

new
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New Evangelists Monthly #7

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New Evangelists Monthly is an informal, dynamic, crowd-sourced “meta-magazine” showcasing the best posts faithful Catholic bloggers publish each month. Here you will find many different, but faithfully Catholic viewpoints, insights and perspectives.

Contributing authors submit their very best piece from the prior month between subsequent first and second Saturdays. Readers are welcome to visit anytime, even while contributions are still being accepted for a new issue. Back issues are available in the archive.

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Rest in Peace, Father Tim, The Man Who Brought Us Back to the Church [at Rambling Follower]



Tonight

[a friend of ours](#)

from our newspapering days in North Carolina, a man who attended our wedding and now is a Catholic deacon in Belmont, NC, let me know Father Tim had died. He was 66.

Father Tim, at the time of his death, Monsignor Tim O'Connor, married Greg and me. He was the priest whose homilies we heard as we both headed back to the Catholic church after nearly a decade of infrequent Mass attendance and indifference. For that - for him - I am forever grateful.

Is it just my husband and me? We have found certain priests to play a pivotal role in our spiritual development at key points in our lives. Father Tim was the first such priest. When we were single in the early 1990s Greg and I began attending Mass at

[Sacred Heart Cathedral](#)

in downtown Raleigh, North Carolina. Father Tim, the rector, preached the noon Mass, a Mass with an African-American liturgy. He managed to bring us back to the Church with his welcoming presence. He was the first priest I ever heard use the word "gay" in a homily. Born in Queens in a family of five brothers, Father Tim was the nephew of the late

[John Cardinal O'Connor,](#)

a fact we only discovered when my mother-in-law quizzed him at our wedding rehearsal.

He gently guided Greg and me through a long Pre-Cana meeting in his office, helping us to set priorities and navigate a minefield of extended family dynamics. Father Tim married us on September 25, 1993 in a church that regularly had at least three weddings each weekend. (The cathedral, which barely seats 350, is the smallest in the continental United States; the diocese is growing so quickly it is building

[a new cathedral](#)

west of downtown.)



Here is Father Tim's

[obituary.](#)

Perhaps he now is enjoying a cup of tea and a long conversation with his beloved uncle. May our Church be blessed with more souls like theirs. And may these faithful souls, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



This contribution is available at <http://ramblingfollower.blogspot.com/2013/06/rest-in-peace-father-tim-man-who.html>
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A June Bride - What I Didn't Know [at Totus Tuus Family & Catholic Homeschool]

In 1991, I married my boyfriend of 6 years. On June 8th, it will be our 22nd anniversary. That girl, in some ways, is so different from me today. The Sacramental events of that day played a large part in my transformation.



ALLISON ©TotusTuusFAMILY

What I didn't know, very well, was my faith. And yet, we were married in a Cathedral Basilica...and *today* that means so much to us! We are strengthened by the graces of the [**Sacrament of Marriage**](#). (*Also see Catechism at bottom*) Our faith...the beauty of such Churches that elevate ones hearts and minds to God are now of monumental importance to us, the architecture that upholds and supports us. Today, it's a passion of mine to photograph the Mass, Sacraments and Churches.

"A basilica is an architectural term for a certain style of building, and, as is often the case in Catholicism, the basilica comes to us from the Romans. When the ancient Romans spoke of a basilica they were referring to a large, high-ceilinged hall with three long aisles. "
[source](#)



ALLISON ©TotusTuusFamily

The Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul is majestic *and traditional looking*. In it's name there's St. Peter and it's Baldachin reminds me of St. Peter's in Rome. **What I didn't know** is how much I would grow to embrace traditional Catholicism, how **Rome** would take a place in my heart and define a path for me here. How like St. Peter and St. Paul, I would turn my life over to Him. Certainly the degree does not compare...O, to be as filled with faith and purpose as those two saints!

" *The canopy, or baldachin, over the altar is of Antique Italian marble. It stands thirty-eight feet high and is surmounted by a semi-circular bronze dome. The underside of the dome is a marble mosaic. Its central figure is a dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The mosaic carries in Latin an inscription which translates: "In every place there is offered and sacrificed in My Name a clean oblation."* At the corners of the baldachin stand ten foot high white Italian marble Angels. Its decorative rosettes are of Botticino marble."

[source](#)

Coming back to my faith, I always felt it was the Holy Spirit that began that process. Reading the above description, of the dome we were married under, I see how He was truly above us on our wedding day, with us....**Three to Get Married**. But, I also attribute so much of my transformation to earnest prayers I made to His "**spouse**," the Blessed Mother, as I knelt before a statue of Our Lady on our wedding day. **What I didn't know** is how we would grow to love and honor her, how she would bring us closer to her Son. *Totus Tuus*.

Praying for Our Lady's intercession on our Wedding Day



We did not have the faith we have today. But, looking back, we see God's guiding hand in it all. There are moments in your life that stand still. Perhaps your guardian angel whispers to you, "*This is it...take notice.*" I remember when I met my husband at a summer job working at a local radio station. It was his first job out of college and he was a producer of 3 talk shows. I was just a college intern. My boss introduced us and my future beloved hopped off a desk top he was casually seated on and came toward me to shake my hand....

"N O T I C E*This is it.*"

I didn't hear my guardian angel whisper it to me, but something happened. **Time froze.** It's still so present to me, the image of that moment in my mind. We shook hands and smiled at each other. I remember thinking why does this feel important? We dated for the years I still had left in college and then he decided to go back for an MBA and I went to NYC to work as an agent for a top modeling agency. **What we DID know** is that we'd get married *someday*. He told me so the first time he visited me in my feminist, 7 Sister's college after our summer together. When he graduated Grad school and was hired by the same company he still works for today we got engaged and I came home from NYC.

As much as I loved the city, it was easy for me to leave it for our new life. Part of me knew that it would be different, certainly more *real* than the world I was in. But **what I didn't know** was the MILES of experience I would cross to the down-to-earth jobs in HR and marketing, and then to the job of embracing motherhood and wanting to stay home with my precious child. Then, when another was born and his older brother already loved him so fiercely... I knew there was something Supernatural to all the love....and I thanked God. We wanted more children, and to raise

them Catholic as we had promised before God and all our loved ones on our wedding day. ***What I didn't know*** was that our children would finally make me grateful in a *real* way.

A way that points to God.

(Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. James 1:17)

Getting back to that photo from our wedding day, as we prayed to the Ave Maria being sung, I do remember that moment too...it also stands out. So much of the wedding day is about [the dress](#) and the plans; I was very attached to that. To honor tradition, I did have a separate bouquet made to place before Mary during the nuptial Mass but...for some reason...I also snapped a white rose (my favorite) from my bouquet to add as an offering. I remember coming down from the altar area and around to the side where Mary's statue and votive candles were and before the marble railing, there on the burgundy leather kneeling pad...was dirt....

Dried mud!

In my mind I hesitated for a moment....my beautiful, *white* dress! If I knelt I would ruin it. But those thoughts left me. On the wedding video there is no hesitation. I see myself kneel. I see myself pray. And I remember praying like I had never prayed before. **Notice...this is it... I asked this beautiful woman - who I didn't really KNOW - to pray for me...for my marriage....**

And just now... reading this over...another realization!. Angel, are you whispering to me? **What I didn't know**...even till now... was that **the dirt means something. So does the stain.**

And how she would bless us! The gentle woman has led us in her motherly way to greater devotion, greater faith and a desire to know, love and serve her Son. To an openness to life, to books and people, to experiences, to priests who love her too **she lifted us from that moment....in the dirt....and brought us to today.**

Only Immaculate Mary can present a spotless gift to her Son. She takes our prayers and makes them beautiful before bringing them to Jesus. She interceded for us both. For [my husband](#), her beads are always in [his fingers](#) and adoration of Jesus, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass his daily priority. And we love her ...grow to **know** her more each day...and we love our Catholic faith, strive to **know** it.

It gives *real* meaning to our lives. **THIS WE KNOW.** Yes....*Totus Tuus.*



Giving thanks to Our Lord & Our Lady, for this day and all the days...
*In sickness and in health, for richer for poorer,
in good times and in bad,*
till death do us part.

CCC - The grace of the sacrament of Matrimony

1641 "By reason of their state in life and of their order, [Christian spouses] have their own special gifts in the People of God."¹⁴⁷ This grace proper to the sacrament of Matrimony is intended to ***perfect the couple's love and to strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace they "help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children.***¹⁴⁸

1642 *Christ is the source of this grace.* "Just as of old God encountered his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Savior, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the sacrament of Matrimony."¹⁴⁹ ***Christ dwells with them***, gives them the strength to take up their crosses and so follow him, to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, to bear one another's burdens, to "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ,"¹⁵⁰ and to love one another with supernatural, tender, and fruitful love. In the joys of their

love and family life he gives them here on earth a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb:

How can I ever express the happiness of a marriage joined by the Church, strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by angels, and ratified by the Father? . . . How wonderful the bond between two believers, now one in hope, one in desire, one in discipline, one in the same service! They are both children of one Father and servants of the same Master, undivided in spirit and flesh, truly two in one flesh. Where the flesh is one, one also is the spirit.¹⁵¹

Prayer asking for Mary's Intercession

**Holy Virgin Mary, there is no one like thee born in the world among women,
Daughter and Handmaid of the Most High King, the Heavenly Father,
Mother of Our Most Holy Lord Jesus Christ,
Spouse of the Holy Spirit:**

**Pray for us with St. Michael the Archangel
and all the powers of Heaven and all the Saints
before thy Most Holy and Beloved Son, the Lord and Master.**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, ...
Amen.**

Being Joyful on Purpose (Despite Neighbors and Old Cars)! [at A Dreamer's Wife]



First day of my senior year of high school with my new car! My bro was a lucky freshman who got to ride with me instead of on the bus!

Some days I want to move. I want to live in a neighborhood where people don't park their cars in the front yard. I'm sick of fixing one thing after another on this house. I'm tired of vacuuming every day because my pomeranian's hair is all over the place.

I can't wait to buy a new (to me) car. One where the dashboard isn't curling up from years of being parked out under the sun, the side door doesn't have a dent from accidentally scraping against a fire hydrant, and the front passenger window isn't taped up to prevent it from sliding down due to some weird electrical issue that's been fixed twice already.

I wish I had more money. Not an obnoxious amount – just enough to feel like an unexpected crisis is going to put us back to square one of rebuilding our emergency savings. And enough to buy a decent used mini-van or SUV when my 13-year-old Grand Am decides it's been driven too many miles.

I'm sure I could go on about all of the things that are lacking in my life and complain about from time to time, but I'm going to choose not to because I prefer (most days) to focus on the many blessings I have in my life – the special relationships, priceless moments, and undeserved gifts.

Just last evening alone, I experienced so many blessings. After work, I went to my parents' house to pick up my daughters from an afternoon swimming lesson at their pool. My parents had just made dinner, which was perfect because I was hungrier than usual and was afraid that if I didn't eat soon my patience would wear thin with the girls. When I sat down to join everybody else who was almost done eating, my two-year-old reminded me to pray! So cute, as she's just learning to make the sign-of-the-cross and say grace before meals right now!

On the way home, my husband called to FaceTime with my four-year-old. Every night that my husband works, they always communicate via FaceTime before she goes to bed! And each night, including last night, “C” won’t let him off the phone until they both kiss their screens at the same time and hug their phones. Can you say A-D-O-R-A-B-L-E?!

And if that wasn’t adorable enough, when I walked into “C’s” room to get her ready for bed I found her standing at her dresser with her hands folded looking at a framed photo of her Daddy holding her when she was a baby. I asked her what she was doing and “C” said, “I’m praying for Daddy.” I asked her what she was praying for and she said, “I’m praying that he comes back to me and I want him to know that I’ll always love him.” MELT MY HEART! It was the sweetest thing I’ve ever seen in my life!

After precious cuddle time and big kisses and hugs, “C” and I even peeked out the window to watch the fireflies before she fell asleep. Then, later in the evening, I received this text from my husband- “Thanks for loving me ”. These moments refresh me and make the vocation of marriage and raising a family so joy-filled. It may seem like just an average night, but how sad it would be if I were to dismiss and overlook all of these blessings!

Maybe I paid extra attention to these moments last night, because on Wednesday afternoon a beloved longtime co-worker lost her husband to a massive heart attack. It’s times like these when our priorities are really put into perspective and we cling a little tighter to what who matters. I want to be able to look back some each day and feel grateful that I soaked up precious time with those I love and didn’t hold anything back. I want to know that I sacrificed, gave too many hugs to count, said “I love you” a million times, and brought joy to others because I lived my own life joyfully, on purpose.

I love my house. I love that we live in a nice town so close to the lake, several parks, and my parents’. I love that my girls have nice rooms and warm beds to sleep in. I love that we have a finished basement with plenty of room for them to play and my husband has his own studio. I love that we only have one full bath – one less shower to clean! I love that we have a fenced-in backyard for Princess.

I’m grateful that my car has lasted this long. It was paid for by my parents and despite several cosmetic weaknesses, it has ran great which is what counts the most!

I’m thankful that God has provided what we have needed. It seems like anytime we get a bonus or some extra money, it goes straight to pay for a repair or a medical bill, but I know that is just what we needed at the right time! I’m thankful for our jobs. My husband and I are able to spend as much time with our young girls as possible and still provide for our family’s needs. We’ll never be able to get this time back with them and we know how much every moment counts.

A thankful heart is the key to joy. And this joy is all because of Him!

Have a great weekend, and live life intentionally TODAY!

*This post is part of the .

This contribution is available at <http://adreamerswife.com/2013/06/14/being-joyful-on-purpose-despite-neighbors-and-old-cars/>
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A Whisper that Echoes Throughout the Universe [at joy of nine9]

I am not just reciting theology when I remind you that there is neither time nor distance when we live and move and breath in the Spirit. As believers, we are all connected not only to God but to each other in the Mystical Body of Christ. It is as if the Lord has plugged us into an invisible circuit board where a mere thought lights up a surge of power and love that moves with the speed of light directly to the heart of God and to the soul we are praying for. Many times my parents, sister and children realized that when I mention exactly when I interceded for their needs, they had felt a burden lift.

Although it seems inconceivable to our modern, western logic, the intercession of the saints both living and dead are vital to our spiritual health. I **know** that there are men and women of prayer who have interceded for me for decades. Perhaps they are contemplative monks in monasteries or invalids who constantly pray the rosary but the Father uses their prayers to enlighten, guide and heal me. I near tears of gratitude when I think of their connection to someone they have never met in the flesh.



God **is** the great “I AM” who exists yesterday, today and tomorrow. His Spirit mysteriously unites all of us, intimately present to each soul, all at the same time. Our whispered hello to God and each other is called prayer.

We are never alone. We live in the Spirit and He dwells in us. A cloud of witnesses surrounds us with prayerful support. They are as near to us as our next breath because they are also in the Spirit and He is in them. Let’s welcome the Word of **God** and the prayers of the faithful because they are like rays of Sonshine in our hearts.



This contribution is available at <http://melaniejeanjuneau.wordpress.com/2013/06/24/a-whisper-that-echoes-throughout-the-universe/>

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Serious Lipstick [at Forget The Roads]



Everybody's got a favorite TV detective. I grew up watching Mannix and Jim Rockford. Kojak was popular in those days. Magnum was huge in the 80s, and Monk broke the mold in the New Millennium. But I've got a real soft spot in my heart for one special lieutenant – Columbo, the disheveled, distracted, disarming homicide detective who never, never gave up. He lulled his suspects' suspicions, apparently accepting whatever story they cared to dish out, but then spent the next 50 minutes making Swiss cheese of that story, at which point the perp invariably decided that coming along quietly was really the only option left to him. I loved it. Some commentators have made the case that the show was a classic portrayal of class struggle – Columbo was a working-class kinda guy patronized by all the high society murderers, and the audience loved to watch him cut them down to size. I think most of us fancied that we saw ourselves in him. He wasn't all perfectly pulled together. He was disheveled. One eye wandered. People tended to underestimate him, and he was okay with that. To this day, when 2 and 2 just don't make 4 in my life, I tend to go into Columbo mode, determined to get to the bottom of things.

Channeling our inner Columbo can be something of a challenge, however, when it comes to getting to the bottom of our own religious beliefs. I should know – I was raised as a Protestant, and it took me 45 years before I was ready to investigate the strange goings-on that occurred every time my church expounded on verses like “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” or “If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained,” or “You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.” We all admire Ginger Rogers for being able to do everything Fred did, backwards and wearing high

heels. The song-and-dance my denomination did around these verses made Ginger look like an amateur – we were dancing on our heads trying to make these verses say something, ANYTHING, other than what they actually said. Finally, one day I stopped dancing, sat down, and asked myself, *why?* It turned out that there was a fatal flaw in our theology, one which we covered up by suppressing various verses. The clues had been there all along; it just took me 45 years to decide to investigate.

There was a pretty basic explanation for my reluctance. We all know that *someone who just doesn't want to know* will selectively filter information in or out of the picture to come to his or her foregone conclusion. Take the example of a wife who dearly loves her husband – when confronted with mysterious business trips, late nights at the office and lipstick on his collar, she will see nothing more than an overworked, underpaid hero who needs a better laundry detergent. The opposite is of course true – a jealous wife reads betrayal into every innocent pastime her husband enjoys, certain that everything he does is proof of adultery and grounds for divorce. Evidence is twisted, misused, overlooked – whatever it takes to uphold preexisting beliefs. We see this clearly in the debate over abortion – intelligent, thoughtful adults who have bought into the notion of a woman's “right to choose” pretty much have to stumble into the illogical insistence that a baby on this side of the womb is a human being entitled to the full protection of the law, while a baby on that side of the womb is not a human being and can be murdered at will – the evidence is forced to fit the pre-existing conclusion. Conservative “right to life” Protestants wonder how anyone could be so foolish. And yet, those same Protestants who are taught that “justification by faith ALONE” is the key to interpreting the Scriptures (rather than “justification by faith,” which is the teaching of both the Bible and the Church) will then find themselves forced into the predicament of denying a literal understanding of verse after verse of Scripture which teaches the necessity of perseverance in the faith, of a genuine concern for the least of these, of obedience to God's commandments, of baptism for the remission of sins, etc., etc. – *these verses cannot be saying what they appear to be saying because they contradict the foundational assumption which shapes the denomination's teaching.* All of us are in this same boat – when we go into any experience with a grab-bag of assumptions, we risk assuming all sorts of untenable positions, until we dispassionately prove or disprove those assumptions and get our feet on the solid ground of the truth.

One day it dawned on me that there is some serious lipstick besmirching the collar of Protestantism. As a female I was aware that various shades of lipstick go by creative names like “Wild Child” and “Candy Yum-Yum.” This shade of lipstick had a name that was really far-out: “Historical Evidence.” Everyone who gives their heart to Protestant interpretations of Scripture must sooner or later ask what this tattletale lipstick betokens. *Is it something that I need to investigate?*

If you believe it is, you can start by investigating the common Protestant assertion that the first Christians believed and preached exactly whatever the Protestant church you happen to attend believes and preaches. This claim is more important than it appears. Those first Christians were taught by the apostles, so if your church believes and preaches doctrines that the first Christians

disagreed with, it is pretty likely that your 21st-century church is preaching “a different Gospel,” the very thing St. Paul warned the Galatians against in no uncertain terms. All Protestant churches therefore will insist that their doctrine reflects the beliefs of the first Christians. Even a cursory inspection of this assertion should set off warning bells, for the Lutherans practice, for example, infant baptism while the Baptists decry it. The Baptists insist that a Christian cannot lose his salvation while the Lutherans insist that he can. The Baptists as a rule wholeheartedly embrace the “secret rapture” doctrine; the Lutherans as a rule think that’s kinda nutty. When you attend a Baptist church they will assure you that the first Christians believed and preached exactly what Baptists believe and preach. This is also the foundational assumption at your friendly neighborhood Lutheran church. *Somebody’s wrong* – the first Christians simply could not have been taught by the apostles that it was appropriate to baptize infants AND NOT appropriate, that Christians can lose their salvation AND definitely cannot, or that they should be expecting to be raptured out of this world AND that no such thing was to be expected. And these are but a few of the beliefs over which Protestant denominations in good standing disagree vehemently. While the “secret rapture” is a secondary issue, baptism and eternal security are most definitely not – *they are essential doctrines, for they inform the believer what he must do to be saved....*

Reading one’s Bible cannot straighten this issue out, for the Bible does not tell us what the first Christians believed. It gives us the teaching of the apostles, but then we must understand that teaching. The \$64,000 question is: *are we understanding that teaching the way the first Christians understood it?* The only way to know that is to read the writings of the first Christians – what were the first-generation Christians teaching the second-generation Christians? This will make clear to us what they understood the apostles to say. It will solve the nagging questions of infant baptism vs. believer’s baptism/eternal security vs. you can lose your salvation/imminent secret rapture vs. secret-rapture-my-foot! To find the writings of the first and second generations of Christians, though, we must look outside the Bible. We must go to the historical record.

When I was a Protestant, I really had no idea what a wealth of documents sprang from the pens of 1st- and 2nd-century Christians. We didn’t talk about those writings at the nondenominational and Baptist churches that I attended. The “fact” that the first Christians believed and taught exactly what we believed and taught was just assumed. Had we looked into the writings of the early Christians, we would have found that they were united in their belief that *baptism is for regeneration* and that *it is appropriate to baptize infants*, that they insisted on the necessity of final perseverance, and that no one ever even hinted at the doctrine of the “secret rapture.” *Score 3 for Team Lutheran!* Either the first Christians all apostatized immediately after the death of the apostles (something groups like the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Latter-Day Saints may try to tell you), or the Lutherans may be onto something here!

Investigating further, we nondenoms and Baptists also would have found that the 1st- and 2nd-century Christians considered *the Virgin Mary to be the second Eve* (as Christ was the second Adam), and taught that *the Mass was a sacrifice*, and that Jesus was actually physically present in Holy Communion, *with the bread and wine actually becoming His Body and Blood*. St. Justin Martyr’s description of the Sunday gathering of Christians circa 150 A.D. is Catholic to the core.

Now, that's not exactly what the Lutherans want to hear....

Upon further study it would have become clear to us that the 1st- and 2nd-century Christians unanimously supported the idea that after the free, unmerited gift of initial justification, works were necessary for salvation. You know Luther must be spinning in his grave right about now.

And those first Christians were, according to their writings, committed to the idea of there being *only one Church, a visible Church* gathered around the bishops, and that *the church of Rome was accorded “the primacy of love.”* They claimed that St. Peter was the first bishop of Rome, and they wrote about the *apostolic succession* which gave the bishops their authority. Those Christians called their Church *Catholic*. No, that really doesn't sound like the kind of doctrine Lutherans propound. It doesn't really sound Protestant at all....

Which helps to explain the experience of so many students in Protestant seminaries when it comes time to study early Christian history. Lest they should start questioning the lipstick evident on the collar of whatever denominational doctrine they espouse, these students are taught ABOUT the early Church and the writings of the 1st- and 2nd-generation Christians, as opposed to being given a copy of the Ante-Nicene Fathers and asked to read what those men actually wrote. This limited exposure suffices to convince them that they know what the first Christians believed and that it was exactly what their seminary teaches. Four quotes from former students:

My theological roots were at most only 150 years deep. Contrary to what I had been taught, my version of Christianity didn't go all the way back to the New Testament. Not even close.

From that point on I had a deep desire to understand historic Christianity. I borrowed Paul Johnson's book, *The History of Christianity*, from a missionary friend. Over the next year I read several books on Church history. I read the works of men I had never heard of before: Anthony of the Desert, Cyril of Jerusalem, Clement of Alexandria, Basil, Ambrose, Eusebius, Ignatius of Antioch. It felt like finding new friends, Christians who knew my Lord so intimately. But their words also profoundly shook my Evangelical theology. The fact that these men were Catholic made me embarrassed and indignant. In all my years as a Christian I had never heard of these people, let alone studied their writings. I didn't know much about the early Christian Church. In seminary (we attended Biola, in Southern California) we had been taught to believe that after the death of the Apostles, the Church slid immediately into error and stayed that way until Luther nailed his Theses to the door, and then the “real” Christians came out of hiding. ([Kristine Franklin](#))

Like many young evangelicals I had little denominational loyalty, but the Southern Baptists had a fantastic seminary and missions program. After delaying my entry into seminary for a year after graduation, I finally started classes in early January. The troubles didn't start until the second week. We were learning about spiritual disciplines like prayer and fasting and I was struck how often the professor would skip from St. Paul to Martin Luther or Jonathan Edwards when describing admirable lives of piety. Did nothing worthwhile happen in the first 1500 years? The skipping of history would continue in many other classes or assigned textbooks. Occasional references to St. Augustine did not obscure the fact that the majority of church history was ignored.

(“[Anthony](#)“)

That's when I did something really dangerous. I started reading the early Church Fathers firsthand. I had studied some early Church history, but too much of it was from perspectives limited by Protestant history textbooks. I was shocked to discover in the writings of the first-, second- and third-century Christians a very high view of the Church and liturgy, very much unlike the views of the typical Evangelical Protestant. ([Steve Wood](#))

In the first year of seminary, we studied church history, one of my favorite fields of study. I went beyond the required readings and explored the writings of the early Church Fathers. In their writings, I found a world very different from that of the Evangelical and Reformed Christianity of my experience. ([Ed Hopkins](#))

And so, folks, we have evidence of a deception and a cover-up. That's some pretty serious lipstick. The question is, what are you going to do about it? Buy some industrial-strength laundry detergent and scrub harder? Send the shirts to a high-priced dry cleaners and hope for the best? Or follow the lipstick trail and see where it leads?

The writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers [can be read online](#), or are available from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and many other booksellers. Channel your inner detective.

Make Lt. Columbo proud.

On the Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist

Deo omnis gloria!

This contribution is available at <http://forgettheroads.com/2013/06/24/serious-lipstick/>
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(CatholicMom.com's [Lawn Chair Catechism](#) lesson for this week from Sherry Waddell's "Forming Intentional Disciples," is Chapter 4: The Fruit of Discipleship.)

Does this description of disciples make you yearn to be one? To know and follow Jesus as close as his best friends?

"Disciples pray with passion. Disciples worship. Disciples love the Church and serve her with energy and joy. Disciples give lavishly. Disciples hunger to learn more about their faith. Disciples fill every formation class in the parish or diocese. Disciples manifest charisms and discern vocations. They clamor to discern God's call because they long to live it. Disciples evangelize because they have really good news to share. Disciples share their faith with their children. Disciples care about the poor and about issues of justice. Disciples take risks for the Kingdom of God."

Whether we are leaders in the parish, avoiding ministry, burned out or somewhere in between, these attributes can be ours. No one can be cajoled or persuaded to take these on like another project to be organized, implemented and fulfilled. The call to discipleship comes from God who first calls us to repentance and the freedom we need to evangelize effectively. He knows that we cannot sustain even one of these discipleship traits without an intimate relationship with him.

We begin building that relationship with repentance, as we pray with passion, from the heart. This leads to true worship, a new love for the Church, a desire to serve with energy and joy. That energy and joy comes from the life of Jesus expanding in our hearts, which he desires more than he desires our serving in a ministry. He develops in us every quality we need in partnership with him in this love relationship.

The "before" and "after" discipleship time in my life came when our family was in a parish that didn't even seem alive. The religious education ministers struggled under the alcoholic pastor. To fulfill our duty to our children, my husband and I dragged our children and ourselves to mass every Sunday.

It took one of the renewal movements outside the parish to snap us all out of it. After a few weeks our faith became vibrant again, our prayer life exciting. We felt loved by the Lord and by our new friends. To me, it was like the scene in the Wizard of Oz where Dorothy wakes up after the tornado. As she opens the door to Oz, the scene slowly changes from black and white to Technicolor. Everything is brilliant. She experiences a new life she never imagined. That's what

happened to me. My new life comes from my personal relationship with Jesus. Without it I cannot evangelize and wouldn't want to try.

I have seen similar Oz moments in dozens of others. One woman was overwhelmed by the presence of the Lord as she stood at her kitchen sink washing dishes. This was her Oz experience. Many persistent worshippers encounter Jesus personally when receiving the Eucharist or during Adoration. For some their Oz moment happens in Bible study, a retreat, a healing service or a prayer meeting. The Holy Spirit works in our hearts in whatever setting he can get our attention. Conversion always brings repentance, frees us and changes us forever.

Others in our parish shared their Oz moment stories with us. They had a hunger to learn more about their faith and to “manifest charisms and discern vocations.” Years ago I filled out a charisms questionnaire where I scored high in the charism of discernment and low in mercy! I’m still working on that. Developing our natural gifts to serve God’s people in a supernatural way is just as exciting as discovering new gifts of the Spirit. Mothers already have a head start on the gifts of teaching, intercessory prayer, administration and hospitality. When God provides a challenge grander than our human efforts we’ll have what we need. As Sherry says, “Charisms tend to show up at the mysterious intersection where the Church and the world cry out to God in need and a disciple takes up his or her call to follow Jesus.”

Growing spiritually with those who “clamor to discern God’s call because they long to live it” naturally leads to evangelization. We have really good news to share about our Catholic Faith and about our personal faith relationship with God. Joining with other disciples, we saw Bible studies, a couples share group, Adoration and Pro-life ministries spring up like flowers in the desert. With more and more Spirit-filled parishioners, we experienced Sherry’s assertion that, “The presence of a significant number of disciples changes everything” in the parish.

Using our gifts to make normal intentional disciples the true norm in our parishes is an exciting challenge we all share. It’s so worth taking the risk to foster Oz moments of discipleship in others.

Read comments on this blog and other blogs on this topic on *CatholicMom.com* [Lawn Chair Catechism](#), Chapter 4.

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This contribution is available at <http://joyalive.net/oz-moments-of-discipleship/>
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Mr. On-line Man [at The Veil of Chastity]

As promise, this week I am sharing my insights and experience with On-line dating. Gregg and I met on-line 12 years ago when on-line dating was just getting started. I seriously never expected to meet my husband on-line. And, I was embarrassed to even admit I was participating in on-line dating!

Men Were Not Scarce

After college, I lived in a **very** metropolitan area where there were **plenty** of single men. In fact, I was surrounded by single men both socially and at work. I also had a very active social life with a Catholic community comprised of both married and single Catholics. I knew a lot of people! So, statistically, I should have found my husband in this environment. I dated a lot and had 3 relationships that I would put in the '*on-the-cusp-of-being-engaged-serious*' category. But, alas I remained single.

Why Online Dating?

I signed up for on-line dating with a Catholic site at the encouragement of a girlfriend of mine. She was a brave girl from New York and she gave me just the right push to get me to do it. I had high hopes at first because I had a fundamental belief that I had a lot to offer. I jokingly describe my decision to participate in on-line dating as "*opening myself up to the larger, National Market.*" My motto was "*Let the best man win!*"

But, then I went on dates with the on-line guys and my expectations were tempered. After a while, I viewed it as just a 'supplemental' way of meeting men.



It Only Takes One

One of the beliefs I had about on-line dating is that the men are seeking marriage (which appeared to be half the battle with the real-life men I was dating). However, I found that although the on-line guys may have been seeking marriage, none of those relationships progressed towards marriage (not even remotely). So, I became disillusioned about it. Don't get me wrong, the guys were contacting me and they were taking me on dates but they were not guys I was interested in. Dating them felt mostly forced.

I got to the point where I was only logging into the site on Monday's to answer the emails I received from these guys. But then, one glorious Monday, I logged in and found an email from Gregg, my beloved. The saying, "*It only takes one.*" is true.

A Desperate Move?

Is on-line dating a desperate move? If it is, it is the best desperate move I ever made! Did I feel desperate and creepy at the time? Yes. Do I care now? Not a bit. If I hadn't done it, I have a strong feeling I would still be single. And no man is better for me than Gregg.

I know you might think on-line dating is just for the 'hopeless' but may I make a suggestion for those of you who scoff at it? Approach it as a supplemental way of meeting men. Approach it as a way for God to work in your life without limiting Him to your **local** area. Don't put all your hopes and dreams in it, but just be open to it.

Suggestions for On-line Dating

Since my [Response Formula](#) won't work in the cyber world, here are my suggestions for on-line dating:

Let him pick you: I never shopped around or checked out the guys that were on the site. I only responded to the ones that sought me out and sent me notes. That way, I knew that **they picked me.**

Log in once a week: I got to the point where I only checked my on-line inbox on Mondays. This did frustrate the guys a little but it prevented us from getting into an **email-only** relationship. It forced them to **call me** if they wanted to interact with me and ask me out. I think it also showed that I had a life outside of on-line dating.

I followed this practice with Gregg too which is why we got off to a slow start. But, it did not discourage him! I only learned later that he was checking his inbox for my reply while I was going about my life. I had no idea that he was going to be '**the one!**' So, I treated him just like every other guy.....until he set himself apart with his [wonderfulness](#). —

None of their beeswax: Other than my friend from New York, I did not tell anyone I was participating in on-line dating. I even fibbed to my Mom about how I met Gregg and only told my parents the truth because I was flying to Kansas to visit him. Yeah, I was weirded-out about it a little.

Therefore, if you feel desperate and creepy and hopeless for trying on-line dating, just don't tell anyone. Just remember the safety rules for the first 3 dates (meet in a public place, drive yourself, keep your spidy scenses on).

Treat it as supplemental: Treat is as a way to increase your ability to meet men. Don't put all

your eggs in the real-life or on-line basket. Be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit!



Don't be too electronically chatty: In other words, be flirty and sweet but keep it **breezy**. You do not want him to carry on an **electronic-only** relationship with you. If he keeps it at that lame-o level, you can email him back after a couple of exchanges and say, "*Email is not my preference. Would you like to call me?*"

Don't become his buddy: The guy should move things to the **dating phase** rather than taking the **phone/email buddy** approach. He should want to look into your eyes, see your smile and **smell you** by taking you on dates! ☺

Long-Distance situations: This can be tricky but obviously not impossible. A guy may feel skittish about initiating a visit. Seriously, the women's lib thing has screwed up chivalry. He may not want to scare off a perfectly nice girl by suggesting a visit.

True Story: Gregg and I lived a long-distance from each other. Once our interactions moved to talking on the phone and I could tell that he was a nice guy (oh, and I loved his voice!), I wanted us to meet in person. So, after about a month I sweetly said, "*When are you going to visit me?*"

My point in sharing this is that you don't need to be coy. You can **state what you want** in the relationship. Guys cannot read your mind and they don't have the visual cues they would have in person. If you say to him, "*Would you like to call me?*" or "*When are you going to visit me?*" and he does not want to, so be it.

