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Charismatic

Articles of Spiritual Enlightenment for Christians

San Francisco *Charismatics*, the Halo on the Internet, at www.sfSpirit.com
Volume 11, Number 3 March 2004

The Spirit's Fruits Fr. Peter Coughlin

St. Basil said, "Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of Heaven and adopted as children, given confidence to call God 'Father' and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory."

It is the gifts of the Holy Spirit that sustain the moral life of Christians. These gifts, which are particularly celebrated in the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, are wisdom, under-

standing, counsel, fortitude, piety and fear (reverence) of the Lord. Isaiah 11:1-2 tells us that they belong in their fullness to Jesus Christ, the Messiah. They complete and perfect the virtues in those who receive the Spirit's blessing and empowerment. These gifts also make the disciples of Jesus docile in readily obeying divine inspirations. "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rm 8:14).

The tradition of the Church lists 12 particular fruits of the Spirit. They are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-



control and chastity (cf. Ga 5:22-23). These fruits identify Christian maturity in the disciple, evidence that the Spirit of God is present and active, forming Christ in the believer. As we grow to be more like Jesus, as we walk in the Spirit, our character is being formed in such a way that we look more and more like Jesus. The fruits reveal godly character.

Made in God's image, God wants us to be like Him, sharing the same character traits we find in Jesus.

We are children of God who are expected to grow into full Christian maturity. The more we evidence in our lives the fruits of the Spirit, the more mature we become. It does take time to grow and to mature. As we cooperate with the grace of the Spirit we be-

(See Page 2)

Lent—A Paschal Journey Bro. John Samaha, S.M.

to see Lent only as a period of spiritual practices, penances, and self-imposed deprivations would be distorted and limited. Some understand Lent solely as a time of painful spiritual exercises accepted more or less willingly. But with reflec-

tion and by following attentively the Lenten celebrations brought to us by the Church and its liturgy, we come to recognize that Lent is a parable of Christian life. We come to recognize the wisdom of St. Benedict's admonition that the lives of Christians and of the Church "ought to be a continuous Lent."

Lent is an important

time of the liturgical year aimed at redressing Christian life. The works of Lent—prayer, almsgiving, and fasting—do not have their value in themselves, as the Scriptures proclaim on Ash Wednesday and the following Thursday and Friday. All actions have a God-centered motive and aim.

In encouraging us to

(See "Lent" Page 7)

First Friday Mass—of the Sacred Heart
The AFCCPC Conference Healing Mass
Rosary 7:00 pm—Mass 7:30 pm
March 5, 2004
St. Mary's Cathedral
Geary Blvd. at Gough St., S.F.
Msgr. Fred Bitanga & Concelebrating Priests
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Sacraments & Service Fr. Michael Slavik

The apostle Paul writes in the Song of Christian Love that the Christian may be extensively endowed with charisms, may even have great strength and make great sacrifices in the service of others risking his/her life for them. However, in the eyes of God these works may not be meaningful at all. "...I am nothing" or "it will do me no good whatever" he writes to his friends in Corinth (cf. 1 Co.13,1-3). All this indicates

quite clearly that living in love is an absolutely crucial and initial requirement for us to be able to stand up before God. The rest is important for our life only as a part of love's fulfillment.

It becomes clear that the Lord is not happy with those who are only faithful to Christian practices or with serving professionals who strive for perfect performance. It is convincingly revealed to us that the priority in our life should not be given to what we are doing for the Lord. The important thing is whether we belong to Him in the first place—wholly and utterly—so that we

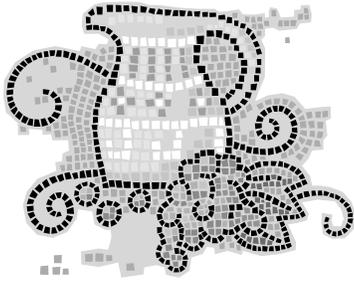
(See Page 12)

The Spirit's Fruits

From Page 1

come a new creation, doing what God requires, loving our neighbor, praying for our persecutors, loving our enemies, going the distance. The spirituality to which we are called consists in living as true sons and daughters of the Lord God, reflecting in our daily walk in faith the character of Jesus.

Love is the way in which we are called to live. Love is our goal as Christians because God is love. Love is our way of life—St. Paul beautifully describes the fruit of the Spirit in his famous passage on



love, "Love is always patient and kind, it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offense and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes. Love does not come to an end" (1 Cor 13:4-7).

Change a Word— Change Your Life

Try re-reading the passage above and change the word "love" to the word "I". That is the ideal for which each one can strive to live. For each of us spiritual growth means growth in character, in holiness and in righteousness. It is the Spirit who is at work in us as we actively cooperate with Him that brings the revelation of Jesus to be visible in our lives.

The beginning of all spiritual growth takes place when we are born of the Spirit, born again. St. Peter writes: "You have been obedient to the truth and purified your souls until you can love like brothers, in sincerity; let your love for each other be real and from the heart. Your new birth was not from any mortal seed but from the everlasting word of the living and eternal God" (1 Pe 1:22-23).

In order to grow in the character of Jesus this new birth must already be within us. All those who have been reborn in the Spirit of God have God's life within them. This life needs to be nurtured, strengthened and encouraged in order for spiritual growth to take place.

St. Paul tells us that we are changed as we gaze on God, "And we, with our unveiled faces reflecting like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, all grow brighter and brighter as we are tuned into the image that we reflect: this is the work of the Lord who is Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18). The more we spend time with God the more we absorb His likeness. Through our personal prayer, community worship, reception of the sacraments, in scripture reading and study, in sharing our lives with Christian brothers and sisters, we enter God's presence and, as it were, dwell in His presence.

Try To Imitate God

Again, St. Paul writes, "Try, then, to imitate God, as children of his that he loves, and follow Christ by loving as he loved you, giving himself up in our place as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:1-2). Paul goes on to say there should not even be a mention of impurity or fornication or promiscuity, not even any coarseness, bad language or jokes. We are to imitate Jesus Christ, actively pursuing holiness and goodness of life. It is really our character that makes us effective Christians.

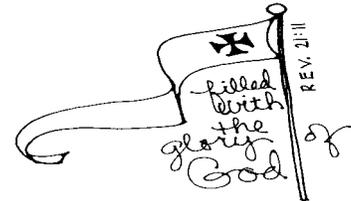
As Christians we are all tested. St. James advises, "Happy the man who stands firm when trials come. He has proved himself and will win the prize of life, the crown that the Lord has promised to those who love him" (Jas 1:12). We should desire to be Christians who have been found able to stand.

Though still under construction in the way of Christ Jesus, we should be able to be relied upon, entrusted with charisms and responsibilities to build up the Kingdom as our character develops, more firmly rooted in Jesus. While not wanting to be tested and tried we should welcome testing and trials because they show us what we can handle and help us to know that we really are who we say we are...disciples of Jesus come to maturity.

—Fr. Peter Coughlin, Editor of *The Bread of Life* magazine, recently graduated with a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Graduate Theological Foundation. Currently pastor of St. Andrew parish in Oakville, Ontario, he continues to serve the renewal of the Church through the Charismatic Renewal and the ministry of healing. Article courtesy of *The Bread of Life*.

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The Passion of Blab

By Fr. Joe Landi, Editor

Mel Gibson's movie, the "Passion of the Christ", has generated an amazing amount of negative press.

From pundits, op-ed page columnists and news services—because of the objections made by some Jewish Leaders that the movie is blatantly "anti-Semitic"—to the cover of *Newsweek*, everyone is weighing in on the movie. It's the passion of blab.

Newsweek's (16 February 2004) cover with the bloodied face of James Caviezel, a Catholic, (Jesus in *The Passion*) with the headline, "Who Really Killed Jesus?", was a "come-on" suggesting they alone had a now-it-can-be-told exposé, the inside scoop. They didn't. The article was along the lines of "Who really killed JFK".

Newsweek did have an interesting take about whether the Gospels are anti-Semitic. "No, but they are polemics (argumentative), and they have been long misinterpreted to justify violence against Jews... When the Gospel authors implicated 'the Jews' in Jesus' passion, they did not mean all Jewish people then alive, much less those unborn. The writers had a very specific group in mind: the temple elite..." Besides, Jesus and his mother, Mary, were Jews as were his Apostles and followers at the time.

