

Christ victorious Rising glorious alleluia



by Br. John M. Samaha

Given the prominence of his name in the history and geography of Christian society, St. Joseph naturally arouses our attention and commends our respect.

Since the feast of St. Joseph is celebrated on March 19 in the Church's liturgical calendar, March has traditionally been observed as the month of St. Joseph. May 1 we honor St. Joseph the Worker, a feast intended to highlight the dignity of the working person and the blessing of work as a means of improving the lives of all.

These devotional observances remind us to recall the importance of Joseph's place in God's plan of salvation, and to renew our intercession for his assistance.

Joseph of Nazareth shared like no other being except Mary in the mystery of the Incarnation, God becoming human. Joseph was significantly involved in this sacred event of our salvation. He was God's choice to be the husband of Mary and the guardian of Jesus.

Little is Known Factually About St. Joseph

Little is known of St. Joseph. The infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke contain the only factual information about him in the Bible. Through Joseph's genealogy Jesus was the

heir to the Davidic promise. This established the Savior's Jewishness, his messianic character, his historic reality. Spiritually this indicates that Joseph shows us how we can receive the promised Savior, give him a place of dignity in our lives, offer him a family, and protect him.

The Gospel identifies Joseph as a carpenter. The Greek expression of the Gospel, *tehton*, refers to a worker in wood, someone who made articles needed for village life, either domestic use or outdoor work, like frames for small buildings, simple furniture, and plows.

God manifested his will about the marriage of Joseph and Mary in a special way. Joseph was certainly not the physical father of Jesus. The virginal conception of the Savior was the cause of great anxiety for Joseph, but he was relieved of this upset by a mystical dream.

Catholic theologians and Biblical scholars have shown that Mary's vow or promise of virginity was not incompatible with the Jewish mentality and practice of the time. The mystery of the Incarnation also exalted Joseph's virginity.

In chapter 2 of Luke's Gospel, Joseph is called a parent and father when the Temple mysteries are recorded. His fatherhood is restricted to a legal context since the Presentation and the Passover were legal obligations. Significantly he is not called father until the Child is born and the birth proclaimed by a heavenly sign.

As Mary cooperated by faith and obedi-

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So What's It All About? by Fr. Joe Landi



It shouldn't come as a surprise to any who follows the politics of San Francisco to realize that members of the Board of Supervisors spend a goodly amount of time

doing theater while having momentary contacts with the reality of those they represent.

Since San Francisco is a City-County, we have a Board of Supervisors, whereas most cities have a City Council. Both do the same things but Boards need bigger, brighter lights for their

theater. After all, being a supervisor is just a step away from being mayor, to being governor, to being president, or queen for a day.

Politicians engaging in monkey business is no longer shocking. We usually overlook it, because we have come to expect it, even joke about it, except when it hits home or takes our job or home.

One of the latest escapes from reality was proposed by the very lovely and talented Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier. The last half of her hyphenated name, Pier, isn't as important as the "Alioto" that got her the job in the

first place to represent District 2, by the mayor and then by voters possibly thinking that she would be a chip off the old block of level-headed Joe Alioto and not be swayed by special interests.

Being new to the Board of Supervisors and perhaps not old enough to remember the brouhaha caused by the closing of St. Brigid's Catholic Church, or maybe thinking that the Archdiocese capriciously closes churches because it likes to upset people, Alioto- proposed that the city give the St. Brigid Church building landmark status so the Archdiocese of San Francisco or anyone who might buy the relic cannot tear it

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Christianity likely came to Ireland in the early 400s and thus Patrick was not Ireland's unique evangelizer.

St. Palladius was on Irish soil first, and the country boasts of legions of saints since: for example, Brendan and Brigit, Columba and Kevin; but somehow it was Patrick who became Ireland's patron saint. What marked him for such a critical place in Irish history?

He was born in fifth century Britain, a place that had retained a Roman and Latin character. His father was a deacon of the church, but Patrick later wrote that his household was not very observant or particularly religious. When he was sixteen years old, a band of Irish raided his household and took him and several of his father's slaves to the northwest of Ireland where he lived in exile as a

One night in sleep he heard a voice. "Soon you will go back to your own country." He soon escaped at age twenty-two and walked 188 miles 'in the power of God who guided my way.'" At some unidentified spot he found a ship about to set sail and after three days this ship foundered, forcing the ship's captain, crew and Patrick to walk for twenty-eight days with little food and water. The captain then demanded of Patrick that he obtain food and drink from his God and soon this band of wanderers came upon a herd of swine and a discovery of wild honey. Patrick later wrote, "Turn with faith to the Lord ... to whom nothing is impossible."

A Return to Ireland

He finally found his way back home to his family who guarded him then with an almost intense captivity. In another dream, however, he

wrote, "I am greatly a debtor to the God who has bestowed on me such graces that many people through me should be born again to God"

His Mission, the Gift of God

St. Patrick was a "lone missionary" who prayed at the end of his life that "I may pour out my blood for his name's sake." He ends his Confession by saying, "I beg of those who believe and fear God, whoever shall deign to look into or receive this writing, which Patrick, the sinner, unlearned indeed, has written in Ireland, that no one may ever say, if I have done or demonstrated anything according to the will of God, however little, that it was my ignorance that did it ... It has been the gift of God." Patrick died on this day in the latter half of the fifth century.

At the Mass During the Day for Christmas, we hear the Isaiah prophecy, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad news, announcing peace ... (Is 52:7-10) Jesus is the one par excellence who springs across the mountains of this world and our lives, imprinting everything and everyone with peace and God's presence. Patrick followed Christ in this same fashion, touching the green mountains and fields of Ireland as he echoed the words of Jesus, "I am [your] good shepherd... I know my sheep and my sheep know me..." (John 10:11-16)

A 7th century biographer claims that after his death Patrick's body was placed in a cart drawn by untamed oxen, and guided by the will of God the oxen brought the corpse to what is known as Downpatrick Cathedral in County Down. The truth of this claim is doubted, but the tradition has nonetheless remained that as in life, so in death, Patrick was forever guided by the hand of God. By God's grace, may it be said of each of us – one day – that we too, as St. Patrick were always guided by the hand of God.

--Gerald D. Coleman, S.S. is the Rector Emeritus of St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, Ca. Courtesy *Patrician* magazine, Summer 2004.

St. Patrick: Slave, Mystic & Missionary by Gerald D. Coleman, S.S.



slave and shepherd for six years. This experience of abandonment became the most decisive time in his life, as a slave-shepherd shaped his spiritual outlook and formed in him a deep humility.

God His Only Solace and Treasure

He had virtually no education, a reality that plagued and grieved him his whole life. He was barely articulate in his own tongue and was forced to adopt another. He experienced deep loneliness and personal poverty in every level of his being; and living outside in the harshness of the Irish climate, he was brought to feel "naked" to the point that God alone became his only solace and treasure. Prayer became a constant sustenance and he learned to become a passive instrument in God's hands. Through some sense of grace, he came to see his slavery and aloneness as a blessing.

saw "in a vision of the night someone apparently coming from Ireland ... bearing many letters, one of which he gave him." His letter, he wrote, contained the voice of the Irish and they "begged him to return: 'Come, and from now on walk with us:'" Many attempted to hinder Patrick's desire to return to Ireland, and even his own hesitations made him waver.

By pure grace, he came to see that he had no other option and so he sold whatever little he had, and set out again, this time freely, for Ireland. On the first trip he was a slave to brigands, but now he was a slave of Christ. His mission to the Irish people was often plagued by imprisonment, chaining, and condemnation to death. Identical to Paul's proclamation today that "Because we possess the ministry through God's mercy, we do not give in to discouragement...The treasure we possess ... comes from God and not us," (2 Cor 4:1-2, 5-7) Patrick

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So What's It All About? From Page 1



St. Brigid Church, San Francisco

down. She hasn't explained where the money will come from to retrofit the building to make it structurally compatible with another ordinance passed by the Supers after the Loma Prieta Earthquake of 1989. St. Brigid, an example of Richardson Romanesque architecture, has stood at the corner of Van Ness and Broadway since 1900, more or less, surviving both the 1906 and 1989 Loma Prieta earthquakes.

