, by putting them in the hands of their enemies. Now the one praying asks God to show his greatness by undoing the power of his oppressors and establishing a new Messianic-like era.

Certainly, the request reflects the tradition of prayer in Israel, and in reality is full of Biblical references. In a certain sense, it can be considered a model of prayer to be used in time of persecution or oppression, as it was at the time the author lived, under the rather harsh and severe dominion of the foreign Syro-Hellenic sovereigns. The first part of this prayer opens with an ardent appeal to the Lord that he may have mercy and pay attention to what is happening (cf. Sir 36,1). But immediately attention is directed to the divine action, that is exalted by a series of remarkable verbs: "Have mercy ... pay attention ... put in dread ... raise your hand ... show yourself great ... renew your signs ... work new wonders ... glorify your hand and your right arm..." The God of the Bible is not indifferent



in the face of evil. Even if his ways are not our ways, and his times and plans are different from ours (cf. Is 55,8-9), yet he takes sides with the victims and will be a severe judge of the violent, the oppressor, those

who triumph without showing mercy. His intervention does not seek destruction. By showing his power and the faithfulness of his love, He can generate even in the conscience of the evil one a shudder that can lead to his conversion. "They will know, as we know, that there is no God but you, O Lord" (Sir 36,4).

The second part of the hymn opens with a more positive perspective. In fact, while the first part asks for the intervention of God against one's enemies, the second part no longer speaks of enemies, but asks the favor of God for Israel, begs his mercy for the Chosen People and for the holy city, Jerusalem. The dream of the return of those sent into exile, even those belonging to the Northern kingdom, became the goal of the prayer: "Gather all the tribes of Jacob, that they may inherit the land as of old" (v. 10). The prayer is for the rebirth of the entire Israel, as in the happy days of the occupation of the whole of the Promised Land.

In order to make the prayer more urgent, the one praying insists on the relation that binds God to Israel and Jerusalem. Israel is designated "the people called by *your* name", the "whom you *have* treated as your firstborn"; Jerusalem is "*your* holy city"


"*your* dwelling place". It then expresses the desire that the relation become still closer and more glorious: "Fill Zion with your majesty, *your* people with your glory" (cf. v. 13). By filling with his majesty the Temple of Jerusalem, that will attract all nations to itself (cf. Is 2,2-4; Mi 4,1-3), the Lord will fill his people with his glory.

In the Bible, the lament of those who suffer never ends in desperation, but is always open to hope. It is based on the certainty that the Lord does not abandon his children; he does not let those he made fall out of his hands.

The selection made by the liturgy has left out a very beautiful expression in the prayer. It asks God to "give evidence to the creatures that are yours from the beginning" (Sir 36,14). From all eternity God has a plan of love and salvation for all his creatures, called to become his people. It is a plan that St Paul recognized as "revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit ... the eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph 3,5-11).

—Condensed from *L'Osservatore Romano*, 30 Jan 02





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¿Cómo podemos llegar a la juventud?

Por Henry Cappelo

Si de alguna manera estás en contacto con la juventud habrás notado en su vocabulario palabras y frases que siendo jóvenes nunca utilizamos. ¡Comunican viejas ideas con palabras nuevas! Este fenómeno es sólo la punta de un iceberg y necesita tomarse en cuenta al servir a los jóvenes. Desde luego el contenido del Evangelio es esencialmente uno e inalterable, pero el modo en que puede presentarse difiere de momento a momento, de país a país, de cultura a cultura, y de un grupo de edad a otro. También se debe advertir que los enfoques que ayudaron a los jóvenes a responder al Evangelio hace 10 años, no son necesariamente útiles hoy. La cultura de la juventud de hoy, tremendamente influida por los medios y la tecnología informática es muy diferente de la de principios de los 90. Este cambio necesita reconocerse y traducirse en un modo de llegar a esta generación. Identificar las tendencias y presentar el Evangelio de maneras compatibles con tales tendencias son la clave para llegar a la juventud. Al mismo tiempo, algunas tendencias negativas necesitan redimirse. Esto se puede hacer presentando alternativas positivas. Esto implica ser creativo, emprendedor y pionero. La base de nuestro análisis de tendencias y cualquier identificación de las necesidades de cualquier grupo particular de gente debería ser el amor, la comprensión, la aceptación y una gran sensación de esperanza.

