

Charismatics

The Faith Newsletter of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal
Articles of Spiritual Enlightenment for Christians

San Francisco Charismatics, the Halo on the Internet, at www.sfspirit.com

April 2005

Volume 12 Number 04



Falsehoods are “sticky” for some people; they can’t let go of them. They continue to believe, for instance, that sunbathing is healthful, or that an alcoholic nightcap improves sleep, or that seatbelts are useless or even dangerous, or that the Pope never goes to confession. One such falsehood that some people cling to is the belief that all Christians are “charismatic” by the fact they are baptized

WHAT MAKES A CHRISTIAN CHARISMATIC?

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

with water and living in the state of grace, especially if they have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior. This position is one that confuses three separate spiritual states:

1) That of a baptized Christian in the state of grace (who is sacramentally and canonically a Christian, “baptized into Christ”) (Gal. 3:27);

2) That of a Christian who is “born-again” (“regenerated”). That is, a Christian

who has undergone a kind of “conversion.” Or a “metanoia” experience, as the Greek Fathers called it, which involves knowledge of and commitment to Jesus as one’s Lord and personal Savior (Gal. 2:20). It is a state which Pope John Paul II said is lacking in many “sacramentalized” Christians; and

3) That of a charismatic Christian who has received the baptism in the Spirit as an experience separate from, and usually subsequent to, a “conversion” experience (Titus 3:4-5).

Each of these three spiritual states can be lost or diminished in some way:

1) By mortal sin (1 John 5:16-17).

2) By loss or diminution of an abiding commitment to Jesus as Lord (John 15:6).

3) By not “living by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16-26).

To simplify the problem, this three-fold distinction can be reduced to a two-fold one, namely, the uncompromising distinction between a “pre-charismatic” Christian and a charismatic Christian—a distinction that seems to needle many non-charismatics, and raises the hackles of some theologians whom I love to challenge.

The Pentecost experience of becoming charismatic by being “baptized in the Spirit” (Acts 1:5) is something clearly distinct from and

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Voices of Saints by Fr. Joe Landi



Being the “voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord,” reportedly said by the prophet, Isaiah (Is.40:3) and echoed

by Jesus in the Gospels is what also should be our mission on this earthly level. As Christians we are called to help make this level of our brief existence as we expect will be

the next level where we hope to exist for eternity. In any day and age, that takes a bit of courage.

Nobel Prize winner (1987), Oscar Arias Sanchez, the former president of Costa Rica, brings Isaiah and Jesus’ admonition to us in a modern form, “Courage begins with one voice.” Sometimes that one voice, like a stone thrown into a pond, creates a ripple effect, causing shock waves that go far beyond the intent of the creating voice and changes the church, the nation and even the world.

Those voices that have

changed the nation, like Dr. Martin Luther King, a Baptist minister, whose voice of moral outrage in the ‘60s rallied committed Christians to use non-violent tactics against racial injustice. (See a “Testament of Hope” by Martin Luther King.) In centuries past, King might have been “worshiped” (from the English word “worthscipe” which means worthy of honor or respect.). Nowadays we worship God but King could be called a “saint” except that the Catholic Church is the only religion that has a regular legalistic process for determining which its members is

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“Say it with flowers!” Christians did not wait for the FTD in the 20th century to express their religious spirit and belief with flowers. The rose was a popular religious symbol from earliest times.

And in 2002 Pope John Paul II renewed this interest with his Apostolic Letter, *The Rosary of the Virgin Mary*, and declared 2003 the Year of the Rosary.

Why did the rose become an important symbol through the Christian ages? Is there a biblical foundation? Although wild roses grew in Palestine at the time of Jesus, the rose is mentioned neither in the Hebrew Scriptures nor in the New Testament.

In the Greco-Roman culture the rose represented beauty, the season of spring, and love. It also spoke of the fleetness of time, and therefore inferred death and the next world. In Rome the feast called *rosalia* was a celebration of the dead.

In western Christian iconography, the first use of the rose appears



The Rose: a Marian Symbol

by Br. John M. Samaha, S.M.

in scenes representing the next world, paradise, together with the lily and other flowers. These flowers also became symbols of virtues and of categories of the elect; for example, the red rose for martyrs, and the lily for virgins.

The rose, as the queen of flowers, was evidently a privileged symbol for Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth. The rose is a symbol of Christ, too, as we see in the German Christmas song from a poem by Goethe, *Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen* (Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming).

Dante Uses Rose Symbolism

The Marian symbolism is well illustrated by Dante in his description of paradise. His guide, Beatrice, invites him to contemplate among the heavenly inhabitants the beauty of Mary, the Mother of God: “Why are you so enamoured of my face that you do not turn your gaze to the beautiful garden which blossoms under the radiance of Christ? There is the Rose in which the Divine Word became flesh; here are the lilies whose perfume guides you in the right ways” (*Paradiso*, 23, 71-75).

But Dante uses also a more general symbolism of the rose, that of the universe (*Paradiso*, 31, 1-3), like the lotus in Asia. Indeed, with its multiple petals the rose is a beautiful image of our expanding cosmos.

Rose Windows

Wonderful examples of this symbolism are found in the gothic cathedrals and their rose windows, the circular, stained-glass windows that enhance the three entrances of these churches. These immense roses symbolize the world of salvation offered and revealed by God to our lost human race through the Old and New Testaments.

Christ is at the center of these rose windows, where he appears usually as judge or in the mystery of his Incarnation. In the latter example, we see Mary presenting the Child Jesus. All around are figures and scenes of the Bible illustrating the history of our salvation. In this artistic creation the universal symbolism of the rose found one of its most exalted expressions. The

symbolism of the rose assumed a Marian association in a privileged manner through two themes: the rose garden and the devotion of the rosary.

During the Middle Ages the theme of the rose garden developed from the symbolism of the rose in the literature of courtly love, using the rose as the symbol of the beloved lady.

Later the influence of the Song of Songs led to the rose symbolizing the mystical union between Christ and his Church, or between God and each member of his people. Because Mary was honored as the model of our union with God, the rose became a privileged symbol of the union between Christ and Mary. The Litany of Loreto includes the title, “Mystical Rose.”

Marian Roses Through the Centuries

Mary holding a rose (and not a scepter) appears in the art of the 13th century. The theme of Mary in a rose garden or under a rose arbor or before a tapestry of roses inspired many artists or the Rhineland.

During the Renaissance the rose garden theme came to represent human love and lovers. But at the same time the

religious, Marian symbolism of the rose was popularized by the devotion of the rosary.

The structured prayer form of 150 Hail Marys was termed a “rosary.” This expression came from the Latin *rosarium* or *rosarius*, a name given to works collecting the best of some teaching. For example, Arnold of Villanova wrote a *Rosarius Philosophorum*, explaining that it was a compendium, a thesaurus, a treasury of philosophy. Here the symbolism of the rosary ended in abstract use. In contrast, the rosary stands as a precious anthology of spirituality.

Our Lady of the Rosary is Our Lady of the roses, because the flowers are the symbols of greeting offered to the Mother of God. We greet her with spiritual flowers.