In any case, according to the S.F. *Chronicle*, Alioto- said, "We need to do whatever we can. It means a lot to people in San Francisco, and it does have historic value." To those whose faith is tied to their place of worship, rather than the God to whom they worship, it means a lot. The Committee to Save St. Brigid formed after the church was closed in 1994, the special interest behind this ill-conceived move, is thrilled by their latest tactic after being rejected by the Vatican, which apparently feels the Archdiocese knows what is best to be done with this structure. (See www.St-Brigid.org for their point of view.)

State vs. Church

Barrett Giorgis, writing in the S.F. *Examiner* (2/10/05) about the Brigid affair, makes an interesting point: "Where are all the separatists? If the archdiocese had asked the city to fund the renovation of St. Brigid, calling it an integral part of the fabric of our community, there would be outrage. 'Separation of church and state!' But let the government of our city try to tell the archdiocese what to do with its own property and there is nary a peep."

We Are Peeping

The issue of Separation of Church and State seems only to work in one direction and by those who have a grudge to bear against Christianity in general and the Catholic Church in particular. There are those who hate the Church for "what it has done to..." (fill in the

blank).

A "landmark" designation given to private property can reduce its economic value to zero. Yet, the Alioto- resolution passed February 8, and without a smidgen of thought, Senator Carole Migden, champion of the alienated Catholics, carried the wishes of the Supers to Sacramento because she works for us not because of her lack of love of the Catholic Church.

While there isn't much chance that such an ill-conceived special interest bill would pass, stranger things have happened in Sacramento, so should it pass, the thousands and thousands of tourists who come to San Francisco each year to see our beautiful churches, especially St. Brigid's, will surely remember to vote for Alioto- or Ms. Migden when they run again.

A Landmark Domain Bill

However, Ms. Migden could do something really productive, like sponsor a bill that puts "landmark status" under a Law of Eminent Domain, i.e., requiring the governmental authority making such a designation obligated to purchase the property at fair market value.

In a democracy, the government taking property for the common good should compensate its owner. Suggest that to Senator. Migden@sen.ca.gov .

Or, Alioto- could sponsor a local law requiring the city to buy St. Brigid's Church. Suggest it to her at Michela.Alioto-Pier@sfgov.org.

The City Should Buy St. Brigid's Church!

Nonetheless, Migden's bill opting St. Brigid out of the exemption of church properties from those that cannot be "landmarked" is unjust and smacks of totalitarian government at its worst.

Whereas, a **Landmark Domain Bill** requiring government to purchase landmarked property at fair market value smacks of a just society.

Income for the City

Think of it! After Ms. Migden's Landmark Domain Bill is passed and the city owns St. Brigid and has retrofitted it to the tune of \$7 million plus of our tax dollars, it could be rented for dances and gay weddings. It's a law that has the potential to please/displease a lot of people and exactly what we've come to expect from elected officials playing theater for special interests.

So what's it all about? It's theater called Beating A Dead Horse.



Reader's Choice

A Book Review

A Family Journey with Jesus Through Lent —Prayers and Activities for Each Day

Families will come together during Lent with an enjoyable new book that brings the stories of Jesus alive! **A Family Journey with Jesus Through Lent** provides the perfect format for family prayer during Lent. For every day of Lent, children can journey with Jesus from His baptism in the River Jordan to His passion, death, and resurrection. Hebrew children from Capernaum, Nazareth, Cana, and Jerusalem narrate the stories in a way that makes Jesus' parables, miracles, and teachings come to life, sharing interesting historical details to show what life was like in Jesus' time in just a few short pages.

In addition to these attention-grabbing short stories, Jesus, Speak to Me concludes each Lenten day story where

The Journey of Lent

Two books by Angela M. Burrin

Jesus speaks lovingly and personally to children about the significance of the story that was just shared.

Lessons and Activities for Kids

Added features standing out of each story in boxed format include: *Remember*—the lesson children can take away from each story; *Scripture Memory Verse*—a portion of Scripture of suitable size for children to memorize; and *Prayer*—a short, daily prayer to bring families together. Families will also find original artwork throughout the book and suggestions for Lenten and Holy Week activities. This is a book that families will enjoy year after year!

Step by Step to Calvary —Praying Through the Stations of the Cross

One of the most popular and treasured traditions of the Catholic Church is the Stations or Way of the Cross. Since the early days of Christianity, devout pilgrims have walked and prayed

along the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, the road that Jesus walked as he carried his cross to Golgotha. This was only natural: the followers of Jesus desired to be in the same physical places as their Savior as he carried his cross to his death. Now, **Step by Step to Calvary: Praying through the Stations of the Cross** will help readers to grasp the reality of Jesus' suffering along the Via Dolorosa—and bring them into a closer relationship with their Lord and Savior.

Each Station Offers Special Reflections and Prayers

Each of the traditional fourteen Stations of the Cross begins with a moving description of Jesus' passion. Other sections for each Station follow and include: *"Jesus, Who Are You?"* which describes Jesus using a traditional title such as Emmanuel or the Good Shepherd; *"Jesus, Show Me Your Face,"* which describes one of his countless attributes, such as gentleness, humility, or obedience; *"Jesus, I Repent,"* which provides readers with an opportunity for repentance and healing in a specific area; and ending with *"Jesus, I Pray,"* which gives readers an opportunity for prayer and intercession. Jesus' resurrected life is celebrated in a litany of praise at the conclusion of the Fourteenth Station. In addition, each of the stations is depicted in full-color by eighteenth-century Italian artist Giandomenico Tiepolo. Step by Step to Calvary makes a beautiful gift book or devotional aid for Lent or any time of the year.

Episcopal Praise

"Angela Burrin's reflective book . . . invites us to journey side by side with our Savior. One cannot help but be drawn personally into each moment of Jesus' suffering and death. This very practical version of the Stations of the Cross is a 'must' for enriching one's prayer life, especially during Lent." *Most Reverend William C. Newman, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Baltimore.*

—Available from The Word Among Us Press at www.wau.org

Praying to Our Lord Jesus Christ —Prayers and Meditations Through the Centuries

By Fr. Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R.

Personal devotion to Our Lord Jesus Christ is an essential component of authentic Christian spirituality. This anthology of profound prayers, ranging from those of early Church martyrs and Fathers to those of mystics and theologians, provides an introduction to twenty centuries of devotion to Jesus. The author adds his own insights throughout the book. Beautifully illustrated with classic art.

\$11.95—Ignatius Press

Embrace Your Renewal

—A Thought a Day for Lent

By Harold A. Buetow

The author, "an editor for the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, uses the Gospel readings for the weekday Masses of Lent as a prod to personal renewal. He begins by reminding us that Lent should be the 'springtime of the spirit,' in opportunities for growth and flowering." *St. Anthony Messenger.*

\$12.95—Alba House

Praying the Gospels Through Poetry

—Lent to Easter

By Peggy Rosenthal

Poetry's "fresh eye" may startle us with its different view. The author here casts the eye of poetry on the Gospel readings for Lent and Holy Week as a new way to enter the Gospel stories and pray with them more fully.

\$6.95—St. Anthony Messenger Press

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Teen Chat



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A couple of friends & I are going to do a fast...does anyone have any ideas what to give up? We don't really want to do the 40 days without food...

Posted 1/15/2005 12:320 am by kenj89

On-line replies to this message:

Re: Fasting

Maybe you don't even need to fast. Maybe you could just be more involved with the church and everything like that. Because that would be very hard to do and God would love it if you did that! And at the same time you would become closer to God.