Una preocupación universal para la juventud de hoy es tener una educación mejor y superior para asegurar las mejores oportunidades. El porcentaje de la juventud que hoy busca educación terciaria en facultades y universidades es mucho mayor que el de hace 10 años. Por consiguiente, hablamos de “cinturones universitarios” y de “ciudades universitarias” donde cientos de miles de jóvenes viven en un área limitada de 3 a 5 años. La experiencia de muchos que han establecido una presencia continua en estas áreas es que al realizar actividades y programas para estudiantes universitarios, están resultando ser muy productivos y fructíferos.

Un principio sencillo que me gustaría subrayar es la importancia de ir donde está la juventud para poder llevarles el mensaje del Evangelio en un lenguaje y un formato que hablan y entienden. Muchos trabajadores juveniles en

universidades afirman que los jóvenes mismos son los mejores para llegar a otros jóvenes. Todos los que han pasado por esta fase en su vida recuerdan los momentos de emoción y reto que ofrecen las universidades, pero sin duda también recuerdan los miedos, los desengaños y la soledad del estudiante. Estas situaciones a menudo hacen a la persona más vulnerable y abierta a la verdad.

Al haber dicho que “la juventud llega a la juventud” con éxito muchas veces, no quiero menospreciar la importancia del testimonio de vida, a veces en silencio o verbalizado, de todos los que trabajan donde están los jóvenes. Digo esto con la esperanza de alentar a todos aquellos que están trabajando con jóvenes sin importar su edad. La experiencia común de aquellos que están en contacto con jóvenes de cualquier manera, es que al haberse aproximado a los jóvenes con amor genuino, preocupación y cuidado, y al expresar confianza en ellos se encuentran con jóvenes generosos y sensibles. Muchas veces esos jóvenes están dispuestos a embarcarse en un viaje muy serio con Dios. Estos ejemplos llenan de alegría los corazones de los que trabajan con jóvenes. El compartir el encuentro y viaje personal de uno mismo con Dios es también una manera poderosa de presentar el Evangelio a los jóvenes. Por último, los jóvenes buscan la autenticidad en aquellos que les proclaman el Evangelio. El seguimiento y el discipulado son una parte intrínseca de preparar a los jóvenes para llegar a los jóvenes.

Aunque creo firmemente en los programas, campamentos, festivales, conciertos y cualquier otro medio que pueda dar a los jóvenes alejados una primera muestra de una cultura cristiana joven donde la paz y la alegría van más allá del acontecimiento par-

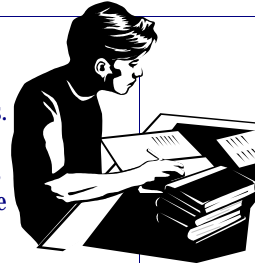
particular, sin embargo defiendo firmemente la importancia del compartir uno a uno. Desarrollar la amistad con jóvenes (que también es verdad para otras edades) es clave para presentar el mensaje del Evangelio. Una vez que se construye la confianza, una persona puede compartir la verdad con más ganas. La confianza se construye en la amistad.

Antes mencioné la tecnología informática, y sin detenerme mucho en ello, merece la pena advertir que la generación joven, en algunas culturas más que en otras, pasa más tiempo delante de los computadores que de la tele. Navegan y comprueban lo que es divertido, o “de moda”, y de interés. Sin duda esto ofrece un reto pero es una herramienta que todavía debe explotarse para el Reino. Se está haciendo mucho en este área, pero se debe aspirar a mucho más para encontrar medios creativos de divulgar información cristiana a los jóvenes.