The Holocaust, a Nazi nightmare inflicted on the Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, and dissidents during WWII, comes to mind as a prime example of anti-Semitism and of man's inhumanity towards man. Some claim part of the rationale for the Nazi's persecution was supported by a misreading of the Gospels. The warped minds fostering persecution used the "Christ killers" charge against the Jews to gather support from bigoted Christians. But that was just a part of the rationale for the Holocaust. It was more complicated and diabolical. For one thing, the Nazis needed a scapegoat and a cause to unite the Ger-

man people to their brand of Socialism.

The Passion—from the Latin word *Passus*, meaning having suffered or having undergone—has critics who have left no stone unturned to throw in their attacks against its director, Mel Gibson. Abraham Foxman, National Director of the (Jewish) Anti-Defamation League says Gibson "entertains views that can only be described as anti-Semitic." AP 9/19/03)

Jon Meacham, writing in *Newsweek*, termed Gibson "an ultraconservative Roman Catholic, a traditionalist who does not acknowledge any of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.... favors the Latin Mass, does not eat meat on Fridays and" ... blab blab blab. If you don't like the message, attack the messenger. With all the excesses festering in our society, being called conservative or ultraconservative is a compliment.

The supporters of Gibson, like Catholic League President, William A. Donohue, says "...there is no way to sugarcoat the scourging and crucifixion and Mel Gibson is not a sugarcoating kind of guy—he's a Catholic League kind of guy." Since Gibson belongs to the Catholic League, Donohue observes, "So much for his (Gibson's) rejection of the Catholic Church today."

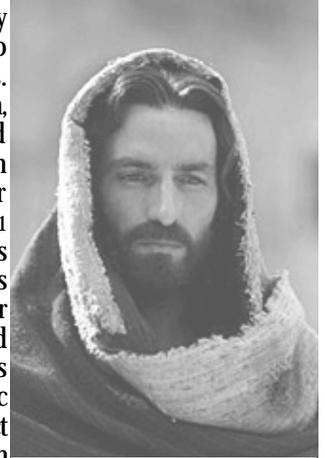
Who Really Killed Jesus?

It is a warped mentality that would equate the Catholic Church with teaching hatred of Jews or fostering the erroneous teaching that the Jews were responsible for killing Jesus. The Church holds that we Christians bear the gravest responsibility for the torment inflicted upon Jesus. The Church teaches that it was our sins that are responsible for the death of Jesus.

But it was also God's plan.

Simply put, he sent the Christ, the man God, to teach us "The Way" to live, to save sinners and then to die for our collective sins, so that we may start anew in our relationship with God the Father. Our reinstatement in the friendship of God and in our right to heaven came through Christ's act of propitiation and was made known to His Apostles (Mt.

13:11) and they made it also known to us. The crucifixion, death and resurrection effected our redemption (1 Tm 1:15). Jesus commands us to love our neighbor and the teachings of the Catholic Church reflect His admonition



not to hate, James Caviezel as Christ but to love one another. The most fundamental passion, the mark of a Christian, is love. Hatred is the antithesis of Christ's teachings.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. He accomplished this work principally by the Paschal mystery of his blessed Passion, Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension, whereby 'dying he destroyed our death, rising he restored our life.'

"For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the wondrous sacrament of the whole church. For this reason, the Church celebrates in the liturgy, above all, the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation." (ccc 1067) Through the liturgy Christ continues the work of our redemption in, with and through his Church. (ccc 1069)

The Passion of the Christ may become the most watched Passion play in history. Neither the movie nor its director, Mel Gibson, may get an Academy Award, but his reward will be great in heaven. Gibson has produced and directed a movie so powerful that it will bring people to Christ. It may offend some Jews. It may also cause some to join **Jews for Jesus**. See you in church.

Theaters showing *The Passion of the Christ*

CinéArts @ Empire

85 West Portal Ave., San Francisco,
12:40 | 3:35 | 6:30 | 9:25

UA Galaxy 4

1285 Sutter St., San Francisco
1:00 | 4:00 | 7:00 | 10:00

Century Plaza 10

410 Noor Ave., South San Francisco
12:40 | 3:35 | 6:30 | 9:25

Century 20 Daly City

1901 Junipero Serra Blvd., Daly City,
10:15am | 1:10 | 4:05 | 7:00 | 9:55

UA Emery Bay Stadium 10

6330 Christie Ave., Emeryville, CA 94608
12:30 | 3:45 | 7:00 | 10:15

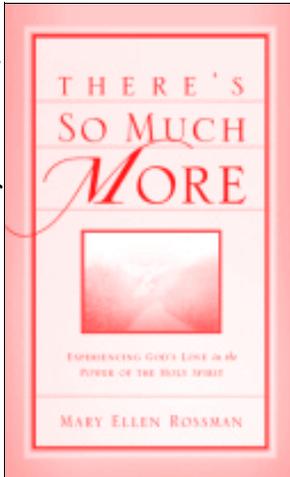
For a theater near you, enter your zip code at: www.thepassionofchrist.com

There's So Much More

A book review

There's So Much More—Experiencing God's Love in the Power of the Holy Spirit is a book about discovering the wealth of God's love through the power of the Holy Spirit. You are invited to journey with Mary Ellen as she searches for the ability to love God, to love herself, and to love others. Matthew 3:11 is the pivotal scripture that helped her make sense of the meaning and purpose of her life.

Rossman discovered that God wants to give us much more of himself. She also learned that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Love, and there is no real power to love and minister to others without appropriating his tremendous presence in our lives.



The Most Revered Thomas J. Flanagan, D.D.V.G., Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of San Antonio, comments about this book, "*There's So Much More* is written in a very clear and easy style for readers of all ages. It will be helpful to those who lead prayer groups or Bible studies or teach religious education.

This book invites and encourages us to a deeper prayer life and a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ. God is our source of unconditional and everlasting love in our faith journey. I now invite and encourage you to prayerfully read Mary Ellen Rossman's new book, *There's So Much More*. It will help you tell your story. There is so much

more of God's love for us."

Rev. George T. Montague, S.M., Professor of Theology, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, says, "If you already yearn for more of God, then this book is like the scroll that the prophet ate. It will taste like honey and will open new horizons for you and tell you how to get there.

"Mary Ellen has woven a tapestry of God's word in Scripture with her personal experience in a way that speaks to the heart. As you read, you are likely to say, 'Yes, that—or something like that—happened to me.' And reading a little further you may say, 'Wow, I'd really like to have what she is talking about.'"

About the Author

Mary Ellen Rossman was born and raised on Long Island, New York. At age forty, she enrolled at Long Island University, receiving her bachelor's degree in oral communications and her master's degree in counseling.

Since 1972 she has had leadership roles in Catholic Charismatic Renewal as a prayer group leader and as a member of archdiocesan service committees in Miami and San Antonio.

She co-hosted a weekly radio program, *Living in the Spirit*, in Miami and has appeared on the San Antonio television program, *Fanning the Flame*. She currently ministers in San Antonio giving retreats, seminars, and workshops. Mary Ellen is the mother of four children and grandmother of eight.

—See www.cccrsa.org/MaryEllenRossman.htm

Book Reviews



The Fire in the Cloud

—Lenten Meditations
By Francis Martin

In Lent, which is our Exodus, God's glory leads us in Scripture, where his word is the burning flame. The author offers inspiring meditations on the liturgical readings for every day of Lent. May be used annually as it provides reflections on the daily readings for Lent.

\$10.99—Servant Publications

Seven Weeks for the Soul

—A Reflective Journey for Lent or Other Times of Renewal
By Gerald W. Hughes, S.J.

Based on practices for renewal that include fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, these meaningful lessons present simple ways to enrich your prayer life and deepen your relationship with God during Lent.

\$12.95—Loyola Press

Lenten Days, Lenten Grace

—Forty Days with Jesus
By Raymond Chapman

"Lent is a solemn time," says Chapman. "But it is not meant to be a miserable one." Encouraging, challenging but above all, reassuring, this book uses scriptural themes to help you nurture a more authentic life of faith.