Re: Fasting

I have tried to do bread and water fast on Fridays before. That is a challenge, but yet good.

Re: Fasting

If you want to go for traditional fasting "no food at all" try the 30 hour fast. It is a great idea. You can't have anything other than water for 30 hours. You and your friends could do it once or twice a month. That's what I'm doing.

Re: Fasting

Fast from listening to music! This can be even harder than going without food, in some ways. I have some medical conditions that made it tough for me to fast from food, so I have done this fast a lot. I've expanded it at times to no listening to sports talk radio either. This fast helps get rid of some of the noise in my head and helps me focus

more on listening to God.

Re: Fasting

Think of a 'category' of food that seems pretty normal for you. For example, cheese or bread or sugar, etc. Don't eat that food for 40 days. I think it will show how much you are dependent on it and how much you really need it like God. I think it would be a good reminder.

Not saying that you will, but if you break the fast, say towards the end of Lent, still be proud of yourself for taking the initiative getting this far. He will be proud of you for at least making an effort

Good Luck and remember it's only 40 days, it's not going to kill you. I will pray for you...

Re: Fasting

How about not watching TV?

Re: Fasting

Hey, well, just an idea. But earlier this year some of my friends went on a "media fast" : no TV, computer, radio, etc. (for a few weeks or a month). You don't have to go without food for a long time and it really shows you that we rely on that stuff way too much to entertain us.

Re: Fasting

You should give up something that you eat a lot of, like chocolate, or sweets in general, something that would be hard for you to stay away from. Fasting should be a commitment of how much you're willing to give up for God. Sometimes people will give up non-food items for Lent, like television, music, even hot...

Re: Fasting

You could try fasting until a certain time. Example: you could fast from 6am-12pm; if you go to school you could fast until lunchtime. This has really worked for me...

Re: Fasting

You could try not cussing, or anything else that leads you away from God. Also, you could try fasting from food, like not eating between meals, and eating less than you normally would. I hope that this helps. Personally, I am

going to try fasting 3 times a week, and stop cussing so much. I am also going to work on praying more...

Re: Fasting Give up your favorite candy, food, or drink. But don't give up Pepsi and then go drink a diet Pepsi. If you're going to give something up, give the whole product up.

Editor's Note: Fasting is refraining from food and drink as an expression of interior penance, in imitation of the fast of Jesus for forty days in the desert. Fasting is a self-denying practice recommended in Scripture. It is especially appropriate as an action for Catholics on Fridays and during the liturgical season of Lent.

Fasting vs Penance

Fasting, prayer and almsgiving are foremost expressions of the interior penance of the Christian as suggested in The Catechism of the Catholic Church (ccc1434). Other actions like spiritual exercises, retreats, attending penitential liturgies or making the Stations of the Cross and fraternal sharing, such as volunteering time with a charitable organization, are also appropriate signs of penance.

The point being: Do Something!

Also your attitude when fasting should not be, "Hey look at me. I'm fasting because I'm holier than you." It should be you telling God, "I want to be closer to you and this is my way of showing it."



Condensed from **Teen-Talk**, the chat room at www.lifeteen.com & www.sfspirit.com




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Think for a moment about the difference between these two sentences:

“I believe in you” and “I believe you.”

The first remark attests to my faith in you as a reliable person, whereas the second refers to my faith in the reliability of your statements or assertions. Obviously there is a connection between the two remarks, since I can fully believe you only if I fully believe in you.

Forms of the Virtue of Faith

This analogy represents the primary and secondary forms of the virtue of faith, as described in the Vatican II *Decree on Divine Revelation*. By *primary* faith we believe in God,

not aware of the subtle nuances of the English language. Likewise, persons not aware of the nuances of words in theology often use the words *faith* and *trust* as if they were synonymous.

Trust is a Form of Faith

Trust is a special form of faith that is person-focused; it is distinguished from doctrinal faith, which is referred to generically as belief. Trust is a type of faith characterized by confident reliance on a sovereign being. Thus, to say meaningfully, “I trust in the Lord,” is to experience a comfortable reliance on him that brings with it the privileged blessing referred to by Jeremiah (17:7): “Blessed are those who trust in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.”

Trusting in humans (e.g., “having faith” in the police or in a surgeon or a psychiatrist), is usually a good natural trait, but it’s not the supernatural virtue we are dealing with here. The supernatural virtue

succinctly and emphatically: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in *God*, believe also in *me*” (Jn 14:1, emphasis mine).

Failure to prioritize this personalization—a subtle requirement for trust—is why many faith-filled persons complain that their prayers are never answered. *Their mistake is in primarily believing that their request will be fulfilled, rather than primarily believing in the reliability of the One who will fulfill it.*

Expectant Faith

In Hebrews 11:6, the author speaks about expectant faith—that is, faith that expects that one’s prayers will be answered. He trenchantly asserts that without that expectant kind of faith, “it is impossible to please God.” If you wonder why this expectant faith is indispensable for pleasing God (attaining holiness), then read carefully the rest of the sentence: “for whoever would approach him must believe

Faith and Trust

by John H. Hampsch, C.M.F.

in the person of Jesus, as the Revealer of truth (see Jn 14:6), who reveals the Father’s mind through the Spirit of truth (vv. 16-17). Yet by *secondary* faith we believe whatever he reveals to be true, especially as he reveals it through “the church of the living God, the pillar and the bulwark of the truth” (1 Tm 3:15).

Scripture often points out the clear relationship between *whom* we believe and *what* we believe; for example, John tells us that Jesus, “whom God has sent speaks the words of God” (Jn 3:34). When our belief (faith) is directed to the *person* of the deity rather than the revealed truths (teachings or doctrines) of that deity, then we refer to that dimension of faith as the virtue of *trust*.

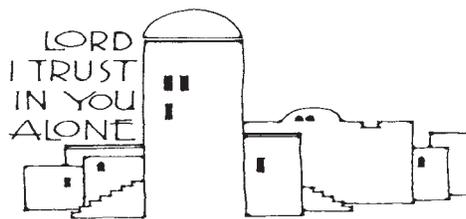
The words “healthy” and “healthful” are often (wrongly) used interchangeably by persons who are

requires that the trusted person must be sovereign and divine, as Paul reminds us: “Such is the confidence that we have *through Christ toward God*” (2 Cor 3:4, emphasis mine).

If you start with expectant faith in a prayer of petition, then you already have a kind of *belief* in a future favorable outcome. That particular non-doctrinal form of faith overlaps the virtue of hope. Merely expecting an answer to a prayer of petition would be the charismatic *gift* of faith referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:9. In Hebrews 11:1 it is called “the assurance of things hoped for.”

The Virtue of Trust

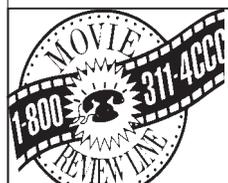
Yet even such hope-filled faith is not trust. To have authentic trust as a *virtue*, a person must not just believe in a favorable outcome (healing and so forth), but rather be primarily focused on the reliability of the One being petitioned; the expectancy must be personalized—that is, person-focused. Jesus highlights this issue



that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him”—*not* those who simply seek a favor and have only a background awareness that he is the source of that favor. The words in this statement that are overlooked by most readers of the Bible are precisely those describing personalism, the very element of expectant faith that characterizes the true champions of the exquisite virtue of trust: “those who seek *him*.”

When this specific form of faith called trust flourishes in your soul, you should humbly recognize it as one of many special graces from God (see Jn 1:16), not something construed only by your goodwill or by your pious human efforts. In addition, for trust to thrive and grow, you must depend confidently on the divine Gardener to water and fertilize it, for God gives the growth (see 1 Cor 3:6).