In a different perspective, Mary and the Child Jesus offer the rosary to their devotees. In his Feast of the Rosary (1506), Albrecht Dürer represents Jesus and Mary handing out crowns of roses.

The internationally renowned Marian Library at the University of Dayton (the world's largest assemblage of Marian publications and materials), possesses a number of artistic portrayals of the rosary. Some contain a circle of fifteen medallions depicting the main events of the lives of Jesus and Mary, which constitute the rosary prayer. Ten roses representing the ten Hail Marys that accompany the contemplation of each mystery of the Christian faith separate each medallion from the others.

The Rose as Emblem

Another use of the rose as a spiritual symbol is emblematic. The rose became a moral emblem to illustrate various adages or maxims. For example, “Life is a rose. Its beauty fades rapidly.” Or, “As the rose blossoms under the sun, I shall blossom under the eyes of God.”

In another emblem, the rose of our life blossoms among the thorns: pain, hard work, wickedness, disappointment. But God brings good out of our miseries.

The late, revered Mariologist, Father Theodore A. Koehler, S. M. summarized the universal symbolism of the rose in Christian practice in this brief prayer:

May God look with favor upon our world, the rose he created, that it may more expand its petals and so glorify him, our Creator and Father, in imitation of the rose of Nazareth, Mary, the servant of the Lord.

-- 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. Courtesy *Voice of Fatima*, Pentecost 2003.

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The San Francisco Charismatics

(ISSN 1098-4046),
on the web at sfSpirit.com
is a non-profit, educational,
monthly, faith publication of
the Catholic Charismatic Renewal
of the
Archdiocese of San Francisco,
published at St. Cecilia Parish,
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Printed by Folger Graphics,
Hayward, CA

Voices of Saints From Page 1

worthy to be a saint. But even those Christian sects who are fairly casual about "sainthood" would count King as one. Some Protestants are finding their own reasons to celebrate our St. Mary's contribution to salvation history. (See TIME, 21 March 2005)

Nonetheless, even as a pacifist, King is not everyone's darling. That's the problem about being "a voice crying in the wilderness." You can be hated for what you say more than what you do, because words can take on a life of their own. The pen is still mightier than the sword "and considerably easier to write with," observed the late comedian Marty Feldman. And it takes courage to take a moral stand. Most of us do not have that brand of courage.

You begin to realize what courage it takes to be a "voice" when you read the lives of the saints like Francis of Assisi, whose actions did not make him the darling of the hierarchy either, but whose ideas eventually moved the Church for the better. Or the actions of Ignatius of Loyola, who was hauled before the Spanish Inquisitions for his "heretic ideas." Now Francis and Ignatius have their thoughts studied in seminaries and have churches named after them.

It takes courage even when you are convinced that you are just the voice and not the motivator behind that voice. More often it is just an ordinary person doing an extraordinary thing.

AN UNHAPPY LAITY

The "father knows best" attitude of the '60s is no longer accepted cart blanche by the laity. I know first hand, having spent the greater part of my life on the "outside" as a layperson, ordained "inside" in 1989 to the Deaconate and 1990 to the priesthood; I've experienced the problem of "father knows best" from both sides. Believe me when I state emphatically, "He doesn't!" Unfortunately, there are too many lay Catholics (and priests) who still think he does.

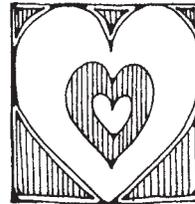
A NEW SPRING TIME

Things are changing slowly. Last month a group of U.S. Catholic bishops and lay church and business leaders formed the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management. Its goal is to help Catholic diocese and parishes improve administrative, financial and hu-

man resource management as the Church confronts changing realities in American Catholicism.

However, the hierarchical church has strained relations in the USA with a Catholic lay organization, Voice of the Faithful. It's a group that does not count itself among those who think father knows best or conforms to the old adage: pray, pay and obey.

In April 2002, Voice of the Faithful was formed in Boston in response to their pedophile scandal. It was a grass roots organization of about 100 Catholics gathered at St. John the Evangelist Church in Wellesley, Mass. to discuss what they might do in essence to make the promises of Vatican II of lay involvement in the Church a reality. Now VOTF is an organization of over 25,000 members with branches throughout the USA, including in Northern California.



*With
God's
Word
in your
hearts*

LAITY WANTS A VOICE

"The faithful are designated by Vatican II to have a meaningful voice in the church; it just didn't create a mechanism. We will," Dr. Jim Muller, one of the organizers of Voice of the Faithful and a Harvard cardiologist, is quoted as saying by Eileen McNamara in the Boston Globe (14 Apr. 2002). The group is animated by a simple slogan, "Keep the Faith, Change the Church," and a 25-word mission statement: "To provide a prayerful voice, attentive to the Spirit, through which the Faithful can actively participate in the governance and guidance of the Catholic Church". Not particularly dangerous stuff. However, future generations of the Church may look back on it as the emancipation of the laity or equal-to-all-Catholics are created equal.

With God's words in their hearts, voices crying in the wilderness gather other voices and they may start talking about things that will upset the hierarchy. Yet that doesn't stop God's voice, but may take generations to be heard, witness Martin Luther, a former Catholic monk who not only voiced but also nailed.

Luther's suggestions took generations to become commonplace. Hierarchies come and go and the Church has plenty of time. We don't. So we should make the most of our voice now. Sainthood could be just around the corner.

--Fr. Joe Landi is a Parochial Vicar at St. Cecilia Church, San Francisco and the Editor of the Charismatics.



Reader's Choice

LIFE OUT OF DEATH

—A Thought a Day for the Easter Season

By Harold A. Buetow

For centuries, Christians were known as “Easter people.” Easter is a fervent prayer for the full realization of the redemption of humankind brought about by Jesus. It celebrates deliverance from the slavery of sin and death. All of these themes and more are presented here in a manner both lighthearted and serious as befits the season. These reflections will benefit enormously those who wish to enter more profoundly into the spirit of Easter.

\$12.95—Alba House

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND ROMAN CATHOLIC MORAL TRADITION

By E. Christian Brugger

This engrossing and meticulously researched work traces the history of the thorny issue of capital punishment. The author's analysis of contemporary and traditional Catholic teachings on the morality of the death penalty is impressive and authoritative. This is easily a primary resource on the moral question of capital punishment.

\$50.00—University of Notre Dame Press

THE SEEKER'S GUIDE TO MARY

By Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda

An accessible, non-intimidating guide that introduces the reader to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Covers topics such as Mary in Scripture, Mary as the first Christian, devotion to Mary, and Mary in the world today.

\$11.95—Loyola Press

A Book Review

In G-Dog and the Homeboys,

journalist Celeste Fremon brings readers up-to-date on the heart-warming story of Father Greg Boyle, a Jesuit priest in East Los Angeles who has helped reform the lives of hundreds of Latino gang members.

Father Greg Boyle, whose first priestly mission was to South America, was raised in middle-class Southern California, a far cry from the barrios of East L.A., where, in the area surrounding Greg's Dolores Mission Church, Pico Gardens and Aliso Village combine to form the largest public housing project west of the Mississippi and the poorest parish in the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

G-Dog and the Homeboys covers the four-year period from the fall of 1990 to late 1994 when gang violence in L.A. was at its deadliest peak. When

G-Dog & The Homeboys

by Celeste Fremon

Celeste Fremon was first told about Father Greg, she considered him an intriguing, but limited subject. “I thought I'd write a single magazine article about the man's work, and then get out,” she writes in her introduction.