\$9.95—Pauline Books & Media

Can You Drink the Cup?

By Henri J. M. Nouwen

With stories from his family life and his life with people with mental disabilities, the author challenges us to drink our cup to the bottom, thereby letting it become the cup of our salvation. For those who have the courage to make Jesus' question their own, this book can be life-changing.

\$10.95—Ave Maria Press

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Everything we know about the husband of Mary and the foster father of Jesus comes from Scripture, and it doesn't seem like much until you fully understand the meaning behind each brief description.

Joseph was a carpenter, a working man, for the skeptical Nazarenes ask about Jesus, "Is this not the carpenter's son?" (Matthew 13:55). He wasn't rich, for when he took Jesus to the Temple to be circumcised and Mary to be purified, he offered the sacrifice of two turtledoves or a pair of pigeons, allowed only for those who could not afford a lamb (Luke 2:24).

Despite his humble work and means, Joseph came from a royal lineage. Luke and Matthew disagree some about the details of Joseph's genealogy but they both mark his descent from David, the greatest king of Israel (Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38). Indeed, the angel who first tells Joseph about Jesus greets him as "son of David," a royal title used also for Jesus.

Joseph was a compassionate, caring man.



When he discovered Mary was pregnant after they had been betrothed, he planned to divorce her according to the law but he was concerned for her suffering and safety. He knew that women accused of adultery could be stoned to death, so he decided to divorce her quietly and not expose her to shame or cruelty (Matthew 1:19-25).

We know Joseph was a man of faith, obedient to whatever God asked of him without knowing the outcome. When the angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him the truth about the child Mary was carrying, Joseph immediately took Mary as his wife. When the angel came again to tell him that his family was in danger, he immediately left everything he owned and fled to a strange country with his young wife and baby. He waited in Egypt without question until the angel told him it was safe to go back (Matthew 2:13-23).

Joseph is the patron of the dying and the patron of the universal Church, fathers, carpenters, and social justice. We celebrate two feast days for Joseph: March 19 for Joseph the Husband of Mary and May 1 for the Worker.

St. Joseph

Feast days: March 19, May 1
Patron of the Universal Church

--Courtesy of Liturgical Publications, Inc.

Jaci Velasquez



at only 23 years of age with eight top-selling records to credit her nine-year career span, one might think Jaci Velasquez has already said everything possible about her life. But that's not so.

On "Unspoken," Jaci Velasquez's first English language studio album in nearly two years, the platinum-selling artist knowingly took a risk and laid herself and her soul bare, offering in each song candid pictures of lessons learned through heartbreak. Over the last five years, Velasquez has weathered her parents' separation and divorce, her own failed relationships and the daily scrutiny of living under the public's magnifying glass.

"So many lessons that I've learned I've left unspoken, never told anybody," Velasquez says, explaining the album's title song. Originally crafted as a pop song, Velasquez approached the song writers for a different bent. "I asked them to make it about all the things we leave unspoken in our lives that we should have just told God, even though He knows our hearts already."

For Velasquez, the process of writing the bulk of the lyrics and melodies on "Unspoken" came with its fair share of challenges. Working with writers, most of whom brought no faith perspective, forced her to throw out any Christianese

crutches of the past. "I loved working with these writers because I really had to articulate what faith is and how it applies to our lives," Velasquez says. "So you're pretty much getting it from a normal 20-something's perspective. I'm not a pastor or a poet. I'm just a person who knows what God means to me."

"Unspoken" is rooted in her faith in God. "I was born to sing songs about God," Velasquez says, admitting that she did wrestle with the decision. "For some reason, my heart was never really there to do that. Everything I was writing was not about love. It was things about God."

On "Unspoken," Velasquez gives intimate looks into a refined faith and a God who "heals us when we're broken."

"I feel like I know myself more, and if I know myself more, I know more about who I am in God," she says. "If you don't have faith, you have nothing. I think that's why we're all here—to serve God. Yeah, we learn lessons, but in the end the lessons we learn bring us closer to who God is and who He designed us to be."

--Courtesy of Liturgical Publications, Inc.; Excerpted from ChristianityToday.com



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Sinful Voting

by Fr. P. Frank Pavone

Can you commit a sin in the voting booth?

I raise the question first of all because we are in an election year. Campaign 2004 is everywhere in the news, and it is only going to get more intense with every passing week.

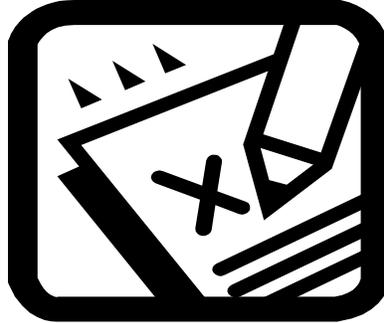
And if Priests for Life has anything to say about it, it is also going to get more intense in the churches and in the pulpits. The reason is simple: there can be no democracy without virtue, and there can be no human activity divorced from the moral law. And in matters of the moral law, the Church does not have the right to be silent.

Is it Morally Right?

To put it another way, morality has to do with human activity and human choices. Any time we make any kind of decision about what we do, say, or even think, we are either affirming or denying the moral law, and therefore are either coming closer to God or going farther away from him. Every step we take on the journey of life either strengthens us in virtue or enslaves us in vice.

Wherever we are, then, it is possible to perform a virtuous act or to

commit a sin. I may be singing God's praises in the choir amidst a splendid liturgy -- but if I deliberately think thoughts of rash judgment against a fellow choir member, I have sinned in the midst of those holy surroundings. Conversely, I may be a police officer called to investigate a complaint inside a nightclub where immoral acts are being committed at every turn. By carrying out my duty diligently, however, I can



perform virtuous acts despite the surroundings. In short, the only "no-virtue" or "no-sin" zones are on the other side of the grave.

Sin or Virtue

Now sin or virtue is always a combination of my action, my intention, and the circumstances surrounding both. I cannot tell whether a photo of two men carrying a TV set out of an apart-

ment is the photo of sin or virtue, because I don't know if they are two thieves or two repairmen. All the relevant facts have to be considered, and not all of those facts are always available.

An Example

Let's look at one example of a voting booth sin. A voter believes in "abortion rights," and for that reason knowingly and deliberately votes for a candidate who has promised to protect those "rights." That is a sin.

The voter has intentionally helped someone who is attempting to advance a violent and destructive activity. The vote in that case is similar to the sinful act of taking part in a pro-abortion rally, writing an editorial letter that expresses support for abortion, or otherwise encouraging or enabling those who perform abortions.

To say this has nothing to do with being partisan, because anybody of any party at any time might take any position on abortion, and yet this teaching remains the same. Nor is it "telling people how to vote," but rather pointing out the moral implications of voting.

—Courtesy of www.priestsforlife.org. Order a copy of the thought-provoking picture, **Earth's Trash—Heaven's Treasure** at the Priest's For Life web site.

God Won't Ask

"for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil."

—2 Corinthians 5:10

God Won't Ask:

...**what kind of car you drove**, but He'll ask how many people you drove who didn't have a car.
 ...**the square footage of your house**, but He'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.
 ...**about the designer labeled clothes you had in your closet**, but He'll ask how many you helped to clothe.
 ...**what your highest salary was**, but He'll ask if you com-

promised your character to obtain it.

...**how much money you made on your investments**, but He'll ask how much money you invested in His work.

...**what your job title was**, but He'll ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.

...**how many friends you had**, but He'll ask how many people to whom you were a friend.

...**in what neighborhood you lived**, but He'll ask you how you treated your neighbors.

...**about the color of your skin**, but He'll ask about the content of your character.

...**why it took you so long to seek salvation**, but if you have, He'll lovingly take you to your mansion in Heaven, and not to the gates of Hell.

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Michaela Farm

By Fr. John S. Rausch

in the rolling hills of southern Indiana, the Oldenburg Franciscans converted their 300-acre farm into a center for organic food production, environmental education and spiritual renewal. They initiated a farm renewal program, and dubbed it "Michaela Farm," to honor an early mother superior. By combining spirit and soil they hope to grow crops while raising awareness about the direction of U.S. agriculture. At the same time they are addressing many of the ethical concerns the U.S. Catholic bishops raised in their recent pastoral: "For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food: Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers and Farmworkers."