Gregg wanted to visit me and he was **very** happy I put that opportunity out there! With the right guy, it works. With the wrong guy, it won't work. It will leave you feeling needy and stupid. But, it is still better than a stalled courtship stuck at the email or phone phase.

Questions?

If you are doing the on-line thing and you have specific questions for me, feel free to email me or (if you feel brave) state your question in the combox.

Next week

The topic: ~~There Is No Formula!~~ — [An Amazing and Beautiful Guest Post. This is BIG!](#)

God love and bless you!

This contribution is available at <http://theveilofchastity.com/2013/06/25/mr-on-line-man/>
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Liberation theology: the war that never was [at Catholic Deacon]

Yesterday several friends brought to my attention an article by Gianni Valente that appeared on

[La Stampa's Vatican Insider website](#)

the headline of which announced,

["The war between the Liberation Theology movement and Rome is over."](#)

To point out the obvious, the working assumption here is that there was a war in the first place. I contend that this is not just an exaggeration, but a gross exaggeration. To be fair, Valente's piece is very balanced. As someone who has articles published from time-to-time, one must keep in mind that headlines are written in order to grab attention, even when this sometimes results in a disconnect with the content of the article.

All the way back in 1984, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, then headed by Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, issued an

["Instruction on certain aspects of 'The Theology of Liberation.'"](#)

As the title indicates, this was not a wholesale condemnation of "liberation theology."



Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez, OP

It is important to recognize that there is really no such thing as "liberation theology." There is certainly a liberation(ist) strand of Catholic theology, but it is not monolithic and never has been. I challenge anyone to read Gustavo Gutiérrez's

[The God of Life](#)

, or

, and not be deeply moved and better informed.

Jon Sobrino is another liberation theologian whose works, despite running into some issues with the CDF, are also well worth while. In its

["Notification on the works of Father Jon Sobrino, SJ,"](#)

the Congregation pointed out that Sobrino's "works contain propositions which are either erroneous or dangerous and may cause harm to the faithful." It is important to note that Sobrino was not condemned, censured, or forbidden from teaching or publishing by the Holy See. It is a bit odd, even humorous perhaps, to note that the archbishop of San Salvador forbade Sobrino from teaching and lecturing on theology anywhere in his metropolitan province- here comes the funny part- the archbishop pulled the previously granted

nihil obstat

from Sobrino's writings.

A

nihil obstat

is an official guarantee, granted by legitimate ecclesial authority (in most instances a bishop, after the work has been reviewed by a qualified

censor liborum

- a qualified theologian), that the book contains nothing contrary to the Catholic faith. The trouble that Sobrino ran into serves to highlight the major area of concern about liberationist theologies in general, namely that Jesus' human nature is emphasized at the expense of His divine nature, reducing liberation to merely an existential concern without a transcendent dimension. Of course, there are also those who breached the banks of orthodoxy, such as Leonardo Boff, as well as those who were carried away by Marxism, whose influence is what the Holy See sought rightly to curtail. In other words, there were and remain some very radical theologies of liberation that are actually anti-theological to Christianity in many ways.

It was well known at the time of his appointment by Pope Benedict XVI that the current Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Archbishop Gerhard Müller, who, as I noted in

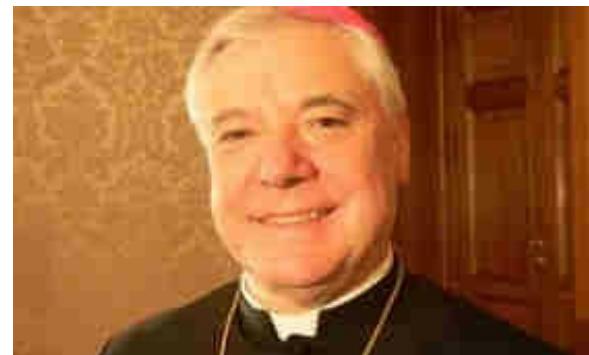
[a previous post this week](#)

, wrote his doctoral dissertation on the sacramental theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, is, shall we say, favorably disposed towards "good" liberation theology. As Valente notes in his

piece, back in 2004 Müller and Gutiérrez co-authored a book of essays on liberation theology, which was published in Germany, the translated title of which is

On the Side of the Poor. The Theology of Liberation.

It was also well-noted at the time of his election that Pope Francis, when he served as Provincial of The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in Argentina, also fought against the more extreme tendencies among liberationist theologians. One can certainly do this while vigorously supporting the healthy strands and tendencies of liberation theology.



Archbishop Gerhard Müller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

In a post over on

[Cosmos The In Lost](#)

,

["Colm Tóibín's Regensburg Moment & Macauley's Catholic Dissidents."](#)

Artur cites from a recent article by Philip Jenkins, noting "Rome's effectiveness in flexibly absorbing and directing the energies of eccentric figures and movements in ways Protestantism doesn't," which is highly relevant to this whole issue of liberationist theologies.

Here are some links from the Καθολικός διάκονος archives:

5 June 2007-

["The God who gives life and who invites us to call him Father"](#)

20 July 2007-

["Reflections on the God of the covenant in light of chapter 3 of Gustavo Gutiérrez's The God of Life"](#)

"Jesus Christ, the liberator of humankind"

The Congregation ended its "Instruction on certain aspects..." by citing paragraph 27 of the Servant of God, Pope Paul VI's

Credo of the People of God

:

"We profess our faith that the Kingdom of God, begun here below in the Church of Christ, is not of this world, whose form is passing away, and that its own growth cannot be confused with the progress of civilization, of science, and of human technology, but that it consists in knowing ever more deeply the unfathomable riches of Christ, to hope ever more strongly in things eternal, to respond ever more ardently to the love of God, to spread ever more widely grace and holiness among men.

This contribution is available at <http://scottdodge.blogspot.com/2013/06/liberation-theology-war-that-never-was.html>

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My new e-book on the Carmelite saints.

Update: At least one reader has said he can't see the link on his mobile device. Is that the case for others? Try this link instead: [Subscribe to my posts](#).

Update 2: The [Nook edition](#) is now available for sale for \$.99!

It's finally here—my first e-book! I hope you're as excited as I am. I wrote this e-book for you, to aid you in your spiritual life. And today I'm going to ask you to do something for me. But first, I want to tell you how you can receive a free copy of *Five Lessons from the Carmelite Saints That Will Change Your Life*.

What if you are already following my blog by email? No problem. I have set up a new account at MailChimp to handle my emails to subscribers. I have also removed the old WordPress widget for email signup from my sidebar. All new subscribers will go onto the MailChimp list. If you are on the old list, simply sign up for the new list and download the e-book. Then you can click on “unsubscribe” in the email you got today for this post to remove you from the old list. That way, you will not get two emails when I post on Friday. If you have any questions about this, leave a comment or email me directly.

Buy a copy for your Kindle for \$.99

If you prefer to read *Five Lessons from the Carmelite Saints* on Kindle, you can [purchase a copy](#) for less than a dollar. That's the lowest price Amazon allows. This is also an option for those of you who would rather not subscribe to my blog posts. I hope to have versions for the Nook and other formats available soon. I'll update you on their progress.

Please help me publicize this!

Several of you received advance copies of my e-book in exchange for reviews on your own blogs. You can read reviews from [Kristen Johnson](#), [Terry McDermott](#), [Mary N.](#), [Nancy Shuman](#), [Jenny](#), and [Melanie Jean Juneau](#). If you haven't yet written a review, it's not too late. Please link back to

this post to make it as simple as possible for your readers to get their free e-book.

For those of you with a smaller blog audience who wanted to help out before, now is your chance. I still need lots of reviews to spread the word. Feel free to provide a link to your review in the comments below.

Don't have a blog? I also need reviews on Amazon and [Goodreads](#). Please [Tweet this](#), share it on [Facebook](#), [Reddit's Catholicism subreddit](#), [Google Plus](#), , and any other social media you use. Send a link to this post by email to your friends and family who may not otherwise see it. I am really counting on my readers for publicity. There's only so much I can do myself.

Bigger projects ahead?

This short e-book is a trial run to see how much interest there may be in a book-length manuscript on Carmelite spirituality. Your response to this e-book, and your enthusiasm in sharing it, will tell me whether it's worth my time to write a longer e-book. Remember, besides being a wife and mother, I am a homeschooler before I am a writer. Writing a book-length manuscript will demand sacrifice. I can't do it if the interest isn't manifest.

It's all about growing closer to Christ

I truly believe that the lessons in my e-book will bring you closer to Jesus. They are not secrets. They are the tried and true steps to holiness that countless saints have followed. If you are new to the Catholic spiritual life, this e-book will give you a road map for the future. If you are advanced, it will remind you of the basics. If you, like me, are somewhere in between, it will challenge and motivate you. (I am currently being changed by Lesson 5). You can come back to it again and again over the years. And it's all taken from some of the most admired saints in the history of the Church.

Sign up for your free copy now, before you forget.

JMJT

Connie Rossini

This contribution is available at <http://contemplativehomeschool.wordpress.com/2013/06/11/free-e-book-five-lessons-from-the-carmelite-saints-that-will-change-your-life/>
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Celebrating the Liturgical Year: July [at Our Ordinary Life]

I was so proud of myself the other night, because I actually sat down with a calendar and a bunch of books, determined to plan out different ways we could celebrate and recognize the various holy days and saints' feasts over the next month. I have a number of good books on this topic, so I thought it'd be pretty easy to map out some good plans (certain traditional foods to make for dinner or dessert, a good decorating or craft idea that was relevant to the saint of the day, special prayers to use, etc.). Turns out, it's not as easy as I expected. Or maybe July is just a little sparse on big feast days.

Since we attend the traditional Latin Mass, we observe the traditional liturgical calendar in our home as well. You may notice that certain feasts I mention below are on different days than you are used to.



Here were some of the tools I had spread out in front of me:

[2013 Traditional Liturgical Calendar](#)

, The Seraphim Company

Butler's Lives of the Saints Vol. III

, Thurston and Atwater version - by far the best version of Butler's, and it follows the old calendar. It's hard to put down once you pick it up - the stories are fascinating!

St. Andrew's Daily Missal (1953)[Around the Year with the Trapp family](#)

, Maria Von Trapp - I've mentioned this book a number of times. I absolutely can't say enough good about it. A wonderful source for how to observe the feasts and fasts of the Church.

[The Bad Catholic's Guide to Good Living: A Loving Look at the Lighter Side of Catholic Faith, with Recipes for Feasts and Fun](#)

, John zmirak and Denise Matychowiak- very amusing book, with some real and some tongue-in-cheek suggestions for celebrating the Catholic year. Follows the new calendar, though, so a little more flipping around to find what I needed.

[Feast Day Cookbook; The Traditional Catholic Feast Day Dishes of Many Lands](#)

- I've mentioned this one before as well. Good source of information and recipes (though some are a bit "dated" in terms of ingredients).

[The Catholic Home: Celebrations and Traditions for Holidays, Feast Days, and Every Day](#)

- This book came highly recommended by several blogs and by Amazon ratings. I haven't read enough of it to give a recommendation either for or against.

[The Big Book of Catholic Customs and Traditions for Children's Faith Formation](#)

- this book sounded pretty promising, but I find that there's not a lot of "meat" to it, and a lot of suggestions for activities are only vaguely Catholic and/or kinda corny.

Some good online sources for these sorts of things:

[Shower of Roses](#)

and

[Catholic Icing](#)

Here are some ideas I've come up with so far, for some of the days that stuck out to me. I was hoping for more ideas leaning towards the "food and crafts" style of celebrating. But for most of the days, it's going to end up just reading something aloud. That's good too, I suppose.

July 1 - Most Precious Blood of Our Lord

Have friends over for dinner of red meat and red wine, and pray the

[Litany of The Most Precious Blood.](#)

The whole month of July is dedicated to the Precious Blood, so this would be an appropriate

prayer to use on any day.

July 2 - Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

This is one of the joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, so I suggested to Tom that maybe we pray that particular decade of the Rosary. He decided we should be more ambitious and say a whole Rosary instead. But it seems weird to use the Joyful Mysteries on a Tuesday (which is usually for the Sorrowful Mysteries). Can you mix and match?? Maybe we should just pray (sing?) the Magnificat instead.

July 4 - American Independence Day

(not actually in the Catholic Calendar!)

[Prayer for Government](#)

(because they could really use it)

July 8 - St. Elizabeth Queen of Portugal

Read her story in Lives of the Saints since it's pretty inspiring, and read

[Proverbs 31:10-31](#)

which is part of the Mass Propers for her feast day.

July 14 - St. Kateri Tekakwitha

(technically not in the traditional calendar, since she was only recently canonized).

Read a story about her life? It's also St. Bonaventure's feast day, who would be good to learn more about.

July 16 - Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Maybe just tell Sly the story of this apparition. He already knows about scapulars, since Tom and I wear them, and he recognizes St. Simon Stock, as he appears on the back of Tom's scapular. We could also

[eat caramels](#)

, even though it's a *little* cheesy :-)

July 22 - St. Mary Magdalen

July 25 - St. James the Apostle

His symbol is the cockleshell (which has become the symbol for pilgrims), and shellfish are traditionally eaten for his feast day. I think they're all pretty gross, though...so we might substitute shrimp. I know, it's kind of a stretch. He's the patron of Spain...what's a type of Spanish food?

July 26 - St. Anne Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary

She is patroness of homemakers and mothers (among many other people). She is definitely a Saint I can benefit from. I'm still looking for a good way to celebrate her feast. The Feast Day cookbook suggests cooking in the style of Brittany (in France), since there is a strong devotion to her there. hmm...not sure what that might be. Perhaps we can do something with that mysterious bottle of "

St. Anne water

" my uncle gave us.

July 29 - St. Martha

Another patroness of housewives. I would like to read her story in the Gospels. Perhaps I could serve a dinner of savory soup and some good crusty bread (which I like to think is similar to the meal she made when Christ came to visit).

We'll see how this month goes. I think Tom and I both benefit spiritually from these kinds of observances, and it might even teach Sly a little something. Ideally, over time, it will become as natural to take note of the day's feast and act accordingly as it is to take note of the fact of it being "Tuesday" or "Friday", and perform the activities or errands proper to that day of the week.

I am more than open to hearing other suggestions!

This contribution is available at <http://ourordinarylifeextraordinary.blogspot.com/2013/06/celebrating-liturgical-year-july.html>

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A Cloudy Future for Catholic Boy Scouts [at Truth and Charity Forum]

I am the wife of an Eagle Scout and the mother of three Eagle Scouts. I spent many years as a Cub Scout leader, my husband did a stint as a Scout Master, and one of my sons served as an assistant Scout Master. Our family has been heavily invested in the Boy Scouts of America. Perhaps this explains why I feel so heartbroken over the Boy Scouts' decision to allow openly homosexual boys to be members of the Boy Scouts.

When the policy change was first being discussed, the possibility of openly gay Scout leaders was considered. The national organization would take a hands-off approach and leave each troop free to restrict membership according to the chartering organization's moral principles. This would allow the Catholic troop to ban Scout leaders living active homosexual lifestyles, while the Episcopal troop down the road could say, "no big deal" and have leaders representing the full LGBTQ spectrum.



The [policy that finally emerged](#) and was approved on May 23 retained the ban on homosexual Scout leaders but stated that sexual orientation alone would not be a barrier to boys joining the Boy Scouts. However, this loosening of the membership standards is not as broad as is being reported in the media. One of the introductory clauses states:

AND WHEREAS, Scouting is a youth program, and any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting;

At first glance this appears to be consistent with Catholic teaching. Same-sex attraction is not a sin, but acting on such inclinations is disordered and immoral. A young man who claimed to be homosexual but lived chastely would be treated no differently than his heterosexual counterpart doing the same.

However, a Scout who insisted on engaging in homosexual acts could be barred for failing to live up to the Boy Scouts standards for virtue. [Bishop Robert Guglielmone](#), the USCCB liaison to the Boy Scouts, was not pleased with the policy change but seemed resigned to it. Bishop Guglielmone stated it was a change that could accommodate Catholic teaching. Canon lawyer, Dr. Edward Peters, seemed to reach the same conclusion in [his cogent analysis](#) of the membership resolution.

When dealing with this issue isolated to the theoretical realm, Bishop Guglielmone and Dr. Peters

are correct. However, when looking at this in the context of a real Boy Scout troop and real Catholic families, it is difficult to see how it can be workable. Consider the seemingly exculpatory clause cited above.

What constitutes sexual conduct? It would be normal for a high school age Boy Scout to post pictures on Facebook of his girlfriend. He might be seen holding hands with her. He might even be seen giving her a kiss. None of this would be considered as inappropriate sexual behavior. Now consider the Boy Scout with a same-sex attraction. Would it also be acceptable for him to hold hands and kiss his boyfriend? This policy opens the door to a Clintonian parsing of the definition of sexual relations. Will the Scout invite his boyfriend to the Court of Honor to share in the celebration of his Scouting achievements? Will other Scouts and their parents be expected to look upon this behavior with tolerance and acceptance? For Catholics, that would be impossible.

An integral aspect of Scouting is the development of leadership. Older Scouts teach and guide younger scouts. As a parent, I would not be comfortable with a high school boy who felt the need to openly declare his sexual attraction to other males being a mentor for my son.

Most parents would never allow a teenage son to share a tent with a girl, no matter how much he promised there would be no sexual activity. Propriety and avoidance of temptation demands such a prohibition. How could a Scout attracted to members of the same sex expect to be treated as one of the guys with no concern about potential sexual encounters on a camping trip? The very fact that a young man felt compelled publicly to define himself based on his sexual orientation raises the concern that he will view other Scouts from a sexual perspective. Protecting this Scout's virtue as well as the virtue and innocence of other Scouts requires the same segregation used for coed activities.

Finally, the Boy Scouts of America have shown their hand: they can be bought. This issue came to the forefront, not because of some ideological epiphany, but because corporate sponsors of the Boy Scouts are cutting off donations in response to pressure from gay advocacy groups who oppose funding an organization that does not embrace homosexuality as normal. The Boy Scouts are trying to bend just enough to stem the loss of corporate money. There is no reason to trust that they will not compromise further in order to attract donors.

So what is a Catholic Scouting family to do? Should they go or should they stay? There is no single right answer. The National Catholic Committee on Scouting is taking a wait-and-see approach according to its [public statement](#):

Since the change in policy will not take effect until January 1, 2014, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting has adequate time to study its effects. The NCCS will determine how it may impact Catholic chartered Scout units and activities. In doing so, we will work within the teachings of our Catholic Faith and with the various local bishops and their diocesan scouting committees.

Since there is no clear-cut moral obligation to dissociate from Scouting, current senior Scouts may

just want to finish up their Scouting career and move on. Families with younger boys, however, may want to reconsider a significant investment of time and resources to Scouts.

The potential conflicts with Catholic moral teaching are not going to get easier and will most likely get worse—especially if the national leadership of the Boy Scouts provides further accommodations to those seeking to abolish any moral opposition to the homosexual lifestyle. It is time to seek other options that can be trusted to provide a strong moral formation of boys to men. Perhaps it is time for parish Knights of Columbus councils to push hard for the formation of [Columbian Squires Circles](#) as an alternative for Catholic Boy Scouts.

The Boy Scouts of America tried to preserve their financial stability by making honor and virtue a matter of opinion. By tying their principles to the shifting sands of popular culture, the Boy Scouts have forfeited their credibility as a solid pillar of moral authority. With this change in membership policy, the Boy Scouts of America today cannot be compared to the Boys Scouts of yesterday and it does not bode well for Catholic Boy Scouts of tomorrow.



This contribution is available at <http://www.truthandcharityforum.org/a-cloudy-future-for-catholic-boy-scouts/>
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Ask the Deacon: Marian Devotion [at Footprints On My Heart]

I was wondering where the devotion of beating our breasts 3 times during the Hail Holy Queen (at "O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary") came from? Is it proper, or out of place in this prayer? Thank you! ~Anonymous



The Hail Holy Queen expresses a beautiful devotion to our Blessed Mother and is commonly prayed at the end of the rosary. It is one of the Marian anthems that may be prayed at the conclusion of Night Prayer (Compline) in the Liturgy of the Hours. The prayer is the English translation of the Salve Regina. There are many beautiful musical settings of this Latin text in chant and in polyphony, several of which have long held a preeminent place in popular devotion to Mary, especially among sailors; there is evidence that the sailors of Columbus' expeditions sang the hymn and taught it to the natives they encountered.

The practice of beating one's breast at the conclusion of the prayer is purely a private expression of penitence or humility. There is no basis for doing so in any rubrics that I am aware of, and while it is common in some groups the practice is essentially unknown in others. Having an attitude of true penitence or humility is very important (cf. Luke 18:9-14) and beating one's breast as a reminder is certainly fine but not required or discouraged in any sense.

That being said, Marian devotion is extremely important in the spiritual life. Mary is, of course, the Mother of our Lord and, by his gift to us from his Cross, our Mother.

The life goal of every Christian is holiness, which is nothing less than union with Christ, and the surest way to achieve this union is through Mary by God's design. Jesus was incarnate of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit and Scripture demonstrates that this is how he comes to us: Elizabeth and John in her womb encountered Christ through Mary, who was compelled by the Holy Spirit to go "in haste" to attend to her kinswoman; the bride and the groom at Cana encountered Christ through Mary; the apostles were gathered with Mary in prayer in the upper room at Pentecost when they received the Holy Spirit and the Church, Christ's Mystical Body of which we are all a part, was born.

Devotion to the Holy Spirit and to Mary is as old as the Church and is characteristic of the saints. Such devotion does not interfere or compete with our worship of Jesus; Saint Louis de Montfort and many other great spiritual writers have recommended and offered guidance for consecration to Jesus through Mary. It is a most efficacious way to worship Jesus and to open ourselves up to union with him.

Thanks for the question and always stay close to Mary!