Instead, Fremon shadowed Greg as he helped Homies find jobs, encouraged them to resist the temptation to buy guns, even angrily attended their funerals. Fremon soon decided to devote an entire book-length work to his heroic exploits.

Combining the Pastoral with the Heroic

A typical Father Greg day looks something like this: Greg awakens at 5:30 AM. He works in his office or makes a trip to Juvenile Court to testify for various gang members by 7 AM. During the day, he performs conventional pastoral duties like saying mass, hearing confessions, officiating at weddings or funerals, or dealing with parish business. He answers each of the nearly forty monthly

letters from inmates he receives. Greg's last call comes at midnight when he rides his bike around the neighborhood to make sure all is well. If it's not—and often it isn't—Greg may not sleep at all.

The life of a living-day hero is hectic.

“At a time when the country is looking for those willing to do the hard work of caring for the young ... the story of Greg Boyle... is a welcome reminder that heroes still walk among us, guided by God, compassion, and justice,” says Tom Brokaw in his foreword to this new, revised edition.

Though education and public awareness of gang problems has increased in recent years, actual implemented public policy has not followed. Fremon hopes that this time around **G-Dog** will be a call to action.

“In the decade since **Father Greg and the Homeboys** was published, we have learned much about the underlying causes of gang violence,” she asserts. “The bad news is that very little of this knowledge has entered the arena of public policy.

About the Subject

Father Greg Boyle, 50, is pastor of Dolores Mission Church where he first started Jobs for a Future and Homeboy Industries. In 1989, he and parish mothers formed the *Comite Pro Paz en el Barrio* (Committee for Peace in the Barrio), a group that hosts barbecues, peace marches, and learning conferences for gang members.

About the Author

Celeste Fremon of Topanga, CA, is an award winning free-lance journalist who writes for *L.A. Weekly*, *Los Angeles Magazine*, and *Good Housekeeping*. Fremon has reported on gangs for fourteen years. An expert on criminal justice issues, she is the author of a twelve-part, yearlong series for *L.A. Weekly*, “The American Family,” which follows a parolee and his wife as they attempt to build new lives for themselves and their kids. Fremon's work has been recognized by the American Library Association, the L.A. Press Club, and PEN USA.

—Available from the University of New Mexico Press, (800) 249-7737, or at www.unmpress.com

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I'm not sure about going to church.
I'm afraid people in the Catholic church here won't accept me, because I'm not always in agreement with the church...

Posted 2/19/2005 6:29 pm by ceiligirl

On-line replies to this message:

Re: Going to church

Thanks for being open to God! And GO TO MASS! Is there a parish nearby that has Life Teen? If there is...go to that one! People will not "not accept you" and if by chance they do, don't let them stop you from being with God. You could try talking to some of the people in your family about the faith and what it means to them. The hope is that, by going, you will feel God tugging at you and telling you where to go! Keep on asking questions and pray for understanding. I will be praying for you!

Re: Going to church

You should research the Church's stance on the issues you disagree with it on. That means figuring out why the Church holds what it does. Also, keep praying and persevere through it. If you have any specific questions on issues post them in the Questions on the Catholic

Church section and I'm sure a lot of people would be more than happy to help you.

Re: Going to church

I will pray for you & your family. Our loving Lord can never abandon you nor forsake you. He loves us so much & wants us to come home to Him.

The biggest thing that sets the Catholic Church apart is that 1) Jesus established it Himself (Matthew 16:18) & 2) He left us the Eucharist -- the Bread of Life. Him who is truly present Body, Blood, Soul & Divinity so He can unite Himself with us & to dwell in our hearts (John 6:25-53)

I pray that Our loving Father may open up your heart & your mind, & that He may shine His light upon you & that you will be a reflection of His grace. May you have an increase of faith. Don't worry about being judged. Seek God & His mercy, because He is waiting for you to come back home to Him.

Re: Going to church

A faith journey starts with a question and a search. Faith always has some uncomfortable parts to it. And we are not always going to agree. It is OK to have doubts. It's OK to question.

What is not OK is using your doubts to stay where you are. Search for answers! And a great place to start that is at church. Learn more about the church and God and why things are the way they are. You are blessed! Keep searching. No matter what anyone says, remember that God knows and loves you right where you are.

Re: Going to church

When you say you believe in some things but not in others, you really should ask questions, because God is right. It's not like you can pick apart the teachings and say "Well, I believe in this, this,

oh, I don't want to believe in this because it doesn't pertain to me (or something like that). It doesn't work that way. God doesn't revolve around what we want Him to, we revolve around Him. That's why we have the Church to answer our questions, to be our answer, yet if you don't go.. how can you get the questions resolved. I suggest go to church, for God loves you and wants you to follow the TRUTH. For he said " I am the truth." Not you are, or what you want is, nope, He is. I hope this helps, I really do.

Re: Going to church

I think Faith comes from God, we just need to be open to it... you shouldn't reject all of church together...perhaps you don't fully understand the purpose of certain things...Faith comes from God... God is in Church... We talk to God... We get faith - it's simple - and having God present in a church is the most obvious way of developing faith... sometimes we don't even notice we are growing...but we are.

Re: Going to church

The faith journey is just that - a journey. It is life-long, and it is a constant struggle

Re: Going to church

We have to continually search for the truth, and live to please God, and follow His Commandments. You need to continue to learn about our Faith.



Condensed from TeenTalk, the chat room at www.lifeteen.com & www.sfspirit.com



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Living in the Spirit

Step One - Being Good

In accord with the laws of God, we need to try and be good, live uprightly, and never take advantage of others. Jesus tells us that: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" (Matthew 7:12). The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that: "Human virtues . . . govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith. They make possible ease, self-mastery, and joy in leading a morally good life. The virtuous man is he who freely practices the good" (CCC, 1804).

Step Two - Learning To Walk in the Spirit

In chapter 16 of Mathew's Gospel (and chapter 8 of Mark's), we read of two moments when Peter tried to do the good and right thing. On one occasion, he was told — it is of God. On the next occasion, he was told — it is of Satan. In time, Peter learned to discern the difference between what is of God and what is not of God. How?

The answer: Through prayer and through examination and reflection on his thoughts, actions, and decisions. We need to pray and try to stay as close as we can to God. We need to try and sense what God might be trying to say to us.

This is why we need to watch our behavior. I am sure that Peter's ability to discern and differentiate good from bad was closely linked to his own prayer relationship with God, the grace of the Spirit, and Peter's efforts to reflect on the way he thinks and acts in light of the words and teachings of Jesus.

Step Three - Experimentation

Finally, we need to try and seek the messages of the Spirit. The Spirit will speak to us — through sensing him in our hearts; through sensing him as we read the Scripture; through sensing him as we attend Mass, receive the Eucharist, and pray; through sensing him as we examine our lives and repent for any wrongdoing. God can and does speak to us — we just need to learn how to set our eyes on him, be open to his words, and be changed by them. We need to try and ask the Spirit to guide us.