--Condensed from **Pathways of Trust** ©2005 John H. Hampsch, Servant Books. Available at www.AmericanCatholic.org



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www.usccb.org

The U.S. Catholic Bishops' Office of Film and Broadcasting

The issue of separation of church and state proved to be quite alive during this election year, but it is not tied exclusively to politics.

To say this issue is laden with myths would be an understatement.

The words “separation of church and state” nowhere appear in the U.S. Constitution, though many believe that they are part of the First Amendment. They were penned by Thomas Jefferson in 1802 in a letter he wrote to Baptists in Danbury, Connecticut. What exactly he meant to convey has been hotly debated ever since.

The most reliable work on Jefferson’s famous letter was revealed in 1998 by James H. Hutson, a prominent historian and the chief archivist for the Library of Congress. Using FBI advanced technology, Hutson was able to read through the inked-out lines in Jefferson’s letter, thus enabling him to more accurately understand Jefferson’s thinking. It sheds light on a fascinating historical background.

government and religion; two days later he finished his letter to them.

We now know that in his first draft, Jefferson wanted to send an unmistakable message to his political foes: he possessed only “temporal powers,” he argued, and as such was compelled to respect a “wall of eternal separation” that exists between church and state. But when two of his Cabinet members said the language was too extreme, he agreed and decided to delete the words “temporal powers” and the word “eternal.” This was no slight change.

Jefferson Not Hostile to Religion

Yet to this day, organizations like Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the ACLU cite Jefferson as giving sustenance to their radical views. But this is mistaken. While it is true that Jefferson did not want church and state to become entangled, it is not true that he was hostile to religion. Indeed, literally two days after he wrote the letter to the Danbury Baptists, he attended church services in a government building—the

hostile to religion. Indeed, when-president he even provided federal funds for the building of a Catholic church for the Kaskaskias Indians! Just to float an idea like this today would result in mayhem.

The Real Source of “Separation”: Justice Hugo Black

So where did our current interpretation of church and state come from, if not from Jefferson? It came from Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black in 1947. Prior to that time, it was understood that there should be no national religion and no government favoritism of one religion over another. But Black changed all that by decreeing in the case of *Everson v. Indiana* that there was a “wall” between church and state that was so impregnable that it even barred government from supporting all religions equally.

It is important to note that Black was not motivated by fidelity to the First Amendment. He was motivated by bigotry. To be exact, anti-Catholic bigotry. A former member of the Ku Klux Klan, Black made no secret of his hatred for Catholicism, so when the *Everson* case emerged, he seized the moment. At issue was whether the government could provide funds

for public transportation for parochial school students. The Supreme Court said it could, citing public safety concerns. More important in the long term, however, it also took the occasion to lay down Black’s infamous “wall” dictum.

Things have only gotten worse since. Those whose objective it is to stamp out the public expression of religion—if not religion itself—constantly trot out the “wall” argument. Though their intellectual touchstone has dissolved under the weight of evidence, their resolve has not. But unfortunately for them, neither has ours.

--William A. Donohue is the President of the Catholic League. Courtesy *Catalyst* magazine, November 2004.

Myths About Church-State Separation

by William A. Donohue

Where “Separation of Church and State” Really Came From

When Jefferson became president in 1801, he broke with the tradition of George Washington and John Adams of issuing a proclamation for days of “fasting and thanksgiving.” This did not sit well with his Federalist critics, many of whom had already branded him an atheist during the presidential campaign. So when Jefferson received a congratulatory letter from Danbury Baptists on December 30, 1801, he took the occasion to lay out his thoughts on the proper relationship between

Capitol—for the first time as president. This was no accident: he was intentionally making a public statement rebutting the accusation that he was some sort of heretic.

In 1808, Jefferson wrote a letter to a Presbyterian minister and Princeton professor explaining why he resisted the aforementioned tradition of Washington and Adams. He maintained that when he served in state offices—as a Virginia legislator and as governor—he supported state laws allowing for public fasts and thanksgiving. But as president of the United States, he did not think it appropriate to use the powers of the federal government in this manner. In other words, he was expressing his convictions as a Republican president.

All this is to say that it is pure fiction to say that Jefferson was

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Life and death. Light and darkness. Sin and redemption. The Easter Triduum begins.

Holy Thursday and Good Friday exude a fevered tension as we witness perfect good, the Son of God, become the new Passover lamb laden with sin, sacrificed in agony and abandonment. We behold His complete transformation into the Suffering Servant of whom it was prophesied: "[T]he Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all. Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent . . . Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away, and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people . . ." (Is

53:6-8). In the titanic struggle between good and evil, as the Lord Jesus lies fearfully bloodied and still at the sun's set on Good Friday, appallingly, evil appears to have won. Then, after such grievous loss, we are abruptly greeted by the brilliant triumph of life on Easter, as were the disciples on the road to Emmaus who in overjoyed retrospect recognized the Lord once more among them, remonstrating, "Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (Lk 24:26-27). In the words of the angels of the resurrection, the living one is no longer to be found among the dead (Lk 24:5-6). The Suffering Servant's ultimate destiny is gloriously realized: "Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their

guilt he shall bear. Therefore I will give him his portion among the great, and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty, because he surrendered himself to death and was counted among the wicked; and he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses" (Is 53:11-12). The Suffering Servant Himself confirms this exalted mission, "[I]t is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations . . ." (Lk 24 46-47).

Easter's Gift is Ours to Accept or Reject

So it turns out that Easter is all about us. Amidst the wonder of Easter, it can be oddly easy to overlook that this most august of feasts, from which all

pardon for our offenses--do we allow this pardon to take effect in our souls by responding with repentance, the "repentance for the forgiveness of sins" cited by the risen Jesus? Our Savior's blood was shed for us "so that sins may be forgiven" (Euch Prayer II). Do we contritely seek His forgiveness of those sins? It is entirely possible to waste our justification before the Lord obtained by Jesus' priceless paschal sacrifice and victorious resurrection by failing to repent of those things in our lives that effectively turn those divine gifts away. Incredibly, we can choose to make the immeasurable grace of Easter meaningless in our lives. To choose an unrepentant life of deliberate or negligent wrongdoing is to render for oneself the profound feast of Easter into little more than a bland, secular spring-time festival of fluffy bunnies and dyed eggs.

Allowing the Lord to Save Us

Our response to the Easter mysteries determines whether we will permit the sublime grace of justification obtained by the Lord Jesus to save us. How vital the decision to repent, to gratefully embrace the overwhelming gift of redemption that our all-merciful God offers. In responding to the glory of Easter with the rejection of sin, as affirmed in the renewal of our baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil, we wholeheartedly accept His forgiveness of our sins obtained at such immense cost. We celebrate the majestic feast in the way that the magnificent God intends and gladden Him that a sacrifice of infinite worth has not been in vain. We sit in our darkened churches during the Vigil, in the glow of a new fire that burns most brightly on the beautiful paschal candle symbolizing Jesus, "the light [that] shines in the darkness" that the darkness could not overcome (Jn 1:5). Let us take His light into our hearts to overcome any sinful darkness that broods there. Let us celebrate the divine triumph that marks the conclusion of the Easter Triduum, joyfully declaring: *Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting?* (1 Co 15:54-55).

Life! Light! Redemption!

--Mary Chang Flynn is a member of St. Cecilia Parish, San Francisco and does Layout and Design for the *Charismatics*.

Embracing our Redemption

By Mary Chang Flynn



53:6-8). In the titanic struggle between good and evil, as the Lord Jesus lies fearfully bloodied and still at the sun's set on Good Friday, appallingly, evil appears to have won.