For most city dwellers food comes from the supermarket and underscores the consumer's mantra: sell it cheap, keep it safe. As a result, the average U.S. middle class household spends only 11 percent of its income on food—far less than the average 15 to 50 percent the rest of the world spends to eat. Despite the 1.4 million annual cases of salmonella poisoning—many resulting from inadequate cooking—the food supply remains basically safe. Yet, farming as a human activity stands apart from other types of production. Farming is not just about cheap chicken or mad cow disease. Farming sustains life itself,

husbands the land and influences the economic system.

The bishops broaden the discussion on farming by raising five areas of concern: eliminating hunger, ensuring safe food, maintaining dignity for farmworkers and small farmers, caring for creation and supporting rural communities. Reading the signs of the times, the bishops are growing concerned about the trends in agriculture both in the U.S. and abroad.

Whereas in 1950 America boasted 5.5 million farms, today the number has dwindled to 2.16 million. Only 10 percent of these farms account for 70 percent of all agricultural production, but these mega-farms receive approximately two-thirds of the government subsidies.

Industry concentration consolidates immense power in the hands of a few. In 1997, the top five food retailers in the U.S. held 24 percent of the domestic market, but by 2000 that share had jumped to 42 percent. "Fewer people are making important decisions that affect far more people than in the past," the bishops write.

Among livestock processors, the four largest beef firms control 81 percent of the cattle, the top four pork firms process 59 percent of the hogs and the biggest four chicken processors handle 50 percent of all broilers. Vertical integration allows companies to own the

animals from conception to market, reducing many U.S. farmers to growth technicians while living as serfs on their own land.

Approximately 50 percent of the 1.8 million farm workers in the U.S. are undocumented. American agriculture could collapse without them. The bishops recognize that a legalization program, not a guest worker program that exploits workers, would help stabilize the work force. They call for amending laws to ensure health care, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation and Social Security for all agricultural workers.

Globally an estimated 23 percent of all usable land suffers degradation, most especially from soil erosion. Causes include deforestation, overgrazing and excessive use of chemicals, the mainstay of American agriculture.

Somehow, cheap food loses its flavor when consumers chew over the political costs of concentration, the social costs to small farmers and farm workers, the ecological costs to soil and the environment and the spiritual costs to our very souls.

Michaela Farm teaches schoolchildren that farming represents not just a job, but also an expression of faith. In the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare the kids learn respect for, and celebrate, the bounty of the earth.



Fr. John Rausch, a Glenmary priest, teaches, writes and organizes from Stanton, Kentucky, in central Appalachia.

Lent

From Page 1

a greater emphasis on private and liturgical prayer, the Church does so to help to recapture during Lent their rightful place in Christian life at all times.

Almsgiving and sharing practiced during Lent are part of a movement of conversion regarding the use of goods. Far from jealously and selfishly keeping material goods for themselves, Christians learn to possess them as not possessing them. They manage their possessions as good stewards, with constant concern for those less fortunate. This is not an occasional practice, either. The ideal continues to be relevant at any time there is a need.

Whatever value is assigned to seasonal or even habitual fasting, fasting is essentially an attack on uncontrolled appetite for earthly goods of all kinds. People yield easily to such an appetite, especially in countries where over-consumption is

a matter of course. Not to curb the search for bodily and material satisfactions is pagan. Christians seek to rectify their behavior in order to balance their everyday lifestyle in harmony with their faith and hope. The pagans think we should eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. But the dead are raised, and now we know that Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep (1 Cor 15).

Lessons From Scripture

The lessons from Scripture proclaimed during Lent help us raise our eyes to God and his plan of salvation, to Christ and his mystery that brings this plan to realization, to its fulfillment here and now in the Church and in the world.

Of course, this can be said of all seasons of the liturgical year. What characterizes Lenten liturgies are the density, the wealth, and the strength of the texts. Especially challenging are the Gospel readings for Christian initiation, the selected apostolic catecheses, the remembrance of the most significant steps of salvation history. In this way Lent proves to

(See "Lent" Page 8)

Catholic Radio Hour



KEST 1450AM
7:00 pm

Dear Grace By Grace MacKinnon

Q: Is it true that the Church will not annul a marriage when there is a third party involved?

A: Your question never be broken. leaves many factors missing. However, there are some things we can clarify.

The Catholic Church believes and teaches that the marriage bond has been established by God Himself in such a way that when it is concluded and consummated between two baptized persons, it can never be dissolved, not even by the Church (CCC 1640). In teaching this, the Church is being faithful to Jesus Christ, for it was He who stated quite clearly that marriage is indissoluble when He declared, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matthew 19: 6-8).



Grace MacKinnon holds an MA in Theology and is a syndicated columnist and speaker on Catholic Doctrine.

What you refer to as an annulment is more properly termed a "declaration of nullity" or "decree of invalidity." This is a better way of expressing it because when we use the word "annul" it implies that we are dissolving something that really existed and that is not what the Church ever means to do. It is unfortunate that sometimes it may look or seem as if a marriage has taken place but in actuality it may have never come into existence at all.

What is Marriage?

Christian marriage is a covenant that is exchanged between a man and a woman, and when it is entered into freely and without anything to block it, then God, who is the author of marriage, seals it with His grace and marriage comes into existence. It is for life and can

When the Church declares a marriage null, it means that after a very careful investigation it has determined that some element or factor either prevented the marriage from coming into existence or was missing from the start. In other words, the marriage tribunal will consider what was the situation on the day of the wedding and prior to it. To all who attended the wedding, things may have looked wonderful, but underneath may have been another story.

Meeting another person years later in your marriage will have no bearing in the case, unless that was your sole reason for petitioning. Falling in love with another person can never be grounds for ending a marriage. If, however, it can be proven that your spouse had a serious psychological disorder and a history of physical abuse, which he withheld from you at the time you entered into marriage, then that would be a different matter.

Canon law allows either party to petition for a decree of nullity. Before petitioning, it is usually expected that the couple be civilly divorced. No guarantee can be given to a person who requests an investigation of their marriage whether or not a decree of nullity will be granted. Canon law protects marriage and all marriages are presumed to be valid and binding until death, unless proven otherwise.

—© Grace MacKinnon, 2004.
Contact grace at www.deargrace.com

Lent From Page 7

be catechumenal for all baptized persons and not only for those preparing for baptism. With special insistence Lent repeats the Church's never-ceasing call: "Become what you are." Lent is a paschal journey because it leads us to the Easter celebrations. It has a fixed place in the liturgical calendar, beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending on Holy Thursday before the evening Mass. But Christian life is wholly paschal because it is an exodus toward our eternal Father. From this point of view, Lent is a parable of the lives of Christians and a paradigm of the Church. What is experienced intensely for forty days must give a new and enduring dynamism to our lives in all the days of the Lord.

Lent is a paschal journey because it leads us to Easter

—Brother John Samaha, S.M., writes from the Marianist Community, Villa St. Joseph in Cupertino, CA 95014.

Your Vote Counts!

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- ◆ In 1990, Attorney General Dan Lungren defeated his opponent by a razor thin margin of near 1 vote per precinct.
- ◆ In 1960, John F. Kennedy defeated Richard Nixon by 113,000 votes—about 1/2 vote per precinct.

Vote. Be a responsible Christian

Tuesday, March 2, 2004

7:00 am to 8:00 pm

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Marin: www.co.marin.ca.us

San Francisco: www.sfgov.org/elections

San Mateo: www.shapethefuture.org

Non-partisan Voter Guide:

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On The Lighter Side



When the Temperature is:

60 above—New Yorkers try to turn on the heat.

Wisconsin people plant gardens.

50 above—San Franciscans shiver uncontrollably.

Wisconsin people sunbathe.

40 above—Italian cars won't start.

Wisconsin people drive with the windows down.

32 above—Stilled water freezes.

Lake Winnebago's water just gets thicker.

20 above—Floridians wear coats, gloves, and woolly hats.

Wisconsin people throw on a sweatshirt

15 above—New York landlords finally turn up the heat.

Wisconsin people have the last cook-out before it gets cold.

0 - People in Miami go back to where they came from.