--Courtesy *The Word Among Us* © 2005



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

Charismatic Christians from page 1

beyond the experience of becoming a Christian by being "baptized into Christ" (Rom. 6:3) by water. The two baptisms have totally different purposes. Water baptism makes one a child of God in a special way, grafting one into the body of Christ (Gal. 3:27 Rom. 6:3), while Spirit baptism gives one charismatic power to be an effective witness (evangelizer) in building the Kingdom (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:48-49).

The distinction between various baptisms (plural) is scriptural and described as an "elementary teaching" of Christianity (Heb. 6:2). All four gospels quote John the Baptist emphasizing that distinction: "I baptize you with water, but he (Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33).

Dissenting theologians claim that it was the Church that corporately received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and all Christians partake of that general outpouring—somewhat like a huge vat being water-filled, with many spigots for individuals to draw from the general supply. In this view, the baptism in the Spirit is not an additional experience subsequent to becoming a Christian, but a privilege that everyone experiences by simply being a Christian and thus partaking of the fullness of the Spirit-presence of the Church from the time of water-baptism. If this partaking could be called charismatic, then

of course every Christian would be charismatic from the moment of Christian initiation by water baptism. However, this theological theory was disproved by St. Thomas Aquinas, who showed that within an individual, there is a distinction between the "indwelling" of the Spirit (occasioned by water baptism or Christian initiation) and the "infilling" of the Spirit (occasioned by a Pentecostal experience of being baptized in the Spirit).

Jesus Himself Makes the Distinction

Jesus also makes the distinction, in a pre-Pentecost discourse with his disciples in John 14:17, by using two separate prepositions: "with" and "in": "The spirit ... lives with you (now) and will be in you (later)." Jesus thus clearly distinguished between two different levels of intimacy by which the Spirit can relate to an individual. The baptisms mentioned in Hebrews 6:2 were referred to by Jesus at the beginning of his public life: in John 3:5 he tells Nicodemus that a person must be "born of water and the Spirit." Then, at the very end of his earthly existence, just before his Ascension, he again distinguishes between the two baptisms: "John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5).

The disciples were already Christians, of course, as shown by the fact that they had already

See Page 11

The year 2004 was a bad one for our cultural elites.

They began the year by calling Christians who liked Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* anti-Semites, and they finished the year by calling Christians who favor the traditional understanding of marriage gay bashers. But they lost both battles: Mel's movie was a monumental success, and all eleven states that voted on gay marriage overwhelmingly rejected it.

The elites, those gentlepersons who work in the top echelons of the media, the colleges and universities, the publishing world, the entertainment industry, the artistic community, major grant-giving foundations, and so on, are now licking their wounds. And they are angry. Indeed, some are pledging to leave the country. Promises, promises.

Motives: Hatred and Power

What motivates the cultural elite are two things: hatred and power. They hate traditional values and

becoming, a theocracy run by Taliban-like Christian thugs.

Issues Mislabeled as "Religious"

What is amazing about this lunacy is that their cruel caricature of Christians is so wide of the mark. What most Christians want is a decent society that respects life and family. The right of a child to be born is not a religious issue—it is a human-rights issue. The preservation of marriage as an institution between a man and a woman is also not a religious issue—it is a societal issue. The attempt to label these issues as religious is actually an attempt to marginalize them.

That the Catholic Church is both pro-life and pro-marriage does not make abortion and marriage religious issues: atheists and agnostics have been known to favor both, and some religions—Unitarianism comes quickly to mind—reject both positions. It should also be pointed out that simply because the Catholic Church supports traffic lights and arithmetic, they do not, on that account, become religious matters.

about the smut that Hollywood delivers than he is the smut that automobiles deliver is irresponsible. Technology can, and has, helped to check the latter, but only a values reversal can change the former.

Christians Want to Stop Imposition of Secular Values

The Catholics and Protestants whom I know are not seeking to impose their values on anyone. What they want is for the secular elites to stop imposing their values on us. It is not our side that seeks to censor "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. It is not our side that seeks to stigmatize the Boy Scouts. It is not our side that seeks to remove the Ten Commandments from courtrooms. It is not our side that wants to ban kids from singing "Silent Night" in the schools. Indeed, when it comes to muzzling free speech and punishing diversity, it's more often their side that's guilty.

Can There be Truce to Culture War?

Many on all sides are questioning whether we can have a truce in the culture war. Listen to what the *New York Times* said in an editorial two days after the election: "This page will never give up our commitment to women's

right to reproductive choice, as well as full civil rights for people of all sexual orientations." Sounds pretty unequivocal.

Unashamedly, the next sentence says that "political sacrifices" will have to be made in order to stake out a "middle ground" that will lay "the foundation for a new national consensus that might finally bring the nation's social wars to an end." Translated this means that those who support traditional values will have to compromise their principles in order to accommodate the side of the *New York Times*. Uh, huh.

Didn't anyone tell them they lost?

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

Bad Year for Cultural Elites

by William A. Donohoe

they love power. When they could not succeed in censoring "The Passion of the Christ," they launched a hate-filled campaign against Mel Gibson and his supporters; for good measure, they branded the film "pornographic" and "sado-masochistic." And when they couldn't persuade voters that it was okay for two men to get married, they went ballistic. The demonization of Christians is now at an all time high. The elites are absolutely convinced that traditional Catholics and evangelical Protestants are out to get them. They sincerely believe that the United States is, or is on the verge of

Moral Issues Vital in 2004 Election

Much to the chagrin of the elites, moral issues played a big role in the election. So what have they learned? Not much. Having lost on abortion and gay marriage, the elites are now saying that poverty, war, corporate greed, health care, the environment and the minimum wage are also moral issues. They're right about that, but what they fail to understand is that everyone can relate to issues of life and family—they are as palpable as they are visceral. The same cannot be said about something as nebulous as the deficit.

Similarly, the elites would like to live in a world where most parents get as upset about air pollution as they do moral pollution. But any parent who isn't more concerned



Catholic Radio Hour



KEST 1450AM
7:00 pm

If ever “Once upon a time” got turned on its fairy-tale head, it was a few weeks ago when the engagement of Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, and Mrs. Camilla Parker Bowles, was announced.

Their relationship is built on years of adultery—admitted to by Charles on national British television—that affected their first marriages calamitously. Both of those marriages, each of which produced two children, ended in divorce. The lovely, late, and lamented Princess Diana, Charles’ first wife, famously attributed the acrimonious failure of her marriage to Camilla’s continuing relationship with Charles in these words:

God and Marriage

By Mary Chang Flynn

“There were three of us in this marriage, so it was a bit crowded.”