Then, after such grievous loss, we are abruptly greeted by the brilliant triumph of life on Easter, as were the disciples on the road to Emmaus who in overjoyed retrospect recognized the Lord once more among them, remonstrating, "Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (Lk 24:26-27). In the words of the angels of the resurrection, the living one is no longer to be found among the dead (Lk 24:5-6). The Suffering Servant's ultimate destiny is gloriously realized: "Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their

other feasts spring, is utterly ours. The redemption accomplished on our behalf by the Lord through the Easter mysteries is a limitless gift given to us by our limitless Creator Who refused to abandon helpless humanity even in its sinfulness. The entire object of God's infinite love on the seemingly accursed Golgotha and His annihilation of death in, as the wondrous mystic John of the Cross calls it, the "life-giving tomb," was to secure the forgiveness of our sins. The ultimate mission of our Messiah was to reconcile us with our eternal Father, Who in turn, tenderly sent Jesus to us precisely in order to bring that reconciliation about.

Yet this monumental gift of reconciliation and forgiveness presented to us at Easter is not forced on us. It is ours to accept or reject. This acceptance or rejection of the great gift of redemption lies in how we respond to the Lord Jesus' taking our guilt upon Himself, completely winning

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On the lighter side...
(Send us yours to sfccc@sfspirit.com)

A 98-year-old Mother Superior from Ireland was dying. The nuns gathered around her bed trying to make her last journey comfortable. They tried giving her some warm milk to drink but she refused it.

One of the nuns took the glass back to the kitchen and remembering a bottle of Irish whiskey received as a gift the previous Christmas, she opened it and poured a generous amount into the warm milk.

Back at Mother Superior's bed, she held the glass to her lips.

Mother drank a little, then a little more and before they knew it, she had drunk the whole glass down to the last drop.

"Mother," the nuns asked with earnest, "please give us some wisdom before you die."

She raised herself up in bed and said, "Don't sell that cow!"

a newly ordained priest was asked by the local funeral director to conduct a grave side burial service for a man who had no family or friends. The priest left early for the cemetery but since he was new to the area, he quickly got lost.

Eventually, a half hour late, he saw a backhoe and its crew, but the hearse was nowhere in sight. Nearby, a few workmen were eating lunch. The diligent young priest went to the open grave and found the vault lid already in place. Taking out his book, he read the Committal Service, including a Scripture reading. Feeling guilty because of his tardiness, he made impassioned prayers for "those who have parted from us... gone from our sight, that is all", concluding with a generous usage of Holy Water.

As he returned to his car the priest overheard one of the workmen say, "I ain't never seen anything the likes of that, and I've been putting in septic tanks for 20 years."

When a family returned from Sunday Mass, the father criticized the homily, the daughter said the choir's singing was off-key, and the mother found fault with the organist's playing. They dropped the subject when the young son said, "But it was a good show for a buck, don't you think, Dad?"

a very elderly gentleman, (mid nineties) very well dressed, hair well groomed, great looking suit, flower in his lapel smelling slightly of a good after shave, presenting a well looked after image, walks into



an upscale cocktail lounge. Seated at the bar is an elderly looking lady, (mid eighties).

The gentleman walks over, sits along side of her, orders a drink, takes a sip, turns to her and says, "So tell me, do I come here often?"

Remember the Original Hollywood Squares?

Here are some classic comments. Peter Marshall was the host asking the questions.

Q. Do female frogs croak?

A. Paul Lynde: If you hold their little heads under water long enough

Q. If you're going to make a parachute jump, at least how high should you be?

A. Charley Weaver: Three days of steady drinking should do it.

Q. What are "Do It," "I Can Help," and "I Can't Get Enough"?

A. George Gobel: I don't know, but it's coming from the next apartment.

Q. As you grow older, do you tend to gesture more or less with your hands while talking?

A. Rose Marie: You ask me one more growing old question Peter, and I'll give you a gesture you'll never forget.

Q. Paul, why do Hell's Angels wear leather?

A. Paul Lynde: Because chiffon wrinkles too easily.

Q. Charley, you've just decided to grow strawberries. Are you going to get any during the first year?

A. Charley Weaver: Of course not, I'm too busy growing strawberries.

Q. In bowling, what's a perfect score?

A. Rose Marie: Ralph, the pin boy.

Q. When you pat a dog on its head he will wag his tail. What will a goose do?

A. Paul Lynde: Make him bark?

Q. According to Ann Landers, is there anything wrong with getting into the habit of kissing a lot of people?

A. Charley Weaver: No. It got me out of the army.

Q. Back in the old days, when Great Grandpa put horseradish on his head, what was he trying to do?

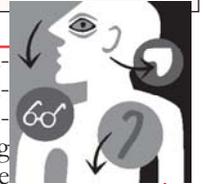
A. George Gobel: Get it in his mouth?

a college student challenged a senior citizen, saying it was impossible for their generation to understand his.

"You grew up in a different world," the student said.

"Today we have television, jet planes, space travel, nuclear energy, computers..."

Taking advantage of a pause in the student's litany, the senior replied, "You're right, Junior. We didn't have those things when we were young; so we invented them. What are you doing for the next generation?"



Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi

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Panel 1: Some doctors say that partial birth abortion is NEVER necessary for the health of the mother.

Panel 2: Well, DUH!

Panel 3: Come to think of it...

Panel 4: It doesn't do much for the health of the BABY, either!

Scripture reflection: Luke 18:9-14

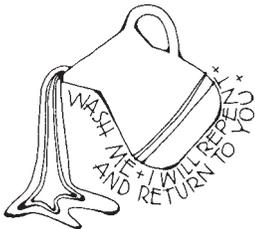
An

approaching police siren whines in the distance. Good news or Bad news?

It depends on one's point of view. If you are a criminal robbing a convenience store, it is bad news. If you are the employee crouching in fear behind the counter in that convenience store, it is a beautiful sound indeed.

The high school football team dressed in red jerseys, a thirty-point underdog to the heavily favored blue team, scores a touchdown in the closing seconds of the game to seal a most unlikely upset victory over last year's state champs. Good news or bad news? It depends on your point of view. If you are wearing a red jersey, a parent or supporter of the red team, you are dancing in the stands, hugging any stranger who happens to be wearing red. If you are one of the fans of the blue team, you stand there looking at the scoreboard in shock and disbelief,

as if you expect



Good News or Bad?

the score magically to change and thus restore your hope of another unbeaten season.

Jesus tells a story about a sinner who receives commendation from God and a saint who receives condemnation from God after they pray in the Temple. Good news or bad news? It depends on one's point of view. If you identify with the saint in his story, it is surprising bad news. If you identify with the sinner in the story, it is hilarious and surprising good news indeed! That is the power

of the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, our reading today from Saint Luke's Gospel. Depending on one's point of view, it is a story with the power to shock, or the power to bless.

On the surface, these two persons in Jesus' parable could not seem more different.

The Publican: Outcast

One is a sinner of the worst magnitude. Few people, in any century, enjoy paying taxes to the government, and they/we frequently transfer some of that resentment to the people charged with the collection of those taxes. But in the first century, the context of Jesus' original hearers, tax collectors were an especially loathsome lot. The Roman government was a hostile occupying military force in Israel. But the Romans auctioned off the job of tax collector in each local village to the Israelite who paid the highest bribe. In return, the tax collector was granted the privilege of squeezing the hated tax out of his Jewish neighbors—plus any amount he could collect in addition, which the tax collector

to be a tax collector was an insatiable greed, the willingness to sell your neighbors and family for an extra shekel, and thick enough skin to live the lonely life of a despised outcast from polite and religious society. Tax collectors were considered unclean and unwelcome in the places of worship and other gathering spaces. Rabbis taught that religious Jews could justifiably lie on only two occasions—to someone who wanted to take your life, or to a tax collector.