In the Heart of Christ,

The Deacon

~~~~~

Do you have a question you would like to Ask the Deacon? Please feel free to send us an email: littleflower219 {at} gmail {dot} com. Unless otherwise requested, questions and answers will be published on the blog as they are received. We look forward to hearing from you!

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This contribution is available at <http://totus2usmaria.blogspot.com/2013/06/ask-deacon-marian-devotion.html>  
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# Come, O Creator Spirit Blest / Veni Creator Spiritus [at ~ Breviary Hymns ~]



Make Our Hearts O'erflow With Love

## [\*\*Come, O Creator Spirit Blest\*\*](#)

is a translation of the 9th century Latin Hymn,

## [\*\*Veni Creator Spiritus\*\*](#)

(see 2nd video) attributed to

## [\*\*Rhabanus Maurus\*\*](#)

(766-856). A Benedictine monk and theologian, he eventually became the Archbishop of Mainz and is considered one of the most important writers of the

## [\*\*Carolingian Age\*\*](#)

. In 1849, the ancient Latin text was translated into English by

## [\*\*Fr. Edward Caswall\*\*](#)

(1814-1878). It was included in his seminal work, the

## [\*\*Lyra Catholica\*\*](#)

: his collected translations of hymns from the Roman Breviary and Missal. The tune most associated with it is

## [\*\*Lambillotte\*\*](#)

, written by the Belgian Jesuit,

## Fr. Louis Lambillotte

(1797-1855). He was a composer and palaeographer of Church music. His efforts in

## palaeography

involved the study, restoration, and standardizing of Gregorian Chant. Another translation of

## Veni Creator Spiritus

also used in the Liturgy of the Hours is

## Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, Come

.

Tune: Lambillotte

COME, O CREATOR SPIRIT BLEST by Edward Caswall, 1849 (Public Domain)

1. Come, O Creator Spirit blest,

And in our souls take up Thy rest;

Come, with Thy grace and heavenly aid,

To fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

2. Great Comforter, to Thee we cry;

O highest gift of God most high,

O Fount of life, O Fire of love,

And sweet anointing from above!

3. The sacred sevenfold grace is Thine,

Dread finger of the hand divine;

The promise of the Father Thou,

Who dost the tongue with power endow.

4. Kindle our senses from above,

And make our hearts o'erflow with love;

With patience firm, and virtue high,

The weakness of our flesh supply.

5. Far from us drive the foe we dread,

And grant us Thy true peace instead;

So shall we not, with Thee for guide,

Turn from the path of life aside.

6. O may Thy grace on us bestow

The Father and the Son to know,

And evermore to hold confessed

Thyself of each the Spirit blest.

Gregorian Chant

VENI, CREATOR SPIRITUS - Rabanus Maurus, 9th century (Public Domain)

1. Veni, creator Spiritus

mentes tuorum visita,

imple superna gratia,

quae tu creasti pectora.

2. Qui diceris Paraclitus,

altissimi donum Dei,

fons vivus, ignis,

caritas et spiritalis unctionis.

3. Tu septiformis munere,

digiti paternae dexteræ

tu rite promissum

Patris sermone ditans guttura.

4. Accende lumen sensibus,

infunde amorem cordibus,

infirma nostri corporis,

virtute firmans perpeti.

5. Hostem repellas longius

pacemque dones protinus;

ductore sic te praevio

vitemus omne noxium.

6. Per te sciamus da Patrem

noscamus atque Filium,

te utriusque Spiritum

credamus omni tempore.

7. Deo Patri sit gloria,

et Filio qui a mortuis

Surrexit, ac Paraclito,

in saeculorum saecula. Amen.

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This contribution is available at <http://kpshaw.blogspot.com/2013/06/032.html>  
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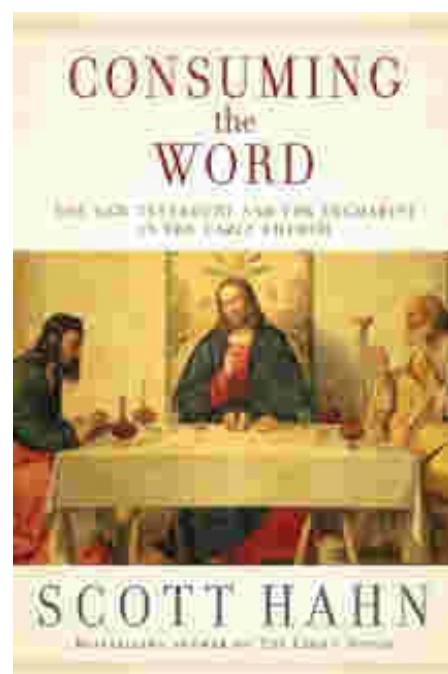
# Is God Being Unfair? [at A Spiritual Journey]

In the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20), Jesus told that the landowner paid each laborer at the end of the day with the same wage, regardless of how early or late during the day he was hired. Naturally, the ones who worked the longest grumbled against the owner. But he said to them, "Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Am I not free to do as I wish with my own money?" We often complain about unfairness in this world. So what is fair? God is always just ~ this we can be certain of. We must look at the whole picture. If you end up in heaven, are you still going to grumble about the time someone got the job you also applied for or someone didn't catch the flu and you did? Or should you end up in hell, you still wish you had suffered less in this life? The bottom line is that what happens now doesn't matter much. What matters is what happens in the end: If you believe in Christ and do good, you get to heaven; if you reject him and do evil, you end up in hell ~ this sounds perfectly fair to me.

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This contribution is available at <http://journeyofimperfectsaint.blogspot.com/2013/06/is-god-being-unfair.html>  
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# Consuming the Word: The New Testament and the Eucharist in the Early Church by Scott Hahn [at Back to Books]



160.

**Consuming the Word: The New Testament and the Eucharist in the Early Church**

by Scott Hahn.

Rating: (5/5)

(

[US](#)

) - ([US](#)

[Canada](#)

) - ([Canada](#)

[Kindle](#)

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May 28, 2013,

[Image/Random House](#)

, 146 pgs +bibliography

Nihil Obstat; Imprimatur

Age: 18+

*"Long before the New Testament was a document, it was a sacrament. Jesus called the Eucharist by the name Christians subsequently gave to the latter books of the Holy Bible. It was the "New Covenant," the "New Testament," in his blood. Christians later extended the phrase to cover the books produced by the apostles and their companions; but they did so because these were the books that could be read at Mass.*

*This simple and demonstrable historical fact has enormous implications for the way we read the Bible. In Consuming the Word: The New Testament and the Eucharist in the Early Church, Dr. Scott Hahn undertakes an examination of some of Christianity's most basic terms to discover what they meant to the sacred authors, the apostolic preachers, and their first hearers. Moreover, at a time when the Church is embarking on a New Evangelization he draws lessons for Christians today to help solidify their understanding of the why it is Catholics do what Catholics do.*

*Anyone acquainted with the rich body of writing that flows so inspiringly from the hand and heart of Dr. Hahn knows that he brings profound personal insight to his demonstrated theological expertise," writes Cardinal Donald Wuerl in the foreword to the book. Consuming the Word continues in that illustrious tradition. It brings us a powerful and welcome guide as we take our place in the great and challenging work in sharing the Good News."*

Received a review copy from

[Random House Canada](#)

I have anxiously been awaiting Dr. Hahn's newest book which has been expected for some time now. This author has a way of totally blowing my mind with truths that just light up my world and positively show me the light of Christ. Hahn's books are usually written for the layperson and very easy to read, *Consuming the Word*, however is his third book written for both the layperson and priest thus, as noted in the Preface, requiring just an extra bit of effort on the layperson's part but by no means does that make it "difficult" to read.

After reading this book I will never hear the words "New Testament" and think the same as I did before I read the book. Hahn has us go back to the first century Christians and shows us how they thought and teaches us how to think like them. So much of the meaning of the "Bible", the "Word" has been lost in modernity that we need to see what the "Word" meant to those who started following Jesus' orders understood it to be. The New Testament is not a book, it is not written text; it is a divine being. Jesus wrote no words. The first century Christians had established traditions before they had written words. That tradition was the Eucharist which started in the Upper Room when Jesus instituted it. Reading this book is absolutely amazing as you see how the Eucharist came first, how it contains what we call "The New Testament" and how the NT came about \*because of\* the Liturgy.

As I read I would suddenly just have to stop because my mind would clear and it would all make sense as I saw and understood what Hahn was telling me. I understand the importance of knowing what the original Hebrew and Greek words mean, especially when they have no exact Latin or English translation. We must always remember to read the OT as a prophesy of the NT and the NT as a fulfillment of the OT. But at the centre of it all is the spoken word, the actions, the divine being of Christ which is celebrated daily all over the world in the Sacraments, the Eucharist, the Liturgy, the Mass.

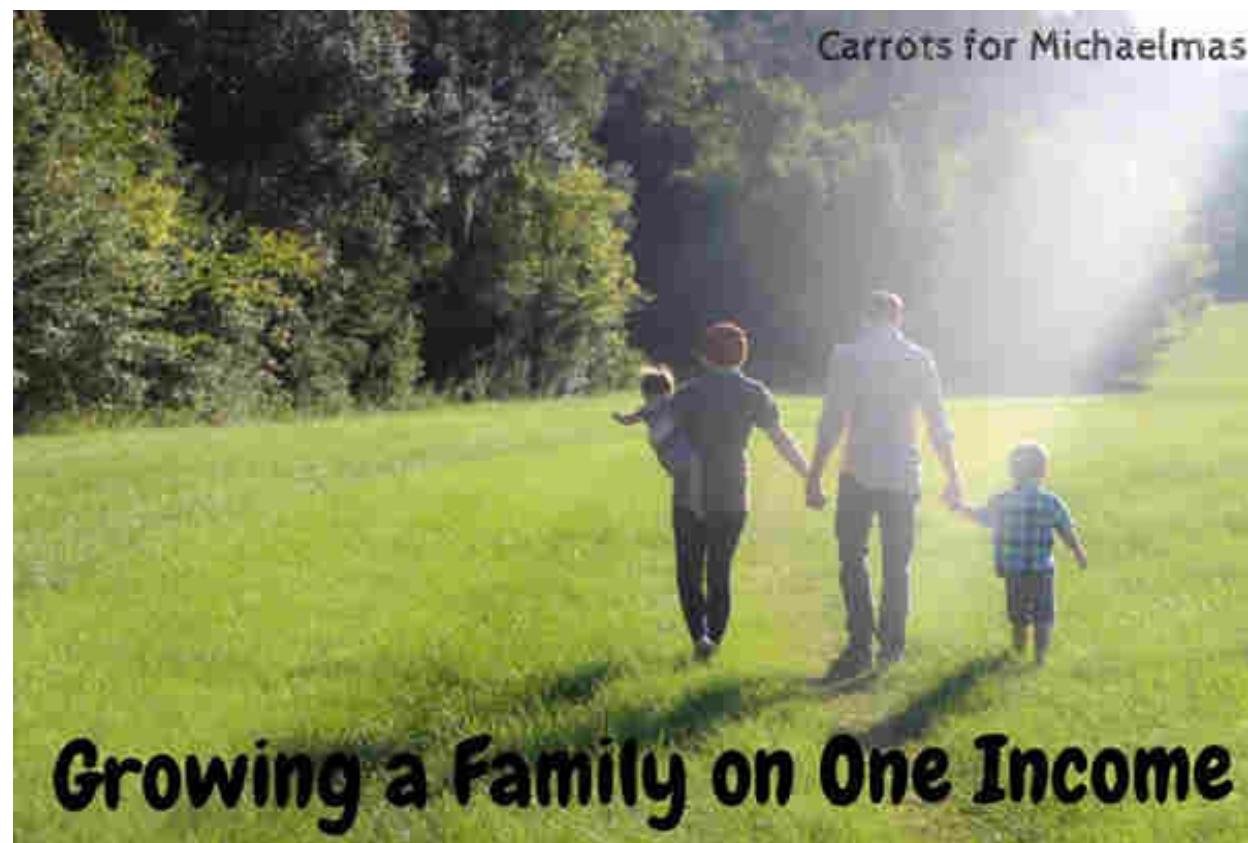
If you are Catholic, read this book. If you have forgotten the real presence of Christ, read this book.

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This contribution is available at <http://back-to-books.blogspot.ca/2013/06/160-consuming-word-new-testament-and.html>  
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# Growing a Family on One Income: Part I, Being a One-Car Family [at Carrots for Michaelmas]



## Growing a Family on One Income

I get all riled up about claims that raising children costs millions. Could you spend a million dollars on a child? Sure. You can also spend over [\\$100,000 on a Versailles-inspired Neiman Marcus chicken coop](#). But that would be unreasonable. Yes, kids aren't cheap, but having a large family doesn't have to be a financial impossibility.

Granted, *each family's situation is different* and living off one income with a growing family isn't a possibility for many no matter how hard they try to make it work. Yet, it's often possible to maintain a family on one income. It does require great creativity and you simply won't look like the average American family. We're not financial wizards by any means, but we do practice some simple, common sense ways to keep our expenses down. I thought I'd start a series of posts about how we make it work and our efforts to live simply and frugally so that I can be primarily a stay-at-home mama with our growing family of three little ones.

I'm not of the opinion that it's the right choice (or even possible) for every mama to stay home, but I do believe that [life centered around the home is valuable \(for women AND men.\)](#) Our ideal life would be living on a family farm so that our entire family could be centered in the home and that both my husband and I could be involved in the daily education of our children. Until that day, my husband works full-time and I'm working one afternoon a week as a ballet teacher and doing some freelance writing to supplement our income while keeping the home fires burning, homeschooling

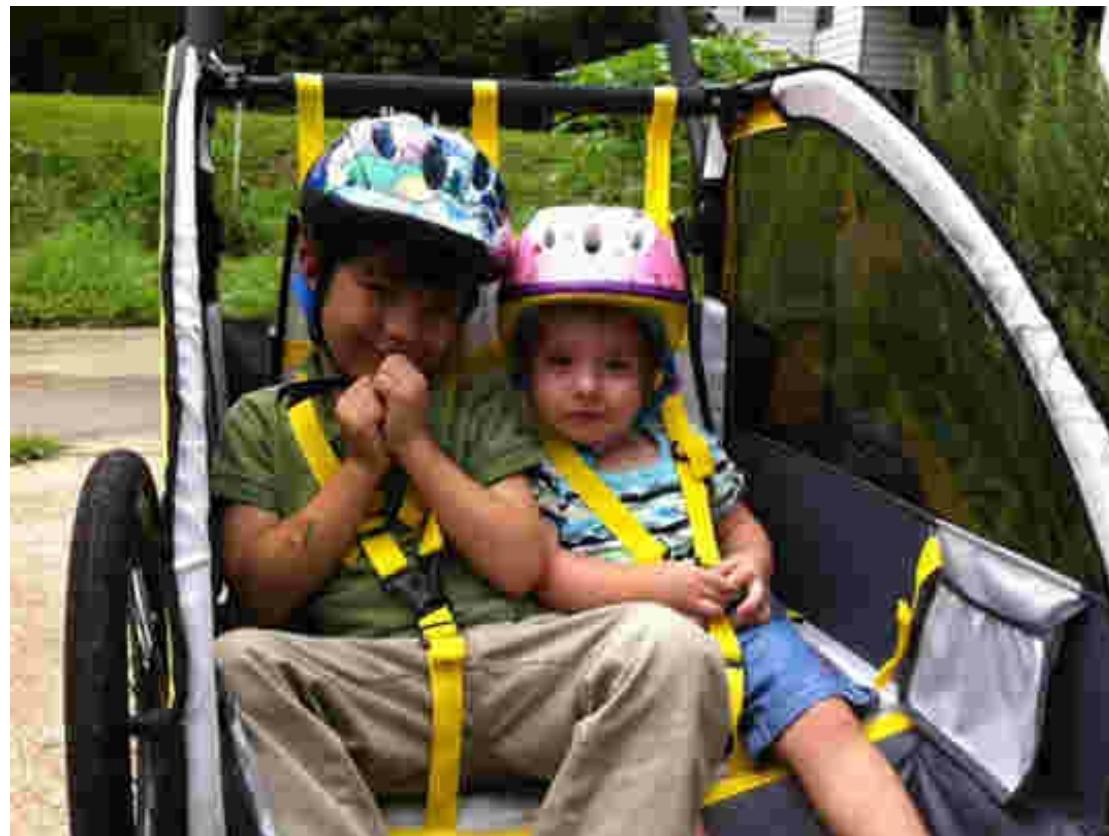
our preschooler, chasing our toddler, and soaking up our youngest's babyhood.

**But how do you survive on one income?** Well, truthfully, we've never known any different. Our entire married life only one of us has worked full-time (at first we took turns doing college/grad school and then when our eldest was 18 months, I started primarily staying home). But we've learned a few tricks as our family has grown.

One of the ways we cut down on monthly expenses is to **only have one car**. In addition to honoring God's earth by not wasting resources, there is the financial benefit of only one insurance payment, paying for maintenance on only one car, less money spent on gas due to carpooling, and the obvious: no second car payment. Having only one car isn't an option for every family because of location and work schedules; however, here's how we make it work for us:

### **Location, location, location:**

When viewing homes to buy, we only considered houses in the center of town. We are walking distance (or almost walking distance) from: our pharmacy, our pediatrician's office, a hospital, my midwife's office, our favorite breakfast place, our parish, city parks, dentist office, Walgreen's, etc. We are easy biking distance from my husband's work, so he bikes or runs every morning and leaves me the car to cart the littles around. Another obvious benefit to short commutes to work and other frequent destinations is that you spend far less on gas than if you settled in the suburbs and had to drive 15-30 minutes to get anywhere.



### **Alternate Transportation:**

My husband wins some points for awesomeness for successfully biking to the grocery store with our toddler and preschooler in tow with a [biking trailer/stroller](#). Not your average grocery store trip, but to make the one-car life work, you have to be creative. As I said my husband bikes to work almost every day. Occasionally, he needs to run an errand or go somewhere during the work day that requires the car and we just plan accordingly knowing that we will be homebound. Some friends who are also rocking the one-car lifestyle, but have farther to travel to get to work or school, take public transportation or carpool to work with co-workers. Research what options are available to you. I was pretty inspired by [this woman's commitment to transport her six children only by bicycle.](#)

## **Relish the Inconvenience:**

Being a one-car family isn't always convenient. It's sometimes tricky to figure out how everyone will get where they need to go and occasionally we find ourselves in a bind because of poor planning. However, there is something really special about slowing down and working together to get where we need to go and it's one of the many ways we can be a team. We spend far more time in the car together than we would if we had a second car to use which is definitely an added bonus.

## **Are you a one-car family? How do you make it work?**

(Check out [Part II: Can You Fit Three Car Seats in a Camry?](#))

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This contribution is available at <http://carrotsformichaelmas.com/2013/06/24/growing-a-family-on-one-income-part-i-being-a-one-car-family/>  
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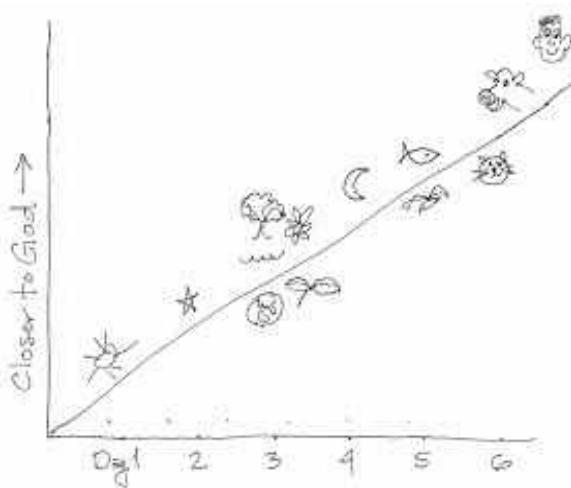
## Pitchers 17: Man, the View is Tremendous [at Smaller Manhattans]

This is some refinement I'll be working into my

[Genesis chapters 1 and 2 classes](#)

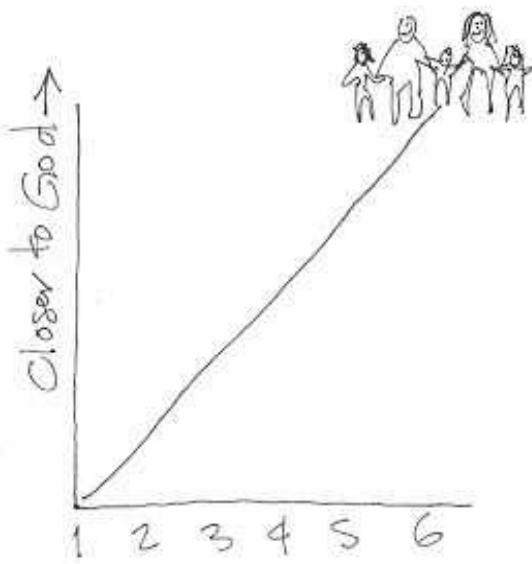
this Fall.

When we cover the 6 Days of Creation I incrementally draw this graph on the whiteboard:



It's how I show that as Creation progresses, the things created are more like God. Once this graph is done, we move on to Eve, marriage, and God's command to be fruitful and multiply. That completes our look at Chapters 1 and 2. We then look at sin in chapter 3. But this year, I'm going to draw a bit more to make a bridge between the bliss of Chapter 2 and the Fall in Chapter 3.

I usually stop the graph at Adam as shown. But this year, when God makes Eve, I'll erase Adam's head, and draw both Adam and Eve standing next to each other with some space between them. Then when we get to God's commandment to be fruitful and multiply, I'll draw in some kids, and the top of the graph will look like this:



[In class I'll still have the animals & stuff on the slope.]

Then I envision this sort of discussion:

"So y'all tell me about the humans on this graph.

*Well, they're happy in Eden I guess.*

Yes, but I mean tell me about them on the graph.

*They're the highest!*

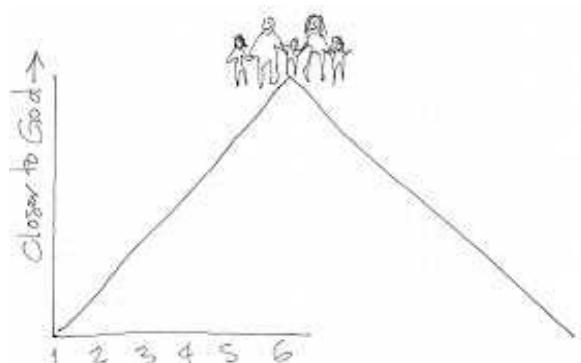
Yes! Which means?

*They're the best!*

Yes! Now watch this...[I draw]...

*now*

tell me about them.



*They're on a mountain!*

Yes, and how do they see all the other plants and animals?

*They look down.*

Yes. And how might that make them feel?

*Umm...important?*

Yes, and....

*like they are the boss?*

Yes, and...

*they can do what they want.*

Yes, maybe so. But what if they look up?

*They see God.*

Yes, and how do they feel then?

*Like God is important.*

Yes. Now if you see the Moon from the ground, but later you see it from the top of a mountain, are you closer to the Moon while you're on the mountain?

*Yes.*

Does the Moon look any bigger?

*I don't think so.*

Right; only a tiny, tiny bit that makes no difference. You may as well be at the bottom. But tell me about when you look

*down*

from the mountain.

*You see everything!*

Yes, it makes a big difference when you look down. Now tell me about looking up to someone.

*Like my parents?*

Yes. Well?

*They take care of us.*

Yes. And how about looking

*down*

on someone, y'all ever done that? Nobody? Well I have, and it's probably my worst habit. That reminds me, let's jump ahead to one of Jesus' parables. See if y'all can tell it.

"Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector."

*The Pharisee was bad!*

Like how?

*He thought he was better than everybody else.*

And was he?

*No.*

Right: "O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income." And the tax collector?

*He was sorry to God*

. Yes: "...the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, O God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Which man did Jesus prefer: the proud man or the humble one?

*The humble one.*

Why?

*Well, he was sorry for his sins?*

Yes, that's a good answer. And the proud Pharisee—how about his sins?

*He didn't think he had any.*

But did he?

Yes.

Right. We know for sure one sin he had, tell me when you know: "I am not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like this tax collector."

*He was looking down on the tax collector!*

Yes, and putting himself up high, like he was God's buddy.

So are you most likely to feel humble- or proud- when you look down on someone?

*Proud.*

Yes, and if you look up to someone?

*Humble.*

Yes, good.

Now we're about to start on Chapter 3 in Genesis, the business with the snake. Y'all be ready to explain what pride and humility have to do with Adam and Eve's sin, and our sins, too—there's more to it than just eating an apple."

\*\*\*\*\*

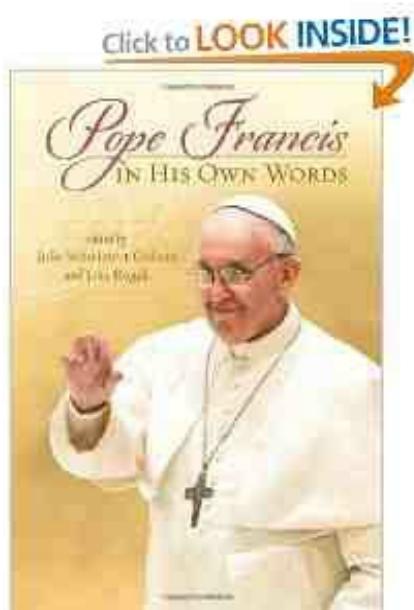
A few catechetical points:

1. There's a whole lot of catechesis in the concept of relative height, some of which will be covered later in the year.
2. Notice that after I read the parable's introduction, I don't read any further without giving the kids a chance to tell what comes next. It's very effective for a child to first say in her own words what comes next; then for me to read the passage the child anticipated; then ask any follow up questions on that bit; then ask them to say what happens next, and so on. This follows a couple of my class guidelines: never provide information one of the kids can provide; let the kids contribute as much as they can.
3. Drawings can be more than illustrations: they should also be teaching tools.

This contribution is available at <http://platytera.blogspot.com/2013/06/pitchers-17-man-view-is-tremendous.html>  
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# Review: Pope Francis in His Own Words [at This That and the Other Thing]



## About the Book:

The moment the identity of the newly elected 266th pontiff was revealed, it was clear to the thousands gathered in St. Peter's Square, and to the watching world, that this pope was different in fascinating and exciting ways — the first from Latin America, the first Jesuit, and the first to take the name Francis, in honor of St. Francis of Assisi.

When Pope Francis, formerly Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, spoke from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, he greeted his audience colloquially: "Brothers and sisters, good evening." Downplaying his power and position, he proceeded not to bless the crowd but to ask them for their blessing: "I ask a favor of you," he said, bowing humbly. "Let us make, in silence, this prayer: your prayer over me."

Francis has repeatedly foregone the fancy dress, lavish accommodations, and other luxuries of his position, emphasizing pastoral work with the sick and the poor and always seeking to empower the underdog. This revealing collection of his own words, gathered from sermons, interviews, and the Pope's books, prompts understanding and insight into his way of being and believing — and inspires goodwill, love, and hope.

## My Comments:

They say if you want to know someone, listen to what she or he has to say. This book teaches us about Pope Francis by quoting things he has said in the past about various topics. Most of the quotes are short, a paragraph or so. While the book includes an extensive bibliography so readers can read even more about our new Pope, from the book itself you cannot tell if the quotes were taken out of context or not. It is a relatively short book that I read in a couple of hours. I'll leave you with a few of the quotes:

The child has absolutely no responsibility for the state of his parents' marriage. Often a baptism can be a new start for the parents as well.

In some churches--and I don't know how to remedy this, honestly--there is a fierce competition between bridesmaids and brides. These women aren't observing a religious act; they're just showing off. And this weighs on my conscience; as a priest, I am permitting this and I haven't found a way to put a stop to it.

What world are we leaving our children? Maybe it would be better to ask, "What children are we giving this world?"

Where there is hope, there is happiness.

The most dangerous idols our own selves when we want to occupy the place of God.

I'd like to thank the publisher for making a review copy available via NetGalley. Grade: B.

This post is linked to [New Evangelists Monthly](#).

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This contribution is available at <http://rannthisthat.blogspot.com/2013/06/review-pope-francis-in-his-own-words.html>  
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7.3.13

# Word-FILLED Wednesday: They Chanted HAIL SATAN

Ah, the raging liberal stereotypes were alive and well at the Capitol in Austin, Texas yesterday {and the day before} in response to the second session called by Governor Rick Perry. Now currently named [HB2](#), the new bill is [identical to the bill](#) SB5 that [mob](#), Cecile Richards, and [Mizunos](#) killed last week. As a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin myself, I understand the behavior I witnessed last night all too well. I would have simply called it a Tuesday on the south mall at UT. Mobs and rage and irrational anger are part and parcel to the UT scene. These are the people that Cecile wants representing **her** cause, the destruction of the unborn under the guise of “women’s health,” carried out by women who have bought the lie that in order to be equal to men, they need to shed their uteruses.

But, if you [pay people](#), I guess you can’t complain who shows up.



Another Craigslist ad was removed, but the text read: Craigslist Ad  
Posted: 2013-06-29, 1:13PM CDT  
Stand with Pro-Choice Texas: Leadership Positions to Ensure Healthcare  
Building Organizations. Winning Elections. Developing Leaders.

\$1300-\$2200/Month

Apply Online Now: or by Phone: 512-994-1010

Salaried positions available immediately. Run a campaign office

Click here to read more about Grassroots Campaigns and our work. If you click on the link for "Salaried positions" you will read this:

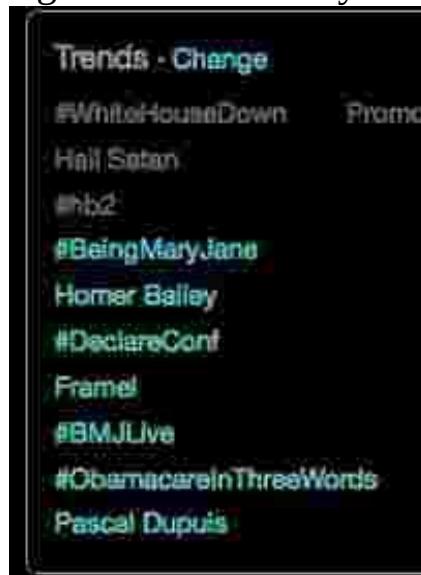
"Grassroots Campaigns is a progressive organization that specializes in running face-to-face campaigns for political parties, candidates, and advocacy groups. By running campaigns on behalf of groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, Democratic National Committee, the Nature Conservancy and Oxfam America we can focus on building up their membership and base of support."

Keywords: campaign, student, politics, non profit, college, rights, equality, environment, women, gender

Compensation: \$1300-\$2200/Month

This is at a non-profit organization.

[Hail Satan](#) was heard behind those giving witness to life – you can hear them [here](#). Hail Satan



even trended on Twitter last night, too.

Here is a small snapshot into the past two days at the Capitol in Austin.

Pray, friends. It's about to get more intense in Texas.

Pray for hearts to be pierced by the love that only comes from God.

And pray for State Representative Jonathan Strickland and his family who were

threatened by pro-choicers who told him "[I hope you're raped](#)" and "[I hope your daughter's raped](#)."



*Many feminists insist that abortion is necessary for women to participate freely and equally in society. Anyone who disagrees, they argue, has merely adopted patriarchal standards and accepted women's 'place' in society. Yet this argument demonstrates how deeply the roots of sexism run in our culture. Its premise is a sexist one—that women are inferior to men and that in order to be equal, we have to change our biology to become like men—wombless and unpregnant at will. What other oppressed group in history has had to undergo surgery in order to be equal?*



Word-FILLED Wednesday: They chanted HAIL SATAN





The opposition were so flustered that TEXAS BLUE showed up on Tuesday at the correct time, that they pouted and

whined in the Twittersphere and created an embarrassing tactic against [anyone wearing blue](#).





SEA OF BLUE

#STAND4LIFE



let's talk!  
we can find  
**COMMON GROUND**

#stand4life



#stand4life

# SAVE DEFETUS!

REPUBLICANS  
CAN'T  
DEFETUS

*Fetology is the study of, diagnosis and treatment of a human fetus as a separate patient.*

*Read those words again. Separate Patient. Fetology didn't exist in 1973 when Roe vs. Wade decision was made.*



What's beneath the surface level mantras? Watch the video and see.

EXCEPT WHEN WE'RE TALKING  
ABOUT THE HHS MANDATE.

Hi

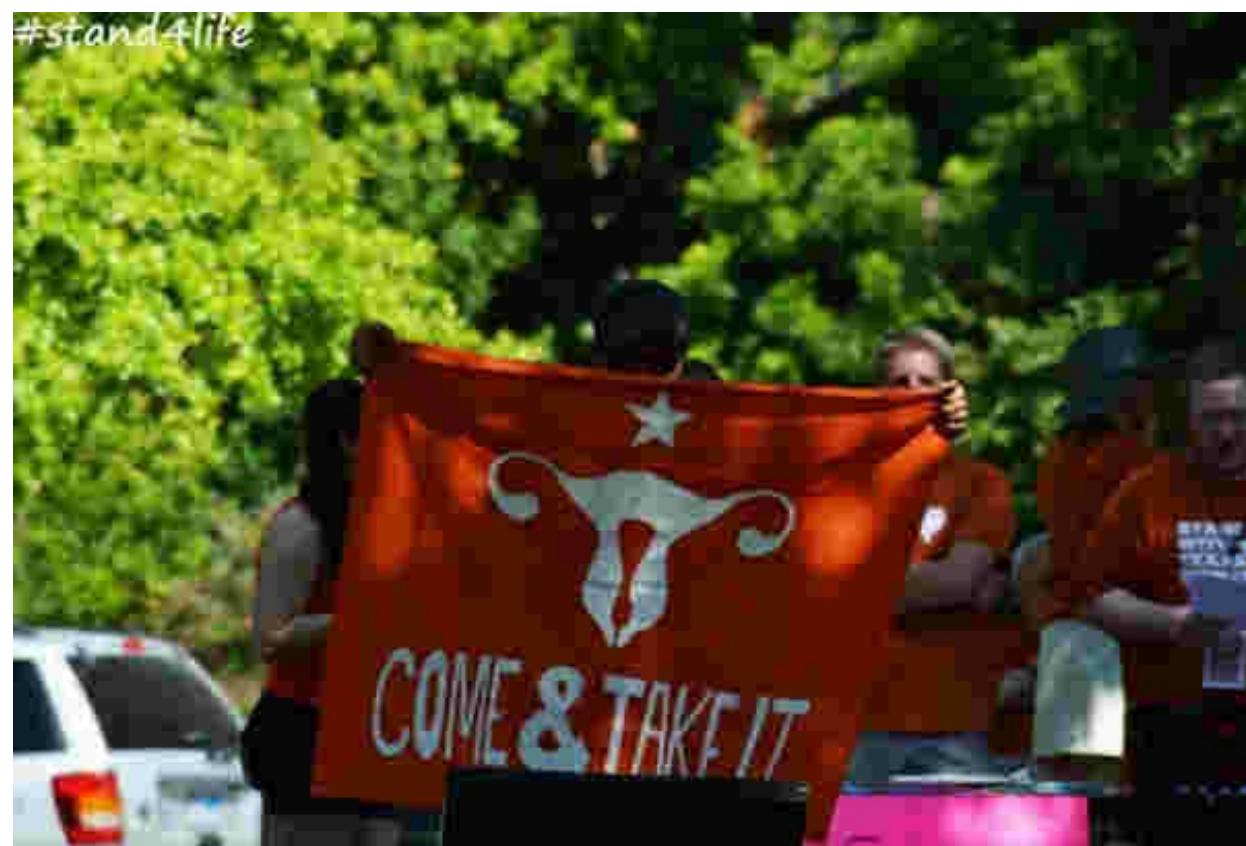


NY  
UTERUS  
IS  
PRIVATE  
PROPERTY

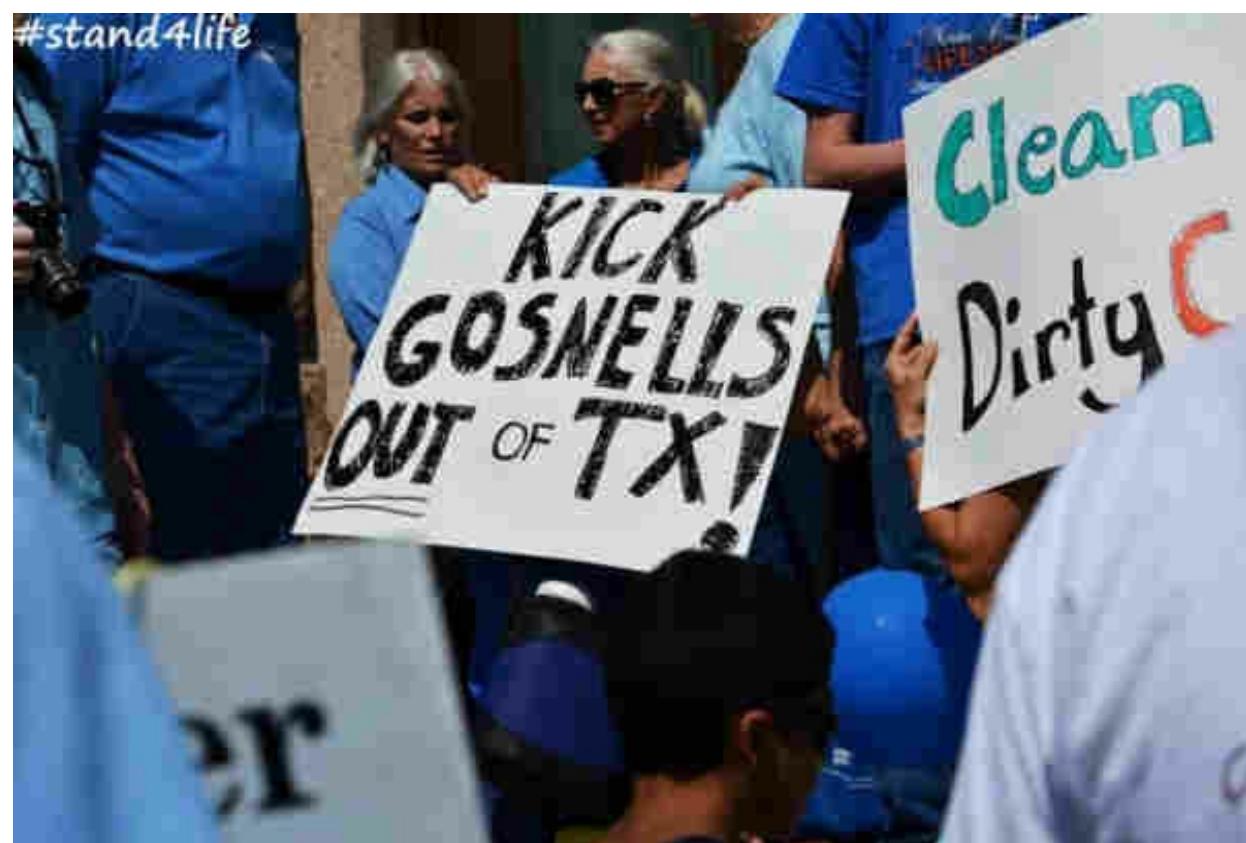
IS IT REALLY JUST  
YOUR BODY?

[FACEBOOK.COM/RIGHTTOREFUSE](#)

#stand4life



#stand4life



#stand4life



STANDWITHWENDY

#stand4life

An airplane with the message “STANDWITHWENDY”

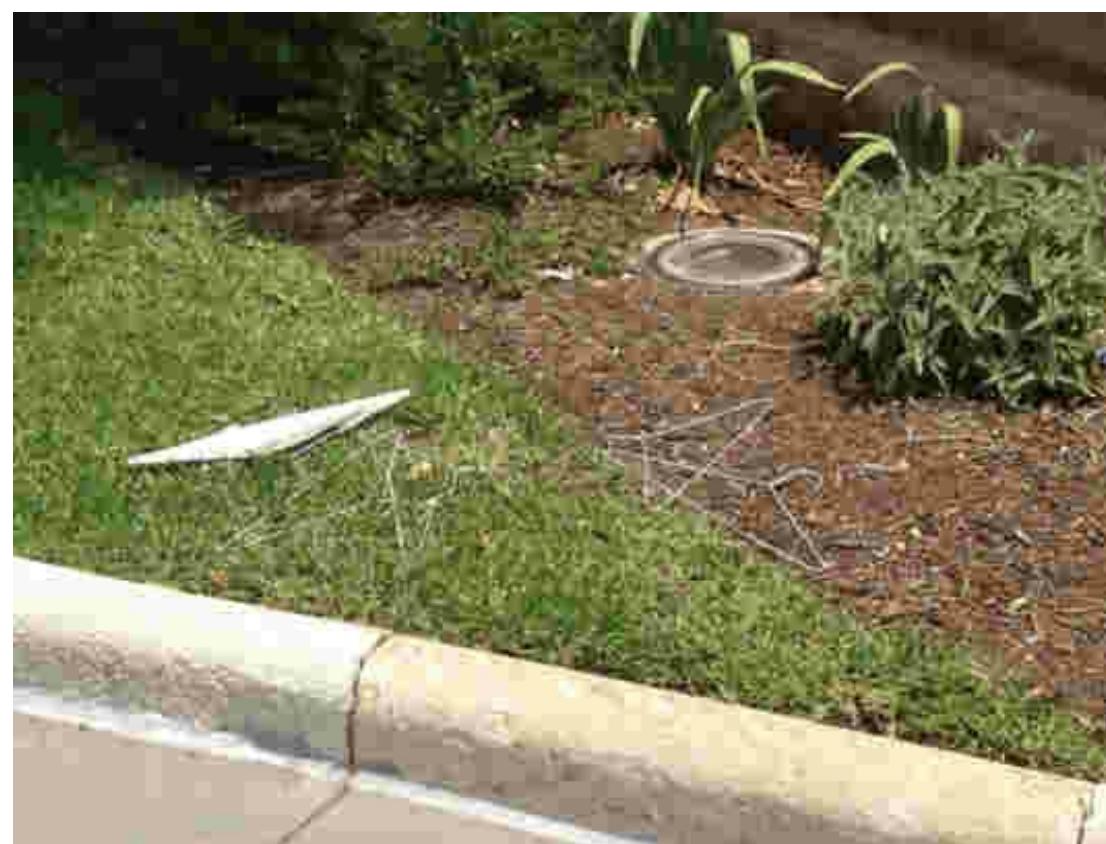


#stand4life

#stand4life







Eyewitness account: I want to share my story from the rally on 7/1. I went to the Capitol grounds, found a shaded place on the sidewalk, and knelt down and started praying the rosary and the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy. As I was praying, a women in orange came up to me and started to hassle me and tried to give me a metal clothes hanger. I ignored her and a courageous man came to my defense and she backed off.

However, what I found most disturbing was a man telling a mother of 3 (in the presence of her children), "Why don't you put pictures of dead women who died from botched abortions in back alleyways?!" His tone was full of anger and hate. All the mother was doing was putting together a sign for her and her children to carry around in support of life. I was so inspired by this mother and her 3 children.



Those who understand how the process goes, know that you have to be prepared to drop everything and head to the Capitol once information is known. Originally planned to show up at noon on July 2, news changed abruptly and folks needed to get down there at 9 a.m. – on short notice, TEXAS BLUE folks made the trek to register their presence and sign up to give testimony.





If the fetus you save is gay, would you still fight for it?  
Yes.



Here is video of what it sounded last night just before we left.

To keep up to date with what's going on, please visit [Texas Alliance for Life's Facebook fan](#)

[page](#). #Stand4Life, y'all!

SOUND OFF: If you were there, what was your experience like? Share with us, TEXAS blue!



I am a 30-something stay-at-home mom to six kiddos, 4/96 through 6/12. We recently decided to homeschool after many years in public school. In my "spare time," I serve as the chair for the Pastoral Council at my home parish and I help with our Adult Faith Formation program, from the planning committee to facilitating and mentoring incoming facilitators. I also enjoy photography as a hobby. I enjoy talking about all things Catholic and always look to infuse a little bit of humour whenever possible.

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This contribution is available at <http://www.catholicsistas.com/2013/07/03/word-filled-wednesday-they-chanted-hail-satan/>  
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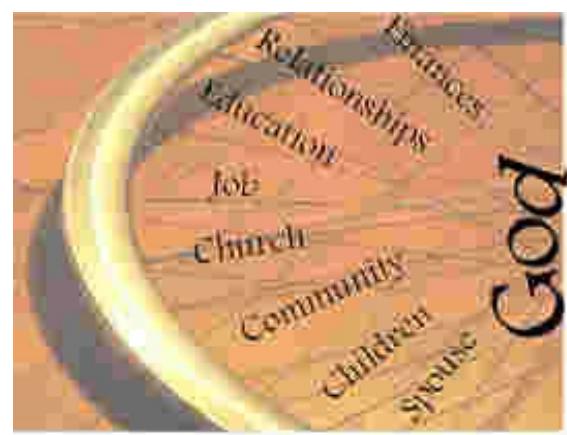
# Where Do Your Priorities Lie? [at The Syrophenician Woman]

When I went to the grocery store yesterday, I saw a car parked like this:



Granted, the car I saw was probably  
*a lot*

more expensive than this one, but that only leads me to question all the more: Where do your priorities lie?



This guy (or girl) clearly knows one thing that is important in their life. They are willing to be a complete jerk taking up four spaces in a grocery store parking lot in order to avoid getting their pretty little car scratched. I wonder why they even bothered taking it out of the garage if they were so paranoid. What are you that protective of?

"When we put  
God first,  
all other things  
fall into their  
proper place."

President Ezra Taft Benson  
(Ensign, May 1988)

Let me answer the question first. For better or worse, I think my top priority right now is my son. I don't like ever having him out of my sight. As much as I complain about dealing with him all day on my own, I love holding him and cuddling with him, especially when he is asleep. My life has been scheduled around him since the day he was born and I love him more than anything or anyone else.

Before you start applauding my priorities, there's a lot of very wise people who say you should put your spouse first. The most important thing that the baby needs is a happy, stable home.

There are even wiser people who say that God should still come absolutely first. I'm reminded of

#### Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac

. That story bugged me even before I had a kid. Now that I'm a parent, it bothers me even more. What kind of parent would even think to do such a thing? And he's supposed to be one of our role models (see Romans 4)? And what kind of God requests that?



The Sacrifice of Isaac by Caravaggio

To keep my sanity, I try to concentrate on the fact that God stopped him. Child sacrifice was not unheard of in ancient times, so such a request would not be a revolting to Abraham as it is to me. It

is a very important political statement that God stops him. The God of Abraham does not want human sacrifice like the pagan gods did. So it becomes more of a statement of Abraham's loyalty and trust than of madness.

Putting God first is sometimes painful and almost always hard. We like to look for instant gratification, but putting God first will make us happier in the long run. It will make us happier not only in the life to come, but in this life too as we live a life unattached to stuff and with a clean conscience.

Sounds like a good deal to me, and I don't get to come across as a jerk taking up 4 spaces in the grocery store lot. Man, I wanted to key that car.



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This contribution is available at <http://syrophoenicianwoman.blogspot.com/2013/06/where-do-your-priorities-lie.html>  
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# Monday Musings - Just Eat The Pork Under Protest! [at Harvesting The Fruits Of Contemplation]



(Biblebios.com)

*If God used Balaam's donkey to get that prophet's attention, I guess he can use me to get yours. May these periodic postings on the second and fourth Mondays of each month (God willing) generate fruitful discussion and faithful change.*

One of my favorite characters in the Old Testament (2 Maccabees 6:18-31) is Eleazar, a ninety year old Jewish scribe, a “teacher of the Law.” He was ordered to eat pork in violation of the Mosaic Law or be killed. He preferred death rather than offend God.

He was well respected not only among the Jews but even by some of those charged with killing him. They pulled him aside, spoke to him outside the hearing of his fellow Jews and urged him to eat some other type of meat not prohibited by Jewish dietary law and pretend it was pork. They advised him to act this way not only because they wanted to save his life, but because they assumed most of his fellow Jews, believing their well-respected leader ate pork to save his life, would follow his example.

This too Eleazar refused to do since he would thereby “offend God, bring dishonor to himself and lead other Jews astray.” He knew full well that while participating in this ruse would spare him from the punishment of men, he would never escape eternal punishment. Instead, he chose to “leave to the young a noble example of how to die willingly and generously for the revered and holy laws”.

What brings this man to mind now? - the shocking revelation that the Archdiocese of New York has been paying “into a union benefit fund that is then used by the union to pay for various benefits, including an insurance plan that covers contraception and abortion.”

According to an article in the June 16-29, 2013 issue of the *National Catholic Register*, a spokesman for the Archdiocese, you see, claimed it had no choice. It was under a contractual obligation to do so. The Archdiocese “had no other option but to pay into the fund which administers the union member benefits ‘under protest’ to continue to offer insurance to its union workers and remain in the health care field in New York...”

Why didn’t Eleazar think of that? If he had only known of this loophole, he could have saved his life and his soul by simply eating the pork “under protest”.

Silly me for thinking that breaking a contract that is contrary to God’s law, refusing to make any additional payments to a program that funds intrinsic evils, closing down Catholic health care programs in New York, or all the above were and are obvious options.

Eleazar would not risk his eternal soul or the soul of anyone else by pretending he was eating a piece of pork. He certainly would not have provided a penny to facilitate contraception or abortion.

A Church that treasures the salvation of souls more than anything else would not either. Not now! Never!

Lord, fill Your Church with more men and women like Eleazar!

---

This contribution is available at <http://harvestingthefruitsofcontemplation.blogspot.com/2013/06/monday-musings-just-eat-pork-under.html>  
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# Melkite Greek Catholic Eparch Nicholas Samra Visits Our Lady of Perpetual Help [at TASTE and SEE]

The Melkite Greek Catholic Eparch, Bishop Nicholas Samra, was in town this week to do some teaching for this year's class of Melkite Deacon Candidates. While here on Sunday, June 2, 2013, he co-celebrated Divine Liturgy at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) in Worcester, MA. The other clergy joining him were Pastor, Fr. Paul Frechette, Deacon Elias Bailey and Deacon Dennis McCarthy. The class of Deacon Candidates joined the laity.

There is something grounding about having the Eparch at our church, especially this Eparch. When I sat next to him after Liturgy downstairs in the church hall, I was greeted and talked with as if I was one of the family. Bishop Samra is down to earth and humble. Please pray for him at all times, but especially in the coming week when he travels to strife-ridden Lebanon for meetings. Having the Deacon Candidates present to pray and chant with the rest of us was also a blessing. Their deep and loud voices lifted us up. May God bless their discernment process.



**Veneration of the Cross w/Bishop Nicholas Samra & Deacons in Background**



## 2013 Class of Deacon Candidates Preparing for Divine Liturgy

The celebration was multi-layered in that OLPH also began its year long celebration of the 90th anniversary as a church community and the 50th anniversary of the church building. To see more photos, visit the [OLPH Facebook Page](#).

images - Personal photos

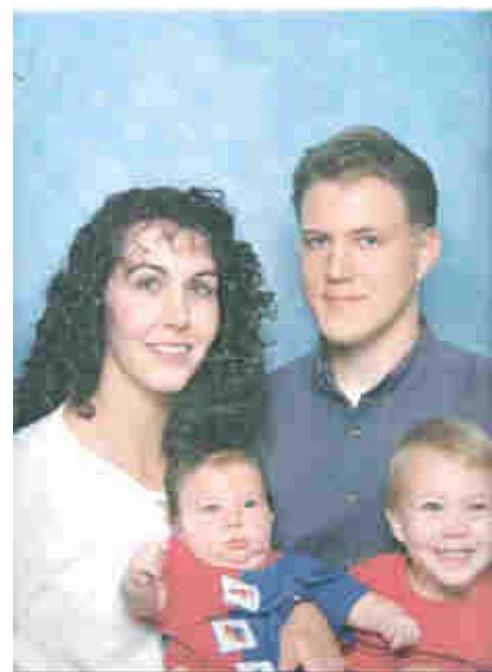
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This contribution is available at <http://www.tasteandsee2.blogspot.com/2013/06/melkite-greek-catholic-eparch-nicholas.html>

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## About John's Birthday [at CF Family]



On June 7, 1997, I gave birth to our second child, another son we named John. It was more momentous than any other birth in human history (!) because it meant that cystic fibrosis had not paralyzed us. It meant that we loved Rees exactly how he was, genes and all. It meant that we could,

*and happily would*

, take care of our kids no matter the need. It meant that more children, even with CF, was still a pleasant prospect.

It was my fist-shake at God, whom I blamed; and at Satan, whom I feared, in a mixed-up mess of muddled theology. After our charmed life crashed over the dire diagnosis, we learned a few things about Christianity, stretching, and growing. The adventure of real love in real life is a trifle reckless. It opens you up to pain and loss as well as peace and joy (Just like Mary, but I wasn't Catholic yet so I never gave her an instant of thought except for Christmas Eve.).

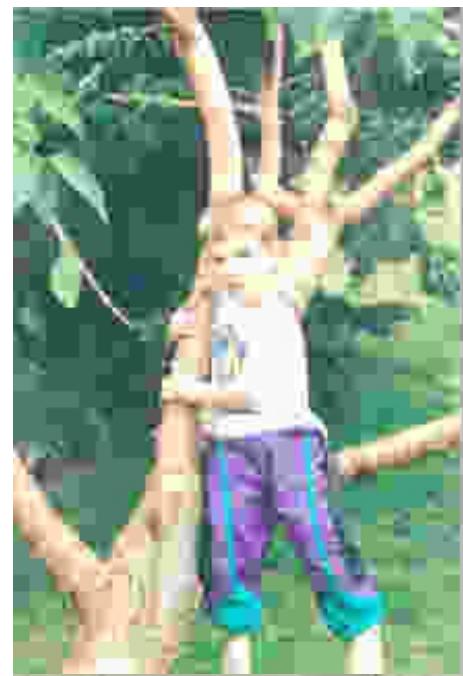
I continued to search the Scriptures for answers despite my dabbling with atheism, and Isaiah 54:13 turned my mind's eye ~

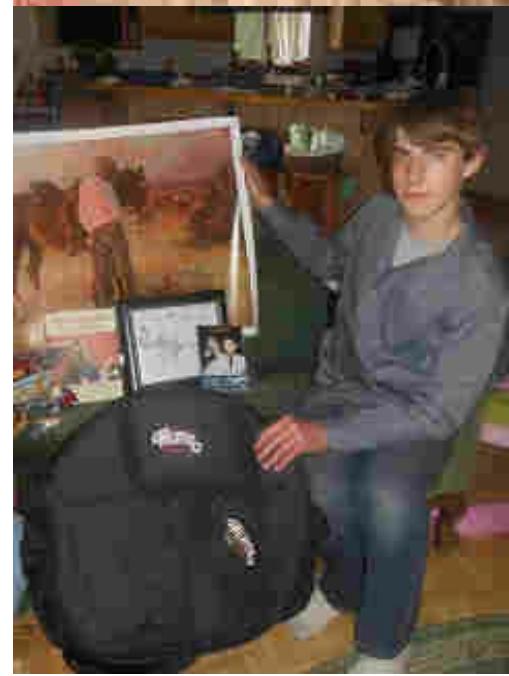
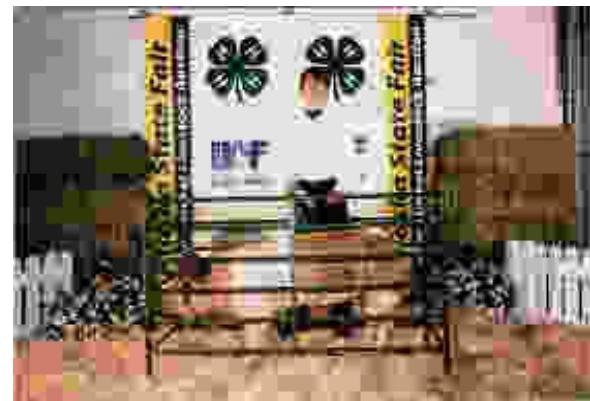