Charles and Camilla have been living together in his late grandmother’s home in London for several years now. Their wedding, to take place in early April at Windsor Castle, will be a civil ceremony.



two folks with affection for each other sharing happy and sad times together. Not bad, but it amounts to settling for very little; such words could also describe the relationship between Charlie Brown and Linus in *Peanuts*, for example

God is Love

This relationship and the circumstances surrounding this marriage are hardly extraordinary and are of note simply because one of the principals is the Prince of Wales. A great many relationships and marriages likewise demonstrate little spiritual dimension of any meaningful kind. Couples chiefly rely instead on human bonds in forging their lives together. Certainly, these human bonds are very important, necessary, and pleasing. But by focusing on the human while marginalizing the spiritual, these couples rob themselves of the most loving and profound bond between them that can exist and, most importantly, that will endure—the presence of God in their union, not only as a divine observer, but as an active participant. “Authentic married love is caught up into divine love,” states the Church (CCC #1639 fn 145, quoting *Gaudium et Spes* 48 § 2). God is love (1 Jn 4:8); He is the inventor

and perfecter of love at its most exalted: “For stern as death is love, relentless as the nether world is devotion; its flames are a blazing fire. Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away” (Song 8:6-7). A relationship based on the loftiest and most fruitful form of human love, between a man and woman entering into a marriage covenant, requires divine participation in order for that love to reach the potential that God intends it to have on every level, from simple, everyday partnership to rich, gratifying sexuality. But the always-gracious Lord will not intrude on a relationship unless He is allowed in. He relies on that couple to open the door to His loving presence. Exclude God and the divine meaning and intensity that He brings to a relationship, and that relationship will simply become

often self-sacrificial, love between husband and wife in body, mind, and soul: a symbol of God’s love that defends and cares for—never abuses!—the beloved. Christian marriage is to be a constant symbol of the Lord’s loving, faithful, and self-sacrificial quest for complete union with us. Conversely, this loving quest of the Lord’s for complete union is to be the exemplar for Christian marriage.

Spirituality in Marriage

Going to Mass and receiving the sacraments; investing time in praying together (even if briefly, but regularly); taking advantage of grace-filled moments such as the opportunity to renew marriage vows: such are the simple things that make up spirituality within a marriage. They are beneficial to a marriage on a practical level. For example, marriages with a strong and sincere sense of God are those marriages least likely to be marred by serious problems such as adultery, abuse, or the like. If a couple has habitual recourse to the Lord’s grace and guidance, issues such as temptation can be dealt with routinely and decisively before posing a threat to the marriage’s integrity.

Furthermore, cultivating spirituality in a Christian marriage is an ideal way of dealing with problems that cannot be avoided and will invariably arise. Weighing options and solutions in a prayerful way—and, particularly, doing so together—is an ideal way for a couple to problem-solve.

Perhaps the greatest benefit enjoyed by a husband and wife who make the spiritual dimension of their marriage a top priority, however, is the joyful knowledge that such openness to God’s presence assures them of His profound partnership in their union and, therefore, of the guaranteed steady increase of their love for Him—and for each other. *With you we rejoice and exult, we extol your love; it is beyond wine: how rightly you are loved!* (Song 1:4)

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

One Heart and Soul

The Church affirms that married love “aims at . . . a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul” (CCC #1643). The unity of married love is a wonderful representation on the human level of the sublime unity that the divine Lord, out of His infinite love, seeks with His creatures: one heart, one soul, one will. That is why disrespect of the married state—for example, through adultery (even if it is mutually tolerated by a couple, as in so-called “open marriages”) or, more ominously, through abuse—is so very grievous.

Not only is the obvious suffering that such behavior produces a terribly grave wrong, but such behavior degrades the unity of marriage as God intends it. The married relationship is to be based on a union until death of mutually faithful,

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

Dog Property Laws

1. If I like it, it's mine.
2. If it's in my mouth, it's mine.
3. If I can take it from you, it's mine.
4. If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.
5. If it's mine, it must never appear to be yours in any way.
6. If I'm chewing something up, all the pieces are mine.
7. If it just looks like mine, it's mine.
8. If I saw it first, it's mine.
9. If you are playing with something and you put it down, it automatically becomes mine.
10. If it's broken, it's yours.

How We Got a New Organist

Our minister was preoccupied with thoughts of how he was going to, after the worship service, ask the congregation to come up with more money than they were expecting for repairs to the church building.

Therefore, he was annoyed to find that the regular organist was sick and a substitute had been brought in at the last minute.

The substitute wanted to know what to play. "Here's a copy of the service," he said impatiently. "But

you'll have to think of something to play after I make the announcement about the finances."

At the end of the service, the minister paused and said, "Brothers and Sisters, we are in great difficulty; the roof repairs cost twice as much as we expected, and we need \$4,000 more. Any of you who can pledge \$100 or more, please stand up." At that moment, the substitute organist played "The Star-Spangled Banner."

And that is how the substitute became the regular organist!



My How Time Flies...

To realize the value of one year:
Ask a student who has failed a final exam.

To realize the value of one month:
Ask a mother who has given birth to a premature baby.

To realize the value of one week:
Ask an editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realize the value of one hour:
Ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realize the value of one minute:
Ask a person who has missed the train, bus or plane.

To realize the value of one second:
Ask a person who has survived an accident.

To realize the value of one millisecond:
Ask the person who has won a silver medal in the Olympics.

Time waits for no one.
Treasure every moment.
Share them with someone you love.
Share them too with God,
who loves you.

Sister was telling the class the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and was making a tremendous impression with her story.

"Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city that was going to be destroyed. They were not to look back, but Lot's wife did look back and was turned into a pillar of salt.

"And now, children are there any questions?" she asked.

"Yes," one boy asked. "Whatever happened to the flea?"

Father Flood/Webb

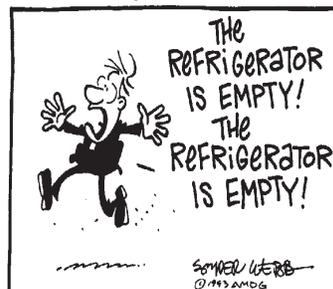


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Modern life is based more and more on the elimination of risk.

Everything is calculated, worked out, insured against. How many people are hypnotized, once they go out into the world, by the prospect, not of final rest, which is less attractive to them, but of pre-final rest, the age of retirement and a pension. It needs more courage today than formerly to build one's life on any value but security and to dare to base one's existence on reasons for living greater than oneself.

Human courage

And yet life is not worth living unless it is dedicated to the service of values which transcend human life.

Man is not made for life on the ground floor, for a drab existence. His heart has more dimensions than the four walls of a house, however cozy and homely it may be. The human heart must have its reasons for living, reasons which measure up to its hunger and thirst. And the heart of man dreams of the infinite and the eternal. It dreams of giving itself to something beyond and outside itself.

This is true even in the present life. It is always a matter for astonishment to see how many people volunteer for

in this case it was primarily a question of physical courage. True moral courage is rarer in this base world. The courage to do one's duty, to go against the current and the prevailing wind, to brave irony and ridicule—St Peter, who trembled at a servant-girl's mockery at the praetorium realized something of it—this is what we must constantly strive for: courage in the face of life; courage to accept life.

Péguy speaks of the fathers of today as the great adventurers of the modern world. It is a great and wonderful thing to collaborate with God and do it with loyalty and generosity. It is a great and wonderful thing also on the part of parents, when the time comes for their children to choose their careers, not to stifle their youthful generosity and idealism, not to clip their wings with too much prudence.