The Pharisee: Religious Overachiever

The Pharisee, on the other hand, enjoyed the unqualified respect of the Israelite community. Pharisees were not the elite religious professionals, like the priests who tended the Temple or the Sanhedrin who sat in seats of power in Jerusalem. The Pharisees were religious volunteers, men who did some-

thing else for a living, but who studied and taught and observed the religious Law with scrupulous care. If the Sanhedrin priests were the religious professional athletes of the day, the Pharisees were the exceptional amateurs, like Olympic athletes or collegiate athletes, of the religious arena. And by and large, the people loved and respected them more than any other sect within Judaism. Much of that respect was hard-earned by their careful practice of obedience to the commands of Scripture. If the Bible commanded a tithe to be paid from their income, they would pay a double tithe. If the Bible commanded weekly worship in the synagogue, they would appear daily. They were classic overachievers when it came to religion.

Jesus' Great Contrast

Could Jesus have drawn two more distinct and contrasting men together for his story?

But the point of Jesus' story is the difference between the two men beneath the surface.

Although both men come to the Temple, the sinner cannot even lift his face to God, for he assumes that God frowns at him the same way the other worshippers do toward him. And they are all correct about him; he is a real sinner. We should not whitewash his sin to make him more respectable. The Pharisee, meanwhile is really a good person, who actually does tithe his income, who gives to the poor, who eats only kosher food, and who never misses a worship service. Which one of these men do you hope your daughter brings home to meet you from college?

It is their prayers that create the reversal of fortunes in Jesus' story. The tax collector only concentrates on God in his prayer, while the Pharisee spends most of his energy focused on how much better he is than the tax collector. The sinner throws himself upon the mercy of God; the Pharisee recites his spiritual resume. And here is the real surprise, neither man realized as they left the Temple that God had forgiven the sinner and condemned the saint. There is no fire and brimstone falling from heaven here, nor the appearance of angels. Both men would be shocked to hear the opinion of God over their respective prayers. And that is the nature of true prayer. As Richard Foster said, "Prayer is not a set of words or actions to be mastered, the way one would

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master auto mechanics or algebra. When we pray we come with our whole mixture of tangled motives and twisted past. And so we are saved by grace, we live by grace, and we pray by grace. It is all we have. And it is all we need.”

So, Good News or Bad News?

Is this story good news or bad news? It all depends on your point of view, doesn't it? For those who wish their good deeds added up to automatic credits on deposit with God, this story is unsettling. But for those who thought they were forever stiff-armed from God's favor because of their miserable spiritual resume, this story is surprising good news indeed!

Those who think they do not have a prayer to make it to heaven need to know that a prayer is precisely what they do have. It's all any of us have ever had. “O Lord have mercy on us all,” we pray.

--Courtesy GraceWorks, Dallas, Texas.

Joseph

 From Page 1

ence, so did Joseph, who “did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.”

Since Joseph's death is not mentioned in the New Testament, Biblical scholars assume that he died before Jesus' public ministry, or before Jesus' passion and death. Why otherwise should Mary be entrusted to John?

Devotion to St. Joseph Ancient;

John Paul II Emphasizes Saint's Importance

From the earliest centuries of Christianity, St. Augustine and other Fathers of the Church wrote of St. Joseph. But the theology of his vocation, dignity, holiness, and intercession began to flower in medieval times; and the seventeenth century was a golden age. The enthusiasm of St. Teresa of Avila for St. Joseph was remarkable, vividly expressed in her writings, and perpetuated in the twelve convents founded in his honor.

All the popes of modern times, from Pius IX in the nineteenth century until our present Holy Father, have issued substantial teaching about St. Joseph in their official documents. Only recently has Pope John Paul II added to this rich body of doctrine about St. Joseph with his inspirational letter, *Guardian of the Redeemer*.

John Paul II's instruction affords us another occasion and reminder to recall the importance of St. Joseph in God's plan of salvation and to review what makes him special, not only for us personally, but for the Universal Church.

The new pastoral letter (apostolic exhortation), *Guardian of the Redeemer (Redemptoris Custos)*, deals with the person and mission of St. Joseph in the life of Christ and of the Church.

Pope John Paul II opens with this explanation: “Inspired by the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church from earliest times stressed that just as St. Joseph took loving care of Mary and gladly dedicated him-

self to Jesus Christ's upbringing, he likewise watches over and protects Christ's Mystical Body, that is, the Church, of which the Virgin Mary is the exemplar and model.”

Consequently, the pope continues, “On the occasion of the centenary of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical letter *Quamquam Pluries* (1889) and in line with the veneration given to St. Joseph over the centuries, I wish to offer some . . . reflections concerning him to whose care God entrusted his most precious treasures.”

This John Paul II does in an instruction of several dozen pages with a brief chapter devoted to each of the following topics: the Gospel portrait of Joseph, Joseph as guardian of the mystery of God, Joseph as just man and husband, work as an expression of love, the primacy of the interior life, and Joseph as the patron of the Church in our day.

Previous Popes Often Honored St. Joseph

In this regard Pope John Paul II continued in the example of his distinguished predecessors. From the popes of modern times have come substantial teaching about Joseph in official Roman documents. By the decree *Quemadmodum Deus* (1870) Pope Pius IX proclaimed Joseph Patron of the Church; and in his apostolic letter *Inchyum Patriarcham* lie uplainud why and outlined a theology of Joseph.

That sketch was developed by his successor in *Quamquam Pluries* (1889), and that encyclical of Leo XIII is the most important document on St. Joseph up to John Paul II.

Pope St. Pius X (Giuseppe Sarto) acted pastorally by composing a prayer to his personal patron and by approving the Litany of St. Joseph.

In 1920 Pope Benedict XV issued a *motu proprio* to honor the golden jubilee of the proclamation of Joseph's universal patronage of the Church.

Pope Pius XI spoke often in his addresses of the merits, dignity, and power of St. Joseph, and invoked him as special protector against atheistic communism (*Divini Redemptoris*, 1937).

Pope Pius XII instituted the feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1, 1955, and composed a prayer about this title.

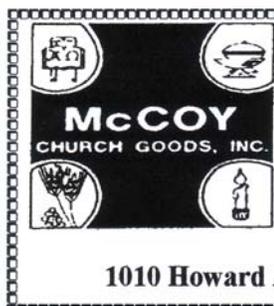
In his apostolic letter *Le Voci* (1961) John XXIII summarized the teachings of his predecessors and named St. Joseph “Protector of the Second Vatican Council.” On his own initiative, during the first session of Vatican II, Pope John XXIII included Joseph's name in the Roman Canon (First Eucharistic Prayer) of the Mass.

In a similar vein Pope Paul VI extolled Joseph in the life of the Church.

Now this centuries-old appreciation of St. Joseph is enhanced by the impressive apostolic exhortation of John Paul II.

As a result of this tradition, the accomodated Biblical directive (Gn 41:55) still rings true for all of God's people, “Go to Joseph!”

--Marianist Brother John Samaha, a former high school and adult education teacher in the U.S., including the Oakland Diocese and Lebanon, is now retired and residing at Villa St. Joseph in Cupertino, Ca.



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The Pain of Pain Killers

by Fr. John S. Rausch



Danny knew pain most of his life from a chronic ear disease affecting his right eardrum. He found relief from his periodic ear infections with antibiotics, but he lived with a dull pain inside his head. In 1990 he suffered a gunshot wound and his doctor prescribed a pill containing the opiate oxycodone to treat the pain. The pain killer unwittingly gave Danny his ticket to a life-long roller coaster ride.

He never felt better he told his wife, even his ear pain quit. But, when the medicine wore off, the pain returned, and with it Danny's 8 year quest for more and better pain killers began.

As his addiction advanced Danny visited 4, perhaps 5, doctors seeking pain killers for one malady after another—stomach trouble, insomnia, ear pain, the gunshot wound, vertebrae or nerve problems. He even bought pills off the street. In his final hours Danny locked himself in the bathroom and snorted OxyContin, a potent time released oxycodone hydrochloride. Then with a single blast from his 30-30 hunting rifle Danny administered his last pain killer.