Al escribir estos pensamientos, recuerdo especialmente a los que ya están comprometidos o planean comenzar un ministerio para jóvenes. Intento alentarles y apoyarles en este empeño apasionante pero a veces desalentador. He intentado evitar caer en la tentación de hacer una lista de lo que puede funcionar y lo que no puede funcionar. Estas listas están regidas por muchos factores que incluyen la cultura, el enfoque, el estilo, las necesidades, etc. He intentado subrayar algunos de los principios básicos en su mayoría recogidos de lo que he advertido y he intentado aplicar en nuestro propio ministerio de jóvenes. Para lo demás confiamos en Dios para Su Espíritu Santo, sabiduría y dirección. Por último, lo que necesitamos al acercarnos a la juventud es el Espíritu Santo, sin el cual podemos tener estructuras perfectas, pero ningún resultado.

—Henry Cappelo es el Presidente de Youth Arise International (Levántate Juventud Internacional), una iniciativa católica que promueve la evangelización y el discipulado juvenil mundial.

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prise returned with his big sister in tow.

The lesson began. Five minutes later the lesson was abruptly halted by a loud noise outside. Everyone stopped to watch a late-model car speeding away. The lesson resumed after the teacher reassured them that it was probably the car's backfire they had heard.

Zeek's hands were barely on the piano when the teacher's husband rushed in: "A gun shot...into the car... shattered the passenger side window in the front seat!" The lesson was over. They hurried down to look. Sure enough, there was the bullet lodged in the backrest just where Anya's head had been five minutes earlier.

They all knew it immediately. God had used seven-year-old Zeek to save his sister's life. It was a profound moment. Zeek had responded when it hadn't made sense to him or to anyone else, and Anya had complied with his illogical request.

The two snipers who were driving through the streets of Salem, Oregon, randomly shooting mailboxes, cars, and houses, were arrested and held on one-million dollar bail.

The district attorney asked Anya and Zeek to come to court and tell the story. The young men were sent to prison for five years, but not without hearing how God had protected a seven-year-old and his big sister. Author Unknown.

Family Life Failures (From Page 8)

parents used to do. And although day care is not the reason, it's inescapably part of the overall pattern of two parents working outside the home. Sure, numerous factors are operative here, including, for many moms and dads, sheer economic need. But do we have to pretend that it's good for the kids?

Now still another threat to traditional marriage—the campaign for legal recognition of same-sex “marriage”—is marching to the propaganda drums of secular media pushing it as an expression of a legitimate lifestyle choice.

Hoping to head off that movement, a group called the Alliance for Marriage earlier this year announced a proposed Federal Marriage Amendment declaring heterosexual marriage as the only legal norm. It's a good idea, but it faces an uphill fight to become part of the U.S. Constitution. Doesn't everybody have a right to personal fulfillment, after all?

—Russell Shaw serves as a consultant to the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. Reprinted with permission from *Columbia* magazine, courtesy Knights of Columbus Supreme Council, New Haven, Ct.

Peace (From Page 6)

avoid this situation. Either way is acceptable.

The great commandment is *to love one another*. In the Mass, we express this by our sign of peace. It is said that Catholics are “God's frozen chosen.” However, we thaw out to some degree by sharing a sign of peace in the Banquet of Love.

Condensed from *Healing Through the Mass* by Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J. with Linda Schubert. Resurrection Press, Mineola, New York.

Life Questions (From Page 5)

don't get ready for sex if you aren't going to have it!

4) Pray for strength to remain pure. In fact, you and your date should pray together!

Good luck and know that there are many holy men and women who are praying for you along the way. Ask the saints who have gone before you for help with the struggles that you encounter as well.

God Bless, Jenny

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Holy Cross Cemetery, Colma
Holy Cross Cemetery, Menlo Park
Mt. Olivet Cemetery, San Rafael

°Graves/Family Plots

°Veteran's Burial Section

°Memorial Benches

°Children's Section

For more information, please call or write: **Holy Cross Cemetery**
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When will our consciences
grow so tender that we
will act to prevent misery
rather than to avenge it?
—Eleanor Roosevelt

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