The Christian risk

There is a magnificent Christian risk inherent in every human vocation. The young feel it by instinct: they must be allowed to run the risk of making something of their lives. This drive is often weakened by a cautious attitude. By coddling the young, we turn them into egoists. And egoism will take its revenge, sooner or later, on those whose love has failed to come up to the mark. I am think-

his life, his power as Savior of the world, in them. God longs to make saints of all the beings he has created. We have no right to stand in the way of their true happiness.

The motive of profit cannot by itself be the response to a question so fundamental as the choice and direction of life. We have only one life. It is a question of living a life which is worth something, worth something to our own family, no doubt, but also worth something to society at large. It is a question of giving one's life for others, of risking it in their service. This social, communal outlook is the only one which fits in with the demands of Christianity. From the Gospel point of view, there is no difference between social Christianity and the other kind. The social dimension is an integral and fundamental part of the Christian vocation. When I say this, dear parents, I am thinking of your older sons and daughters who find themselves at the crossroads.

Beware of too much prudence and caution. Help them to make a good start on the way.

The letter of the Gospel

But I am thinking of you, too. There is an element of risk which you must preserve in your life, if you want it to be great and worth while. You must have the courage to take certain passages in the Gospels literally. You must have the courage to go beyond what is guaranteed solely by fleeting human wisdom.

Make a brief examination of conscience occasionally on this one point: "Do I ever do anything in my life which I should not have done if Christ had not come on earth?" Is there anywhere in your life a deed which, without him, you would not have done? If your life rolls on, from morning till night, with nothing unforeseen, if everything about you, twenty-four hours out of the twenty-four, can be explained in human terms, then Christianity has not penetrated you to your very depths.

Will you take a risk in the name of Jesus and for his sake? He is watching you; he is waiting for you. And he measures your heart's real love by the impulse which gets you out of yourself and makes you rebel against conformity. Have no fear: stop hugging the shore and make for the open sea. There is no need to be afraid of imitating St Peter occasionally and walking on the water towards the Lord, so long as we keep our eyes fixed confidently on him and put our lives in his hands.

Learning to Take Risks

by Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens

tasks which call for heroism. When the Americans or the Russians want candidates for space flights, their only problem is the number they have to choose from. These young men, even young women, are not disillusioned with life; for the most part, they are people who long to risk their lives for something worthwhile.

A London newspaper once published this advertisement asking for volunteers to serve with an Antarctic expedition:

Men wanted for dangerous expedition. Low pay, intense cold, months of total darkness, constant danger. Return uncertain. If successful, honour and gratitude.

There were five thousand replies to this advertisement from men who wanted to go with the expedition.

Let us salute their courage. But

ing of the tragedy of so many vocations to a generous life, to the priesthood or the convent, which have been stifled by affection which was really only self-seeking, counsels of prudence which were really no more than a way of steering a human life off the track, back to a low level of aspiration.

Parents, think about this seriously. Sometimes, when young people get out of hand and want to follow mere caprice or impulse, you are justified in opposing them. But sometimes your opposition is a revolt against the Holy Spirit at work in the souls of your children, an obstacle to the grace of God. Your children are not your property. They belong to God, and he entrusts them to you. It is in the name of the Lord that I am here to plead their cause, the cause of God's rights, the cause of his love for your children.

What God longs for, what he wants for each of his children, is to develop the whole of

--Condensed from **Christian Life, Day by Day** by Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens. English Translation ©2005 Burns & Oates Ltd., 1963. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland.



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Charismatic Christians From Page 6

received spiritual life for having “heard his word and believed in the one who sent him” (John 5:24). Jesus had assured them that they were “clean” (Luke 13:10), with their “names written in heaven” (10:20). Furthermore, the resurrected Jesus had breathed upon them, even imparting the Holy Spirit to activate a ministerial gift of forgiving sins (John 20:22-23). Yet he told them to pray for (Luke 11:13) and to wait for (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4) a subsequent (and therefore separate) grace of the baptism in the Spirit a “few days” after his Ascension (Acts 1:5)—clearly an additional experience beyond the basic Christianity they had been experiencing.

Baptism in the Spirit—Normative in Early Church

A close study of the Acts of the Apostles shows that the early Christians regarded it as normal and normative for believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit; hence, in the early Church a pre-charismatic Christian was regarded as a kind of “sub-normal” Christian. This is clear, for instance, in the case of the converted Samaritans, mentioned in Acts 8, who had fulfilled the two requirements for salvation given by Jesus (Mark 16:16): belief and baptism. Yet, when Peter and John arrived in Samaria, they “prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 8:15-16). They obviously had not received the baptism of the Spirit at the time of their conversion and water baptism. A similar example is seen in Acts 19. Paul found twelve disciples at Ephesus who were believers, and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when (or after) you believed?”

When they answered in the negative, Paul baptized them. Then, “when Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied” (verse 6). If mere believing or being converted carried with it the baptism in the Spirit automatically, then Paul’s question would have been meaningless. The Ephesians’ baptism in the Holy Spirit was subsequent to (and therefore distinct from) their belief in Christ and also distinct from their water baptism.

While the baptism in the Spirit is always distinct from the conversion experience, it need not necessarily be subsequent to it, as in the case of Cornelius’ household, all of whom received the baptism in the Spirit before they were baptized in water (Acts 10:44-48). In recounting this episode at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:7-9), Peter referred to two separate acts: 1) Purifying their hearts by faith (conversion), and 2) Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul’s baptism in the Spirit at the hands of Ananias came three days after his conversion on the road to Damascus, and just before his water baptism (Acts 9:3-18). Here again, Spirit-baptism is seen as distinct from a conversion experience and distinct from water baptism.

Baptism in the Spirit is a Beginning

A common misunderstanding is to regard Spirit baptism merely as a one-time isolated event, rather than the beginning of a “growth in the Spirit,” with a need for “refilling” periodically (by prayer meetings, etc.). Hence Scripture urges, “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing” (Heb. 10:25). When Peter and John joined in a prayer meeting after being released from prison, they were re-filled by a deepened presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31).

The exact translation of Ephesians 5:18 is not “Be filled with the Spirit,” but “Be being filled with the Spirit”—an ongoing receptive experience. Thus, it is clear that the baptism in the Spirit is an experience over and above the experiences of water baptism, the born-again experience, and in general the conversion experience. It adds to the “indwelling” of the Spirit a new kind of presence—an “infilling” that is meant to produce empowerment and growth—a growth in the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) as well as the gifts of the Spirit (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

Although Paul found much to criticize among the Corinthian Christians, still he called them “sanctified,” and yet “called to be holy” (1 Cor. 1:2). That is, he attributed to them what some theologians call “positional sanctification,” and yet he urged them to “progressive sanctification.” The growth factor in this “progressive sanctification” is the Holy Spirit himself (1 Pet. 1:2; Rom. 13:16), who “helps us in our weakness and ... intercedes for us” (Rom. 8:26). Hence, it follows that those with a deeper relationship with this “Spirit of holiness” (Rom. 1:4) through the baptism in the Spirit have an advantage in opportunities for graces inducing that growth. (1 Th. 3:13; John 7:38-39).

Ultimately, in personal self-evaluation, the matter of the baptism in the Spirit resolves itself into a question. And this question is not, “Do I have all of the Holy Spirit?” but rather, “Does the Holy Spirit have all of me?”