Nearly a half million people in 2000-43 percent of those coming to hospital emergency rooms from drug overdoses-were treated for misusing prescription drugs.

In 2001, 16 percent of persons aged 12 or older (36 million Americans) had used prescription drugs non-medically at least once in

their lifetime. Federal statistics in 2002 estimated that 6.2 million Americans misused prescription drugs, compared to 2 million misusing cocaine and 700,000 misusing ecstasy. The number of new users of pain relievers has increased steadily since the mid-1980s from about 400,000 initiates to 2 million in 2000. With that trend comes the increased possibility of misuse and addiction.

The Problem is...

Part of the increase of prescription drug use lies with the pharmaceutical firms whose relentless marketing creates an appetite for the promised nirvana of pain-free living. The largest drug companies now spend nearly three times more money marketing and promoting their products than doing basic research and development. Since 1995 the R & D staff of major U.S. pharmaceutical companies has decreased by 2 percent, while marketing staff has increased by 59 percent, according to the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association. Currently, R & D employs 22 percent of the staff of the larger firms, while marketing commands 39 percent.

The Public Expects

A major part of American medicine revolves around pain. Doctors receive training to treat it, journals promote advertisements to address it, and universities accept grants to defeat it. In today's medical climate, patients expect a pill to relieve their pain.

The pharmaceutical firms respond with more potent drugs that, used correctly, stave off the most acute pain, but always with the threat of complications and side effects. The culture of instant gratification seizes on the allusion of no-pain to deny the life struggle from birth through death.

Given that harsh pain might require chemical intervention, an increasing number of folks are seeking holistic alternatives to drugs with their unwanted side effects and possible addiction.

Judy, a woman with severe allergies, quit western medicine for acupuncture and herb therapy. Jeanie with lupus found pain relief through feet and hand massage. Agnetta suffering acute pain from lymphadema aban-

doned morphine for reflexology, the application of alternating pressure causing a physiological change in the body.

Alternative folks train themselves to accept the daily pain of life by visioning a serene place without pain rather than sedating themselves with chemicals. Manufactured compounds seemingly treat one aspect of pain without addressing the whole human situation. Treating pain apparently requires a balance between mind, body and spirit.

Coming Events

Mar 4 FIRST FRIDAY MASS of the Sacred Heart

A Healing Mass

7:00pm Rosary, 7:30pm Mass

St. Catherine of Siena Church

1310 Bayswater, Burlingame

Fr. Joe Landi, Principal Celebrant

with Fr. Dan Nascimento, & Fr. Augusto Villote, concelebrants

Mar 18 Bible Study, 7:30 pm (Every Friday)

With Rev. Kato Kei, SDB

Corpus Christi Parish Hall, 62 Santa Rosa Ave, SF

Advance Registraion: Norma Calip 415/468-8369

Leonor Conde 415/584-8121

Mar 19 SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT SEMINAR

on Healing & the Sacrament of Reconciliation

9:30am-12:30pm

(Registration 9-9:30am)

St. Cecilia Church, Lower Hall, 17th Ave. at Vicente St., SF

Fr. Ray Reyes, Speaker

Contact Letty 415/469-0560

Mar 20 SUNDAY CHARISMATIC MASS, 2:00 PM

St. Patrick Church,

756 Mission St. (between 3rd & 4th Sts.) SF

Contact Judy 415/826-7827

Apr 1 FIRST FRIDAY MASS of the Sacred Heart

A Bilingual Mass in English & Spanish

7:00pm Rosary, 7:30pm Mass

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church

300 Fulton St., Redwood City

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The Church is supposed to be about salvation.

But what is it really?

This is an excellent topic to discuss at Easter because salvation is what Easter is all about. Let us explain this in the simplest terms. Salvation – eternal salvation, that is – is ultimately about getting to heaven – it is the open door. If you ask most people, they would say, “Yes, I want to get to heaven.” But many do not understand that in order to accomplish that, they must be “saved.” “Saved from what?” they might ask. The answer is that to enter heaven, we must first be saved from the

love, God had to give man to himself so that man would then be able to give himself back to God. In other words, he had to be made free. And it was precisely this freedom that brought with it the possibility of sin – the possibility of a disobedience or rejection of God.

Thus, when our first parents Adam and Eve freely disobeyed God, sin entered the world, and it was then that salvation became necessary so that the communion with God could be restored. This was the mission of Jesus Christ – to reconcile the world with God (2 Corinthians 5: 18ff). He, who was God, came because of His boundless love to die on the Cross in order to “save” all mankind. This is why Easter is truly a celebration of our salvation – we were saved from eternal damnation by the powerful passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without His sacrifice, there would



Dear Grace... by Grace Mackinnon

power of sin. And what is sin? It is when we have freely and willingly chosen to disobey or offend God.

On a day-to-day basis, many people do not think very much about salvation, do they? They may not even realize or believe that they are in need of being saved. This is because so often we have allowed the evil one and the “world” to convince us that what we have here on earth is all there is.

Free Will Brings Possibility of Sin

God created the human race out of love, and His purpose or plan was that mankind would love Him back and live in perfect communion with Him for all eternity. But in order for man to be capable of true

be no possibility of heaven for you and me.

The Church Completes Jesus' Mission of Conciliation

And yes, you are right, the Church is about salvation. Jesus knew that, even after He had redeemed us, on our own we would never make it to heaven because the temptation to sin has such a strong hold on us. So He established a Church and gave to her the task of completing His mission saying, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and Lo, I am with you always, until the close of the age” (Matthew 28: 19-20).

Jesus opened the door and continues to lead the way through His Church, but we must work out our salvation by following Him. And we do this by obeying the Church’s teachings because they are His teachings. Explaining how the Church is the sacrament of salvation, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states that the Church “is the visible plan of God’s love for humanity,” because God desires “that the whole human race may become one People of God, form one Body of Christ, and be built up into one temple of the Holy Spirit” (CCC # 776). God wants everyone to be saved! And He gives us everything we need to be saved.

We Must Work Out our Salvation Daily

To believe in Christ is to follow Him. How can we expect to enter heaven if we have freely and willfully disobeyed Him? We must make every effort to work out our salvation every day. Consider the following: “Every action of yours, every thought, should be [that] of one who expects to die before the day is out. Death would have no great terrors for you if you had a quiet conscience. Then why not keep clear of sin instead of running away from death? If you aren’t fit to face death today, it’s very unlikely you will be tomorrow” (The Imitation of Christ, 1, 23, 1).

Jesus overcame death when He rose on Easter morning. Easter is the open door to heaven. We must therefore do everything to defeat sin in our lives so that, when the time comes, we will find ourselves ready to walk through that door and join our Savior there.

--Grace holds an MA in Theology and is a syndicated columnist and speaker on Catholic Doctrine. Contact Grace at www.deargrace.com ©2005 Grace D. MacKinnon. All rights reserved.



Vision Statement of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (Adopted January 2004)

The Lord is calling the Charismatic Renewal to be bold in a united voice to make an impact on the Church and society by proclaiming:

- 1. the priority of the Lordship of Jesus**
- 2. the Father's love for all**
- 3. the power of the Spirit in all we do**
- 4. the radical call to a witness of holiness.**

Hace nueve meses, mi cuñada murió de cáncer a la edad de cuarenta y dos años. Yo sé que ella amaba a Dios y era una devota Cristiana, por lo que estoy luchando por comprender por qué Él se la quitó a un hijo de cuatro años, que necesita tanto a su mami y también por qué se la quitó a mi hermano. Sé que nuestra familia no es la única que sufre tal pérdida, pero yo oraba cada noche desde que fue diagnosticada hasta que murió, sólo nueve meses después. ¿Por qué Dios no escucha nuestras oraciones?