Wisconsin people lick the flagpole.

20 below—Californians fly away to Mexico.

Wisconsin people get out their winter coats.

40 below—San Francisco Bay freezes.

Wisconsin's Girl Scouts begin selling cookies door to door.

60 below—Polar bears begin to evacuate Antarctica.

Wisconsin's Boy Scouts postpone "Winter Survival" classes until it gets cold enough.

100 below—Santa Claus abandons the North Pole and goes South. **Wisconsin people get frustrated when they can't thaw the keg.**

460 below—ALL atomic motion stops.

Wisconsin people start saying.... "Cold 'nuff for ya?"

500 below—Hell freezes over.

The Minnesota Vikings win the Super Bowl.



Who would you vote for?

Candidate A—Associates with crooked politicians, and consults with astrologist. He's had two mistresses. He also chain-smokes and drinks 8 to 10 martinis a day.

Candidate B—He was kicked out of office twice, sleeps until noon, used opium in college and drinks a quart of whisky every evening.

Candidate C—He is a decorated war hero, a vegetarian, doesn't smoke, drinks an occasional beer and hasn't had any extramarital affairs.

Which of these candidates would be your choice: A, B, or C? Decide first, then see below who you selected.



A is Franklin D. Roosevelt. B is Winston Churchill. C is Adolph Hitler.

"A joyful heart is the health of the body..."
Proverbs 17:22

Thank you for sharing...

"There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know."
—Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, clarifying U.S. policy on the war of terror at a Pentagon briefing.

To Be or Not to Be...

I'd rather be a "could be"
If I could not be an "are",
For a "could be" is a "maybe"
With a chance of touching par.
I'd rather be a "has been"
Than a "might have been" by far,
For a "might have been"
Has "never been"
But a "has been" was once an "are."

Courtesy of www.massprep.com

Bumper sticker sighted on I-280

Politicians and diapers should be changed often.
And for the same reason

THEME SONGS FOR BIBLE CHARACTERS

Noah: "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head"

Adam and Eve: "Strangers in Paradise"

Lazarus: "The Second Time Around"

Esther: "I Feel Pretty"

Job: "I've Got a Right to Sing the Blues"

Moses: "The Wanderer"

Jezebel: "The Lady is a Tramp"

Samson: "Hair"

Salome: "I Could Have Danced All Night"

Daniel: "The Lion Sleeps Tonight"

Joshua: "Good Vibrations"

Peter: "I'm Sorry"

Jeremiah: "Take This Job and Shove It"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: "Great Balls of Fire!"

The Three Kings: "When You Wish Upon a Star"

Jonah: "Got a Whale of a Tale"

Elijah: "Up, Up, and Away"

Methuselah: "Stayin' Alive"

Nebuchadnezzar: "Crazy"



an atheist professor was teaching a college class and told them that he was going to prove once and for all that there is no God. He said, "God, if you are real, then I want you to knock me off this platform. Send down a lightning bolt! I'll give you 15 minutes!"

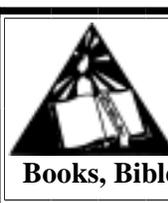
After a few minutes, he started taunting God saying, "Here I am God. I'm still waiting. Too busy to prove you exist?"

After a few more minutes, a 240 pound football player in the class walked up to the professor and with a lightning bolt punch in the stomach sent him flying from his platform.

"What in the hell is the matter with you?" the obviously shaken professor yelled at the student.

"Nothing is the matter with me, Sir", he replied. "It's God. He is too busy—so he sent me!"

Father Flood/Webb



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The Mystery of Calvary by Gerard Rooney, C. P.

Lives of great men are written to tell us how they lived. The life of Christ is written to tell us how He died. Inspired by God, four men wrote about the life of Jesus. Essentially, they are joyous writings. In fact, we call them "The Gospel," that is, "The Glad Tidings" sent by God to mankind.

Yet, in recording these Glad Tidings, each of these human authors appears more intent to tell us about the death of Jesus than about His wondrous life. At the conclusion of his account of Jesus, St. John remarks: "There is much else besides that Jesus did: if all of it were put in writing, I do not think the world itself would contain the books which would have to be written."

Yet, strangely enough, out of all these wondrous things which Jesus did and said, the sacred authors, led by the Holy Spirit, are content to relate comparatively only a handful. Moreover, when relating the happenings of Our Lord's earthly life, they move rapidly from one incident to another, often without regard for connecting the scattered situations.

But when they come to relate Our Lord's sufferings, His trial and death, they slow their pace, they halt their pens and are keenly careful to set forth the painful details. Why this emphasis on the death of Our Savior?

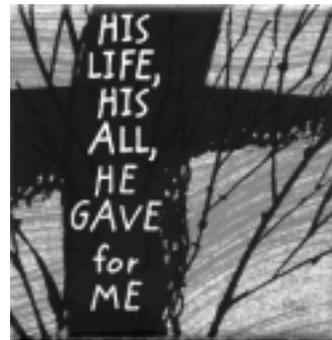
Gospels Focus On His Death

It is an astonishing thing to see that in the Gospel according to Saints Matthew, Mark, and Luke, nearly one-sixth of the text is devoted to relating the death of Jesus, with the events immediately preceding it. Still more astonishing is the Gospel of St. John, where we find nearly one-third of the text devoted to this all-important subject! Why?

From start to finish, everything they wrote converges on that mysterious death. At the outset, each evangelist sounds a note of imminent conflict, of coming tragedy. Matthew shows the political power bent on destroying Jesus. Mark describes the religious representa-

tives of the people jealously watching Jesus. Luke relates His birth and immediately indicates how He will be a sign of contradiction for many in Israel, while a sword of sorrow will pierce His mother's heart. John's outlook is more cosmic as he sees in Christ's entrance into the world a definitive battle looming between light and darkness.

Why this tremendous emphasis on the death of Jesus? Are they simply trying to establish His innocence before the world? Certainly they make it crystal clear that Jesus was innocent. The entire structure of the four Gospels shows the intense sincerity of Jesus pitted against



the elementary passions of jealousy, of pride and avarice, which eventually brought about His death. They

quote Jesus as challenging the Jews to find any sin in His life. They show Judas rushing around bewailing that he has sinned in betraying innocent blood. They portray Pilate as publicly declaring his official examination of the case reveals no fault in Jesus. They report the thief crucified alongside Jesus as shouting to the mob that the Man beside him has done no wrong. Into the record they write that the army officer in charge of the execution remarked when he saw Jesus die that he had just witnessed the death of a just man, while his fellow guards, puzzled and fearful, are quoted as saying: "Truly He was the Son of God!" (Matt. 27:54).

The sacred writers appear to be at pains to make clear that Jesus died innocently, a victim of the grossest injustice. But, like every gross injustice, this only highlights the mystery of the suffering.

The mystery grows deeper when we read that this tremendous death was foreknown by God, foretold by God, and willed to take place by divine decree.

For ages it was written about by the prophets of God. When it was all over, the risen Christ appeared to His disciples and reminded them: "Did not the Christ

have to suffer these things before entering into his glory?" (Luke 24: 26). St. Luke adds: "Beginning then with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things referring to himself" (Luke 24:27).

But, though his death was caused by the wickedness of men and though it was divinely decreed, yet Jesus is shown as making it perfectly clear that He freely submits to it of His own accord: "No one takes it [my life] . . . I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down and the power to take it up again" (John 10: 18). When Peter sought to defend Him, He said: "Do you suppose that I cannot entreat my Father, and even now he will furnish me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then are the Scriptures to be fulfilled . . . ?" (Matt. 26:53).

Jesus then died innocently and He died with perfect freedom because He willed to die. But why? What good was this death? Of what advantage to God? What benefit to us? An impressive answer comes from the fact that Jesus declared He is "The Way." Every great religious leader is a teacher. And every great teacher knows well that his conduct must set the seal on his teaching. Nowhere more than on Calvary does Jesus teach so persuasively, so vividly, so clearly.

What We Strive For

The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ does present us with an epitome of Christian conduct. But the mystery of Calvary lies far deeper than pedagogy. Jesus Himself indicated the basic reason when He declared: "The Son of Man has come not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

Even as He was establishing the everlasting memorial of His death, He stated: "This is my blood of the new covenant which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:28).