--Rev. John Hampsch, C.M.F. latest book, *Pathways of Trust, 101 Shortcuts to Holiness*, is at your favorite book store.

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Cheap Tomatoes, Hard Times

by Fr. John S. Rausch



of Guadeloupe Church.

They then rode two hours north for encouraging words from Bishop John Nevins of the Diocese of Venice. Seemingly, these prayers plus their three year boycott supported by national labor and religious groups convinced Yum! Brands, the parent company of Taco Bell, to meet the demands of the workers and pay an additional penny per pound for picking tomatoes. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), congratulated Taco Bell for doing the right thing and ended the boycott. Tomato pickers rise before dawn to board buses for the fields. There, they labor, many days in blistering heat, to fill 32 pound baskets with large green tomatoes that bring them the same piece rate (40 to 50 cents per basket) as 25 years ago. Minimum wage laws do not apply to agricultural workers. They get no overtime pay and they have no right to organize a union. In addition, reports of abuse in the work camps range from housing 12 workers in dilapidated trailers, to overcharging them for rent and groceries, to modern day slavery.

A full day's pay depends on the vagaries of the weather, and most tomato pickers live in poverty earning less than \$8,000 a year. To make \$50, workers spend 10 to 12 hours filling 125 baskets, the equivalent of picking 2 tons of tomatoes for their daily wage. The additional penny per pound boosts wages slightly above \$7.50 per hour.

The Taco Bell Boycott

The Taco Bell boycott began in 2001 as a way to force a fast-food company to address the human rights abuses in the fields. Yum! Brands owns Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, KFC, Long John Silver's and A & W Restaurants. The pooled buying power of the five brands exerts a significant force on tomato growers for the lowest possible price. Since the grower has little control over his external costs of production (tractors, seeds, chemicals), labor remains the most vulnerable input in the supply chain.

At first Taco Bell, with 6,500 outlets and gross sales of \$5.4 billion in 2003, protested that the tomato pickers were employed by the grower, not the restaurant chain. It argued it could not change the plight of tomato workers. To some, subcontracting services relieves corporations of responsibility for labor abuses by their contractors. But, the fact that corporations exert so much pressure for volume discount prices, perpetuates workers' powerlessness and poverty. Taco Bell employs supply chain inspectors to check safety and quality standards of the tomatoes, but not labor conditions of the workers.

The Taco Bell boycott obviously got traction from student and religious groups. The "Boot the Bell" campaign blocked or forced Taco Bell from 21 college campuses, and several Protestant and Catholic groups issued statements of support.

The Boycott's Success

In the end Taco Bell became the first in the fast-food industry to help improve farm workers' wages by agreeing to pay a penny per pound "pass-through" directly to the tomato workers. It also pledged cooperation with CIW to improve working conditions in the tomato fields.

The Taco Bell boycott reminds believers of their moral and economic power. No longer can believers live simply as self-interested consumers trolling the mall for the cheapest prices. Gospel justice demands a solidarity with workers to create a marketplace where all can live with dignity. Despite the need for still greater reforms, this month believers can rejoice with the Immokalee workers and ring the bell for Taco Bell.

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

When the Immokalee, Florida, tomato pickers began a bus tour to publicize their boycott of Taco Bell restaurants, they first got a blessing at nearby Our Lady

Coming Attractions

Mar 26 EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE (Ecumenical)

6:30 AM at the Cross on Mt. Davidson,
enter at Dalewood & Myra Way, SF

Join a spectrum of church and community leaders, the
Salvation Army Band, Rev. P.T. Mammen & Fr. Joe Landi
Hosted by the Armenians Community

Mar 26 EASTER SUNDAY MASS--11:30 am

Mass of Creation sung with Choir & Orchestra
St. Cecilia Church

Vicente at 27th Ave, SF
Fr. Joe Landi, Principal Celebrant

Apr 1 FIRST FRIDAY MASS of the Sacred Heart

A Bilingual Mass

7:00pm Rosary, 7:30pm Mass
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church

300 Fulton St., Redwood City
Fr. Nestor Aterado, Principal Celebrant (Spanish)
Fr. Joe Landi, Concelebrant (English)
with English & Spanish Music Groups

Apr 15 Bible Study, 7:30 pm (Every 3rd Friday of the month)

With Rev. Kato Kei, SDB

Corpus Christi Parish Hall, 62 Santa Rosa Ave, SF

Advance Registration: Norma Calip 415/468-8369

Leonor Conde 415/584-8120

Apr 16 & 17 Annual Retreat--FCCC (Filipino Catholic

Charismatic Council)
Vallombrosa Center

250 Oak Grove Ave., Menlo Park

Fr. John Balleza, Retreat Master

Contact Judy 415/826-7827 or Lota 415/337-0797

Apr 17 SUNDAY CHARISMATIC MASS, 2:00 PM

St. Patrick Church,

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

Contact Judy 415/826-7827

May 27-29 NORCAL CONVENTION

Santa Clara Convention Center

at Great America, Santa Clara

Information 1-800-474-6644

or www.ncccdl.com

May 6 FIRST FRIDAY MASS of the Sacred Heart

7:00pm Rosary, 7:30pm Mass

St. Andrew Church,

1571 Southgate Ave., Daly City

Fr. Joe Landi, Principal Celebrant

Oct 1 & 2 HOLY SPIRIT CONFERENCE With English & Spanish

Sessions, St. Mary's Cathedral Conference Center, Circle the Date!

The Church teaches that we should follow our conscience, but also says that we must obey Church teaching. Who am I supposed to follow, the Church's teaching or my own conscience?

It's true that the Church teaches that no person must be forced to act contrary to his/her conscience.

Nor must they be prevented from acting according to their conscience, especially in religious matters (Dignitatis Humanae).

The reason that the Church can teach this, however, is because she knows that "deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment.... For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God.... His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths" (CCC 1776).

Our "Conscience" is Really God Speaking to Us

What the Church is telling us is that when we truly listen to our conscience, we will hear God speaking to us. We do not belong to ourselves. We belong to God; He made us and we are on a journey back to Him. He wants for us to be very happy, and, because He made us, He knows best all that is good for

us. So, He builds inside us this conscience through which He will try to guide and lead us to do what is good and right.

Our Conscience Must be Informed

For this column, we are speaking in particular about decisions of conscience for which we have Church teaching on the matter we are deciding about. In this life, we will face many serious, moral decisions, and we will have choices to make. These choices cannot be made blindly. In other words, our conscience must be informed. This means that we must first take certain steps to learn everything we can in regard to what we are trying to make a decision about. This is called discernment.

Let us say that you are a parent, and your son or daughter has come to you and asked you to help them

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

Additional Ways of Informing our Conscience

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

When you have done all these things, make your decision, and move forward. This way, even if you make a mistake, you will be able to say to God



Dear Grace...
by Grace MacKinnon

that you did all you could; you did your best. He knows our hearts and minds and will know if we are sincere. You see, the Church can say "follow your conscience" because she knows that if you truly listen to God in your conscience, then what you hear will be no different than what the Church teaches, for she teaches only what God has revealed to her. There is no conflict between following your conscience and following the Church.