**"All your children will be blessed by the Lord and great will be the peace of your children."**

That would be enough: to have blessed, peaceful children (not necessarily healthy). Then here came John! Because of him, we also have Clare, Ian, Luke, Joseph, and Adah. So take that, CF!

Although we're sadder and would give anything for a cure, we're smarter, stronger, sweeter, have a great big family, and the world is a better place with the beauty of true life, blessed and peaceful.

Happy 16th Birthday, John; you're the man! Our cowboy, motorcyclist, farmer who idolizes his big brother and is (usually) nice to his little brothers and sisters ~ we are glad to have you!





Here's his chosen "birthday cake" recipe ~

\*3 boxes of ice cream sandwiches

\*1 large tub of Cool Whip (or knock-off brand)

\*1 bottle of Magic Shell topping

Layer the sandwiches, then magic shell, then cool whip as many times as the size of the pan allows. Freeze. Thaw for about 10 minutes before serving.

There are many flavors of sandwiches and magic shell so the possibilities are many!

Warmly (Because it's wicked hot here in AK),

Allison

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This contribution is available at <http://www.northerncffamily.blogspot.com/2013/06/about-johns-birthday.html>  
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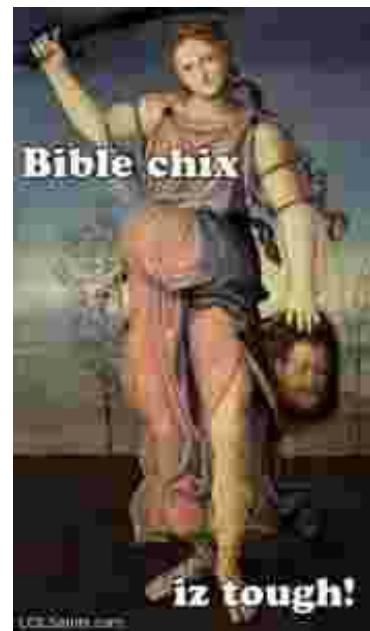
6.24.13

# Thank God Judith is in the Bible



When the Old Testament's Judith was eleven years old, I wonder if her mother ever wrung her hands over her strong-willed daughter. Ever wept at Judith's stubborn streak or worried at her fierce anger. Did she yell her prayers to God and beg Him to soften her a bit? Did she hiss at her through clenched teeth to be loving to her siblings as God loves her? Did she have someone to point Judith toward the way I point my daughter toward Judith?

According to the Scriptures, Judith was incensed to learn that the Israelite leaders were poised to surrender to the Assyrians rather than die of thirst. Chapter eight reports that she called for them to visit her; they came (apparently she was also bossy); she delivered quite a tongue-lashing; she preached; and she informed them of her plan, which would "do something that will go down from generation to generation among the descendants of our race." The leaders basically said, "Go and God bless."



And what a plan it was: While bad-boy Holophernes thought he was seducing Judith, she was seducing him with her "festive garments and feminine adornments."

While she flirted and flattered and swirled her wine, he drank the wine, “more than he had ever drunk on one single day in his life.” When the guards slipped away with knowing winks, she slipped into his inner chamber, asked God for strength, cut off Holopernes’ head, and quickly tiptoed back to her town, where she presented the head to Uzziah with a flourish (at least, I picture my strong-willed daughter doing it with a flourish).

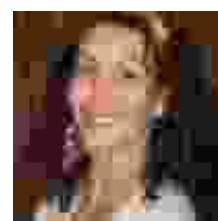
“*No one had a bad word to say about her, for she was a very God-fearing woman (8:8).*” It’s the God-fearing part that makes all the difference for a strong-willed woman ~ that sense of wonder at the greatness of God that can soften any prideful, angry edges and allow more patience and kindness to shine. Judith knew she was tough, smart, beautiful, and right; she was angry with Israel’s leaders and enemies, but she loved God and acted in His service, her way. A strong-willed woman was what was needed for this job.



**I don't  
always  
sever heads,  
but when I  
do, I save  
Israel.**

“*Let Your every creature serve You, for You spoke and they were made (15:14).*”

My daughter’s strong will, like Judith’s, is good. She was made by God and she can serve Him her way (although I hope it never involves wine, men, and swords). My prayer as her mother is for the Holy Spirit to fill her with the fear of God. My job as her mother is to teach and model the fear of God, so I point her toward Judith. I imagine I will still wring my hands, weep, and worry, but knowing this lady’s story softens my stress. Thank God Judith is in the Bible.



Allison is a 40-something mother of seven, living in Alaska, accepted into the Church (together with her husband, thank God) in 2004. She spends her days homeschooling and packaging meat that her menfolk hunt and bring home. She cannot garden to save her life but picks wild blueberries like a champ. She has been published in an edition of Chicken Soup for the Soul and keeps a blog at [www.northerncffamily.blogspot.com](http://www.northerncffamily.blogspot.com), writing about living out the Faith with children with cystic fibrosis.

This contribution is available at <http://www.catholicsistas.com/2013/06/24/thank-god-judith-is-in-the-bible/>  
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# Is the Hail Mary Biblical? [at About the Rosary]

The “Hail Mary” is the illuminative word ever spoken to a human being and it is through it that the Light (Jesus Christ) came into the midst of men to overcome darkness.

Let’s examine the Hail Mary prayer.

Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and in the hour of our death. Amen.



[Part 1] **Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee.** This is derived from the greeting of the angel Gabriel to Mary.

And he came to her and said, “Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with you!” (Luke 1:28 RSV)

And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. (Luke 1:28 DRB)

The biblical Greek word used by the angel *kecharito<sup>mene</sup>* is rightly translated as “full of grace,” it is the perfect passive participle of the Greek word *charitoo<sup>-</sup>* which means, “to grace.” Mary was “full of grace” because the Lord is united with her, “the Lord is with thee” as the angel added.

We should note that angels are messengers of their masters, in this case an angel of God. So, we can conclude for certain that God Almighty Himself was saying to Mary that she is “full of grace” and that He was with her. How sweet it is to imitate God by saying the “Hail Mary?” [Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. (Ephesians 5:1 RSV)]

In other passages of the New Testament, certain men are said to be “full of the Spirit” and also “full of grace and power” according to Acts 6:3 and Acts 6:8 respectively. How much more grace do you expect to be contained in The Woman who is to bring forth the Son of the Living God?

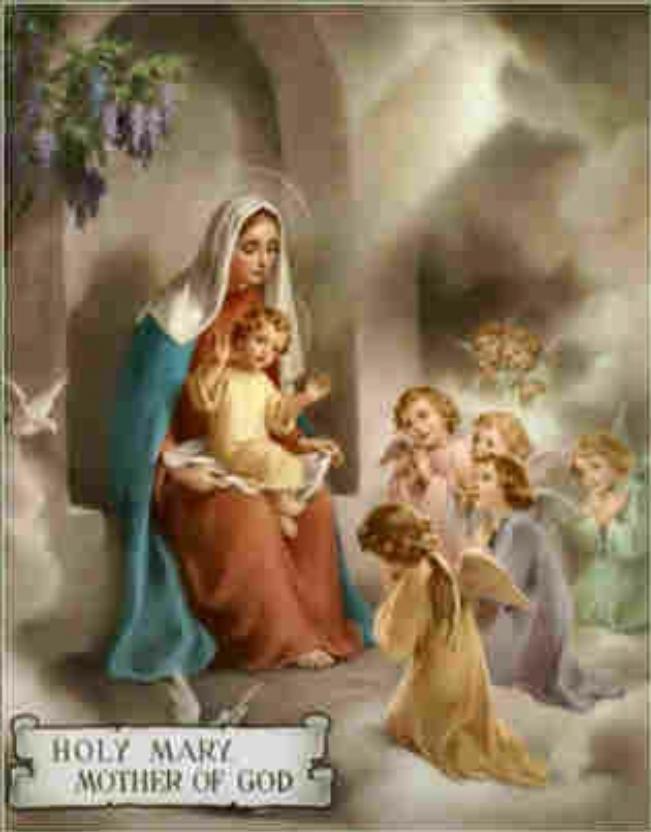
The moon does not take away from the brightness of the sun, but reflects it. Likewise, Mary does not take away from the glory of her Son, Jesus, but reflects Him. Without the sun the moon is useless, so also, without Christ, Mary is nothing. She is “full of grace” because of Christ, the Source of grace.



[Part 2] **Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus.** This is derived from the exclamation of Elizabeth (filled with the Holy Spirit) to Mary.

And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!” (Luke 1:41-42 RSV)

It is very interesting to note how the greeting of Mary “full of grace” had on Elizabeth. It moved her to become “filled with the Holy Spirit” and to exclaim with a loud cry, “Blessed are you [Mary] among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb [Jesus]!” It is also worth noting that it wasn’t Elizabeth who was saying these things but God the Holy Spirit.



[Part 3] **Holy Mary** – This is derived from the fact that Mary “full of grace” is holy.

**Consider this:** John the Baptist was said to be “a righteous and holy man.” (Mark 6:20 RSV) Scripture also says God spoke by “the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.” (Luke 1:70 and Acts 3:21 RSV)

The epistle to the Hebrews was directed to the “holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call.” (Hebrews 3:1 RSV) The children of believers are called “holy.” (1 Corinthians 7:14 RSV)

The mystery of Christ is said to be “revealed to his holy apostles and prophets.” (Ephesians 3:5 RSV)

It is very clear from Scriptures that the closer one is to God, the holier one must be. For example:

Then he [God] said, “Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” (Exodus 3:5 RSV)

Because the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp, to save you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, that he may not see anything indecent among you, and turn away from you. (Deuteronomy 23:14 RSV)

Further, the presence of God imparts holiness:

If any one destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and that temple you are. (1 Corinthians 3:17 RSV)

The Ark of the Covenant was so holy only a few could touch it:

And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry these, but they must not touch the holy things, lest they die. These are the things of the tent of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry. (Numbers 4:15 RSV)

And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there because he put forth his hand to the ark; and he died there beside the ark of God. (2 Samuel 6:6-7 RSV)

If mere inanimate objects can be so “holy” due to closeness with God; how much more Our Lady who bore God the Son?

[Part 4] **Mother of God** - This is derived in part from the further remarks of Elizabeth (filled with the Holy Spirit) to Mary and other parts of Scriptures.

And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Luke 1:43 RSV)

The biblical Greek phrase used *he<sup>-</sup> me<sup>-</sup>te<sup>-</sup>r tou Kuriou mou* means “the mother of my Lord” indicating Elizabeth’s knowledge about Mary being the mother of her *Kuriou* (Lord) as a proof of the Lord of lords (Christ Jesus) whom Mary was carrying in her womb. It is good to also note that as a Jewish woman, Elizabeth cannot pronounce the name of God (Yahweh) because it is forbidden, hence, she has to say Lord (Adonai).

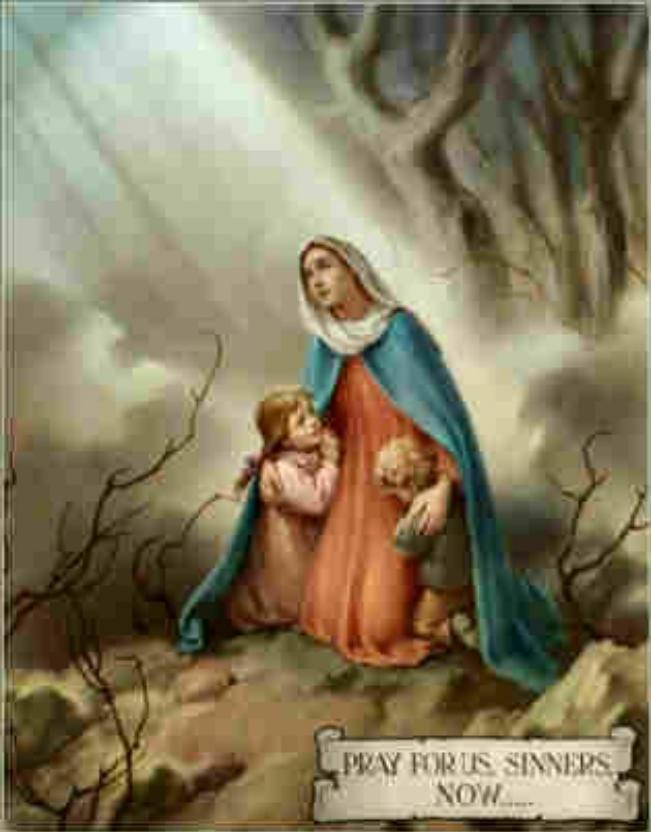
Further proofs that Christ was truly God (the Son) and the Blessed Virgin Mary truly the mother of God include:

And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35 RSV)

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Imman’u-el. (Isaiah 7:14 RSV)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18 RSV)

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5 RSV)



[Part 5] **Pray for us sinners, now and in the hour of our death. Amen.** Perhaps this is the most problematic part of the “Hail Mary” prayer which is derived from the fact that the Church is the *Mystical Body of Christ* and there exists a living relationship with each member.

The Church as the *Mystical Body of Christ*:

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13 RSV)

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27 RSV)

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6 RSV)

This fact, that the Church is the *Mystical Body of Christ*, was made clearer when Saul of Tarsus (St. Paul) was persecuting the Church and Christ Jesus revealed to him on his journey to Damascus that he was persecuting Him.

Now as he journeyed he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:3-5 RSV)

Scripture says God is not the God of the dead indicating that the Saints are not dead but much

alive.

‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living. (Matthew 22:32 RSV see also Mark 12:27 and Luke 20:38)

The transfiguration account of Jesus Christ makes the case certain that the Saints are really and truly living with God, since Moses (who died according to Joshua 1:1) appeared together with Elijah (who never died but “went up by a whirlwind into heaven” according to 2 Kings 2:11). This fact is irrefutable!

And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Eli’jah, talking with him. (Matthew 17:2-3 RSV see also Mark 9:2-4)

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From the booklet “[Let’s talk about the Rosary](#)” get your copy now.

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# Helping Our Children Discern Their Vocation [at 8 Kids And A Business]

Also posted at [Catholic Insight, catholicinsight.com](#)

Also posted at [The New Evangelist/Companions of the Cross](#)



Journal entry by eight year-old Gregory. Used with Gregory's and his parents' permission. Thank you!

“When I grow up, I’m going to be a priest and a policeman.”

“I want to be a nun who rides horses and sings. Can a nun have babies?”

“Mummy, when I grow up I’m going to marry you.”

I smile as I remember these statements made by some of my children when they were very young. As the mom of eight children, I have been listening to my children’s future plans for many years and it’s interesting to observe how their plans change and evolve as they become older.

Children begin to think about their future from a very early age. The photo, above, is of a journal entry made by eight year-old Gregory. In it, he writes that when he grows up, he wants to be a priest and eventually he would like to be the Pope. Gregory’s mom told me that ever since he’s been old enough to take part in the “what I want to be when I grow up” conversation, his response has been the same – priest and Pope. Gregory’s parents know that eventually his plans may change but they wisely understand that it is important to teach their children “that as long as they listen to God’s calling for their vocation, they will be truly happy.”

With ages ranging from their mid-twenties to pre-teens, my children have many thoughts about their future. Usually, their concerns and questions are about career choices, but for the older ones especially, the choice of vocation – holy orders or religious life, sacramental marriage, single life – is a serious consideration.

Usually, when the word “vocation” is mentioned in a practicing Catholic family, the word “priest” follows closely behind. With six sons, the question comes up fairly regularly: “which one is going to be the priest?” My standard answer is: “that’s between him and God.” As Catholic parents, of course my husband and I would be overjoyed if one or more of our sons enter the priesthood. We would be equally happy if one or both of our daughters enter religious life. But it’s not our place to tell them they should enter the seminary or the convent any more than we would tell them who to marry.

When it comes to our children’s futures, the most helpful and most wise action on parents’ part is to pray unceasingly for them and give them our constant support and unconditional love. A Christ-centered home gives our kids the strong foundation they need as they discern God’s plan for their lives.

That’s a very tall order for any parent and I know we can’t do it alone. We need to seek out help from trusted people whom we know have our children’s best interests at heart. With that in mind, I asked our family friend, Fr. Allan MacDonald, how Catholic parents can best support our children’s discernment. [Fr. Allan is the Vocations and Admissions Director](#) for the [Companions of the Cross](#), a new Community of priests founded in Canada with active ministry and parishes in Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax, Houston and Detroit. He has a wealth of experience in vocations discernment. Here are his answers to my, and I’m sure, many parents’ questions:

How do we encourage our children to properly discern their vocation without:

.....turning them away from the faith? **Love them where they are at and encourage them in their uniqueness. Support and encourage them when they do well and even when they make mistakes.**

.....or scaring them? **Ask them what they think God could be calling them to do with their lives.**

.....or shutting them down? **It’s their vocation, not their parent’s. Don’t tell them what to do ... show them how to live a life of prayer and service.**

How do we strengthen our children in their discernment? **Remind them that God has a plan for their lives. Talk about how you discovered that God’s plan for your life was in the vocation of marriage .. that you discerned this and didn’t just fall into it or accept it by default.**

How do we build a climate in the home where vocations to the priesthood and religious life are encouraged? **“Say only the good things men need to hear” (Ephesians 4:29) ... invite priests**

**and religious into your home or on your family outings so that young people see that they are “normal”.**

As my children continue to discern their future, I am reminded that figuring it all out can be a confusing, sometimes frightening, perhaps disappointing and often challenging process. Plans change, doors close, unforeseen circumstances happen. Parents ought to continue to pray, sustain, and love them, encouraging them to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of our Blessed Mother. We trust that our Providential God who placed them in our care will continue to move and act in their lives so that regardless of their vocation, the Will of God will triumph.

linking this to

[Linking to New Evangelists Monthly July edition](#)

***Deo Gratias***

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## Let it Shake You [at Naru Hodo]

This morning I heard someone make a passing reference that I can't let go by without calling it forth, picking it apart, and throwing it in the garbage heap.

Ostensibly it was made in connection with the Supreme Court decisions on marriage yesterday, although it was not in a discussion of that. It was a general comment that the Christian Church has faced challenges throughout history, and some general references were made, including to today's issues of abortion and the sanctity of marriage. And the comment was "We shouldn't let it [the fact that the Church is challenged] shake our faith."

Personal note of my own spiritual formation: I'm learning to articulate a reality that has often confused me. When I heard this I had an immediate red flag, but it wasn't about the logic, nor the historical record nor any objective doctrinal or personal disagreement with the speaker, nor any imagined fault on his part. It wasn't about the words themselves, but the spirit behind the words. (I hate it, though, when I get a rock solid sure sense of something that seems that intangible. I'm still learning.)

Now I'll pick apart.

You see, the enemy of our souls wants "Don't let it shake your faith" to translate in our experience as "Don't let it upset your complacency." "Our faith" sometimes really is simply our smug self-satisfaction at how we've arranged a sense of moral and religious decency -- nothing too drastic, just an arrangement we are comfortable with. Something that serves us to get along reasonably. This way of operating doesn't have

*squat*

to do with Jesus Christ or Christianity. And the enemy of our souls loves it.

So then comes some big challenge. You were all comfortable with your "faith" and then boom: your husband is sleeping around, or your adult child enters a shocking lifestyle, or you are given six months to live, or you lose your job and your home. How do you respond? You were complacent. You were "happy." And now what? Well, you feel like the floor fell out under you, because what was under you was only your self-managed sense of decency. And it is shifting sand that the rains wash away, leaving you with everything in shambles.

Christianity, Jesus Christ active in time and space through His Church, comes to mercifully shake the hell out of us.

**Do**

let the trial shake your faith, by all means! Shaking is the only way we stop relying on our totally lame efforts to prop up our own lives with our smugness and our decency and our comforts. In His mercy Christ shakes us until all that crap can fall away. The call to follow Jesus means to build our lives on Him, not on ourselves and our own decency.

Only after we've gotten the shifting sands out of the picture am I able to build on reality, on love that is certain, on God's eternal faithfulness. Then those same winds and storms will blow -- they never leave the scene! -- but we will be secure. We are tested repeatedly and so we reaffirm repeatedly that our only security comes in how deeply we are loved by God. And with each test, we are purified.

So, let the challenges shake your faith. Let them rip your complacency to shreds and send it back to hell where it came from. And get down on your knees, or stand up with arms outstretched, whatever, and give thanks, praise and glory to God who has treated you with such great mercy as to let you be purified by the great gift of a raging storm. Stay with Him and He will absolutely prove His faithfulness.

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# Our Hearts are Restless [at Catholicism for Cutters]



“Restless” by Flickr user cytoon

I should start, I suppose, by apologizing for my frightfully long radio silence here. I’ve been bouncing about the US—from Virginia to Georgia to California and, at last, back home—which hardly proved conducive to blog writing. Right before settling back in to the major work of this summer—writing my dissertation proposal—I was blessed to have an opportunity to visit [Mt. Saviour Monastery](#), a Benedictine monastery in upstate New York, for five days.

After all my wanderings, it was nice to be properly settled for awhile. But, as I suspected, the silence and stability of the monastery was no simple tranquility—a retreat is not (or at least should not be) a slightly spiritualized version of a beach-sitting, margarita-drinking Bahamas vacation. It was a journey all its own and, for me, a lesson in how to journey.

Within a day of relative silence and solitude, I found not peace but an inner restlessness. It’s always been there—and perhaps always will be—it’s driven me in my academic pursuits and in my drug abuse, at my best and at my worst. And it was certainly what drove me to the Church. But I always found the famous quote from St. Augustine—“O Lord, our hearts are restless until the rest in You”—to be more of a torment than a comfort, a prickly accusation that I was not resting in God because my heart was still so damned restless.

The only real difference between my restlessness at the monastery and my restlessness elsewhere was that at the monastery I couldn’t cover it up. I’d intentionally left behind my cellphone, my laptop, and even most of my books (except a Bible, Augustine’s *Confessions*, and

Merton's *Thoughts in Solitude*). It is doubtlessly a testament to my restlessness that in slightly more than two days I'd assembled two 500 piece jigsaw puzzles that had been left in the room. Eventually, though, I had no choice: I just had to sit and be with my restlessness. In a rocking chair in the corner of the room, facing a window that overlooked the monastery's apple orchard, I rocked my unquiet heart like it was a colicky child.

I thought I knew the cure: if I just knew what I was *supposed* to be doing with my life, this would all stop. I'd grown increasingly skeptical of whether a career in academe was the right path for me—research, which I did love, seemed such a self-centered pursuit and I was growing weary of the disciplinary echo-chamber. The thought of religious life had occurred to me long before I'd become a Catholic and the idea still tempted me.

*Surely God will show me what to do*, I thought. *After all, I want to do what God wants me to do. He just needs to show me.* In short: I had trusted God, I'd become a Catholic, I was ready for action, and now God was *supposed* to provide me with a destination. After all of this, surely I was *entitled* to a destination. I couldn't be meant to restlessly stumble about forever, could I?

The next morning—early morning—I went to pray Vigils with the monks. Nothing else feels quite so medievally monastic as Vigils—down in the monastery crypt at 4:45 in the morning as the monks solemnly speak the verses of the psalms, you can almost forget where and when you are. After the Psalms, several readings are given—a lengthy reading from Scripture and a brief sermon or writing from a Saint, Church Father, or other major figure. This morning it was [a sermon from Bl. John Henry Newman](#) that was, appropriately enough, about “calls”:

[...] consider the circumstances of the call of Abraham, the father of all who believe. He was called from his father's house, but was not told whither. St. Paul was bid go to Damascus, and there he was to receive further directions. In like manner Abraham left his home for a land “that I will show thee,” [Gen. xii. 1.] says Almighty God. Accordingly he went out, “not knowing whither he went.” “Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him.”

Such are the instances of Divine calls in Scripture, and their characteristic is this; to require instant obedience, and next to call us we know not to what; to call us on in the darkness. Faith alone can obey them.

But it may be urged, How does this concern us now? We were all called to serve God in infancy, before we could obey or disobey; we found ourselves called when reason began to dawn; we have been called to a state of salvation, we have been living as God's servants and children, all through our time of trial, having been brought into it in infancy through Holy Baptism, by the act of our parents. Calling is not a thing future with us, but a thing past.

This is true in a very sufficient sense; and yet it is true also that the passages of Scripture which I have been quoting do apply to us still,—do concern us, and may warn and guide us in many important ways; as a few words will show.

For in truth we are not called once only, but many times; all through our life Christ is calling us. He called us first in Baptism; but afterwards also; whether we obey His voice or not, He graciously calls us still. If we fall from our Baptism, He calls us to repent; if we are striving to fulfil our calling, He calls us on from grace to grace, and from holiness to holiness, while life is given us. Abraham was called from his home, Peter from his nets, Matthew from his office, Elisha from his farm, Nathanael from his retreat; we are all in course of calling, on and on, from one thing to another, having no resting-place, but mounting towards our eternal rest, and obeying one command only to have another put upon us. He calls us again and again, in order to justify us again and again,—and again and again, and more and more, to sanctify and glorify us.

And so, it seemed, I had my answer. A paradoxical answer—almost a refusal of an answer. Or an answer to a question other than the one I had asked. When Job asks God why he suffers, God never—properly speaking—explains. But He does answer and His answer is Himself.

Two things seemed clear—I was to go on *not* knowing “whither I went” and my restlessness was not something to be put to rest, but was its own sort of vocation, a pilgrim vocation. And what I found, after meditating on what I’d heard, was not so much “rest” as a place to put my restlessness.

When Sunday Mass came around, the readings picked up the theme again and even more pointedly. In response to a scribe who tells him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go,” Jesus says: “Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head.”

I returned from my retreat, then, resolved to wait and listen and follow. I still don’t know what, precisely, that will entail or where I am meant to go or if, even, when push comes to shove I’ll prove equal to the task(s). But I am grateful to God who can make even my restlessness into a kind of grace.

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This contribution is available at <http://catholicismforcutters.com/2013/07/06/our-hearts-are-restless-2/>  
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# My Journey Towards The Church: The Beginning or Am I Saved? [at A Woman's Place...]



These last few days my mind has been drifting from thought to thought and writing has not come easily.

I'll begin by asking you for your prayers for a friend who is very dear to me, who is struggling through her last days on this earth. My heart is breaking for her, and I know that she would appreciate your prayers (and I appreciate them greatly).

Amid the whirlwind of thoughts that I've been trying to order, I awoke to find a short comment on an old post that told me to quit whining about people saying that Catholics are wrong and going to Hell, because there's a scriptural basis for it.

Right. Well.

In the midst of my prayers I have been asking now and then for some inspiration to help me find the words that God wants me to be writing... and since the answer has felt like silence these past couple weeks, you've gotten to see a lot of pictures of the kids.

Yet this comment inspired the post that follows, which answers far more than the original commentator likely would have asked, if they had managed to form there insult in the form of a question (which they didn't). And so, this is the post, which came from his insistence that damning Catholics is "scriptural."

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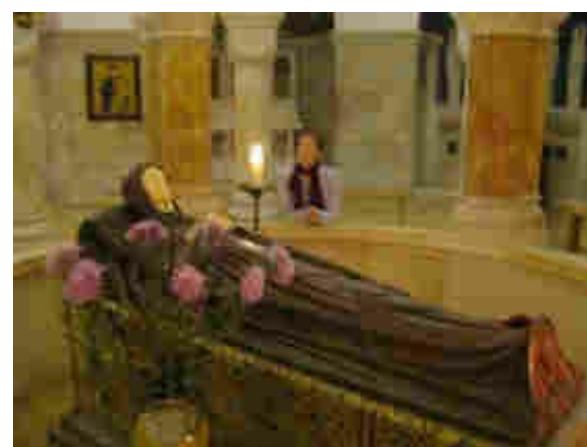
I began my first steps towards my conversion when I met my husband who told me he would never be anything but Catholic. But while it was my marriage that propelled me on those first few steps down this path that I've been stumbling and running and walking and crawling along ever since, it was something far more than our blossoming relationship that compelled me to embrace the faith that I found within the Church.

Before I met my husband my faith had all but been destroyed. This crisis was helped along quite a bit by a certain "Catholic" professor who gave a very convincing (to my 18 year old self) argument claiming that Jesus was neither the son of God, nor God himself and that he'd never claimed that there was a afterlife. But even without that particular rubbish class, I was having my own problems.

I'd read the Bible and read the Bible and read the Bible, but I felt like a piece was missing and I hung on the words in Matthew chapter 7, which seemed to indicate that once saved always saved, which I believed was the basis for all Christian denominations, was missing something. Here are the words that so grated in my mind:

*Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.* [Matthew 7: 21-23](#)

Wait, what? Because that sounded to me like there might be something more involved in salvation than that formula of words accepting Jesus Christ as my personal lord and savior. And when I learned that Paul didn't believe that we were all saved simply by believing in Jesus, I burst into tears. "How could anyone not believe that!" I railed. "It was just so, so mean! If you said the words you were saved!" I might have yelled (okay... I did yell... let's be honest here). "That's what Christians believe!"



But the truth was,

*that*

very fear had been there all along, causing me to repeat that prayer, that oral formula for salvation, over and over again. I remember rolling that verse over in my head, when I was not yet ten years old and fearing that maybe, just maybe I wasn't saved just because I'd "asked Jesus to come into my heart." What if I said the words wrong? What if they weren't loud enough? They had to be proclaimed publicly? What if I did it wrong? I worried. Something just felt off.

I begged God for a sign that I really was saved and then berated myself for asking. Was that testing God? I'd worry. I was fairly sure I wasn't supposed to do that.

Of course by then the seed of doubt had been planted by conversations with other friends of various denominations. One had said you had to be baptized to go to heaven... and I wasn't yet baptized. She could site scripture to back up her claim... and I'd felt sick to my stomach. I was still a few years away from being old enough to be baptized in our church, where baptism was seen as a symbolic expression of ones faith, but was not seen as necessary for salvation.

I worried about it for several years and felt an enormous wave of relief wash over me when I was finally emerged from the waters of our church's baptismal pool a few years later, when I was twelve years old. There. I'd done it. I didn't have to worry anymore.



Still, Jesus' words in Matthew just wouldn't get out of my head. What did he mean?

In college, my crisis of faith reached full force and I fell away from any belief at all. I drifted. Agnostic. I went through a Buddhist phase. A Communist phase. Nothing mattered if you didn't hurt other people, right? And if I did do something "wrong" God, whatever he/she was would understand in his infinite compassion and mercy? After all he told us to forgive even when an apology hadn't been offered. Wouldn't he do the same?

Yet everything was empty. Years of emptiness, stretching from my confused faith until that moment when I lay in bed and read the words "if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall hold me and your right hand shall guide me. If I say, surely darkness shall fall on me, then even the night shall be light about me. For the night shall night hide me from you..."

I whispered a prayer... a hollow, dry prayer, asking God to help me believe... if he was there... and if he wanted me to believe.

And that was what I had been missing all along. You see, all I'd ever needed to do was ask and be open to what was coming next...

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*Since this post is already rather long, I'm going to write it in parts. And this seems like a good place to end part one. [Part two can be read here.](#)*

# Feast of St. Barnabas - June 11 [at The Hill Country Hermit]

If you need a little encouragement today, it is the perfect day to turn to the Saint from Scripture known as the "son of encouragement" - St. Barnabas. A few interesting facts on St. Barnabas:

## 1) His Real Name Was Joseph

, but the apostles called him Barnabas, meaning "son of encouragement." His stories in the Bible are a bit scattered about, but if you search and discover them, it becomes easy to understand why he was considered to be an encouraging fellow (

[Acts 4:36-37](#)

).

## 2) He Was A Cousin To One Of The Gospel Writers -

Mark (also known as John), who accompanied Barnabas and Paul partway through the First Missionary Journey (

[Colossians 4:10](#)

,

[Acts 13:13](#)

).

## 3) He Convinced The Apostles To Give Saul/Paul A Chance

-

[Acts 9:26-27](#)

.

## 4) He Brought Paul To Antioch To Help With The Gentile Christians There -

The early-early church wasn't quite sure how to react to the Gentiles who found joy in the message of Christ. Barnabas was helpful in sorting this out.

[Acts 11:19-26](#)

## 5) He Had "Sharp Disagreement" With Paul

- over whether or not to bring John Mark on another Missionary Journey (

[Acts 15:37-41](#)

).

The scroll that Barnabas is holding in the Stained Glass window above might represent the "

[Epistle of Barnabas](#)

" - a document purportedly written by this New Testament Saint, which was not included in the final version of the Bible.

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This contribution is available at <http://www.theresadoyle-nelson.blogspot.com/2013/06/feast-of-st-barnabas-june-11.html>

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## Mission of the laity by Father Munachi, 14th Sunday Ord C [at Journey unto the Lord]

A preacher was speaking at an open-air crusade in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Billy Graham was to speak the following night. But he arrived a day early. He came unannounced and sat on the grass with the crowd. In front of him sat an elderly gentleman who seemed to be listening attentively to the preaching. When the call came for people to come forward and make a commitment to the Lord, the gentleman did not move. Dr Graham tapped the man on the shoulder and asked, “Would you like to accept Christ? I’ll be glad to walk down with you if you want to.” The old man looked him up and down, shook his head and said, “No, I think I’ll just wait till the big gun shows up tomorrow night.” In the thinking of this man and in the thinking of many people, winning souls for Christ is something that should be reserved for the “big guns.” Today’s gospel story, however, shows us that mission is for everyone, big guns and little shots alike, the clergy as well as the laity.

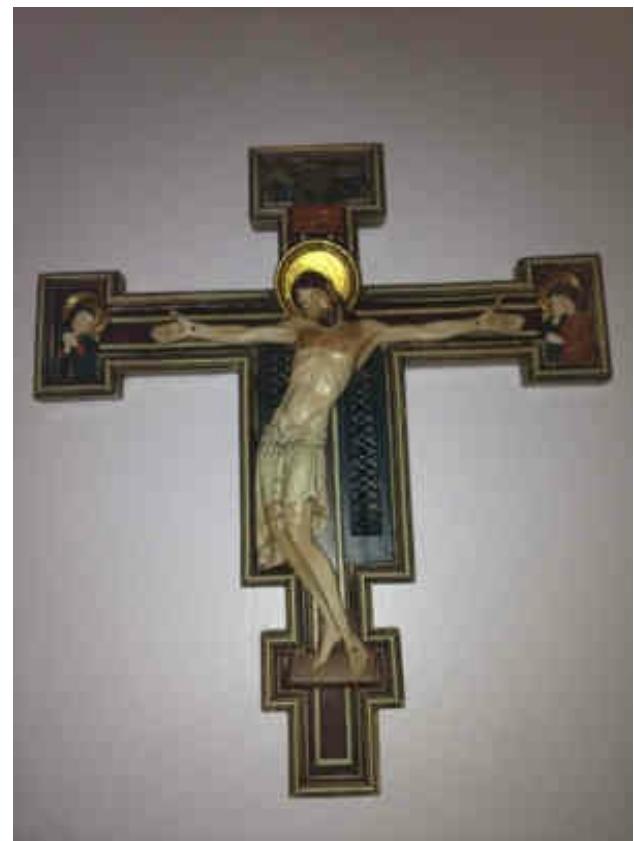
Luke’s Gospel has two stories of Jesus sending out his followers to go and spread the Good News. In chapter 9 Jesus sends the Twelve apostles and in chapter 10 he sends seventy disciples. Matthew’s Gospel has only one: the sending of the Twelve. Scholars believe that Luke’s story of the sending out of the Seventy is his way of emphasizing the universal scope of the message of Christ. The mission of the Twelve, according to Matthew, was limited to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:6). The mission of the Seventy has no such limitation. According to Jewish tradition there are twelve tribes of Israel and seventy nations of the earth. The sending of the seventy disciples, therefore, symbolises the sending of the message of Christ to the whole world.

Today, however, I will invite you to look at the story from a different perspective, from the perspective not of those receiving the message but of those bringing the message, from the perspective of the missionaries themselves. Christian tradition identifies the Twelve apostles with ordained ministry in the church. When at the Last Supper Jesus commissioned his followers to “do this in memory of me” he was addressing the Twelve, the clergy. If this is so, then the Seventy who are sent out on mission in today gospel must be understood as lay people. Today’s gospel, therefore, is the commissioning of lay ministry. This way we can read the two missions in the Gospel of Luke, the mission of the Twelve and the mission of the Seventy, as the mission of the clergy and the mission of the laity. By including the two accounts Luke, unlike Matthew, is saying, therefore, that mission is not only for the clergy, mission is not only for the “big guns,” mission is for us all, ordained and non-ordained followers of Christ alike.