The mystery of Calvary is nothing less than the redemption of mankind. On Calvary, God has established the great turning point of history. This tremendous reversal of the main current of human history is brought about in two ways by the death of Jesus Christ: by atonement and by a limitless outpouring of new life.

Our Mediator

It was fitting that someone who was good enough and big enough should go to God and on the part of

(See "Calvary" Page 13)

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ST. HILARY, QUEEN OF PEACE PRAYER COMMUNITY
 9:30 to 11:30 am Every Saturday in March
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 with Fr. James Tarantino
 Bible Study Saturdays 12:15 pm-2:00 pm
 1 Corinthians—Using "The Little Rock" Study Program
 To register, contact: Moriah 415/756-5505

Mar 4 HEALING MASS—Most Thursdays in March
 8:00 pm.—Immaculate Conception Chapel
 3255 Folsom St., near Precita St. SF,
 Rev. William Lauriola, Principal Celebrant
 Contact: Rose 415/587-8155

Mar 5 FIRST FRIDAY MASS—Of the Sacred Heart
 7:00 pm Rosary, 7:30 Mass.
Opening Mass for North Pacific Regional Conference
 With Msgr. Bitanga & concelebrating priests.
 St. Mary's Cathedral
 Geary Blvd at Gough St., SF
 Music by JAC

Mar 6-7 NORTH PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE
 St. Mary's Cathedral Conference Center
Geary at Gough, SF
 Everyone Welcome!
(See page 16 for speakers.)

Hosted by the Filipino Catholic Charismatic
 Council of the Archdiocese of San Francisco
Contact Mario 415/468-1346

Mar 6, 13, 20 & 27. LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINAR
 Learn what it means to be a Charismatic Catholic
**8:45 am Rosary-9:00 Mass-9:30 Praise/teaching &
 Discussion to 11:10 am**
 St. Hilary Church Hall
 761 Hilary Drive, Tiburon
 with Fr. Jim Tarantino
Contact Moriah 415/756-5505

Mar 19 BIBLE STUDY (3rd Friday of the Month) 7:30 pm
 with Fr. Balaswami,
 Corpus Christi Church Parish Hall
 Alemany Blvd at Santa Rosa Ave., SF
 Contact: Norma 415/468-8369

Mar 21 SUNDAY CHARISMATIC MASS 2:00 pm
 St. Patrick Church,
 756 Mission St (between 3rd & 4th Sts.) SF
 Contact Judy 415/826-7827

Mar 27-28 FCCC Annual Retreat—Vallombrosa Center
 With Fr. Ray Reyes, **Retreat Director**
 \$110 Single/\$105 double/\$90 Commuter
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Apr 2 FIRST FRIDAY MASS—Of the Sacred Heart
 A healing Mass
 7:00 pm Rosary, 7:30 Mass.
 With Fr. Joe Landi, Celebrant &
 Deacon Mark Reburiano, Homilist
 Our Lady of Mercy
 1 Elmwood Dr., DC
 Music by God's People

Stanford—the Real Story

The story which appeared here in our January 2004 issue, reportedly by Malcolm Forbes about the Leland Stanfords establishing the University that bears their name, a memorial to a son that Harvard no longer cared about, was Internet e-mail fiction. We were caught with our facts down!

As usual, the framework of a tale bears some general resemblance to the truth. A version of this story falsely attributes the piece to Malcolm Forbes, the founder and publisher of *Forbes* (a highly respected business magazine). What follows, hopefully, is the real account..

Leland Stanford was a wealthy Sacramento merchant, a railroad magnate who built the Central Pacific Railroad and drove the gold spike at Promontory Summit, Utah, in 1869. He was California's eighth governor (1862-63). He also was hardly the type of person to dress in a "homespun threadbare suit," walk "timidly" into someone's office (especially without an appointment), or sit cooling his heels "for hours" until someone deigned to see him as indicated in the original tale which has been floating around the internet for several years.

The Stanfords' only son died of typhoid fever at age 15, in Florence, Italy. That would have made him a bit young to have attended Harvard, and his death would hardly be described as "accidental." The closest this story comes to reality is in its acknowledgement that the Stanfords did visit Harvard (among other schools) to gather ideas for creating an educational institution of their own (not to discuss endowing Harvard with some type of facility)—the Stanfords had already decided that whatever facility they built would be their own.

Stanford's web site describes the incident thusly:

The Stanfords returned to America and, before proceeding to Palo Alto, visited Cornell, Yale, Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. They talked with President Eliot of Harvard about three ideas: a university at Palo Alto, a large institution in San Francisco combining a lecture hall and a museum, and a technical school. They asked him which of these seemed most desirable and President Eliot answered, a university. Mrs. Stanford then asked him how much the endowment should be, in addition to land and buildings, and he replied, not less than \$5 million. A silence followed and Mrs. Stanford looked grave. Finally, Mr. Stanford said with a smile, "Well, Jane, we could manage that, couldn't we?" and Mrs. Stanford nodded her assent.

The Stanfords did found their university (modeled after Cornell and located on the grounds of their horse-trotting farm) in memory of their son (hence the school's official name of "Leland Stanford Junior University"), but not because they were rudely rebuffed by Harvard's president—because it was what they had intended all along.

"Be Careful How You Judge", the moral of the internet tale, and "You can easily judge the character of someone by how they treat those who can do nothing for them or to them" is still sound advice, even if the tale was not. —Editor

—Information from www.stanford.org and the article, *Won't Stanford it*, at www.snopes.com/glurge/stanford.htm contributed to this article.

Sacraments

From page 1

act with Him and in Him. There is a big difference between working for Jesus and working **with** Jesus. Jesus expressed this difference in yet another part of the Gospel by saying: "I shall no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know the master's business; I call you friends because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father." (Jn 15,15). A slave, servant or employee - these words describe a relationship where one works for a wage. Such a relationship is mainly about performance, utility and productivity, not a relationship between partners based on equality.

Among friends, we share our personal joys and concerns. We are interested in them. And the time spent together is certainly not measured by money. We take pleasure in "wasting" time with friends.... And yet it is very important because without this time "wasting" and mutual sharing our friendship would degenerate and die and we would become poorer, emptier and harder.

Celebrating Sacraments as an Encounter with the Resurrected Christ

Jesus considers Himself our friend and therefore He wants to share the mystery of His life with us. He also desires that we share our mysteries—joys, sorrows, successes and failures—with Him, as He is not unconcerned about our lives. Where and how does this mutual sharing take place, where and how does Jesus share His mysteries? "The mysteries of Christ's life are the foundations of what he would henceforth dispense in the sacraments..." (Catechism 1115). Sacraments and their celebration are therefore moments of friendly encounter with Jesus. There Jesus, through the power of His love, intervenes and transforms our lives. During the celebration of the sacraments He acts upon and in us through a power (cf. Catechism 1116) with which he again and again takes our sufferings, sorrows and sins on Himself (cf. 1P 2,24,25; Is 53,4-6) in order to share the fullness of His life and the joy of redemption with us again and again. Thus He introduces us into the depth of His love so that we might at last

understand, accept and believe that He (Jesus) has loved us (cf. Jn 17,23) as the Father has loved Him.

Service as the Embodiment of our Faith

There is no doubt that Jesus does not want us to experience our relationship to Him as some kind of personal happiness. He wants us to live in a specific community of the Church being aware of mutual responsibility. We have been sent to serve not only brothers and sisters but also the world (cf. Mt 28,18-20), i.e., for the benefit of those outside the Church. Thus the Church, through the service of her believers, becomes an efficient tool for the creation of God's kingdom on Earth.

Service is a kind of embodiment of our faith, i.e., of our relationship to Christ, in the world. Outside this premise our service may become a mere game, a social event or attempt at self-salvation finally condemned to failure. However, the point for the Christian is not in being (during each act of service) constantly motivated by an awareness and profound perception of this premise. It is more about a strong bond or anchorage that is taken care of continuously but which we must be reminded of and acknowledge from time to time. This idea may be illustrated by the parable of the vine and branches (Jn 15) that speaks about fruit. In general terms the fruit may be taken as an image of service. The parable reminds us to care for the fertile bond with Jesus—a branch cut off from the vine cannot bring forth anything.