--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.

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St Veronica Church
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May 14, 2005, 7:00pm
St. Raymond Church, Moran Hall
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Nunca he violado la Ley. Nunca me han arrestado.

Sin embargo, a menudo pienso en Monseñor Austin Vaughan, obispo auxiliar de Nueva Cork, quien durante los últimos años de su vida de servicio fiel a la Iglesia, fue arrestado y encarcelado varias veces por rescatar niños por nacer. Había visto lo que hacían los cristianos a lo largo y a lo ancho del país cuando bloqueaban pacíficamente el acceso a los abortuarios interponiendo sus cuerpos entre los bebés y la muerte inminente.

Un buen día miró su anillo episcopal y se dio cuenta que las tres imágenes grabadas en él eran las de San Pedro, San Pablo y el Señor Jesús. ¡Todos ellos habían sido arrestados y encarcelados! A partir de ese instante, no dudó más en arriesgarse a que le sucediera lo mismo si ese era el precio que debía pagar por salvar vidas.

La razón humana, la Sagrada Escritura y la historia nos enseñan que aunque estamos llamados a ser ciudadanos respetuosos de la Ley, no siempre está mal quebrantarla. Piensen, por ejemplo, en alguien que rompe la puerta de su vecino para apagar un incendio, o salta sobre una cerca que tiene un cartel que dice "prohibido pasar" para entrar al jardín del vecino y salvar un niño que está ahogándose. Esos casos demuestran que salvar una vida tiene precedencia sobre Leyes que preservan valores menos importantes.

En la Sagrada Escritu-

ra abundan los ejemplos. Los apóstoles recibieron órdenes estrictas de no enseñar en nombre de Jesús. (Vean los capítulos 4 y 5 de los Hechos de los Apóstoles). ¿Deberían haber obedecido? Si lo hubieran hecho, no conoceríamos el Evangelio. ¿Obedeceríamos si nos dieran esa orden? ¿Qué le diríamos a la asamblea reunida el domingo si se sancionara esa Ley el viernes?

En el libro del Exodo leemos que "el rey de Egipto dio también orden a las parteras de las hebreas... "Cuando asistáis a las hebreas... si es niño hacedle morir; si es niña dejadla con vida." Pero las parteras temían a Dios y no hicieron lo que les había mandado el rey de Egipto, sino que dejaban con vida a los niños."

“si es niño hacedle morir”

(Ex. 1:15-17) Desobedecieron la orden del rey porque estaba en conflicto con una Ley superior: el mandamiento de Dios de no matar nunca al inocente. Daniel fue a parar a la jaula del león porque desobedeció una Ley que prohibía rezar (Daniel 6).

La historia nos dice que los cristianos fueron martirizados por desobedecer al César, hubo gente que rescató esclavos, protegió a judíos durante el Holocausto y resistió la segregación, todo ello violando la Ley para promover la justicia. La lista de ejemplos alcanzaría para llenar muchos tomos.

Nos arriesgamos a fracasar si ignoramos las lecciones de la historia y los principios de la Escritura. Es fácil mirar atrás y reconocer a quienes violaron la Ley en otros casos y alabar-

los. Mas cuando enfrentamos los mismos desafíos nos cuesta reconocer que a veces debemos violar la Ley. Y eso porque ahora somos nosotros los que tenemos que sacrificarnos.

Nunca he quebrantado la Ley. Nunca he sido arrestado. Simplemente, no puedo asegurar que nunca lo seré.

Libre Expresión en la Iglesia

Si un sacerdote o un ministro predica la Palabra de Dios, ¿está Ud. de acuerdo que debe haber libertad en este país para decir lo que necesita decirse para aplicar esa Palabra de Dios a las circunstancias de nuestro tiempo? Eso es exactamente lo que pensaba Martin Luther King Jr. y esto es lo que dijo la noche antes de ser asesinado: "Está muy bien hablar de la nueva Jerusalén, pero algún día, el predicador de Dios debe hablar de la nueva Nueva York, la nueva Atlanta, la nueva Filadelfia, la nueva Los Angeles, la nueva Memphis, Tennessee."

El Concilio Vaticano Segundo también defendió la libertad del predicador en la Constitución Pastoral sobre la Iglesia en el Mundo Moderno en los siguientes términos: "Es de justicia que pueda la Iglesia en todo momento y en todas partes predicar la fe con auténtica libertad, enseñar su doctrina social, ejercer su misión entre los hombres sin traba alguna y dar su juicio moral, incluso sobre materias referentes al orden político, cuando lo exijan los derechos fundamentales de la persona o la

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salvación de las almas.” (GS 76)
Desde 1954 esta libertad está amenazada porque Lyndon Johnson introdujo una enmienda en el código tributario para protegerse de grupos anti-comunista que amenazaban su reelección. Johnson no apuntaba a las iglesias, pero su acción las afectó porque la enmienda establece que quienes están exentos de impuestos no pueden intervenir en campañas políticas. Esta enmienda al código tributario fue incluida sin audiencias ni debate, se resolvió literalmente en cuestión de minutos.

Muchos obispos, sacerdotes y ministros están ahora confundidos e intimidados en lo que respecta a “predicar sobre política”, al punto que algunos abogados de la Iglesia les han asesorado durante la última elección que dado que el presidente

se postulaba a la reelección, las iglesias no debían citarlo cuando hablaba de la “cultura de la vida.”

Ahora se ha vuelto a presentar en el Congreso un proyecto de ley para restablecer la cordura en esta situación. La Ley de Restauración de Libertad de Expresión a los Lugares de Culto (The Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act – HR 235) protegerá los contenidos de los sermones y las enseñanzas religiosas que se imparten en las iglesias de nuestra nación, asegurando que su contenido no se vuelva un fundamento para objetar la exención impositiva de la Iglesia.

La libertad de expresión es uno de los cimientos de nuestra república. Se vuelve mucho

más importante aún cuando se considera en el contexto de las iglesias. Los que predicán y enseñan la Palabra de Dios desarrollan una misión que no les ha sido confiada por ninguna autoridad mundial, sino que les fue encomendada por el Rey de Reyes y Señor de los Señores. Luego, el contenido de un sermón o una enseñanza religiosa tiene que protegerse para asegurar que la religión pueda ejercerse libre y correctamente, que el predicador pueda cumplir con el sagrado deber con que se ha comprometido solemnemente, y que la congregación pueda recibir la enseñanza clara y robusta de su religión sin distorsiones, diluciones o disculpas. Por eso cada uno de nosotros debería contactar a nuestro representante en el Congreso y pedirle que apoye la resolución HR 235, Ley de Restauración de Libertad de Expresión a los Lugares de Culto - The Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act.

--Pradre Frank Pavone is the National

La libertad de expresión es uno de los cimientos de nuestra república.

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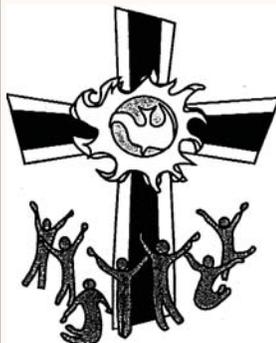
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