What is the reason for lay involvement in the spreading of the gospel? Because “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few.” (Luke 10:2). This is as true today as it was in the days of Jesus. What role are the laity supposed to play in fulfilling the mission of Christ? The role of the laity is twofold: “Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest”

(verse 2), i.e. prayer, and “Go on your way. See, I am sending you” (verse 3), i.e. active involvement. It is not a question of doing either the one or the other. Every Christian is called to participate in the spreading of the message of Christ through a commitment to prayer and a commitment to action. Pray as if everything depends on God, work as if everything depends on you. Jesus goes on to detail the disposition we should bring to the work of evangelisation: a spirit of meekness and vulnerability, a spirit of politeness and adaptability to the changing and challenging local situations in which we find ourselves in the course of mission work.

Jesus places special emphasis on the work of curing the sick. This is not an optional task in the work of spreading the gospel. Someone may ask: Is health of body necessary for salvation? Is holiness of soul not enough? We tend to forget that holiness is another word for wholeness. It has to do with the whole person, body and soul. The Good News is good not only for the soul but for the body as well. The seventy disciples went on their way trying to implement what Jesus charged them to do. They were surprised to see that, acting in Jesus’ name, not only physical sicknesses but “even the demons” submit to them (verse 17). A similar happy surprise awaits all followers of Christ, ordained or non-ordained, who dare to embrace the work of spreading the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ just as he directed us.

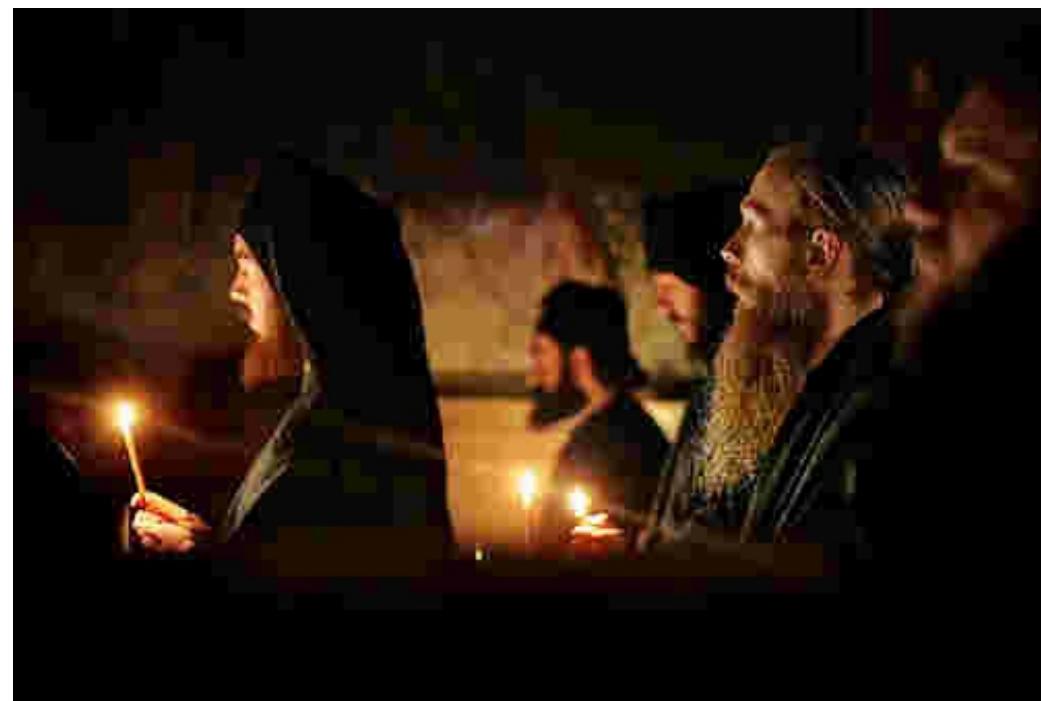


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This contribution is available at <http://www.deaconpolo.com/2013/07/mission-of-laity-by-father-munachi-14th.html>

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# Will Monasteries Save the World? [at Treasures of the Church]



It is hard to doubt that monasteries (and I mean this in a wide use of the term: any community (or even person) who lives apart from the world and prays for the world) have been a key aspect of the Church for millennia, at least since the time of St. Antony the Great. Monasteries began as hermits who lived near each other and had some community. Eventually this expanded into communities who lived and prayed together. In the West, this then expanded into the different religious orders, while in the East the forms of monastic life stayed more or less the same in the early centuries of the Church.

How are monks (again, in a very wide use of the term, including both men and women) helpful for the Church? In two ways: through their witness and through their intercession. Monks have a knack for being witnesses even when they try to remain closed off from the world: the faithful still hear of them, find them, seek their advice, and ask for their prayers. Their hospitality towards travelers probably helps this witnessing as well. Yet I think the biggest impact monks have on the Church is in their intercession. The world is interlinked: it is all connected as being part of God's creation, and the reality of the Church creates a new dimension of interconnection. Intercession has an objective effect on the world and the Church, even if it is not seen. It reminds me of a quote I've always loved from Dr. Peter Kreeft (even from before I knew who he was): "I suspect that if we saw the difference even the tiniest of our prayers make, and all the people those little prayers were destined to affect, and all the consequences of those prayers down the through the centuries, we would be so paralyzed with awe at the power of prayer that we would be unable to get off our knees for the rest of our lives."



Monasteries are the premiere places in the world for intercession. St. John Chrysostom, in a commentary on today's Epistle reading, Rom 8:22-27 ("the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us...He who searches the hearts...makes intercession for the saints..."), discusses people with the "gift of prayer" who come upon them so they can know "the things that were profitable for the whole Church alike" and be "the appointed person to ask for [them] in behalf of all" and be "the instructor of the rest." I think St. John is here describing, whether knowingly or not, the role of the monk in the Church and in the world. Monks make objectively efficacious intercession for the world, and they do so within their monasteries, where they bear witness to the divinizing power of Christ.

Is this intercession needed, though? Isn't our active witness enough, our corporal works of mercy and our kerygmatic, evangelical preaching? Doesn't our active work convert the world? Simply put, the answer is

*no*

. There's a story I was told about a pair of followers of St. Francis sent out as a pair. One preached, and, while he preached, the other prayed. The preacher would always convert crowds of people, inspiring in them the spirit of penance. He thought this was his own doing. One day, though, he preached without his partner, and not a single soul was converted. That day he realized that all of his work was nothing without the backing of prayer, especially the dedicated intercession of his partner.



In some sense, isn't our world a little like the lone preacher? I read recently about "Americanism," a heresy involving a set of opinions condemned by Pope Leo XIII in his 1899 Apostolic Letter

### *Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae*

, written to Cardinal James Gibbons. These opinions include the idea that the Church's teaching must be changed and "accommodated" to each time and place, that license is the true form of liberty and that men should be able to follow

*all*

of their own opinions without Church guidance, that the natural virtues are greater than the supernatural virtues, that there are "active" and "passive" virtues of which the former are more useful for our time, and that the way the Church preaches the faith and makes disciples must be changed. The denigration of so-called "passive" virtues the Holy Father describes as leading to a "contempt for the religious life."

I think the Holy Father's analysis is correct, and I think this "active" vs. "passive" virtues dichotomy is unknowingly accepted by many. It reminds me somewhat of the common view that a truly adjusted person is an extrovert rather than an introvert. Extroverts seem to be more in tune with "active" virtues, while introverts are more "passive." This is not in any sense a complete and perfect correlation, but it's an interesting point. I think there is a view of the denigration of the "passive" in today's culture, even in some areas of the Church. While those joining the priesthood and more "active" religious orders seems to be on the rise, I see little evidence of contemplative

orders growing anywhere near as much.



In terms of the intercessory aspect of monasteries that I am focusing on in this post, contemplative orders are much more monastic. I am not trying to denigrate religious orders that are more active, but I am saying that we need more contemplatives in the world. We need more intercessors groaning with the Spirit's prayers. Without their work of prayer, the work of preaching will be useless. Without their prayer, the world cannot be converted.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky famously wrote, "Beauty will save the world." A motto of Fr. John Zuhlsdorf's is "Save the Liturgy, Save the World." As much as I love beauty and the liturgy (

*especially*

the liturgy), I know that neither can save the world without prayer. Beauty cannot effect conversion without prayer, and liturgy cannot be true liturgy without prayer. And those who pray the most for the world are monks. Prayer will save the world, but particularly that constant intercessory prayer of monasteries. Monasteries will save the world.



*Nota Bene: Quotes from St. John Chrysostom are from his*

*Homily XIV on Romans VIII*

*as quoted in Johanna Manley's*

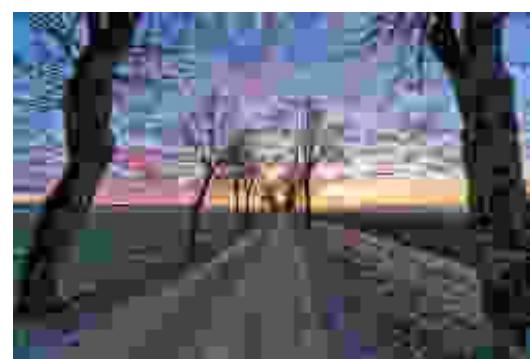
*The Bible and the Holy Fathers for Orthodox.*

This contribution is available at <http://thesaurostesekklesias.blogspot.com/2013/06/will-monasteries-save-world.html>

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# Missing the point of Emmaus [at Convert Journal]



Last Sunday I had the good fortune to hear a friend and neighbor, a Protestant minister, speak on accepting Jesus. He spoke of our Lord's patience, always waiting for us to let Him in. As an illustration, he showed a picture of one of the stained glass windows in his church. It was inspired by well known paintings depicting Jesus knocking softly at a door, without a latch, locked from the inside. This represents us holding back, sometimes tuning-out the knocking, and not letting Jesus into our hearts.

The speaker used a good scripture reference in support of how our Lord comes to us, softly:

Then the LORD said: Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will pass by. There was a strong and violent wind rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD — but the LORD was not in the wind; after the wind, an earthquake — but the LORD was not in the earthquake; after the earthquake, fire — but the LORD was not in the fire; after the fire, a light silent sound.

When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Good stuff, beautifully presented. We cover this reading BTW, on the Nineteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time in cycle A (most recently: August 7, 2011).

My friend went on to note how it is our choice to let Jesus in. So very true. He then used the story of the disciples walking to Emmaus to illustrate the point. As they walked along, he said, Jesus was not yet revealed to them until they came to a fork in the road and invited him in.

I grant that loosely interpreted there is truth in this, and this was offered in support of his topic, but it really misses the point of Emmaus. The story of Emmaus is very important and worth a close look.

The setting is this: it is Easter afternoon, 2 disciples have left Jerusalem headed for Emmaus. They are uncertain about what just happened, but despondent none-the-less that Jesus apparently was not

the redeemer they had hoped for. Let's take a look:

Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.

As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

The disciples do not come to a fork in the road, but as evening approaches they arrive at their destination. Jesus is not revealed to them, but rather gratefully invited to stay as one might invite a rabbi after a day of instruction. It was not until later at the meal where Jesus "*took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them*" that He was revealed. It was then that they responded "at once."

Jesus was revealed in the Eucharist!

Here is how I would summarize this scripture:

- it is Easter Sunday

- disciples are gathered (2 in this case)
- Jesus is literally present
- the disciples confess their troubles to Christ
- Holy Scripture is proclaimed and interpreted
- Jesus consecrates the Eucharist
- the disciples receive Him
- they immediately depart to share the Good News

Does this remind you of anything? It is the Mass. Every Sunday we return to Easter as we disciples gather to hear the Word of God and receive our Lord. He is literally present and it is He (through His priest) who consecrates the Eucharist we receive. Immediately after that, strengthened and sustained by Him, we are sent to announce the Gospel of the Lord.

That is *The Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* today, throughout the centuries, in the very early Church and on the road to Emmaus. What a privilege it was for these disciples to meet Jesus in this way! What a privilege it is for us too, every time we participate at Mass.

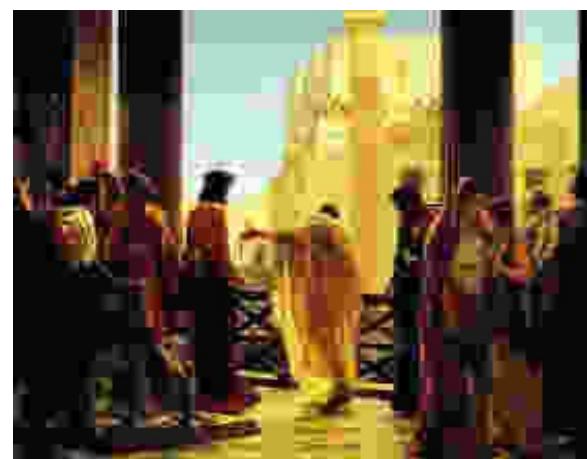
Recently I described the nature of the Mass thus: it is a respite from the fallen world, a place where heaven and earth touch in the presence of our Lord. It is He, speaking to us from the Last Supper, who consecrates the Blessed Sacrament. We join Him there in the upper room, through His passion all the way to the foot of the cross. His sacrifice is real and present upon the altar now before us. Being consumed by Him worthily, our venial sins are forgiven and we are in communion with with Him, all the angels and saints, and our brothers and sisters present with us, at every Mass ever offered in the past and every Mass ever to be offered in the future. How awesome is that!

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This contribution is available at <http://www.convertjournal.com/2013/06/missing-the-point-of-emmaus/>  
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# An Open Letter to the Bishops of the United States [at V for Victory!]



Dear Bishops, Archbishops and Eminences of the Church in the United States:

In 2007, Barack Hussein Obama was elected President. It was his explicitly stated goal to fundamentally transform this country. This he has certainly done. He has nationalized entire industries; increased the national debt to hopelessly out-of-control levels; turned the national security apparatus and the taxing authorities against his political opponents; promoted radical Islam at home and abroad; eviscerated our military; attacked our right to keep and bear arms; crammed abortion, contraceptives and active homosexuality down our throats; published countless new regulations and executive orders; wrecked our system of checks and balances; sought to destroy our sovereignty via open borders; and made our beloved United States the laughing stock of the world. Above all, he has declared war on the Catholic Church, and therefore on God.

We know that Obama is especially targeting the Catholic Church because of the HHS contraceptive mandate. There are other religious groups that also oppose contraceptives, but it is the Catholic Church that is pre-eminently known and despised and laughed at, from without and from within, for having consistently and unswervingly refused to join the many other religions that have caved on contraceptives. We know that Obama is targeting the Catholic Church because he aggressively promotes abortion, active homosexuality and socialism, all of which the Catholic Church condemns. We know that Obama is targeting the Catholic Church because of his brutal campaign to deprive her of her rights and rid the public square of her influence.

But what makes it most certain that Obama is targeting the Catholic Church is his army of

unfaithful Catholic footsoldiers, many of whom were obviously quite deliberately recruited by him in order to weaken Catholic resolve. These politicians and bureaucrats quite openly and notoriously join Obama in his opposition to Catholic teaching, to the great scandal of the faithful. Many more Catholic public figures at various state and local levels who are not directly connected to Obama nevertheless add to the scandal by publicly supporting his agenda.

But what is even more scandalous than all this is the silence of so many bishops in the face of this insouciance. A few bishops take up their rods and staffs and publicly declare that Catholic politicians who openly support intrinsic evils will not be admitted to Holy Communion. Most, however, remain silent. Some allow themselves to be photographed in the act of hobnobbing with openly declared enemies of the Church. Others go so far as to declare they will not enforce canon law against public sinners, on the grounds that this purportedly makes a political football out of the Eucharist.

Perhaps we should be thankful that some of our shepherds are more enlightened than, say, the authors of [Canon 915](#), and are thus in a position to make up for the deficiencies of the Church's lawmakers. On the other hand, perhaps the whole idea of refusing to inflict punishments in pursuit of "the law of love, rather than the law of fear" needs to be re-examined in light of the chastisements we are already suffering on its account.

Dear Shepherds, I can tell these erring Catholic public figures how wrong they are until I'm blue in the face; but they will not listen to me, and aren't about to listen to me. You, on the other hand, have teeth. Only you can force them to a decision: whether they love God more, or their ideologies and all that goes with them. Only you can force them to choose: whether to go on being able to receive the Sacraments, or to persist in their obstinacy. Only you can face them with the stark consequences of their bad choices.

Perhaps, if you do that, they will repent. Is not the point of punishment to make sinners see the error of their ways and repent? But as long as you allow them to go on pretending to be Catholics in good standing, all while waging war on the Church, they will see no reason to repent. When you do not take action, the whole Body of Christ suffers. How much bad legislation could have been averted, if you had acted to move someone to repent? How many disastrous Supreme Court decisions might never have been written, had you taken steps to correct your erring sheep? And we must all live with the effects. By not punishing the guilty, you punish the innocent; and then, how are you to escape your own punishment?

Dear Bishops, time is running out. Events are moving very rapidly. Every day brings fresh disasters; the blows rain down on us with ever-increasing ferocity. There is little left now of the America we grew up in, and of the freedoms we pray every Sunday for our politicians to safeguard. You, dear Bishops, also bear a responsibility for safeguarding our freedom. It is time, and past time, to drive the wolves out of the fold, and to preach repentance and conversion, without which we will never get our country back.

And when the United States is gone beyond recall, where will we go then to find religious freedom?

As ever, your obedient servant.

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This contribution is available at <http://v-forvictory.blogspot.com/2013/06/an-open-letter-to-bishops-of-united.html>

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# From Slavery to Abortion: 150 Years Under the Yoke of Evil [at DavidLGray.INFO]

Under his authority as Commander and Chief, on January 1, 1863 President Abraham Lincoln issued the

## [Emancipation Proclamation](#)

executive order, which effectively ended the government's tyranny of slavery in the ten states that were still in rebellion (leaving slavery untouched in the loyal border states). This year also marks the 150 year anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, which nearly all historians agree was a pivotal turning point in the Civil War, in favor of the Union Army. In the end, the Confederacy exhausted all they had to maintain their way of life – their way of immorality. Even Northern Democrats, champions of slavery and restoration of the union at any cost, used every argument and measure they could to dissuade Lincoln from freeing the slaves.

The Civil War would end on April 9, 1865. With slavery abolished in all of the states, the government launched the [Freedman's Bureau](#), which was established to help former slaves transition into freedom by providing them with sustenance, employment, education, and political empowerment. But it wouldn't be long before the Southern Democrats would establish Jim Crow Laws and the KKK to keep an inferior race suppressed. That was one hundred and fifty years ago.

Today there is a new tyranny at work, and it is still being championed by Democratic Party and by an unelected majority of black robes in the United States Supreme Court. Under this new reign of tyranny welfare entrapment and sexual immorality are the new forms of slavery, abortion is the new lynching, Planned Parenthood is the new KKK, and the new Jim Crow law is [Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton](#). Under the new reign of tyranny these things are called entitlements and freedom and choice.

The [Jim Crow laws](#) were enacted on state and local laws between 1876 and 1965 in the United States. Between [1882 and 1968](#) this legislation contributed to 4,743 lynchings. Out of that 4,743, an estimated 23% were Whites (from [1864 and 1968](#) 4,946/47.7 per year Blacks were lynched). In the forty years since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973 over [54,559,615 million innocent children](#) have been murdered in their mother's womb. Another untold millions of children were never given the opportunity to be conceived as a result of their future parents being murdered before they were even allowed to be born. Out of that nearly 55 million babies aborted, 18,778,000 million (currently 450,000 per year) of them were Black (34%). Here's one more stat for you – the Ratio of Black babies killed by abortion to Blacks killed by lynching is 3,796 to 1.

As this country commemorates the Battle of Gettysburg and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address this

year, we should pause for a moment to consider this new tyranny and yoke of death and immorality that has a choke hold on this country. As we sing “God Bless America”, we should also ask, ‘Why would He bless a country like this?’.



Pro-abortion rights supporters chant “Hail Satan” at the state Capitol in Austin, Texas, on Tuesday July 2, 2013. Gov. Rick Perry has called lawmakers back for another special session with abortion on the top of the agenda. (AP Photo/Austin American-Statesman, Jay Janner)

Just this week in Texas, supporters of abortion were repeatedly chanting “Hail Satan”, in an attempt to drown out Pro-Lifers who were singing the song “Amazing Grace”.

Indeed, Satan’s machinations are making his face visible all over the world – evil is being codified by presidents, legislatures, and judges everywhere. Evil is being called normal under the labels of acceptance, rights, equality, tolerance, and non-judgement. The abortion abolitionists haven’t stopped sacrificing for the babies in the womb. The union of God is ready to fight. Where is our Lincoln of today you ask? Perhaps he was aborted. Where is the Emancipation Proclamation that will save most, but not all of the voiceless babies? Is it the Fetal Pain Bills that are being passed in several state Republican lead legislatures? There is nothing more civil than the safety of all those who have been conceived, but who will start the Civil War? I’m certain that it won’t be the Democrats this time either.

Someone made a remark on my Facebook wall today about how could all of this be happening and no one is doing anything to change it. I responded to him by saying, “There has never been a revolt or revolution of dumb, deaf, and blind people.” It’s time we start inspiring people to get angry about what’s going on.

It has long been the time for us to imitate Joshua and draw the line in the sand for our neighbor and ask them to choose this day whom they will serve. We’ve been walking along our own merry way for long enough, acting as if Satan doesn’t exist – as if all we have to do is worry about ourselves, and our bank account, and our family, and our house. Evil is shoving its feces down our necks and our noses and our eyes and our ears and we don’t even smell it, taste it, or feel it. Compared to the martyrs and saints who fought for the righteousness of God, even the demons think we stink.

Are you angry yet? Are you ready to do whatever you can to help end this tyranny of death in this country? If you are then seek out God in prayer and ask Him to show you what to do. He’ll show you, and then you’ll have to have the guts to obey when that moment comes, but the Spirit of God

will be with you to help you do more than you possibly can do alone.

Here is another video – that is even more creepy with pro-aborts singing ‘Hail Satan’. You’ll have to fast forward to the 5:15 mark of the video to hear it very clearly.

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This contribution is available at <http://www.davidlgray.info/blog/2013/07/from-slavery-to-abortion-150-years-under-the-yoke-of-evil/>

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July 6th, 2013

# Eastern Catholics Communing in a Roman Mass

Just in time for your summer travels! Those of you traveling to areas where the priests aren't familiar with Eastern Catholicism can now print off a guide that hits all the important points about Eastern Catholic faithful communing in Roman Catholic parishes.

## When Eastern Catholics Commune at a Roman Catholic Mass



Photo Credit: Fr. Lawrence Lew, OP

In our globalized and highly connected society, the odds are high that your Roman Catholic community will be visited by one of the more than 17 million people who belong to an Eastern or Oriental Catholic Church *sui iuris* (particular ritual churches in full communion with Rome). This guide helps navigate the canonical and practical aspects of being part of a truly universal church.

"...the variety within the Church in no way harms its unity; rather it manifests it, for it is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual Church or Rite should retain its traditions whole and entire and likewise that it should adapt its way of life to the different needs of time and place." -Paul VI, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*



Questions answered include:

- *What should Eastern Catholics do when visiting a Roman Catholic Mass?*
- *Is the Eastern Catholic held to western rules when in the Latin Church?*
- *What happens when the norms contradict each other?*
- *Does it contradict the Latin rite's liturgical norms to commune an infant?*
- *Is a person who is under the age of reason properly disposed to receive?*
- *May the priest apply prudential judgment if he thinks the visitor is significantly lacking in knowledge or understanding of the Eucharist?*
- *What if the congregation might be scandalized by a child receiving?*
- *What makes an Eastern Catholic properly disposed to receive?*
- *How can the Eucharist be administered to an infant or toddler?*

We hope it will assist many—clergy, religious, and laity of East and West alike—in greater appreciation and participation in the universal nature of the Church. We encourage you to share it far and wide online and in person!

The pamphlet is the first major work of The Star of the East, a canonically established public association of the faithful, headquartered at St. Sophia. The Star of the East has a primary mission of disseminating reliable and orthodox material from appropriate and competent authorities to Eastern Catholic clerical, religious, and lay leaders on the topics of evangelism, catechesis, and missiology.

We want every Catholic to have free access to this meticulously accurate, easily comprehensible guide and we put in all the work to make that a reality. All that needs to happen now is to have it shared!

You can direct others to the [St. Sophia website](#) to see more about it, or to [download](#) and share the fantastic resource.

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This contribution is available at <http://www.stsophiaukrainian.cc/resources/travelingguide/>.  
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# Mary, Mary, Mary [at Catholic in the South]

The first thing I want to say in this post is this: Catholics do not worship Mary. *Catholics do not worship Mary.* ***Catholics do not worship Mary.*** Said another way: Mary is not worshiped by Catholics. Anyone, Catholic or not, would be committing grave sin if they worshiped Mary because we are to worship God alone. This is explained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church in paragraph 971. So, anyone, Catholic or not, who believes we do worship Mary is sadly misinformed. What we do is honor Mary who is the mother of the Son in our Triune God.

We have special devotion to Mary because she is the mother of our brother and savior, Jesus Christ. In Luke 1:38, we read that Mary was the first Christian filled with the Holy Spirit after she consented to the angel Gabriel by saying, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” Later in Luke 1:48-49, we read that “all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me.” Mary, herself, tells us what would happen as a result of the Incarnation. All generations will call her blessed, which is what we Catholics do when saying the rosary. The rosary begins with these words, “Hail Mary, full of grace, blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus,” which come from the first chapter of Luke in verses 28 and 42. The rosary prayer has its origin in the Bible! The word blessed means holy or sacred or worthy of adoration or reverence in this context. Also, the word “pray” comes from the Latin word *precarī* which means to entreat or ask. Prayer is a form of communication.

So, when saying the rosary, we honor Mary, the mother of God, and the idea of honoring the mother of the King is something that has its roots in Jewish history. Scripture supporting the position of the “queen mother” is found in the Old Testament in Psalms 45:9, I Kings 2: 17-20, 2 Chronicles 15:16, 2 Chronicles 22:10, and Jeremiah 29:2.

Why does Jewish history matter to this post? Because Jesus was a Jew who worshiped in the temple, taught in the synagogues, and studied the words of the Old Testament. Judaism is fulfilled in Catholicism. The promised Messiah comes to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. He proclaims His kingdom, is crucified and died, rose again, ascended and now reigns in heaven beside God the Father. As Catholics we observe the sacrifice of the mass representing Christ’s death in thousands of churches all around the world every single day. Early Christians, who were Jews themselves, would have known and understood the connection between Jewish history and the coming of the Messiah. They would have honored the mother of the Messiah as the queen mother was honored in the Old Testament. And they would have recognized the importance of the sacrifice of the mass as a continuation of the worshiping of God that took place in the Temple during Old Testament times. Again, Judaism is fulfilled in Catholicism.

Now I know what you are thinking. What about those beads? What is this rosary that Catholics emphasize so much? It is a prayer in which we ask Mary to pray to God on our behalf. We are

not asking her to grant or answer our prayers. We are asking her to make a petition on our behalf to God for us. I wrote about the first phrases of the rosary in the paragraph above. The next phrase of the rosary is this: "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." Where did Catholics get this idea? Think back to the Bible stories you learned about Jesus. Can you recall His first miracle? You may remember He turned the water into wine at the wedding at Cana and He did it at the request of Mary, His mother. Think of it. The wine steward told Mary about his predicament and Mary told her Son and He turned the water into wine. That is the premise of asking Mary to pray for us. God answers the prayers. Mary only asks for us. We believe we can bring our concerns and our needs to Mary and ask her to pray to Jesus Christ on our behalf.

This practice of asking Mary to pray for us comes from our belief about the Communion of the Saints. We believe that the saints are those who are in heaven. They are in the presence of God. If they are in the presence of God, we feel we can ask them to petition God on our behalf for our needs. After all, isn't God the god of the living and not the dead? The Gospels tell us that. Didn't Jesus converse with Elijah and Moses at the transfiguration? Those believers who are in the presence of God are more alive than we are. As Catholics, we believe we can ask these saints to pray or intercede for us just as we ask fellow believers on Earth to pray as well. In Revelation 8: 3 and 4 we read, "And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God." The saints say prayers to God.

This intercessory prayer does not in any way change the fact that Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and men. In I Timothy 2: 1-6 we read, "First of all, then I urge that supplications, prayers, **intercessions**, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and there is **one mediator** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was given at the proper time." The saints, who are fellow Christians or our brothers and sisters in Christ, intercede for us with their prayers and Mary as the queen mother intercedes for us as well.

Yes, I do pray to God myself about these concerns too. In all cases, I know **it is God alone who will answer these prayers**. Now I want to make it clear that **Catholics do not have to have this devotion to Mary**; however, as Catholics, we believe we can ask the Blessed Mother to intercede on our behalf and I must tell you I definitely believe this works. It only took me 25 years to understand this concept. The thing about Mary is that she only wants to bring us closer to her Son because we reflect on the major life events of Jesus during the rosary. If you look up the story of the wedding feast at Cana in John chapter 2, you will see that Mary said, "Do whatever He tells you," in verse 5. The "He" in this verse is Jesus Christ, her Son. Mary tells us to do whatever Jesus commands. Once I began to say the rosary on a regular basis, my faith began to grow exponentially. My faith in Jesus Christ has grown and my faith as grown in general.

Our family has many examples of prayers being answered. Those prayers were made to God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son, and to Mary and the saints. Our son, Anthony, was born with a congenital heart defect and had to have corrective surgery at two months of age. The evening after his surgery the doctors reported to me that Anthony was struggling to maintain his blood pressure and things looked grim for him. I called my husband, who was at home with our 19 month old daughter, and gave him the prognosis. He and his parents said a rosary about midnight for Anthony's health and it was at midnight that doctors reported a change for the better in his condition. Countless prayers were said for Anthony all those years ago and today he continues to be a healthy example of what prayer and medicine can do.

We recently became the proud grandparents of our first grandson. He is answered prayer personified. Our daughter faced difficult infertility issues for 2 1/2 years before she conceived and gave birth to Beau on June 5, 2013. My husband and I prayed unceasingly for a child for our daughter and her husband. I prayed the rosary daily on her behalf for over two years asking Mary to bring my prayer for my daughter to God. It was a joyful day when Kathryn announced her pregnancy last October. Then, when Beau was ten days old, he faced an infection that had to be treated with IV antibiotics. It was a frightening time for our family, but again our prayers were answered and Beau was discharged in good health. Of course, I prayed to God and to Jesus as well for their protection, mercy, and care in all of these situations. But, the great thing about intercessory prayer to the saints is they continue to pray for us about these same things even when we aren't praying. Continuous prayers sent up to God on our behalf is a very good thing.

So, yes, I do firmly believe in prayer. Moreover, why wouldn't I use all help available to me from God during the trials I face? And also, why not send up my gratitude to God in the same way in times of triumph? I ask daily for your prayers and for the prayers of the saints, because, in the end, the answers all come from Him.

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This contribution is available at <http://kathyfrein.wordpress.com/2013/07/03/mary-mary-mary/>  
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## Is monogamy unnatural? [at Arleen Spenceley]

According to a column Friday on CNN.com, to honor each other as man and wife for the rest of our lives is probably impossible.

**"Strict sexual fidelity is a lofty but perhaps fundamentally doomed aspiration," wrote Meghan Laslocky**

, the column's writer and author of

*The Little Book of Heartbreak: Love Gone Wrong Through the Ages*

According to Laslocky, humans have to tolerate the "impulse to experience sexual variety" for longer now than ever, because people are living longer now than before.

**"A person is theoretically expected to have one sexual partner for about 50 years," she wrote. "This seems like a lot to expect of any human being -- even the most honorable, ethical and moral." It's a lot to expect, she said, because humans are animals**

and animals aren't often monogamous.

"Face it," the column's headline reads. "Monogamy is unnatural."

Then infidelity is "only human," to use words the average American adult might use. But I have good news for Laslocky:

**Infidelity is not "only human." Fidelity is.**

Humans are embodied spirits, created in God's image, given enough daily grace to resist temptation. "Original sin," according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "caused 'a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted; it is wounded... and inclined to sin - an inclination to evil that is called concupiscence.'"