However, some might remain a part of the vine but only as a decoration - no fruit and no benefit. This happens when we are tempted to retire into our inner world of devotion living a personal Christian happiness. We are cautioned against this tempting approach, e.g., in Mt 5, 13-16. Unsalted salt, a disguised city on the hill, a candle under the bucket—all go against reason and common sense. The flame under the bucket not only fails to fulfill its purpose (to give light) but finally uses up all the oxygen and goes out. It is similar with the Christian: a Christian who refuses to take responsibility and engage in some type of service takes the risk of becoming lukewarm. His/her faith may not only fire no one but the flame itself may "go out". A barren fig tree was given a chance to bear fruit several

times (cf. Lk 13,6-9). However, the chances were not unlimited. And should we want an even tougher example of spiritual introspection we may use the contrasting parable of the damnation of a fruitless fig tree (cf. Mk 11, 12-14). Instead of the unattractive perspective of being neither hot or cold and becoming lukewarm (cf. Rv 3,15-16) Jesus invites us to cooperate with him, get involved, and participate in great things that offer an enormous grace for the servant.

What does Jesus Offer through the Performance of Service?

1) That He will be in service with us ("And look, I am with you always ..." Mt 28,20);

2) That He will act in us and through us ("We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus for the good works which God has already designated" Eph 2,10);

3) That He Himself will be the recipient of our service ("In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me" Mt 25,40).

In the environment of Christian service we discover the risen Christ revealing His face to us from various viewpoints. It is not in particular an environment where "professional performance", "top-quality service" or "troubleshooting" is applied but it is mainly (with great respect for the necessity of professional competence) an environment that provides an enriching encounter between Jesus and man.

A Positive Experience

This certainly does not mean that service experienced this way will not be physically and mentally exhausting for the service bearer—we all have our natural limits and Jesus as man had them too (cf. Lk 8,22,23). However, it is impossible not to see a certain spiritual counter-flow present in the positive experience of service, i.e., a spiritually refreshing encounter with Christ. Both the servant and the service recipient encounter Him in the manifestation of Christian service. Yet various people would confirm that it is the evangelizing servant and not the service recipient who experiences greater inner enrichment through service. Why? Because Christ's offer (see above, 1), 2) and 3)) is not hollow words. Therefore, we again and again reflect this offer and the interpretation of our service in prayer.

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Psalm 11

By Pope John Paul II

the spiritual key of the entire Psalm 11 is well-expressed in the concluding verse: "For the Lord is just, he loves just deeds". This is the root of all trust and the source of all hope on the day of darkness and trial. God is not indifferent to right and wrong: he is a good God and not a dark, incomprehensible, mysterious destiny.

The psalm unfolds substantially in two scenes: in the first, the wicked man is described in his apparent victory. He is portrayed in the guise of a warrior or hunter: the evildoer bends his long or hunter's bow to violently strike his victim, that is, the just one. The latter, therefore, is tempted by the thought of escape to free himself from such a merciless fate. He would rather flee "to the mountain like a bird", far from the vortex of evil, from the onslaught of the wicked, from the slanderous darts launched by treacherous sinners. There is a kind of discouragement in the faithful one who feels alone and powerless before the irruption of evil. The pillars of a just social order seem shaken, and the very foundations of human society undermined.

Now, the turning point comes in sight, outlined in the second scene. The Lord, seated on the heavenly throne, takes in the entire human horizon with his penetrating gaze. From that transcendent vantage point, sign of the divine omniscience and omnipotence, God is able to search out and examine every person, distinguishing the righteous from the wicked and forcefully condemning injustice.

The image of the divine eye whose pupil is fixed and

attentive to our actions is very evocative and consoling. The Lord is not a distant king, closed in his gilded world, but rather is a watchful Presence who sides with goodness and justice. He sees and provides, intervening by word and action.

The righteous person foresees that, as happened in Sodom, the Lord makes "rain upon the wicked fiery coals and brimstone" (Ps 11[10]: 6), symbols of God's justice that purifies history, condemning evil. The wicked man, struck by this burning rain - a pre-figuration of his final destiny—finally experiences that "there is a God who is judge on earth!" (Ps 58[57]: 12).

The Psalm, however, does not end with this tragic image of punishment and condemnation. The final verse opens onto a horizon of light and peace intended for the righteous one who contemplates his Lord, a just Judge, but especially a merciful liberator: the upright shall see his face. This is an experience of joyful communion and of serene trust in God who frees from evil.

Down through history, countless righteous people have had a similar experience. Many stories tell of the trust of Christian martyrs during torment and their steadfastness that kept them firm in trial.

—©L'Osservatore Romano - 4 February 2004



Calvary

From Page 10

sin-laden mankind tell Him we were sorry for all the horrible crimes, all the iniquity that ceaselessly flows from our responsibility. This was the primary work of the God-Man, who, as God, was worthy to be heard and, as Man, was fittingly our representative. Christ is thus the Great Mediator between God and man.

The torment of Calvary, lovingly endured, was the mighty way in which Jesus Christ righted the moral balance of the universe, restored the delicate bond of mutual good will between God and man. "He died for our sins" is a basic teaching of Christianity. Our reconciliation with God was the primary effect of the great apology.

But this was only the beginning. The full reason for the mystery of Calvary is as boundless as "the wisdom of God and the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). In giving us the final answer, Jesus di-

rects our attention to the way the creative power of God works in nature. Every autumn we behold the world about us dying; the flowers wither, the grass dies, and the leaves fall from the trees. The cold winter months settle in and all is bleak and dreary. Then comes God's miracle of springtime and we behold the whole earth reawakening, as the freshening verdure of the fields, the budding of trees and pushing forth of plants all announce a birth of new life.

The farmer is familiar with the wondrous power God has placed in every seed. He knows how the seed sinks into the dark, moist earth; how it decays and falls apart; but instead of completely dying, part of it survives, and by the power placed in it by God, the seed begins anew to organize the elements of the decaying world about it, and, behold, comes forth the miracle of life from death, a bursting forth of a new world of verdant trees, rich vegetation, and colorful, fragrant flowers!

No one can even remotely fathom the vast extent of this creative power of God. It is indeed impressively mani-

fest in nature. The dying seed springing up into the new life is a vivid example. The newborn plant continually multiplying itself in ever more numerous plants overwhelms us with mystery. In his book *The Theology of the Mystical Body*, Father Mersch, S.J., remarks (p. 97) that a single plant of corn-poppy could absorb and transform into itself the entire terrestrial globe in some ten years-supposing, of course, that the whole were assimilable and that the plant's seeds were suitably distributed.

After this, the whole solar system would be an affair of several years, and all sidereal matter of a few more: twenty at the most. The tremendous energies hidden away in the tiny atom and released with terrific force when the innocent atom is smashed make us gasp as we try to imagine the boundless uncreated energy of God. What wonder, then, if the God-Man, mocked and scourged, bruised and broken in bodily frame, should declare Himself the

Can you fathom His power?

(See "Calvary" Page 15)



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Votación Pecaminosa

P. Frank Pavone

¿ Puede uno cometer un pecado en el lugar de votación?

Hago esta pregunta en primer lugar porque estamos en un año electoral. La campaña del 2004 está en las noticias por todas partes y se intensificará cada semana que pasa.

Y si Priests for Life tiene algo que decir sobre ella, también se intensificará en las Iglesias y los púlpitos. La razón es simple. No puede haber democracia sin virtud y no puede haber actividad humana divorciada de la ley moral. Y en cuestiones de ley moral, la Iglesia no tiene derecho a estar callada.

Para decirlo de otra manera, la moral tiene que ver con actividades humanas y elecciones humanas. Cada vez que tomamos cualquier decisión sobre lo que hacemos, decimos, y aún pensamos, estamos afirmando o negando la ley moral, y por lo tanto nos acercamos más a Dios o nos alejamos aún más de El. Cada paso que damos en el camino de la vida nos fortalece en la virtud o nos esclaviza del vicio.