Querida Gracia

por Gracia MacKinnon

No pasa un día sin que yo no piense en mi cuñada y en la muerte. También pienso sobre mi propia muerte--algo sobre lo que casi nunca pensaba antes. Pienso sobre mi propio hijo (quien actualmente tiene cuatro años). ¿Qué le pasaría a él si algo me ocurriera a mí? Quiero disfrutar de la vida y estar agradecida por todas mis bendiciones y no preocuparme sobre la muerte, pero siento que es como una nube negra que pende sobre mí todo el tiempo. ¿Cómo puede ser retirada? ¿Cómo puedo restaurar mi fe?

Sí, la vida no parece justa en ocasiones, ¿verdad? Duele profundamente perder a alguien a quien amamos y especialmente alguien que consideramos que es tan necesitada – como lo es una esposa y madre. Nos volvemos a Dios y deseamos que nuestras plegarias sean respondidas. Pero cuando el resultado no es el que nosotros esperábamos tan ansiosamente, nos asombramos y lo interpelamos, “¿Por qué?”

La muerte, como otros acontecimientos que consideramos

trágicos, tiene una forma de enfrentarnos con la realidad. Nosotros con frecuencia tenemos la tendencia de movernos a través de la vida dando por un hecho muchas cosas y muchas personas. ¿Pero sabes qué es lo que más damos por hecho? Es nuestra relación con Dios. Si no somos cuidadosos, nuestra visión y perspectiva pueden volverse borrosos. Vemos a la gente y en ocasiones aun a las cosas en nuestras vidas y pensamos que no podemos vivir sin ellos.

No pretendo decir que esta gente o estas cosas no sean buenas para nosotros. Ciertamente que son buenas y Dios nos las da para aumentar nuestra felicidad. Pero ellos no son la última fuente de nuestra verdadera felicidad o el objetivo de nuestro destino eterno. Cuando le dices esto a alguien que se encuentra atrapado en las profundidades de una pena o con temor a la muerte, puede ser muy difícil que lo vea. Se lleva tiempo.

Devastado por la muerte de su esposa Joy, el gran autor y ensayista C.S. Lewis escribió: “Mientras tanto, ¿dónde está Dios? Cuando eres feliz, tan feliz que no tienes idea de necesitarlo a Él... vuélvete a Él con gratitud y alabanza y serás recibido con los brazos abiertos. Pero recurre a Él cuando tu necesidad es desesperante, cuando toda otra ayuda es vana y, ¿qué encuentras? Una puerta que se cierra en tu cara” (Lewis, C.S. *Una Pena Observada* [New York: Editorial Bantam, 1961]). Esta declaración expresa el terrible y profundo dolor de clamar a Dios, quien parece no responder. De hecho, Él parece estar tan distante de nosotros en esos momentos. ¿Pero lo está?

Eventualmente, con el tiempo, Lewis descubre lo que todos nosotros debemos descubrir – que es a Dios a quien verdaderamente anhelamos. Lewis llega a un punto en su pérdida donde puede decir sobre Dios, “Él siempre supo que mi templo era un castillo de naipes. La única forma

de hacerme darme cuenta de eso, era derribándolo” (Lewis, 61). En otras palabras, no somos nada sin Dios. Es triste que en ocasiones se necesite perder a alguien a quien amamos para darnos cuenta de nuestra dependencia con Él. Él es sin quien no podríamos vivir.

Desde luego tu cuñada era muy necesitada por su familia.

Nunca podemos minimizar o argumentar en contra de eso. En esta vida nunca podremos comprender completamente por qué Dios eligió llevársela de esta vida a la siguiente en este momento en particular. Sin embargo, nunca olvides esto – nosotros le pertenecemos a Él. Nuestra felicidad y realización sólo serán perfectas en Él y con Él. ¿Podemos nosotros, los que todavía estamos viviendo, competir con Dios? No, no podemos. Ni debemos intentarlo. Aquellos que han muerto y que están con Él, están experimentando una dicha y gozo que no conocemos todavía.

Tu familia sentirá una gran pérdida y cierta dificultad.

Sí, nuestras vidas han sido cambiadas. Pero confía siempre en Dios. Él, que creó todo el universo, seguramente cuidará de ti y de toda tu familia. Esto incluye a su pequeño de cuatro años.

No tengas miedo a la muerte. La muerte no es el fin, sino más bien el principio. En primer lugar, nunca se planeó que muriéramos. El pecado causó que la muerte entrara al mundo creado. Pero Jesús conquistó a la muerte y así, nos dio un camino para estar con Él algún día, por toda la eternidad. Permítele su tiempo al proceso de duelo. Pero has tu mejor esfuerzo para también, enfocarte en la vida y en vivir bien. Sobre todo, ama a Dios y confía en Él. Él nunca te abandonará. Luego, un día, cuando lo veas cara a cara, verás y comprenderás por qué ocurrió todo en esta vida de la forma en que lo hizo.

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Parroquia Corpus Christi, Santa Rosa Ave. & Alemany Blvd, SF

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La edición de enero del 2005 de Boston Magazine Online contiene la nota “Confesiones de un médico abortero.”

El abortero anónimo dice: “Tengo el mayor respeto por la vida... pero también creo que acabo con ella por buenas razones.” Sin embargo, oculta su nombre por miedo a que alguien acabe con su vida. Los atentados contra aborteros de hace unos años, que recuerda vívidamente, le dan miedo.

¿Acaso no se da cuenta que las palabras de aquellos que justificarían asesinar personas como ella son sencillamente un eco de lo que ella misma dice? Dicen: “Tengo el mayor respeto por la vida... pero también creo que acabo con ella por buenas razones.”

Es el mismo argumento y la misma falacia aplicada a un grupo de personas diferente. Es simplemente una variación de una vieja herejía que afirma que “el fin justifica los medios.” Las “buenas razones,” cualesquiera sean, nunca pueden justificar que se acabe deliberadamente con una vida humana.

El abortista anónimo de este

artículo no es el único que apoya el aborto y admite que el aborto acaba con una vida humana. En un artículo publicado el 26 de febrero de 1977 en el New York Times se cita a Ron Fitzsimmons, ex-director ejecutivo de la Coalición Nacional de Proveedores de Abortos, quien afirma: “La gente del derecho al aborto lo sabe, los que están contra el aborto lo saben igual que probablemente todos los demás. Una de las realidades del aborto es que las mujeres entran a una clínica a matar a sus fetos. Es una forma de asesinato... está terminando con una vida.”

Ese mismo año, Faye Wattleton, ex-presidente de Planned Parenthood dijo: “Pienso que nos hemos engañado

piensa que puede matar a un adulto por una buena razón?” No hay diferencia moral cuando la víctima es de distinta edad. El problema es que pensamos que podemos matar a elección, y que la idea de matar a elección no se ha diseminado por la acción de aquellos que se oponen al aborto, sino por aquellos que lo promueven.

Es tiempo de hacer un llamado a una postura coherente a favor de la vida. Es contradictorio oponerse al aborto y apoyar el asesinato de aborteros; es igualmente contradictorio denunciar el asesinato de aborteros y apoyar el derecho a matar niños por nacer.

Es tiempo de que los mismos aborteros, como el que cita Boston

La Violencia por Padre Frank Davone

a nosotros mismos haciéndonos creer que la gente no sabe que el aborto es un asesinato.” [Ms., mayo/junio 1997]

No estoy argumentando a favor del asesinato de aborteros cuando hago la siguiente pregunta: ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre la mentalidad de aquel que piensa que puede matar a un niño por una buena razón y la de aquel que

Magazine Online, se hagan responsables de su propia retórica y el efecto nocivo que esta tiene sobre nuestra conciencia moral. Estamos llamados a rechazar toda violencia. También estamos llamados a reconocer que cuando olvidamos proteger a cualquier grupo de gente, ponemos en peligro al resto.

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