Concupiscence is definitely in "the impulse to experience sexual variety." It is what pulls a married man or woman toward sex with somebody other than his or her spouse. According to Theology of the Body (TOB), "It is as if the 'man of concupiscence' ...had simply ceased... to remain above the world of living beings or 'animalia.'" We have to learn, according to TOB, "'to be the authentic master(s) of (our) own innermost impulses...'"

**It is animal to act thoughtlessly on impulse, and human to use faith and reason to control it.**

It is animal to be unfaithful, and human to keep our vows.

This doesn't mean we are animals because we sin. It doesn't mean we are animals at all. It doesn't make us less-than, but proves we are greater-than, that

**we don't sin because we're human but because for a moment, we forgot we are human.**

It means that because we are human, we aren't bound by sin, but invited to be freed from it, that we don't have to keep doing the things we sometimes think we can't not do.

If we are the animals Laslocky says we are, it isn't because of biology, but because we're rejecting grace. And if "sexual fidelity is a lofty but perhaps fundamentally doomed aspiration," it isn't because we are animals, but because we believe we are.

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Click

[here](#)

to read Laslocky's column in full.

Relevant quote: "

**If redeemed man still sins, this is not due to an imperfection of Christ's redemptive act, but to man's will not to avail himself of the grace which flows from that act.**

God's command is of course proportioned to man's capabilities; but to the capabilities of the man to whom the Holy Spirit has been given" (Pope John Paul II in

*Veritatis Splendor*

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This contribution is available at <http://www.arleenspenceley.com/2013/06/is-monogamy-unnatural.html>  
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Patty was super kind enough to post for me today. A little about this gem: “I’m a newlywed, youth minister, and grad student. Lover of good books, traveling, pink moscato, and am passionately Catholic. I blog about marriage, ministry, recipes, and more...its all done with a wee bit o’ sass and a dose of honesty :).” Check her out on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and And, don’t forget her blog, [Tales of Me and the Husband](#).



One thing that’s kind of awesome about being Catholic is the Eucharist.

We believe it is actually the same Jesus who suffered, died, and rose again we receive in communion; it ain’t no symbol to us, but the real deal (that is actually Jesus’ body, blood, soul, and divinity). Crazy concept, huh?? And no, we don’t “re-kill” Jesus at Mass and are not cannibals. But rather time stops at Mass...

And...BOOM. We are present at the Last Supper. BOOM. We are present at the foot of the Cross. BOOM. We are present at the Resurrection.

And you thought time travel really didn’t exist, gotch ya!! ;-)

Jesus told his disciples in John 6 to “eat his flesh and drink his blood to have eternal life.” Many thought he was way crazy and left him right there on the spot. So either Jesus meant that this piece of bread/cup of wine truly IS his body and blood or either meant it was just a symbol. But see Jesus didn’t say “this is a symbol of me,” He said “this IS me...do this in remembrance of me.” So we really do receive Jesus in holy communion at Mass, and its AWESOME. If people really knew WHO they were receiving in communion at Mass and why it matters, I really think they would never leave the Catholic Church.

The Eucharist is spiritual food for our journey through life...to help us become holy, love others, serve the poor, and to follow Jesus with every ounce of strength we have. We all need nourishment to keep our physical bodies alive, healthy, and strong...why not take advantage of this precious gift of heavenly food to keep our spiritual bodies alive too??

Before commenting, [please read the guidelines for this series](#). And, check out the rest of the series [here](#).

*\*\*Catholic 101 posts are designed to be short snippets of our faith. Please consider emailing this to one person who might be seeking an answer.\*\**

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This contribution is available at <http://callherhappy.com/catholic-101-the-eucharist/>  
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# Leaving a Legacy & One Last Lecture [at Prints of Grace]



## *The Last Lecture*

was one of the books my dad read and had hung onto. I put it on my bookshelf figuring I'd get around to it eventually. I've been thinking of my dad

## James Niermeyer

a lot lately because of Father's Day and the time I've spent sorting through boxes of photos and memorabilia of his that I brought to our place after he passed away. Another thing that's brought my dad to mind is that I've been praying for a couple different families whose fathers recently passed away leaving their wives and young children behind.

I know why my dad enjoyed this book: it's about reaching your childhood dreams, making a difference in people's lives, and leaving your mark on your family, friends, and colleagues.

## Carnegie Mellon professor Randy Pausch

was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and he did everything he could to really live the months he had left with his family and friends. One of the things he worked on during his illness was a last lecture with tons of pictures and some of the main themes in his life and work. He included the highlights and wisdom he would have shared with his children when they got a little older.

It's a fun look at how imagination and determination, a strong work ethic, and persistence can really pay-off. The stories and anecdotes he shares are amusing.

### The Last Lecture

definitely has the feel of a motivational speech, though with more personal details and universal values incorporated. Here's a quick 10 minute reprise of The Last Lecture which he appeared on Oprah to give:

There are a few things to note that are vastly different from

### Randy Pausch's life

and my dad's: not only was my father not a computer science guru, but he barely knew how to use a PC. Electronics were not his thing at all. My dad was the youngest (by 15 years) with three older brothers, so his childhood was a direct contrast in many ways to that of Pausch's. Sports and physical strength, then later on success in business were emphasized more than imagination and ingenuity the likes of which would land him working at Walt Disney as an Imagineer.

Some of the clichés he uses remind me of those my dad would always say. In reading

### The Last Lecture

, I wondered what my dad's main messages from his life would have been. What would he have included if he gave one last talk before he passed away?

I'm not sure of all of the messages he would have included for his three daughters, though. I guess one of the biggest questions I have is: what would my dad's talk have included after he'd retired from being one of the top executives at a major corporation, when he had long since lost his football player physique, and when he was faced with the certitude of an early death? I know from our many talks and visits in the last few years of his life that he saw many things differently from the way he once did.

It also makes me wonder what my "last lecture" would include, what main themes and messages from my life I'd insist on having in it. Perhaps that's one of the reasons why I felt this was the right time to read this book: I'd like to sit down sooner than later and figure out what's most important and live in a way that's evident in my relationships, work, how I spend my time and money.

For me,

### discerning God's will

, carrying it out, glorifying Him, and bringing others closer to Him are what I want and try to build my life around. One of the main prayers I have prayed over the years, I was inspired to write a

while back: “Lord, please plant Your will in my heart and make it my deepest desire and most fervent longing,” along with: You, Lord, are ALL I have and You give me ALL I need. My future is in Your Hands. Lord, I pray for Your Will.

Since we don’t always know when we’ll give our “last lecture,” we’re best off living today in a way that would embody the legacy we hope to leave for our loved ones and the generations to come.

This post is linked to the

[July 2013 edition of New Evangelists Monthly](#)

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This contribution is available at <http://printsofgrace.blogspot.com/2013/06/leaving-legacy-one-last-lecture.html>

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# Don Jon's addiction



Heads up. Emily Stinson has a great post over at CatholicVote.org.

From a two and a half minute trailer for the new *Don Jon* movie ([which was previously titled \*Don Jon's Addiction\*](#)) Stinson extrapolates five counter-cultural lessons:

1. Pornography is a problem.
2. Pornography is addictive.
3. Pornography messes with a person's understanding of reality.
4. Romantic comedies mess with minds too.
5. Loving another person is a high risk, high reward endeavour.

These themes are also raised in a thoughtful blog post written several months ago. Greg Bottaro, a clinical psychologist, distinguishes between pornography as we commonly understand it, which arouses and manipulates desire in men, and *emotional pornography* — the sort of romantic fantasy perpetuated by chick lit and chick flicks — which arouses and manipulates desire in women.

I don't know yet if I'll bother with the film, but both blog posts are worth consideration: [The truth about men, women, love and porn \(in 2 minutes and 37 seconds\)](#) at CatholicVote.org, and [Emotional Pornography](#) at CatholicPsych.com.

# Dealing with Adverse Comments and Opposing Opinions [at Sue Elvis Writes]



I'm not a very brave blogger. I don't like stirring up controversy, preferring instead to keep my blog quiet and friendly.

Whenever I hop over to some of those more popular and exciting blogs, where opinions are flying thick and fast, I'm seized with a feeling of panic. How would I ever cope with all those highly emotional comments that tell me my opinions and posts are rubbish, and I am stupid for writing them?

In all the time I have been blogging I am fortunate to have had only one not-so-agreeable comment. Do you remember this?

*"why the hell would you post a picture of your dead baby online? thats just horrible."*

Reacting defensively is not productive. It doesn't open up a conversation in which ideas may be explored. It doesn't even encourage a commenter (and me) to think about things from a different

view point. It just says, “I don’t like what you wrote. I’m right and you’re wrong, and as this is my blog, I’m going to delete your comment.” I might feel justified in my choice not to publish the comment, but I am still left with a bad feeling.

There are lots of not-so-agreeable comments people could stop and write:

*“You’re so irresponsible for unschooling your kids. Parents like you shouldn’t be allowed to homeschool.”*

*“Why should you be allowed to have so many children when the world is already overpopulated?”*

*“Move on! No one wants to listen to your grief forever. Don’t you think it’s time you picked yourself up and got on with life?”*

So what would I do if another adverse comment arrived at my blog? I could just delete it and move on, like before. Or I could respond. It’s quite possible to publish the comment and still write a defensive reply though. Is there a better way?

I remember something I learnt from my breastfeeding counsellor days. We were taught that the best way to get critics to listen to us is to first find something we can agree upon. Once we have done this, emotions are cooled and we might just be able to communicate effectively.

*“You’re so irresponsible for unschooling your kids. Parents like you shouldn’t be allowed to homeschool.”*

You are so right: Children need protecting. I’m not surprised you think I shouldn’t be allowed to homeschool. Unschooling has had a lot of bad press and has been labelled irresponsible by many people. I used to have misconceptions about it too. But I did some reading and this is what I found

out...

*“Why should you be allowed to have so many children when the world is already overpopulated?”*

The world does seem rather crowded, doesn't it? I'm always amazed at how fast those population counter gadgets turn over. I was also amazed by something else I once saw on a blog video. Did you know if all the people in the world stand side-by-side we could all fit into the state of Texas? That doesn't sound right, does it? But apparently it's true. The world must be a whole lot bigger than we realise. Perhaps there isn't an over-crowding problem at all...

*“Move on! No one wants to listen to your grief forever. Don't you think it's time you picked yourself up and got on with life?”*

I sometimes think exactly like you. Why should anyone be interested in my grief stories after all this time? But there's a lot of grieving people in the world. Even though I have learnt to get on with life, I know there are many other people still suffering. Many mothers lose babies and have no one to talk to. I write in case someone stops by who feels alone and in need of some encouragement. I can understand your opinion though. I used to think the same before I experienced grief...

So what do you think? Would my responses open the way for further conversation or thought? Or should I try again?

And if I could go back and answer the original comment...

*“why the hell would you post a picture of your dead baby online? thats just horrible.”*

Posting pictures of dead people is very confronting, isn't it? I can understand why you think it's

horrible. I used to be afraid of looking at the dead before I lost my own son. Then when I saw him, I realised he was just a normal baby even if he wasn't breathing. He didn't look horrific at all but beautiful. I guess I post pictures of my dead baby on my blog because he is special to me, and I don't have any photos of him alive. I'm sorry if my photo has caused you distress.

Of course adverse comments aren't confined to blogs. They could just as easily appear on Facebook. Or someone could say them directly to us face-to-face. Now that would be more tricky to deal with.

I guess I could call this a communication skills post. It's been a long time since the last one. Perhaps you'd like to join in with the conversation and share how you deal with adverse comments and opinions.



*These seals seem to be having a difference of opinion.*

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This contribution is available at <http://www.sueelviswrites.com/2013/06/dealing-with-adverse-comments-and.html>  
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## **There are NO traditions IN ADDITION to Scripture [at Washed, Sanctified and Justified...]**

Lutero said:

There are NO traditions IN ADDITION to Scripture.

Precisely true. This is why you should drop the five alones and any other traditions of men taught by the Reformers which contradict the Traditions of God by word and epistle taught by the Catholic Church.

Roman Catholic sales pitch. Although certain people may be guilty of this, not everyone outside of the Roman Catholic church has done this.

Yes, everyone outside the Catholic Church believes in things which have been added to the Word of God and has approved things which have been removed from the Word of God.

Actually, the Lord has thoroughly enlightened me to the truth. I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior. Christianity is about a relationship with Jesus Christ and not legalistic religious bondage to a church that teaches false doctrine.

That is correct. The Catholic Church teaches only truth.

In Mark 16:16, if we look at this verse closely, we see that it is composed of two basic statements.  
1—He who believes and is baptized will be saved.

agreed.

2—He who does not believe will be condemned.

Also true.

Clearly, the determining factor regarding whether one is saved or condemned is whether or not he believes.

How is belief proven? It is obvious that one is proven faithful if one acts upon his faith and is baptized. If one does not believe, there is no sense in being baptized.

Here, let me break it down further.

Say one believes and is baptized. Will he be saved? According to Mark 16:16, yes. According to the rest of Scripture, as long as he perseveres in good works to the end.

Now, say one believes and refuses to be baptized. Will he be saved? According to Mark 16:16, it takes both. Why? Because one who claims to believe but refuses the promises of Baptism does not truly believe. Therefore his belief amounts to an empty claim. Faith alone. Faith which is dead.

Now, say one does not believe but accepts Baptism. Will he be saved? According to Scripture, it doesn't matter what you do, without faith it is impossible to please God, therefore, according to my understanding, no.

Do I need even mention the person who does not believe and refuses baptism?

Do you disagree with any of that?

In interpreting this passage correctly, it is important to realize that while it tells us something about believers who have been baptized (they shall be saved), it does not say anything about believers who have not been baptized. In order for this verse to teach that baptism is necessary for salvation, a third statement would have had to be included, that statement being: "He who believes and is not baptized will be condemned" or "He who is not baptized will be condemned." But, of course, neither of these statements is found in the verse. While Jesus does give the positive condition of baptism (whoever is baptized) in Mark 16:16,

## **nowhere**

in the Bible do we find the negative condition of baptism being taught (such as whoever is not baptized will not be saved).

This, I think, is true. Because the verse presupposes someone who has heard the Gospel. However, someone who acts righteously, keeping the Commandments even though they have not heard the Gospel, will, the the Teaching of the Catholic Church, be saved by God because they have acted according to the Law written in their heart:

## **Acts 10:33-35**

King James Version (KJV)<sup>33</sup>Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

**<sup>34</sup>Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:**

**<sup>35</sup>But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.**

If water baptism is absolutely required for salvation, then why did Jesus Himself not mention it in the following verses? (3:15,16,18; 5:24; 6:29,40,47; 11:25,26).

How many times must Jesus repeat a teaching before you obey it? He just needs to mention it once for me.

What is the ONE requirement that Jesus mentions in each of these complete statements? BELIEVES. \*What happened to baptism? \*Hermeneutics. The omission of baptized with "believeth not" shows that Jesus does not make baptism essential to salvation.

Note however, that faith ALONE is never a condition for salvation.

Condemnation rests on unbelief, not on baptism. So salvation rests on belief.

I have broken it down above. I await your response to that explanation.

It logically follows that we get baptized after we believe, not before as infants,

If we know the Scriptures, we know that the faith of the parents is very important to God in Christ:

### **Matthew 15:28**

King James Version (KJV)<sup>28</sup>Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Note how the daughter is saved because of the mother's faith.

### **Acts 2:38-40**

King James Version (KJV)

<sup>38</sup>Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>39</sup>**For the promise is unto you, and to your children**, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.

<sup>40</sup>And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Note how the promise is unto us and to our children. The children of a Christian are Christians from birth. It always seems strange to me that a Protestant consider his children heathen. What a strange thought. They relinquish their children to Satan until their children should save themselves by their proclamation of faith.

but if you are on your death bed and cannot get baptized, you are still saved because you BELIEVED (Acts 10:43;

<sup>43</sup>**To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.**<sup>44</sup>

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

**48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.**

Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Let us see how St. Peter says one receives the remission of sins:

### Acts 2:38

King James Version (KJV)<sup>38</sup>Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

That doesn't mention Baptism, but does not deny it's efficacy. While St. Paul in a different place, teaches the efficacy of Baptism:

### Acts 19:2-5

King James Version (KJV)<sup>2</sup>He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

<sup>3</sup>And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

<sup>4</sup>Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

**<sup>5</sup>When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

THAT is faith.

which is in harmony with Mark 16:16(b)...but he that BELIEVES NOT shall be damned.

Agreed. Understanding that he who claims to believe, but does not act upon that belief, is only making empty claims.

The verse is simply talking about general cases without making a qualification for the unusual case of someone who believes but is not baptized. Not every believer will have the opportunity to get water baptized, as someone like the thief on the cross.

Agreed.

You are getting ahead of yourself. Notice that Acts 16:31 says to "Believe" on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, NOT believe on the Lord Jesus Christ

*and be baptized*

and you will be saved.

It is inferred:

31

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

32

And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

33

And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes;

**and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.**

Otherwise, why was he so anxious to be baptized? And to have his whole house baptized?

Their baptism

**followed**

their faith and conversion.

Exactly! Doers of the Law are justified. Not the other way around. First one is converted and begins to obey Christ, then one is justified in Baptism.

Just as it did in Acts 10:43-48. In Acts 10:43, we see that whosoever BELIEVES IN HIM shall receive REMISSION OF SINS.

For a Christian, remission of sins is by Baptism:

**Acts 22:16**

King James Version (KJV)<sup>16</sup> And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

cont'd

cont'd

These Gentiles were baptized in water (vs. 48) AFTER they had already BELIEVED, received the Holy Spirit and were saved (Acts 10:43-47).

Where does it say they were saved?

Referring back to what took place in Acts 10, we see in Acts 11:17, that God gave them the same gift (Holy Spirit) as he gave us, who BELIEVED in the Lord Jesus Christ (PRIOR TO WATER BAPTISM). So believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and getting water baptized AFTERWARDS are two distinct things.

On the contrary, Water Baptism effects that which it symbolizes. The washing of the Body symbolizes the washing of the soul by the Holy Spirit:

### **Titus 3:5**

King James Version (KJV)<sup>5</sup> Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

This is what Mark 16:16 means by believe and baptized. You must believe that Baptism is for the remission of sins or your Baptism is wasted.

In Acts 15:8-9, we see that God, who knows the heart, showed that he  
**accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.**

He made

**no distinction between us and them,**

for he

**purified their hearts by FAITH.**

Not faith and baptism.

St. Peter is speaking of the same incident. When he says, "purifying their hearts by faith", he means

by Baptism.

Now listen. St. Cornelius, was he considered a just man because he followed Christ? Or because he followed teachings of Moses? St. Cornelius is not even aware of St. Peter at the time of his vision. And he is considered just because he pays alms and prays to God. Read Acts 10.

Because of his faith, St. Cornelius kept the Law of God and is considered Just. Then St. Peter is sent to him so that he may be baptized and his heart purified by faith, in the waters of Baptism for the remission of sins.

We are saved through faith, not works, (vs. 8,9) then created in Christ Jesus UNTO/FOR good works. Notice the order. Saved FOR good works NOT by good works.

I never said we were saved by good works. But Scripture is clear that if one does not persevere in good works, one won't be saved.

The "complete" Gospel? That sounds like the Mormon claim of teaching the "fullness" of the Gospel. You both ADD works to the Gospel (difference in style but same in substance) and teach a perverted gospel of works salvation, a DIFFERENT gospel. This is Satan's ultimate goal. KEEP YOU FROM TRUSTING IN CHRIST ALONE FOR SALVATION. He doesn't care how religious you try to be or where you attend church, as long as he can keep you BLINDED with UNBELIEF (2 Corinthians 4:3,4).

One. Scripture does not say Christ ALONE anywhere, anytime.

Two. I'm not Mormon and their teachings are anathema:

### **Galatians 1:8**

King James Version (KJV)<sup>8</sup>But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Three. As are the teachings of the Reformers because they are additions to the Scriptures and they have the added offense of having removed many Scriptures.

Four. Those who trust in God do the works which He made that we should walk in them:

### **1 Corinthians 6:8-10**

King James Version (KJV)

<sup>8</sup>Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

<sup>9</sup>Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

<sup>10</sup>Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Five.

## **Revelation 22:13-15**

### **King James Version (KJV)**

<sup>13</sup>I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

<sup>14</sup>Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

<sup>15</sup>For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Believing in Jesus for salvation is more than just believing "mental assent" in the existence and historical facts about Christ. Saving belief is a complete trust in Christ's finished work of redemption as the allsufficient means of our salvation (Romans 1:16). It's not believe in Jesus "plus something else" or else your belief (trust, reliance) is not solely in Christ for salvation, but in something else as well. Jesus needs no supplements. What else are you believing/trusting in for salvation? Your church? Your works? Mass? How many supplements (in addition to Jesus) are you trusting in for salvation?

I believe in Jesus, therefore I obey Him:

## **Hebrews 5:9**

King James Version (KJV)<sup>9</sup>And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

You are putting the cart before the horse. You are confusing believing in Jesus for salvation with good works that follow as a result of salvation.

I simply follow the words of Scripture:

## **Romans 2:13**

King James Version (KJV)<sup>13</sup>(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

## **Philippians 2:12**

### **King James Version (KJV)**

<sup>12</sup>Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

## **James 1:21-23**

## King James Version (KJV)

- <sup>21</sup>Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.  
<sup>22</sup>But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.  
<sup>23</sup>For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

## Matthew 7:21

### King James Version (KJV)

<sup>21</sup>Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. - descriptive of a believer.

He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. - descriptive of unbelievers.

There you go. Believers keep the Commandments.

Sincerely,

De Maria

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This contribution is available at <http://washedsanctifiedandjustified.blogspot.com/2013/06/there-are-no-traditions-in-addition-to.html>

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# How to build a straw man [at The Impractical Catholic]

If you want to see a very good example of a straw man argument, I suggest you read Daniel Fisher's attempt to take down AJ Antonin Scalia's dissent in

[United States v. Windsor](#)

,

[posted in Forbes](#)

. It's witty, light reading and betrays very little grasp of Scalia's argument or his judicial philosophy. In fact, it demonstrates just about everything that's wrong with the media and political discourse today.

Here is my best attempt to reconstruct the steps Fisher took to write his article:

1. Skim through Scalia's dissent, pulling out of it some juicy quotes on the fly. This isn't hard to do, because Scalia's writing is eminently readable, remarkably free of legal jargon and obscure polysyllabic words.
2. Go back to Scalia's dissent in [National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius](#) and do the same thing. This is a longer process, because it actually involves three separate cases that were combined, and covers four different aspects of a *very* long Act.
3. Convert judicial restraint from a general approach to an absolute principle.
4. Write your post, making sure you keep it within Forbes' word limit.

Step 3 is where the shape of the scarecrow is put together. The transformation is something like the conversion of William of Ockham's "law of parsimony" into "Ockham's razor": A principle that merely admonishes one not to introduce unnecessary elements into an explanation somehow became a reductive, misleading idea that true explanations are always — or at least usually — simpler than untrue explanations.

Fisher's complaint against Scalia: "... Scalia's passionate cry for judicial restraint in DOMA contrasts with his dissent in the Affordable Care Act case just a year ago. In

[NFIB vs. Sibelius](#)

, he writes on for 65 pages about the many ways in which Congress overstepped its authority and

passed a law that should have been struck down in its entirety. ... Reading Scalia's dissent [in

## Windsor

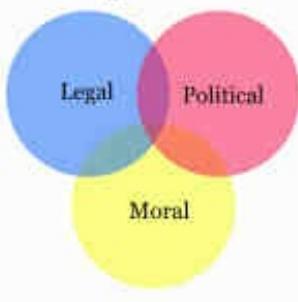
], I can't help but conclude that the important difference between Obamacare and DOMA is the subject matter of the laws."

In other words, "If Scalia *really* believed in judicial restraint, he wouldn't have been so hot to tear apart PPACA." And that is a fundamental misrepresentation of judicial restraint as a legal principle: the point is not to meddle with the law as little as *possible* but to meddle as little as *necessary*. There's a mile's worth of difference between *possible* and *necessary*. Of course opinions will differ as far as whether any particular exercise of judicial review is "necessary". You read enough opinions, you'll find that each of the Supremes has at least paid lip service to restraint at one time or another.

If we cared to indulge in a *tu quoque*, we could as easily respond, "Four of the five justices in the *Windsor* majority were in the *Sebelius* majority as well; we can't help but conclude that *they* liked Obamacare but didn't like DOMA." (In fact, AJ Anthony Kennedy couldn't help make his dislike for DOMA and its proponents clear in his opinion; if he didn't really brand opponents of gay marriage "enemies of the human race" as Scalia contends, he seems to think that we're all big meanies who like to kick puppies and make children cry for fun.) Indeed, we could extend the *tu quoque* to say that Fisher dismisses Scalia as a jurist because he likes Obamacare and didn't like DOMA.

Do you see how fruitless and dishonest such an argument is? Not only is it lazy and demeaning, it risks the emotional tail wagging the intellectual dog.

### An Individual's Opinions



(Your mileage may vary.)

Look, I'm not going to pretend that legal, political and moral opinions are all neatly separable; there's too much overlap between the three. But the point of judicial restraint is that, as necessary as judicial review may be from time to time, **judicial declarations of unconstitutionality are by definition anti-democratic exercises of power by an unelected and unrepresentative body that are damn near impossible for anyone other than a future Court to overcome**; in one notorious case — *Dred Scott v. Sanford* — it took over a hundred years, a handful of amendments and a civil war to nullify the simple yet damning phrase, "The black man has no rights which a white man is bound to respect."

That's why the courts should strive to avoid declaring a law unconstitutional when it isn't needed to cure the appellant's injury. That's why, when an adversarial relationship ceases to exist in fact, the courts should not pretend one still exists for the purpose of exercising judicial review. That's why AJ Clarence Thomas has a sign on his desk that says "THOU SHALT NOT EMANATE FROM THE PENUMBRA", and why "substantive due process" deserves a grave in the jurisprudential cemetery right next to "separate but equal". **Judicial restraint is simply the recognition that the power of judicial review is open, even prone, to abuse**, and therefore demands the willing subordination of one's political and moral preferences to an honest and respectful appreciation of the Constitution, laws and precedents **as they were written and meant to be understood.**

However ... unconstitutionality happens. Laws do occasionally come before SCOTUS properly, fulfilling all the requirements of their appellate jurisdiction, and which need to be struck down in whole or part to cure an injury. So Scalia is

*not*

being hypocritical merely by demanding PPACA be struck down and DOMA be sustained, nor need we conclude that he is motivated solely — or even in part — by his moral or political beliefs. (Let's face it: when a bill's advocate says, "We have to pass it in order to find out what's in it," the bill

*can't*

be entirely good law, no matter what it's trying to accomplish.) Nor does the majority opinion in

*Windsor*

violate the principle of judicial restraint just by dint of striking down DOMA; how it

*does*

violate the principle is a matter for another post ...

## which, oddly enough, I've already written

It could be concluded that Fisher's post is really an *ad hominem* attack posing as an admonition that the Court should choose its battles wisely. ("The Supreme Court only has so much institutional power to squander, and fighting Congress or clearly solidifying public sentiment on the truly big questions can be a fool's errand.") But Fisher could have made such an argument without first reducing judicial restraint to a mere abject veneration of the Will of the People or an ironclad Law of Congressional Non-Interference. Character assassination requires no preliminary bashing of straw men.

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This contribution is available at <http://impracticalcatholic.blogspot.com/2013/06/how-to-build-straw-man.html>  
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# The BSA Policy: One Step Forward, Two Giant Steps Back



Source: <http://blogs.momaha.com/2013/01/31182/>

Any discussion of child sexual abuse is difficult enough. In today's moral climate, add homosexuality to the mix and the conversation instantly turns pricklier, and it's tempting to just shut up. Hardly anyone wants to touch this baby, not with a ten-foot pole. But silence doesn't solve anything, and can even make things worse, as the history of BSA shows.

In 2012, the Boy Scouts of America was ordered by the courts to release information on [1200 abuse cases](#) that occurred under BSA's watch between 1965 and 1985. Those files were hidden for decades, and the BSA reportedly [destroyed many more](#) to keep things under wraps.

A majority of those, if not all, were cases of homosexual abuse, but the word "homosexual" never made it to mainstream media. We all instinctively know that child abuse is abhorrent, but conditioned by LGBT propaganda over the years, we immediately recoil at any hint of labeling male-to-male abuse as "homosexual", lest we be accused of being homophobes or bigots. These abuses were presented to the public under the blanket term "child sexual abuse", pedophilia, or simply "child abuse". The only homosexual abuse that ever counts as far as the media and the LGBT crowd are concerned, are those where homosexuals are the victims.

By helping to bury the reality about these cases, the BSA effectively accomplished two things: 1) they retained a reputation for being a moral stronghold for boys growing into manhood, and 2) they made themselves unlikely protectors of this particular kind of abuse, and hence vulnerable to eventual pressure from the very people the secrecy protects. But any type of male-to-male abuse, while classifiable as pedophilia depending on the age of the victim, needs to be classified homosexual as well, since homosexuality by its very definition pertains to attraction to and

engaging in sexual activity with people of one's own sex. The CDC [refers to any male-to-male sex](#) as homosexual or bisexual: never heterosexual. Note also that by definition, most Boy Scouts would be past the age where abuse could still be classified as pedophilia. Many of these victims weren't necessarily seen as children by their abusers.