Dondequiera que estemos, entonces, es posible realizar un acto virtuoso o cometer un pecado. Puedo estar cantando alabanzas a Dios en el coro en el medio de una liturgia espléndida, pero si pienso deliberadamente pensamientos y juicios duros contra otro de los miembros del coro, he pecado en medio de ese ambiente santo. Al contrario, puedo ser un oficial de policía llamado para investigar una queja dentro de un club nocturno donde se cometen



actos inmorales por doquier. Sin embargo, al desempeñar mi deber diligentemente puedo hacer actos virtuosos a pesar del ambiente. En resumen, las únicas zonas "sin virtud" y "sin pecado" están más allá de la tumba.

Ahora bien, el pecado o la virtud son siempre una combinación de mi acción, mi intención y las circunstancias que rodean a ambos. No puedo saber si una foto de dos hombres sacando un aparato de TV de un apartamento es un pecado o una virtud, porque no se si ellos son ladrones o técnicos de reparaciones. Todos los hechos relevantes deben ser considerados y no siempre están todos disponibles.

Observemos un ejemplo de pecado electoral. Un votante cree en el "derecho al aborto", y por esa razón a sabiendas y deliberadamente vota por un candidato que ha prometido proteger esos "derechos." Eso es un pecado. El votante intencionalmente ha ayudado a alguien que intenta promover una actividad violenta y destructiva. El voto en ese caso es similar al acto pecaminoso de tomar parte en una manifestación a favor del aborto, escribir un artículo editorial expresando apoyo por el aborto o de otro modo alentar o facilitar a aquellos que hacen abortos.

Decir esto no tiene nada que ver con ser partidista, porque cualquiera de cualquier partido en cualquier momento puede tomar una posición sobre el aborto y esta enseñanza permanecería igual. Tampoco es "decirle a la gente como votar", sino señalar las implicaciones morales de la votación.

—Courtesy of www.priestsforlife.org.

¿Quién es justo ante el Señor?

LOS estudiosos de la Biblia clasifican con frecuencia el salmo 14, objeto de nuestra reflexión de hoy, como parte de una "liturgia de ingreso". Como sucede en algunas otras composiciones del Salterio (cf., por ejemplo, los salmos 23, 25 y 94), se puede pensar en una especie de procesión de fieles, que llega a las puertas del templo de Sión para participar en el culto. En un diálogo ideal entre los fieles y los levitas, se delinean las condiciones indispensables para ser admitidos a la celebración litúrgica y, por consiguiente, a la intimidad divina.

En efecto, por una parte, se plantea la pregunta: "Señor, ¿quién puede hospedarse en tu tienda y habitar en tu monte santo?" (Sal 14, 1). Por otra, se enumeran las cualidades requeridas para cruzar el umbral que lleva a la "tienda", es decir, al templo situado en el "monte santo" de Sión. Las cualidades enumeradas son once y constituyen una síntesis ideal de los compromisos morales fundamentales recogidos en la ley bíblica (cf. vv. 2-5).

En las fachadas de los templos egipcios y babilónicos a veces se hallaban grabadas las condiciones requeridas para el ingreso en el recinto sagrado. Pero conviene notar una diferencia significativa con las que sugiere nuestro salmo. En muchas culturas religiosas, para ser admitidos en presencia de la divinidad, se requería sobre todo la pureza ritual exterior, que implicaba abluciones, gestos y vestiduras particulares. En cambio, el salmo 14 exige la purificación de la conciencia,

para que sus opciones se inspiren en el amor a la justicia y al prójimo. Por ello, en estos versículos se siente vibrar el espíritu de los profetas, que con frecuencia invitan a conjugar fe y vida, oración y compromiso existencial, adoración y justicia social. Escuchemos, por ejemplo, la vehemente reprimenda del profeta Amós, que denuncia en nombre de Dios un culto alejado de la vida diaria: "Yo detesto, desprecio vuestras fiestas; no me gusta el olor de vuestras reuniones solennas. Si me ofrecéis holocaustos, no me complazco en vuestras oblaciones, ni miro a vuestros sacrificios de comunión de novillos cebados. (...) ¡Que fluya, sí, el juicio como agua y la justicia como arroyo perenne!"

Veamos ahora los once compromisos enumerados por el salmista, que podrán constituir la base de un examen de conciencia personal cuando nos preparemos para confesar nuestras culpas a fin de ser admitidos a la comunión con el Señor en la celebración litúrgica. Los tres primeros compromisos son de índole general y expresan una opción ética: se



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guir el camino de la integridad moral, de la práctica de la justicia y, por último, de la sinceridad perfecta al hablar (cf. *Sal* 14, 2). Siguen tres deberes que podríamos definir de relación con el prójimo: eliminar la calumnia de nuestra lengua, evitar toda acción que pueda causar daño a nuestro hermano, no difamar a los que viven a nuestro lado cada día (cf. v. 3). Viene luego la exigencia de una clara toma de posición en el ámbito social: considerar despreciable al impío y honrar a los que temen al Señor.

Por último, se enumeran los últimos tres preceptos para examinar la conciencia: ser fieles a la palabra dada, al juramento, incluso en el caso de que se sigan consecuencias negativas para nosotros; no prestar dinero con usura, delito que también en nuestros días es una infame realidad, capaz de estrangular la vida de muchas personas; y, por último, evitar cualquier tipo de corrupción en la vida pública, otro compromiso que es preciso practicar con rigor también en nuestro tiempo (cf. v. 5).

Seguir este camino de decisiones morales auténticas significa estar preparados para el encuentro con el Señor. También Jesús, en el *Sermón de la montaña*, propondrá su propia "liturgia de ingreso" esencial: "Si, pues, al presentar tu ofrenda en el altar te acuerdas entonces de que un hermano tuyo tiene algo contra ti, deja tu ofrenda allí, delante del altar, y vete primero a reconciliarte con tu hermano; luego vuelves y presentas tu ofrenda"

Como concluye nuestra plegaria, quien actúa del modo que indica el salmista "nunca fallará" (*Sal* 14, 5). San Hilario de Poitiers, Padre y Doctor de la Iglesia del siglo IV, en su *Tractatus super Psalmos*, comenta así esta afirmación final del salmo, relacionándola con la imagen inicial de la tienda del templo de Sión. "Quien obra de acuerdo con estos preceptos, se hospeda en la tienda, habita en el monte. Por tanto, es preciso guardar los preceptos y cumplir los mandamientos. Debemos grabar este salmo en lo más íntimo de nuestro ser, escribirlo en el corazón, anotarlo en la memoria. Debemos confrontarnos de día y de noche con el tesoro de su rica brevedad. Y así, adquirida esta riqueza en el camino hacia la eternidad y habitando en la Iglesia, podremos finalmente descansar en la gloria del cuerpo de Cristo" (*PL* 9, 308).

—©L'Osservatore Romano - 6 de febrero de 2004

Calvary

From Page 13

source of new life for all mankind! This is precisely the mystery of Calvary. For He declared this, His divinely designed death, should become the gateway to greater glory. He said: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Believe me when I tell you this: a grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or else it remains nothing more than a grain of wheat. But if it dies, then it yields up rich fruit" (John 12:23).

He was crucified, died, and was buried. The third day He arose again from the dead, as He foretold. And in His resurrection, mankind arose to a new life! He assured us, "As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom he will" (John 5:21).

The God-Man dies for our sins, and in dying He asks each of us to die to our egoism in order to live unto Him. He asks us to die to our falsehoods and live according to His truth; to die to our wrong and live by His right; to die to our evil and live for His good. He does this not merely by

teaching us "the way" of life. He wins for us and offers us and gives as many as will receive it—His own divine life. In this way a new race of mankind is created. The advancement of mankind on every conceivable plane of progress is assured. Calvary is the nucleus of a new world (2 Cor.

This is the heart of the mystery

5:17), a new heaven and new earth (Apoc. 21:1), which God's omnipotence is even now creating out of this old world dying all around us. With Calvary the long night of human despair was ended and the glorious day of hope was ushered in. For the most thrilling thing about the death of Christ is that God became Man to make men gods. This divine rebirth comes to us through the life-giving death of Jesus. This is the wondrous mystery of Calvary.

--Condensed from *The Mystery of Calvary*. The Macmillan Co., NY, publisher. © 1959 Gerard Rooney

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