Psychotherapist Kali Munro offers a [defense of the victims](#) that most of us can agree with: Victims of homosexual abuse aren't necessarily gay. He takes great pains to make readers understand the depth of injustice that victims face. We can agree: prejudice of this sort is unacceptable and does nothing but victimize these children a second time. However, in referring to homophobia, Munro cleverly leaves perpetrators out of the picture. While it's true that we shouldn't be labeling the victims homosexual, **what about the perpetrators?** [cue crickets]

For decades, the BSA reputation was given priority over the protection of scouts. It wasn't until [1987](#), when the [Youth Protection Training program](#) was established, that changes were made in the right direction. All scout leaders today have to go through it, and the program is comprehensive, to a point. It still only addresses adult-to-youth contact, touches only ever so briefly on the very real danger of youth-to-youth abuse. It also hasn't been able to prevent abuse completely, as [recent cases](#) show:

From [Boy Scouts Forced To Reveal Scope Of Abuse](#):

The previously private records show the Boy Scouts have ejected at least 5,100 adult leaders nationwide for sexual abuse allegations since 1946. And the files reveal that despite efforts to keep potential abusers from joining, the problems persist: In the past 15 years alone, the organization has kicked out leaders for such allegations at a rate of once every other day.

With the policy that takes effect in January 2014, the BSA took two giant steps back and renounced the commitment they made to protect boys. Several items crying out for attention:

### **1. Youth-to-youth abuse happens.**

[Do Children Abuse Other Children?](#) Yes.

### **2. There is such a thing as a cycle of abuse.**

[Cycle of Child Sexual Abuse: Links Between Being a Victim and Becoming a Perpetrator](#)  
[Adolescent Sexual Aggression: Risk and Protective Factors](#)

What steps are we taking to ensure that none of our boys even get initiated into that cycle?

### **3. There are predators who were just waiting for the policy change to happen.**

[1992 NAMBLA Letter to the Boy Scouts](#). If you've never heard about NAMBLA, click [here](#). Try to stop yourself from being shocked.

#### **4. Grooming is a valid concern and can involve either adult-to-youth or youth-to-youth interactions, or both.**

From [Boy Scouts' confidential files show pattern of 'grooming behavior' in molesters:](#)

Many suspected molesters engaged in what psychologists today call “grooming behavior,” a gradual seduction in which predators lavish children with attention, favors and gifts.

The organization released a prepared statement by Mike Johnson, the organization’s national youth protection director, who underscored the difficulty in identifying predators before they strike.

Beginning in the early 1990s, some experts on the Scouts’ youth safety advisory panel urged the organization to study the files for patterns, but they were ignored, according to two of the experts.

The problem here is that the LGBT crowd has built up such a fortress around themselves as to make themselves virtually untouchable! There isn’t a Child Abusers Pride Parade. Hiding these abuses under an umbrella term of “child abuse”, when there are clear connections to homosexuality being hidden from view, serves neither the boys who are abused nor the homosexual abuser who needs help.

Whatever it was the BSA decided they needed to protect the boys against has not ceased to exist. There is no legitimate reason to relax on the rules they’ve decided were necessary to protect boys. Inasmuch as the BSA [saw fit to provide for separate sleeping facilities and latrines for boys vs. girls and youth vs. adults](#), they should foresee that introducing a third sex/gender (for those self-identified, “open and avowed” homosexuals) presents the same situations that were inherently problematic to having shared facilities between opposite sexes in the first place.

In addition, there are important points to consider:

Once a child is abused, that’s innocence lost forever. No, we can’t be hating on the gays, especially since we know that many of them were abused to begin with. But that doesn’t mean we should welcome with open arms any situation that puts our boys at risk, especially, I would argue, these days when there is HEIGHTENED risk for not only physical harm but spiritual harm. Those of us who chose to disassociate ourselves and our families from Scouting may be labelled paranoid nutsos, but the continuous degradation of morality in this country calls for us to make necessary judgments, even if it means we make errors on the side of caution.

Where does the cycle of abuse begin? It takes just one misguided individual.

Where does the cycle of abuse end? It ends with us, if we have the courage to stop it from taking place.

## **Additional Reading:**

[Sexual Abuse of Males: Prevalence, Possible Lasting Effects and Resources](#) from Dr. Jim Hopper, Researcher and Therapist with a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology.

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Previous Related Post: [Betrayed in the Name of Tolerance](#)

Next up: The BSA Policy change and the Catholic response.

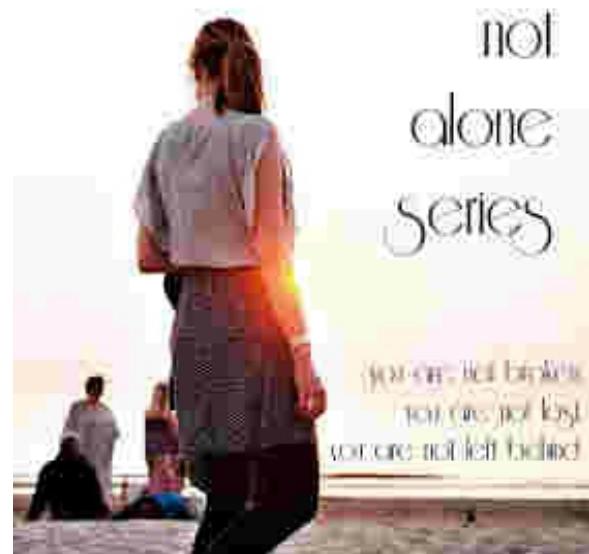
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This contribution is available at <http://www.andthesethygifts.com/2013/06/28/the-bsa-policy-one-step-forward-two-giant-steps-back/>

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# Not Alone Series: Discernment [at follow and believe]



Ahhh discernment.

*"Discernment"*

That word.

Until I went to college, became involved at the Newman Center, and delved further into my faith, I'd never heard the word.

*"Discernment"*

It holds such weight. Maybe not in all circles, but in my Catholic circle, it was almost a level of status.

Those who had discerned.

Those who were discerning.

Those who had not yet begun discerning.

I didn't like it, and I still don't. So I hesitate to ever say the words "I've discerned into marriage" because

a) you're not fully "discerned" until you've taken vows, whether they be to another person or through ordination/entering an order (cliche, yet true)

b) it seems to carry such status

But it's true. It's a long story, but long story almost-short, fall semester of my sophomore year I realized that I was really horrible at objectifying the opposite sex. I remember thinking about how we hear women saying all the time that men look at women like they're pieces of meat...yet was I any better when I got to the first day of class early just so I could scope out the hotties? Um nope.

I made it my mission to see men as "Brothers in Christ" above all else. Not potential prospects, boyfriends, etc.

Just Brothers in Christ.

That was really helpful in every area of my life and gradually led into deeper prayer about what vocation I was made for. Essentially, I felt ready to begin that process because I desired to more purposefully prepare myself immediately for whatever the Lord had in store.

I began to allow my heart to be opened in ways that I never thought possible and gave Him a sliver of my heart at a time. But I always felt like I was holding something back, and I knew that it was the part of me that didn't want to give up my life-long dream of being a wife and a mother.

I think this something that many women (and men, but opposite...) struggle to let go of. And it most certainly was for me. Perhaps it was also the sense of me losing control (I've recently realized that I really like a structured life) and that scared me spitless.

But over time, the call of the Lord to give Him **EVERYTHING** (not just the pieces of my heart that I was willing to part with) broke down my walls and I found myself laying it all before the cross.

**FINALLY**, I had opened my heart and let go in order for God to take over my life completely.

You see, He loves us so much that He'll never force anything upon us. We always have free will and always have to make the conscious decision to choose Him.

## I found true freedom in choosing His will over my own.

Have you ever had a moment when you felt God speaking into your heart?

For me it isn't a big booming voice, but a feeling injected straight into my soul. A *knowing*.

Some time after allowing Him to do whatever He willed, I felt that agape love encompass my heart in a way that I can only translate as Him holding me as a small daughter and saying:

*"My child, you know I love you, and I would keep you for myself if I could. But because I love you so, I'm willing to give you away to the one I'm preparing for you."*

(as the Father of the Bride weeps tears of joy and undying love, this is how I picture our Heavenly Father in this moment)

Wowza.

I'll admit, there are times when I question my recollection of these occurrences and almost fear that I'm actually called to religious life. Despite the beauty I've seen in religious, I've always had a personal aversion to the idea of me entering an order. But other than the rush of peace that I finally found when I gave it all over to Him, what keeps me calm and out of a 1/4th life crisis is that He so powerfully intervened and seemingly handed me His will the first time that as long as I continue to be open to whatever He throws at me, if His plans change, I'll know it.

Until then, I'm staying on this path.

Hokay, this is getting long. Final thoughts on discernment:

Above all, I believe it is most important to make yourself entirely and wholly open to the Lord's will. Like I said before, He won't force you into anything, but whatever He has planned will make you the happiest, most complete version of yourself. Sooooo it's definitely best to let Him take the reins.

I mean, He created you, right?

Therefore He knows the deepest, most ardent desires of your heart and only wants your every happiness.

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Next week's topic:

## **Prayer**

*How do you pray? Tips to staying disciplined? Give us anything you've got!*

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This contribution is available at <http://follow-and-believe.blogspot.com/2013/06/not-alone-series-discernment.html>

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# Welcome Bishop Folda [at CatholicMom.com]

**At long last,** he's arrived!



A year ago, we received word our bishop, Samuel Aquila, had been appointed archbishop of the Denver Archdiocese.

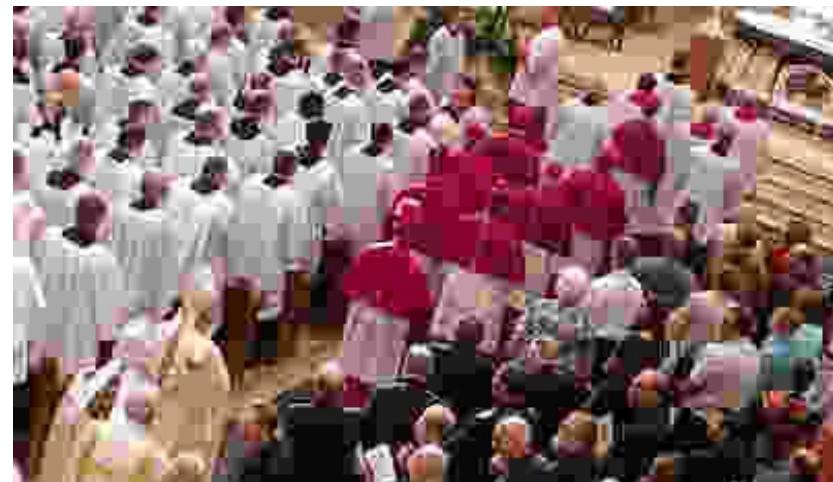


I'd just taken a position as director of communications for the Fargo Diocese, which meant my new job was about to take on a whole new dimension.

It was an interesting time of saying goodbye, waiting and wondering. We definitely felt fatherless, and though our apostolic administrator did his best to keep us moving forward, it was a joyful day when we learned our diocese was among the first to be appointed a new bishop under our also new pope, Pope Francis!

You might say this is an historic event, not only for our diocese but for the Catholic Church in the United States and world as well.

**Though no longer** in my diocesan capacity, I was nevertheless privileged to attend, as a reporter, both the solemn vespers prayer service on Tuesday evening and the ordination Mass itself on Wednesday here in Fargo.



For both events, I joined other media in the choir loft; first in my home parish of Sts. Anne & Joachim Church for vespers, and then at our cathedral downtown, St. Mary's, for the episcopal ordination and installation.

The events were every bit as inspiring as last year's installation in Denver. The beauty and holiness of these sacred ceremonies fills my heart with so much joy. My only wish is that all Catholics could experience such an event, even knowing that one building can't possibly hold a whole diocese.



**Still, if only all could** hear the majestic choirs and brass in person, inhale the rich aroma of the incense, see the reverence and sense the grandeur of where it all leads — to a heavenly banquet that will blow ceremonies such as these out of both water and sky. This is something I wish for each Christian in his or lifetime.



As for the bishop himself and first impressions, I have no doubt whatsoever that by this appointment, we've been abundantly blessed here in North Dakota.



In his concluding remarks of gratitude, God rightly came first.

"I must first of all give thanks to God for the gift of faith and his loving invitation to share in his divine love," he began. "Not only did he see fit to bless me with his faith but he also saw fit to call me to the sacred priesthood, and now, inexplicably, to the office of bishop. For such a gift I can only bow in humble gratitude."



Indeed, and we as well, good shepherd!

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Did you like this article? Share it with your friends!

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## Intentional [at Rediscovering Glory]

A friend of mine was talking to me about being intentional. I never really thought about that word before and what it means.

Now, having given it some thought I want to strive to be intentional.

You see, I have an awesome best friend. But we both have busy lives and busy schedules. So we have to make it a point to plan to see each other, to hang out or visit, to do things together, to call each other. We love doing things together but if we do not plan them they simply will not happen. We have to be very intentional in making time for each other.

I think that is the way it is with a lot of things. For instance if I plan to go somewhere for my daily prayer time then I will take that time to pray. But if I have a free day and I think I will pray at home in the evening, it almost never happens. In the first instance I am intentional about planning what I will be doing since I am going to drive there. I have the intention of praying in mind and so I do it.

When we are intentional things happen, especially when we are intentional with our relationships. I have decided that I only want to be in a dating relationship if it is intentional. What that means is that we both put effort into it, it is not just something we fall into. It also means that there is some sort of goal to the relationship. Namely are we called to marriage.

I know for me the biggest place in my life that I need to work on being intentional is in my relationships. What that means is that if I see an acquaintance or even a friend of mine in public I say hello and take a few minutes to talk to them. It means that I plan to have good hang out times with friends. Those things show God's love and that is what I need to do with all of my actions.

Because being intentional means that I have a purpose and a goal. It means that you care about people. It means that you are not friends with people just because you hung out a couple of times and had fun. No, being intentional in our friendships means that we see things we love in another person and we want to help them get to Heaven. We also realize that they will help us get to Heaven.

So be intentional. Call up a friend not just to talk but to really see how they are doing, to find out what is going on in their soul, what their struggles are.

But more than anything else be intentional in showing love.

My cousin's friend who I only ever met once wrote me a note that is the best note I have ever received.

She wrote

"Dear new friend,

I just wanted to share this with you:

"You are beautiful

because God the Father,

created you and you are made in his image and likeness.

God does not make mistakes.

Love,

Christine

This simple letter was an intentional act of love and affirmation. It means so much to me and I treasure this letter that was given to me by someone I do not even know.

That is what an intentional act of love can do.

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Some blogs of the world, I think, require more courage than others. I would guess that maybe keeping a crafting blog, or cooking blog still puts your heart out there, sharing the love of your hobby or career with others, but not in the same way as those that cover topics related to politics, family, and especially religion. The beauty of blogging is that you can share your voice, opinions, ideas, and maybe even foster friendships. But the downside is that anyone can come across it, disagree with you, and be mean. Behind the anonymity of a combox, people can be ruthless. I personally am not that thick-skinned of a person. I don't think most people naturally are. Unfortunately, life can harden us. I think one of the greatest challenges of life is that we allow life's ugly moments to actually open our hearts and allow us to love anyway.

So when I wanted to blog about my life of faith, I knew it would take a certain amount of courage. I started this blog with a hope to not only grow in my own faith, but in the hope of helping others to grow as well. Virtually my entire faith experience has been impacted by the friends I have encouraging me, challenging me, and loving me for who I am. Jesus surrounded Himself with friends, so I do the same.

I have recently taken a hiatus of sorts from blogging for a number of reasons. I was shocked when someone noticed. Not only did she notice, but she asked about it. My answer was that I was having trouble making time to write...kids on summer break, bats taking up habitat in our home (more on that some other time), painting the exterior of our home, 1000 mile road trip to visit family, and so on and so forth.

But really it was because I was not being brave enough. That reason stopped me for a long time

from even starting to blog, but this past January I made the resolution to share the goodness of a life in Christ.

I don't think my voice is all that important in and of itself. I think that each voice matters, that we all have something to learn from another. Believer, non-believer, nun, lay-person, single, married, doctor, factory worker, homeless man, top executive. Everyone. I know that my relationship with Christ is unique to me, but that relationship might enrich someone else. And, for example, my friend Niki's relationship with Christ is different than mine, but my faith experience is enriched because of what she shares with me. I do not pretend to be an authority on Catholic Church teaching. I am not. But if we don't have the courage to use our voice, there can be no conversation.

Not too long ago I wrote a post [about a meme](#) I saw on my Facebook newsfeed with the image of a mom from the 1950's and her daughter that said, "That's right honey. Dreams and goals are



Satan's way of distracting you from making dinner."

I posted it, and two hours later I took it down. Because I wasn't brave enough. See, a dear friend from high school was tagged in the post, and I quoted some of the things her friends said about the meme. I am by no means close with this particular friend anymore, but I agonized, "What is the right thing to do? Do I private message her? Do I talk it over with her? Do I let it go and just publish? I mean, the comments are basically public." Fear of conflict, people, fear of conflict.

With having just started this blog seven months ago, it's not like I have a lot of readership. And why write if no one reads? So if I don't share my post on Facebook, then the only people that even know I have written something are maybe my 17 followers on Twitter and my 2 followers on Bloglovin. (Be jealous. Be very jealous.) And I thought, "If I don't even have the courage to share this post on Facebook, where said high school friend may or may not read it and be annoyed with me that I quoted her friends, then I have no business blogging. I might as well just take it down." So I did. I was also worried that people might read it thinking that I am someone against women working outside of the home, or having dreams and goals beyond mending clothes. I'm not. I think women in the workforce has its benefits. But I was afraid that I didn't make that clear in trying to express my opinions.

All this to say that I was a coward. Something has happened in my personal life recently that has inspired me to no longer be a coward. Don't get me wrong. I'm still scared. But being brave is recognizing you're scared and doing it anyway. I don't know how other people make life decisions. I make mine based on my life of faith. Specifically my Catholic faith. It has been my experience that more and more frequently people who live by a moral code based on their faith are having their voice drowned out. I will be a voice for Christ. I will have the conviction needed to say that I am Catholic, I am proud to be Catholic, and I will live my life as an expression of my love for my faith. I will hopefully do so in such a way that conveys to others God's desire to have relationship with each and every person. I will fulfill my baptismal promises. I will rely on the gifts of the Spirit I received at Confirmation, and the strength of Christ's true presence in the Eucharist. I will not be vengeful. But I will not stand silent.

Particularly in respect to the issue of marriage equality, I think many faithful are fearful of getting within 100 feet of the topic. I know I am. There are many who do not understand or will not accept the teaching of the Catholic Church. And in knowing that, we fear being labeled hate mongers. So we avoid the topic. I get it. Believe me. But we can't let that be our reason for silence.

This week I will write my first post on the topic. I think it will be the first of many. And hopefully my courage will inspire others to have courage in their own situations and circumstances. Maybe it is the topic of same-sex marriage that requires great courage, or maybe it is the topic of using Natural Family Planning instead of contraception. Maybe someone you know is considering an abortion and you have the opportunity to help them make a better choice. Maybe a friend is considering returning to the sacrament of Confession for the first time in years. Maybe a friend is contemplating living with her boyfriend before marriage and you are not sure how to handle the situation. Whatever the case may be, I pray that you have the courage to be a witness, a voice of the Truth, and a true friend in Christ to those you encounter.

I am not a perfect example of courage. But together I think we can do it. I will try to do it publicly, through this humble little blog. And you do it within your personal daily life. We all have things we want to stand up for in this life. This is what I will do with my life. I will stand with and for Christ. For it is Him who strengthens me.

## Prayer For Courage

Dear God, give me courage,  
for perhaps I lack it more than anything else.

I need courage before men against their threats  
and against their seductions.

I need courage to bear unkindness,  
mockery, contradiction.

I need courage to fight against the devil,  
against terrors and troubles, temptations,  
attractions, darkness and false lights,  
against tears, depression, and above all fear.

I need Your help, dear God.

Strengthen me with Your love and Your grace.

Console me with Your blessed Presence  
and grant me the courage to persevere  
until I am with You forever in heaven.

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This contribution is available at <http://inholycity.com/having-the-courage-to-blog/>  
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# Time is Too Short to Waste [at The Contemplative Catholic Convert]

*Today if you hear His voice . . . . (Hebrews 4:7)*

I couldn't lay the book down. The author's words astounded me. Like most Jews I knew while growing up in New York, my family never owned a Bible, and we rarely attended synagogue. If anyone had asked me why I was Jewish, I'd have shrugged my shoulders and replied: *Because my mom is Jewish.*

So when I read *The Late Great Planet Earth* in 1972, I had my first introduction to the Bible beyond my very superficial knowledge of the Ten Commandments. What Hal Lindsay wrote caused me to shake my head in near disbelief. The prophets of the Jewish Bible – the Old Testament – had predicted for centuries that God would send His Messiah to our people. Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 53; Daniel 7:9-14, Zechariah 12:10, Micah 5:2-5, and Psalm 22:1-18 were only a few of the hundreds of prophecies our prophets made regarding the Messiah. As I read them again and again, I knew they spoke about none other than Jesus.

My mind whirled with this new knowledge. I knew I'd found truth! Absolute, unalterable truth. Eternal truth so remarkable I dared not hide from it. Truth so full of hope I dared not ignore it, regardless of the personal, social or career cost it might require. Oh, the ecstasy of it all! I could be cleansed, forgiven and freed from all the selfish senseless evil I'd ever committed, wickedness that at times weighed deeply on my conscience. Killing my baby in the abortion clinic, turning young women into whores, helping turn young men and women into drug abusers, hurting others simply because I could – all of it, wiped away in an instant by the truth wrapped in the promises of God. But there was even more. Despite my wickedness, God loved me – certainly not what I'd done – but He loved ME. And He would adopt me into His family if only I turned my life over to Him.

What else could I do in the light of such life-altering truth? I knelt beside my bed and prayed: *God, I believe Jesus is the Messiah.* With that simple seven word prayer, God knew I was telling Him I would follow Him wherever He led, do whatever He commanded – and I didn't care what anyone

else thought. The Holy Spirit then showed me how to find more about this truth. I bought a Bible and began reading. Cover to cover, twice in that first year. When I didn't understand a passage, the He led me to seek mature Christians who used Scripture to interpret Scripture to answer my questions.

That was more than 40 years ago, and God still leads me to seek truth through the pages of the Bible. Indeed, it was my continuing search for truth that ultimately led me to the Catholic Church a few years ago – truth previously hidden from me, truth so exhilarating about the Sacraments and the physical presence of Christ in the Mass I could not ignore it, regardless of the personal, social, or career cost it might require.

During the last 40 years I've spoken with many men and women who did not understand much about God or His word. Most of them came to me with inquisitive hearts, honestly seeking answers to their questions. I always answered as best I could, while considering my own continuing journey to know more about Him. But there were also those who, like the Pharisees who came to Jesus trying to trap Him in some statement (Mark 12:13), or the Samaritan woman who at first wanted only to challenge Him (John 4:9-26), there were those who did not want to know truth, but instead wanted to justify their lifestyles or simply engage in an intellectual discussion for the sake only of entertainment.

In my earlier days as a Christian, wanting so much to share with others what I'd discovered about God, I made the mistake to argue. I should have taken my cue instead from Scripture and avoided such useless discussions. For example, St. Paul wrote, “Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned” (Titus 3:10-11). And Jesus said, “do not throw your pearls before swine, lest the trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces” (Matthew 7:6)

I wish I had learned in those days what St. Bernadette knew: *Our job is to inform, not to convince.* It is, of course, only the Holy Spirit who can convince someone of “sin, righteousness,

and judgment" (John 16:8). Our job is to simply tell others what the Book says.

So I've recently changed my approach. When someone is honestly confused about Scripture and is seeking truth, I will explain what I know to the best of my current knowledge. But when I now suspect someone is simply looking to justify his or her sin-laden lifestyle, or to argue a point just to argue, I will give them an assignment to test their sincerity. If they are honest in their search for truth, they will take on the task. If they are not, they will brush off the assignment and we will have both saved ourselves from wasting time. Here is the assignment:

*If you really want to know truth, then go to the One who is truth and read what He said. Read the New Testament. Even if you have read the Bible in the past, please do so again. Two chapters a day will finish the New Testament in less than four months.*

*I recommend you use a good modern translation, preferably one without editorial commentary in the page margins. The New American Bible (Catholic edition), the New King James Version, the New American Standard Version, or the New Revised Standard Version (Anglican or Catholic editions) are some of the high quality translations available. Start at Matthew's gospel and continue reading a couple of chapters a day until you finish Revelation. Keep a journal and each day write what you have learned, or what questions come to mind. Send me weekly updates on your progress so we can talk each week about what you are learning.*

*When you finish the New Testament, we will sit and talk about any other questions you might have that still trouble you. We will talk for as long as necessary, months, if necessary.*

I do not assign the New Testament because I consider the Old of little value; On the contrary, one

cannot fully understand the New Testament without a fluent familiarity of the Old Testament. As St. Augustine wrote: *The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old Testament is revealed in the New.* But the questions most people ask are more readily answered through the pages of the New Testament.

My God has done so much for me that I yearn to tell others of His great love and promises. But the older I get, the more I realize time is too short and too precious to waste discussing truth with those who are not really interested in more than sound-bites. Those who play theological games with God ought to be wary, for *God is not mocked* (Galatians 6:7). But to those who seek Him with an honest heart, caring not about the cost, God says, *You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart* (Jeremiah 29:13).

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This contribution is available at <http://thecontemplativecatholicconvert.blogspot.com/2013/06/time-is-too-short-to-waste.html>

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## Corpus Christi [at Tercets]

This Sunday, the Church celebrates The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, or Corpus Christi. As we remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us, this is a time to help children understand the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Even though we memorialize the Last Supper every week at mass, the familiarity of the words can prevent us from truly understanding them. Jesus said, “This is my body . . . this is my blood,” creating a new covenant between God and man.

One of the best ways to show children that Jesus is present in the Eucharist is to take them to adoration. I attend with my children from time to time, more regularly in the summer, reminding them that we are praying in the presence of Jesus while we are there. We always go to kneel in front of the altar before we leave, to give Jesus the respect He deserves. I think this is particularly important when my daughters have been restless, noisy, or running around during adoration.

If you have access to a children’s adoration program, I highly recommend that you attend with your family. You can read about our experience at children’s adoration, and our activities for the Feast of Corpus Christi last year at [this post](#).

Last August, while we were learning about Saint Clare, we made monstrances out of food as a fun learning activity. Saint Claire is often pictured with a monstrance because she carried the Eucharist to the gates of her abbey when they were under attack; she requested protection and the invaders passed them by. You could make monstrances for Corpus Christi too.

My Catholic Moms group made the base of their monstrances using a graham cracker, but we were absent that week and made ours at home with a half slice of bread. Use a round slice of cheese for the top.



I prepared slices of fruit and bell pepper to use as the monstrance decorations (we ate everything for lunch after we were done). The more variety you offer, the more creativity your children can express in their design.



Here are a couple of monstrances my daughters made; they avoided using the bell pepper because they did not want to eat it.





I also like that this activity creates a parallel between the Eucharist as holy sustenance and the edible monstrance as nutritive sustenance. This is a good way to demonstrate how Jesus feeds our spirit, like food feeds our body.

If you are looking for more body and blood activities, there is a wonderful craft that teaches about Jesus' presence in the Eucharist designed by my friend Jennifer at Catholic Inspired.

[www.tercets.blogspot.com](http://www.tercets.blogspot.com) Thanks Ella and kids



I wrote about that craft and some great coloring pages of Jesus in the Eucharist from the Eucharistic Youth Movement at [this post](#). Hop over to find the links.

Or, see how to paint a monstrance [here](#).



## The How of the New Evangelization [at The Alternate Path]



I do not think that the New Evangelization is just about what we say as Christians, nor about what new technologies we use to proclaim the Good News but also about how and the manner by which we proclaim, “Jesus is Lord!” When it comes to the work of apologetics or promoting/debating the faith or current issues or even just day-to-day encounters for that matter, I must admit that I have never been one for witty, “in the moment” comebacks. I think that this is due, partly, to the fact that my parents taught me from an early age not to regard a snarky attitude, in and of itself, as a sure sign of intelligence and also because I do not think that an exchange of one-upmanship in comments leads anywhere truly productive. Such an exchange tends to produce more heat in friction than light to illuminate, I believe.

I share this because there can be a tendency to view apologetics and the new evangelization solely in terms of formulating the wittiest comeback line that will effectively put the other in his or her place while affording a sense of superiority to the crafter of said comment. But in the entire gospel story I never find Jesus doing this. Our Lord certainly had truth to speak, he knew how to challenge and his wit is demonstrated time and again throughout the gospels but his words never belittled the other nor did they divide and hurt.

If the new evangelization is to be true then we must not just look at what Jesus said but also how he said it. This “how” just as surely as the “what” must inform all means of communicating the gospel message whether that be the classic one-to-one encounter or the tweet to the multitudes.

Jesus valued friendship, relationship and encounter. I do not think that Jesus would disregard the social communication of today but he would view it as a means and not an end. Social communication is at its best and it is fullest in service to the Gospel when it brings people to a deeper encounter and relationship with Christ and with one’s brothers and sisters. Social communication used as a means to isolate oneself or others or social communication used as a

protective wall over which to hurl incendiary verbal bombs is a disservice both to social communication and to the Gospel.

Yes, our Lord taught and he performed miraculous signs but our Lord also proclaimed the Kingdom of God through his daily encounters with people and his willingness to enter into relationships and friendships. Yet, it is easy to overlook this mode of evangelizing and also easy to take it for granted. Christians can sometimes be a sour lot and people take notice of this and it does not help the Gospel cause. Our Lord demonstrates both the importance of evangelizing through encounter, friendship and relationships and also that this form of evangelizing demands a “not so little” amount of discipline and a patiently acquired skillset. Friendship takes work and it can be helpful to read the gospels with the focused intent of watching how our Lord interacted with people in order to learn a few things. (The prayer discipline of Lectio Divina is a great way to enter into these moments in Scripture.) Below are some truths I have found from reflecting on the interactions of our Lord with others in the gospel story.

Humility. Jesus, we are told, did not deem equality with God something to be grasped but rather emptied himself of glory and took the form of a slave. Much to the perplexity of the powers of the world that he encountered, Christ continuously took the road of humility. Humility is essential in the role of authentic friendship. Humility demonstrates a respect for the other person and an acknowledgement that he or she has something truly worthwhile to offer. Psycho-social studies demonstrate how relationships are essential in forming the human person in his or her own identity. (Sometimes I wonder how critical Jesus’ own relationships were in helping him to grow into an awareness of his own identity and mission.) Humility is a path by which we enter into authentic relationships and a means by which we help one another grow into the full person God intends us to be. Authentic friendships are not coincidence, they are gifts from God.

Willingness to listen and be present to people. In his encounter with the woman at the well our Lord demonstrates this discipline in spades. Our Lord put aside his needs (we are told he was tired and thirsty) in order to encounter this woman and answer her thirst. The ability to listen is not a weakness nor does it mean that I fully agree with what I am hearing but it goes such a long way in creating relationship with another. Evangelization is not just proclaiming; it is also listening to the deep desires, hopes and hurts of our world. True evangelization also means sacrifice, putting away one’s own need and agenda, in order to be truly present as God wants us to be present.

Willingness to not manipulate or control. Christ never manipulated others. In fact, he let people walk away at different times in his ministry. He often instructed people to, “tell no one” following a miraculous event and he specifically pointed out the person’s own role in a healing or miracle, “Your faith has saved you”. Manipulation can never aid in bringing about the Kingdom of God. Sadly, the Church has sometimes forgotten this truth but, I would also say, that manipulation is not the sole provenance of the Church. Manipulation is rampant throughout all history and our world today whether it be social, political or economic. To say “no” to the mechanics of manipulation is to be truly counter-cultural and to witness to the truth of the Kingdom that overcomes the sad politics of this world and this, I believe, is one of the truest components of the new

evangelization. The choice not to manipulate demonstrates a respect and care for the other even to the possibility of one's own detriment. It is a form of embracing the cross that our world just cannot comprehend, but it speaks volumes and touches hearts.

Trust in God and others. Truly, Jesus trusted in the will of the Father but he also trusted his disciples even as he was not naïve to their weaknesses. He sent out the seventy-two and he commissioned the apostles. Jesus does not need to micro-manage it seems. Developing trust frees us in order to enter into authentic relationship both with God and with our brothers and sisters. This is not an easy thing to do because trust has truly been wounded by sin but it is essential to any form of friendship and any form of true evangelization. In the life of faith trust can be built through daily encounter with the Scriptures (primarily the gospels), reception of the Sacraments and lived faithful friendship in community and with the poor. It takes work but it can happen.

An attitude of joy. The word “rejoice” is found throughout Scripture and for very good reason! In Christ, God has overcome sin and death! Throughout his encounters with people, Christ demonstrates a deep and abiding joy in the Father and in the coming of the Kingdom. This joy speaks to the deepest yearning of the human heart and it is a joy that cannot be counterfeited because its origin is in God himself. This has been and remains the greatest form of evangelization we Christians have – the joy that we have in the Lord! Joy grows within us as we continually encounter the Lord! We should never hide this light under a bushel basket.

I believe that our Holy Father, Pope Francis, is fully aware of the importance of the “how” in proclaiming, “Jesus is Lord!” Continually he witnesses this to us and by so doing is calling us to an awareness of this truly important but often overlooked aspect of the New Evangelization. How we say something is just as important as what we say.

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This contribution is available at [http://www.thealternatepath.blogspot.com/2013/07/the-how-of-new-evangelization\\_7.html](http://www.thealternatepath.blogspot.com/2013/07/the-how-of-new-evangelization_7.html)  
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## Open Letter to Hollywood [at Ranting Catholic Mom]

I'm tired of Hollywood all taking every otherwise fun story and screwing it up with sex and violence. And when you don't do that, you have to throw in the better-than-any-other-character-in-every-way LGTBQ person. Or maybe you can use a Catholic priest in a confessional as the man to talk to if you want someone killed, or if a child is showing evidence of sexual abuse. Never mind that your family of characters never goes to a church of any kind, unless they are the Flanders.

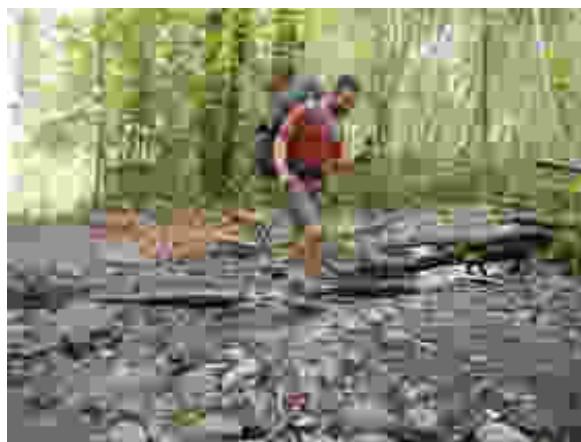
I have been happily watching episodes of White Collar on Netflix. It's a crime show about art theft and forgeries, fun and quite clean... for a while. Then just as I finish recommending it to my older nieces and nephews, the hook-ups start. Then the violence increases. I'm sending out a mass email to retract all endorsements.

It's a shame too. The characters were fun. The dashing young criminal was desperately in love with ONE WOMAN. The g-man who was responsible for him was happily married to ONE WOMAN. (Of course, they have no children, just a dog, because that's the only way to stay happy, right?) Then the female FBI agent is outed in a conversation, but nothing more happens. I'm still okay with where this is going. The virtues of each of the main characters become the bonds of friendship. Moral decision making is central to each story. Then the quirky conspiracy theorist winds up in bed with someone way out of his league. AAAAARGH!

None of this nodding to secular culture was necessary to do anything more than promote the atheistic secular dominion of our morally toxic culture. Divorce, childlessness, homosexuality, and anonymous sex partners have destroyed the happiness of more families and individuals than anything else in our culture today. But that's not what you, Hollywood, want us to believe.

We are on to you. Just check your latest box office numbers. We are not going to pay for the same lies anymore. Especially if you are trying to slip it into family programming.

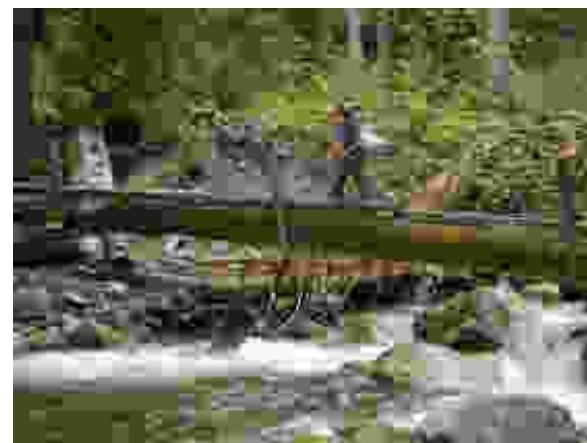
## Speaking in Tongues [at Glimpse of Peace]



*Zachary crosses a stream near Maple Grove campsite along Baker Lake.*

### **The longer the hike, the more I pray**

along the way. How else could I possibly keep up with a group of teenage boys and grown men? Some of the prayers are formal; others are spontaneous. My little prayer at each stream crossing on our recent trek was a simple, "Come Holy Spirit," as the flowing water inspired me to recall the waters of baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit.



**As we hiked along**

, a Protestant friend and I were discussing prayer and I asked him if he prayed to the Holy Spirit. "No," he replied, explaining, "I try to base all of my praying on the Lord's Prayer. Not so much word for word, but in the general meaning of my prayers."

### **In another discussion about the Holy Spirit**

and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, my friend revealed a great curiosity about what the benefit of praying in tongues might be in today's world. He reasoned that on the day of Pentecost, speaking in tongues would have been beneficial for preaching to the people assembled from many lands and many tongues. But to hear someone speaking in tongues today, he said, just sounds like a made-up language and many speak in tongues without an interpretation of tongues to validate or translate

their tongues legitimately.

## St. Anthony of Padua, whom we remember in a special way today

, discussed speaking in tongues in one of his many notable sermons:

The man who is filled with the Holy Spirit speaks in different languages. These different languages are different ways of witnessing to Christ, such as humility, poverty, patience and obedience; we speak in those languages when we reveal in ourselves these virtues to others. Actions speak louder than words; let your words teach and your actions speak. We are full of words but empty of actions, and therefore are cursed by the Lord, since he himself cursed the fig tree when he found no fruit but only leaves. Gregory says: “A law is laid upon the preacher to practice what he preaches.” It is useless for a man to flaunt his knowledge of the law if he undermines its teaching by his actions.

But the apostles spoke as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech. Happy the man whose words issue from the Holy Spirit and not from himself! For some men speak as their own character dictates, but steal the words of others and present them as their own and claim the credit for them. The Lord refers to such men and others like them in Jeremiah: *So, then, I have a quarrel with the prophets that steal my words from each other. I have a quarrel with the prophets, says the Lord, who have only to move their tongues to utter oracles. I have a quarrel with the prophets who make prophecies out of lying dreams, who recount them and lead my people astray with their lies and their pretensions. I certainly never sent them or commissioned them, and they serve no good purpose for this people, says the Lord.*

We should speak, then, as the Holy Spirit gives us the gift of speech. Our humble and sincere request to the Spirit for ourselves should be that we may bring the day of Pentecost to fulfillment, insofar as he infuses us with his grace, by using our bodily senses in a perfect manner and by keeping the commandments. Likewise we shall request that we may be filled with a keen sense of sorrow and with fiery tongues for confessing the faith, so that our deserved reward may be to stand in the blazing splendor of the saints and to look upon the triune God. ~From a sermon by Saint Anthony of Padua, priest (1231+)

Looking back with fond memories on our

[pilgrimage to visit St. Anthony's grave in Padua, Italy](#)

and on our little backpacking trek in the mountains, I am grateful for virtuous Christian friends who speak in tongues every day, even if they don't realize it.

*St. Anthony of Padua, pray for us!*



## His Body and Blood [at Young Married Mom]

Yesterday the Catholic Church celebrated the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. While we celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday—every day, even—this is a special reminder about what an important part of our faith this sacrament is. In my experience, the Mass and Eucharistic adoration can be times of great peace and centering. I can focus on God in a physical way before me, and it often gives me perspective to make better choices in my day-to-day.

Near the end of my senior year of college, somehow my favorite campus minister and I got to talking about daily Mass. Over the course of my undergraduate years—largely spurred on my John's attendance with his family in the summers—I fell in love with daily Mass. It meant sacrificing staying up too late and sleeping in at all, but it gave my days purpose, direction, and focus. As commencement loomed, I thought that I wouldn't be able to attend Mass once I started a real, grown-up job.

Turns out, you only need to look, and it can be pretty easy, especially in a big city like New York, to find a daily Mass that fits in one's schedule. Whether before work, at lunchtime, or after work, the options are almost endless.

After we were married and pregnant, again I thought my daily Mass attendance was at an end. How would I bring a baby to Mass every day? Again, I found that where there was a will, there was a way. In the first few months, we might have only gone twice a week, but the desire was still there, and it pulled me back as soon as I could make it happen.

When I was pregnant with Henry, again, I thought that this would be the end, at least for a while. A toddler and a newborn? Crazy!

Well, maybe not. Sometimes a nap takes precedence, but more often, we are in the pew, participating in something larger than ourselves, giving thanks for the many blessings in our lives, and establishing some kind of structure in what could otherwise be a very loose day.

In my experience, going to Mass while being home with an infant and a toddler is way more effective than an energy bar. It's also good for the kids' souls, good for my spiritual formation, makes all of us get dressed at the proper time, and makes me feel like I've accomplished something by 10am. Plus, with our Mass at 9am, it divides the time between first and second breakfast nicely.

There's yet another benefit of daily Mass attendance in early motherhood—one that yesterday's feast brought to my attention again. In the Catholic Church, children do not receive the Eucharist until they are about seven years old. At that point, they will have undergone classes that help them to appreciate what it is they're receiving. The Eucharist really is open to anyone—anyone who appreciates and accepts what the Church teaches the Eucharist is.

While I'm pregnant, I love that my children receive the sacrament's special graces through me. Likewise, when I'm nursing. I think it's helped make my kids more peaceful, more centered, more loving. It's good for them to know how much they're loved, and participation in the Eucharist is, to my mind, one of the very best ways of doing that.

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This contribution is available at <http://youngmarriedmom.com/his-body-and-blood-even-for-the-little-ones/>  
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# Sin: Practice makes perfect [at A Catholic Mom climbing the Pillars]

*"Sin creates a proclivity to sin, it engenders vice by repetition of the same acts. This results in perverse inclinations which cloud conscience and corrupt the concrete judgment of good and evil. Thus sin tends to reproduce itself and reinforce itself, but it cannot destroy the moral sense of its root." CCC 1865*

In other words, done over and over again, the act of making a decision and carrying out something contrary to good and moral thinking will make each future act of sin easier. Practice makes perfect! For years I would tell my children to practice their instruments each day, "Practice makes perfect, keep playing to get better." I would say. So they would grumble at me and head off to practice. Year after year, they would practice after my constant insistence, and year after year, they honed their craft to the point that they began to win awards, get hired to play for events, and find their voices as musicians.

Do you think repeating bad behavior, alias sinning, is any different? Likened to learning an instrument and achieving confidence and skill as a musician, sin is an act, a decision to do something..and one can get good at it! Good or bad, practice makes perfect.

This is where confession comes in; to come face to face with a bad decision and the desire for forgiveness. A chance to start over without the heavy baggage of sin. In order for forgiveness to happen, remorse must be truly internally felt with the desire to be wiped clean of the sin and be able to start over. The desire to be able to start over and get it right the next time. Just like learning an instrument, it is a conscience decision one makes from their free will. A God-given gift for a reason.

I need to go to confession.

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This contribution is available at <http://acatholicmumclimbingthepillars.blogspot.com/2013/06/sin-practice-makes-perfect.html>

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# Trusting in God's (sometimes confusing) Ways [at Beauty is Lived]

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD.  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,  
and do not return there but water the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I intend,  
and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:8-11



A struggle that so many of us experience in our journeys here on earth is surrendering control of our lives over to the loving design and plans of God. We believe that we know what is right, we know what needs to be done, and we know the way that things should turn out. When things don't seem to turn out that way, we can either find ourselves angry at God, or despairing of his ways. Or perhaps this struggle to surrender comes not because we are so sure of God's will, but to the contrary, we might instead find ourselves totally lost and having no idea what God wants. His ways just seem dark to us, and we feel blind. All we know is that we find ourselves in a place in our lives that we did not expect, and we are unhappy. This too can make us angry, or hurt, and at times despairing of God's ways.

There is a popular saying that says something to the effect of, “It’s not the destination that matters, but the journey.” I don’t fully subscribe to that idea, because I do think the destination matters. I

think the problem occurs, however, when we become so anxiously focused on the destination that we forget to pay attention to the journey that we are led down to get there. Where we're going matters, in other words, but so do all the moments along the way.

I had a profound experience of this reality during my journey to and with the Augustinians. When I had my conversion experience in 2005, I was absolutely convinced that God was calling me to be a priest. I was so sure that even though I had been away from the Church for 10 years, after one weekend on retreat in Malvern, PA, I came home and called a family meeting. "I'm going to be a priest." I said it with such confidence, such finality. The path was clear, and nothing could stand in the way of God's plans.

So at 27 years old, almost a decade after dropping out of college, I enrolled again, at Villanova, and began what I was so sure was my path to my destiny as a Catholic priest. I figured I got all my obstacles out of the way, and now it would be a straight walk. I never thought it would be easy, but at least the path was clear.

Not so fast. A torrid (and at times excruciating) romantic relationship and a battle with cancer later, I found myself at a crisis point once again, totally lost. I've often said that if I ever write my memoirs, the title will be *Funnier than Cancer: Making God Laugh by Telling Him Your Plans*. God, I am convinced, is very amused with me.

But my life did settle, and more matured by suffering, I did join the friars. This time, however, I did so less with the conviction that this was the absolute definite plan God had for me, but rather that it was where God wanted me right at that moment. He wasn't revealing the path to me, only the next step. This is a lesson I'm re-remembering once again, and I am so thankful for the experience that taught it to me. But I digress...

The next three years were some of the most trying and yet at the same time spiritually formative of my life. I entered the monastery with a lot of baggage, so to speak. The quasi-monastic life of an Augustinian Friar is filled with deep periods of silence, prayerfulness, and, in the spirit of St. Augustine, there were few spiritual tools valued more than that of self-knowledge.

Let me tell you something, and pardon my expression here: self-knowledge can be a bitch. As I entered more deeply into the silent awareness of prayer and meditation, it was as if a flood gate was opened in my soul, and memories, demons from my past, demons from my present, self-doubt, pain, confusion, guilt all came rushing at me like a torrent, and I found myself feeling like I was sinking, and fast. This was particularly bad in the first half of my novitiate year, a year that is a true monastic experience of separation from the world, of going into the desert, so to speak, where like Christ, like the Desert Fathers and Mothers, one goes to grapple with the demons that seek to bind us to this world. I grappled, all right, and it was frightening, and it was like every breath I took was painful.

Not everyone who becomes so intentional about cultivating self-knowledge has such a painful encounter, of course. It all depends on what exactly needs to come up, what needs to be dealt with,

and what needs to be revealed in us. Apparently I had a lot. I'm not the only one, of course.

My point is that once again I found myself feeling disoriented in life, and unable to perceive God's plans. It seemed that every time I thought I had figured out what God was trying to show me, or every time I thought I knew where the path was leading, a surprising turn came along. But finally I was beginning to hear the prophet speak, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD."

The key to developing a healthy relationship with the uncertainty of God's plans for our lives, especially during those times when it feels that the rug has been pulled out from under us, and life seems just so indecipherable, is learning to embrace the very unavoidable truth: we are not in control. There are some things we control, of course, but the scope of which is far smaller than most of us are willing to accept. We can control how we act in any given situation. We can decide to make our best effort to do good, to do what seems right in this moment, even if we find out later it was not, and we can control turning the results and the unknown over to God. That's pretty much it.

We cannot control how other people will treat us. We cannot control who will come unexpectedly into our lives. We cannot control unforeseen curve balls, good or bad, that suddenly place difficult decisions before us. We can, however, turn ourselves over to God, and decide to trust in him.

What I am slowly, sometimes painfully still learning in this life is that while the path of God may be winding and twisted, and the turns we will be led down when we seek to walk in his ways – and indeed the diversions we take when we instead walk our own way, wandering far from the path, though he can always guide us back – can at times be jarring and frightful, there is no experience in this life that God cannot use to transform us, mold us, and ultimately demonstrate for us the depths and power of his love and compassion for us.

The trials and tribulations we experience on this earth are like the rain and snow that fall from the sky. They do not simply fall down and then evaporate into nothingness. Rather, they "water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater." In other words, when we learn to surrender our will and our struggles and our difficulties to God, when we decide to seek his path and to do good, then all of our experiences become transformed in his life-giving word and become seeds of growth in us.

One final word. I'm not really a fan of the expression, "Everything happens for a reason." I'm not a fan of attributing everything that happens to being "part of God's plan." Frankly, when followed to its logical conclusion, that can make God seem like a monster, and I think when people begin to take that mentality seriously and consider its implications, it can lead to a faith that becomes damaged. God does have a design, of course, and often times things happen are part of his plan and we just don't quite comprehend it. But life is messy, sin is real, and we don't always do what is right. People make wrong choices, sometimes even monstrously horrifying choices, the kind that lead death and destruction and trauma and suffering. Those choices were not God's plan.

Some will argue that God is a bastard just for even giving us free choice in the first place, but the reality is that without free choice, there is no love. Love of course is not entirely about choice – ask anyone who has fallen in love and they will tell you they had no say in the matter, it just struck them directly in the heart. But sustained love requires daily choices, and love is a way of living, of acting, and if we are not able to freely choose to act in a certain way, then there can be no love. So while some lament against the existence of free will at all, and point to all the suffering of the world, I prefer instead to point to the horror of a world without love, and ask if in the existence of the suffering that also comes with it, will God do anything to redeem it? That of course is the hope of the resurrection.

That was all a grand aside, but an important one, I think. My point is that in the situations we find ourselves in, the truly painful situations, the periods of mourning, of turmoil, of feeling lost, of broken relationships, lost friendships, financial uncertainty, through all the forms of hardship and suffering we endure in this life, we must train ourselves to trust that God can work miracles of healing in their midst. The word for faith in the New Testament comes from the Greek *pistis* (πίστις), which means not so much to believe in a factual way, though it has that element. What it ultimately means is to trust, and so the faith we need to pray for in the midst of our difficulties is that as we endure our hardships, as the sufferings and even the successes of life come our way, we can develop hearts that trust God to act, to heal our brokenness, to guide us in the right paths, and ultimately to draw us closer into his tender, loving heart.

I did in the end leave the monastery, just over a year ago. Once again I find myself at a point in my life when God's ways are slightly darker, where what I was once so certain of is now unsure. But at last, as thick-headed as I can sometimes be, I am learning to surrender, I am learning to trust, and, albeit with great struggle some days, I can live a life that is transformed by hope.

what  
sets  
your  
heart  
free ?

surrender

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This contribution is available at <http://goodbeautifultrue.com/2013/06/15/trusting-in-gods-sometimes-confusing-ways/>

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## The Burning Ones [at One Arrow Alone]

One of the five books of the Torah, *In the Wilderness* (known to us as *Numbers*), relates that the people of God complained. They were dissatisfied because they had no bread and no water, and hated the manna which they did have. So God sent them a serpent plague, at which they relented and asked Moses to intercede. Moses, the prophet of angelic patience, interceded. Then the Lord told Moses to make a copper serpent and put it on a pole for the people to look at. Those who looked at the serpent were healed.

Now as I happened to be reading this passage (21,4-9) in two translations, I noticed that one had God telling Moses to make a ‘bronze serpent’, but the other a ‘fiery serpent’. Whence the difference? I glanced at the Hebrew text to see if the words were alike. This was not the case, but one of the words was oddly familiar.

The ‘fiery serpents’ that the Lord sent His people are, in Hebrew, *ha-nechashim ha-seraphim*. The last word’s meaning is related to ‘kindle’ or ‘burn’; it probably refers to the effect of the poison. God tells Moses to make a *saraph* (the Hebrew-English Tanakh translates ‘a *seraph* figure’) and put it on a pole. So Moses makes a copper serpent (*nechash nechoseth*).

Intrigued, I wanted to find out if there is any connection between the snakes and the angels. It seems that *seraphim* do not often appear in Scripture. They appear in this story and its flashback in Deuteronomy. Other than that, they are only mentioned in Isaiah – but in very different contexts. Twice the *saraph* appears as a dragon-like creature, a horrifying enemy:

*Rejoice not, all Philistia,*

*Because the staff of him that beat you is broken,*

*For from the stock of the snake there sprouts an asp,*

*A flying seraph branches out from it.*

*Through a land of distress and hardship,*

*Of lion and roaring king-beast,*

*Of viper and flying seraph,*

*They convey their wealth on the backs of asses...*

But in one passage, we suddenly find the *seraphim* at the Heavenly Court – hardly less terrible:

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I beheld my Lord seated on a high and lofty throne; and the skirts of His robe filled the Temple. Seraphs stood in attendance on Him. Each of them had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his legs, and with two he would fly.*

*And one would call to the other,*

*His presence fills all the earth!"*

*The doorposts would shake at the sound of the one who called, and the House kept filling with smoke.*

These ‘burning ones’ do not seem to have any serpentine features; they are like winged men. One of them purifies the prophet’s lips by pressing a live coal to it. It is therefore assumed that there is no direct connection between the snakes and the angels. But the double meaning of *saraph* (in one book!) remains intriguing.

Traditionally, the Seraphim have been identified as the highest order in the hierarchy of angels, because they ‘burn’ with love for God; they surpass even the Cherubim, who are characterized by wisdom and deep knowledge of God. Apparently love is higher even than wisdom.

By the way, if you were wondering what happened to the

*saraph*

that God commanded Moses to make: it turned out just a copper serpent after all. After it had

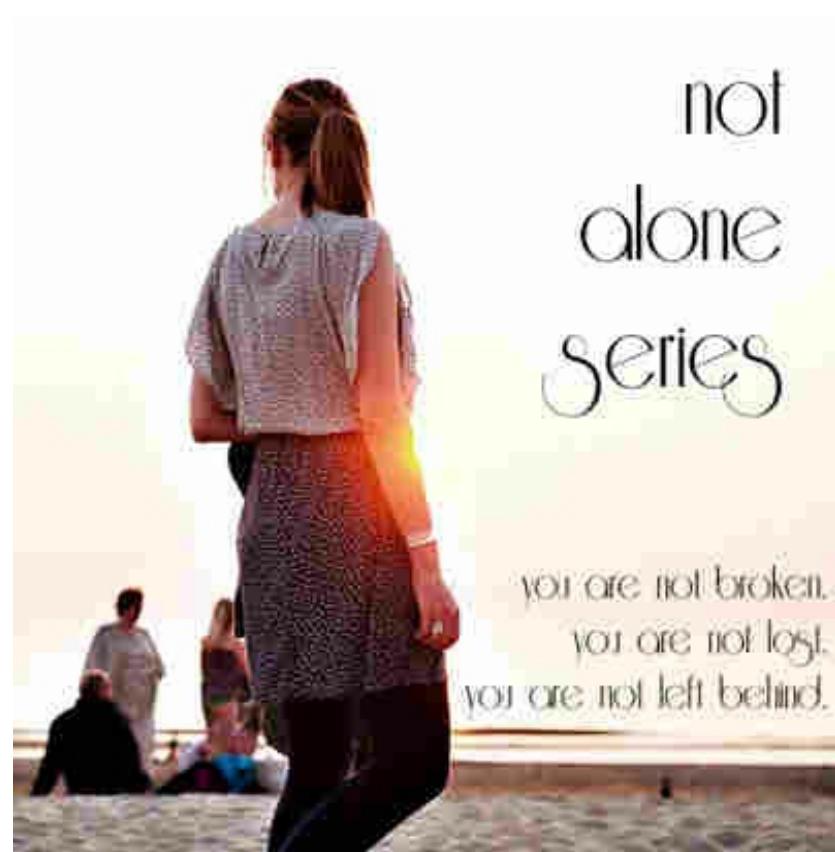
served its purpose, the Israelites started worshipping it as an idol, which was reason for King Hezekiah to smash it (2 Kings 18,4). Yet it still burns in the Christian spiritual memory as an image of Jesus, the life-giver lifted up on the cross (John 3,14-15) in the wilderness of the world; the Son of Man and Son of God, who burned with zeal for his Father's house, and offered up 'this temple' as the final burnt offering.

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This contribution is available at <http://turgonian.blogspot.nl/2013/06/the-burning-ones.html>  
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# NAS: Discernment [at Jumping In Puddles]



Hey everyone!! :) We are back for our second week... and it's all about discernment! Anything you would like to chat about... let's do it.

*Have you discerned your vocation? How do you know? What did you do? How are you really sure that you are called to marriage, religious life or even staying single?*

Gosh... we hear about this discernment thing all.of.the.time. in our Catholic bubbles, don't we??  
We want to make sure that

we are doing the Lord's will in all we do

... so, we

**must**

discern it. Go on a long term mission trip? Discern it. Change jobs? Discern it. Maybe move to a new place? Discern it. Your vocation? Discern it. I think you catch my drift.

The thing is... there is not ONE right way to discern. It's so individual and so personal.

**The most important and common denominator is that of prayer and having a close**

## **relationship with the Lord.**

We cannot discern anything if we are not actively talking to the One that knows what we are supposed to be doing, right? If you are not chatting with your BFF frequently, how are you supposed to know that you are meeting her for drinks on Friday? You wouldn't. The more you talk to her, the more the plans are revealed. (is that a weird analogy? Does it make sense?! I hope so! haha)

So, first. Solidify your prayer life. Go to Mass on the regular... maybe even during the week. Go to confession to help fill your heart and soul with more Grace so you will be able to see clearly. Pray the Rosary (or start, if this isn't a habit for you yet). Mary knows what is up with vocations... I mean... hello?! She birthed Our Lord. I think she understands where we are coming from more than anyone.

*Wow, Jen... you seem to have your act together with this whole discernment thing.*

HA! Pahhh-lease. I talk a good game, but I don't always follow my own advice. I fall short with my prayer all of the time... I always have time to go to Mass during the week and I choose not to. I just went to confession over the weekend after quite a long stretch from the last time. And, the Rosary... WHY can't I just pray it? It really doesn't take that much of your time, Jen.

So, please don't think I am Ms. Perfect Catholic over here... I mean, there actually aren't any of those, unless you happen to be a reincarnation of Mary. But, we don't believe in reincarnation... so there's that.

Ok, I digress.

So, how do I know that I am supposed to be married? Well, for the sake of honesty... I am still not 100%. I mean, I am like 99% sure. I have prayed and chatted and prayed and chatted with the Lord about this, and I am pretty sure this is where He is leading me.

I went on a discernment retreat right after college with Carmelites in Los Angeles... and it was awesome. But, I didn't feel any nudge towards the religious life.

In recent years I have really tried to put it all out there with God and really be open to the religious life. Again with the honesty... I don't

*want*

to be a religious. Part of me is still a wee bit scared that

**God**

wants that for me. It's so countercultural. It's such a radical life change. My mom won't get her grandchildren. And it scares the heck out me. But, it's not about what I want.

## **It's about what the Lord's plan is for my life**

So, while I believe deep down that I am called to be a mom and a wife, it hasn't happened yet. There is a chance that God is working on my heart so that His plan is fully revealed to me. I have said to Him multiple times, though, "Listen, Buddy, you will need to be OBVIOUS about this. Like, hit me upside the head if you want me to enter the religious life. I don't do well with subtle hints. Please, you gotta help a girl out, Lord."

I haven't gotten anything yet where I am like... "ohhhh! there it is! :) I am supposed to be in the religious life." But, it could happen. And right now, I think being open to it and keeping the communication going with God is what I am called to do right now.

As far as other practical things to help with discernment?? Hm,

### **prayer**

. Yes.

### **Spiritual advisor**

, if you don't have one. Don't know how to get one? Talk with your parish priest or any priest that you are close with. Your advisor doesn't have to be a priest, btw, it could be a religious, too. Go on

### **discernment retreats**

! Read some

### **books**

? I don't have any good recs for that, however. Do you?! I could use some.

I will most definitely be praying for your discernment and that you will be able to hear and recognize the Lord's will in your life. It's such a HUGE and important thing, we could use all of the prayers we can get!

And speaking of so many prayers... next week's topic is:

**PRAAYER!!!!**

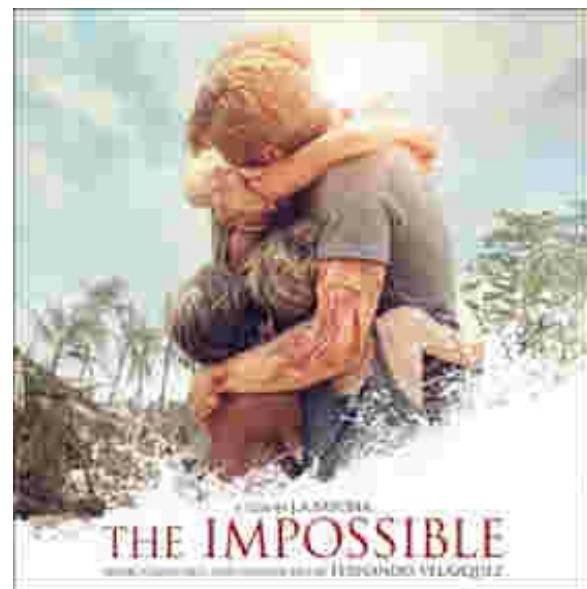
(What do you do? How do you stay committed? Fave way to pray? ANYTHING!)

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This contribution is available at <http://jumpinginpuddlesisfun.blogspot.com/2013/06/nas-discernment.html>  
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## Balancing [at Lord, Make Me a Saint]



I watched this movie last night.

(Tom and the big kids are gone to Canada which means

Jamie movies, Jamie food and

lots of missing my family)

This movie is not for the light at heart

I cried through the whole thing.

It's a TRUE story of a family who survived 2004 Tsunami

I'm not giving anything away, because it is what the movie is,

The Impossible.



It shows a family come together,  
it shows this relationship between mother and son grow  
and it shows the sacrifices this heroic mother made  
in a time of crisis, a time where a lot of people might be selfish.

It shows the sacrifices the father made for his family  
and the impossible happens.



(the real family that survived the 2004 Tsunami)

*Enjoy every single*  
**moment.**  
The good, the bad,  
*the beautiful,*  
the ugly, the inspiring,  
*the not-so-glamorous*  
**AND *moments.***  
**THANK GOD**  
through it *all.*



Boy, watching this movie couldn't have come at a better time for me.

I've been contemplating my life lately.

The things I need to change.

We all need to change constantly.

We are not perfect til we are with God.



Am I ready?

Am I ready if something like this happens?

Maybe not a Tsunami here in Minnesota,  
but maybe vacationing in California, or Mexico.

Maybe a tornado



People lived here.

This could happen any time, to any one.

There could be a bombing, or a New World War,

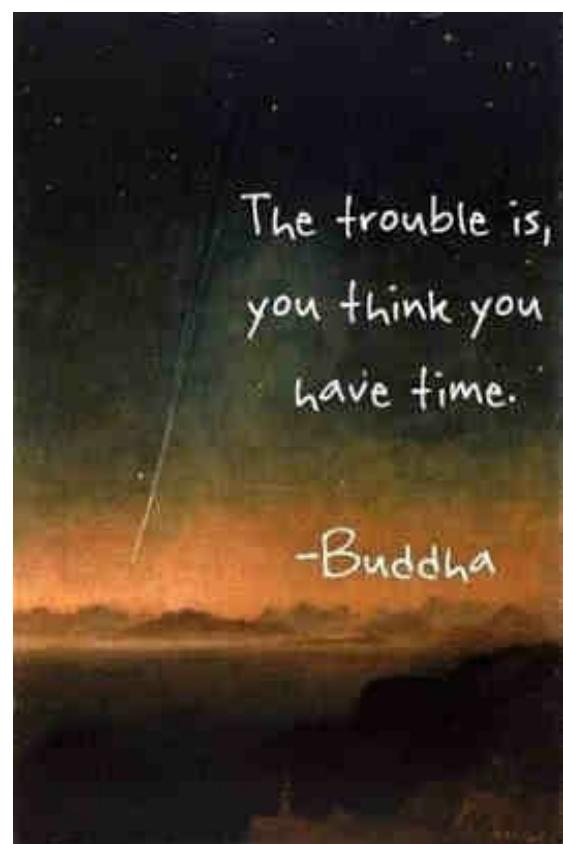
With Obama as president, anything could happen.

(I'm serious)



OK, so *this* won't happen

(I was so disappointed when I found the "Z" stood for Zombies!!)



The trouble is,  
you think you  
have time.

-Buddha

I think we all think we have time.

I think we all even think we have time today, or tomorrow  
but we might not.

I've been reanalyzing my blogging.

Why do I blog?

How much time do I spend reading about other people and their lives?  
(when I have my own life right here)

I actually blog to get out things in my head.

I blog for the conversations and friends I've made.

It fulfills me.

In fact I'd rather be in this virtual world than the real world sometimes.

That's not good.

That's not balanced.

Since I've been linking up for things lately, like weekly,

it has brought out some feelings of jealousy

Jealous of other people and their ideas,

because they are much more creative and cooler than I.

Jealous over comments, if someone has commented here

or only at other people's and not mine.

Jealous of other people and their "appearing to be perfect" lives.

Even that of friends.

I think the linking up weekly has put some pressure on me

and blogging.

I want my blogging to be carefree and full of what *I want to post*.

(I'm selfish with my blog that way)

I've been going to daily Mass and

I think the extra grace has helped me to see things

I was not seeing before

(either that or the devil knows where to tempt me--or both)

I heard this song recently.

(the kids tell me it's old)

But, it's new to me, and it's my new favorite.

(it's not a workout song, just a listening song)

I play it over and over.

I love the part where she sings,  
"Everybody's got a dark side, do you love me?"  
Because we all want to be loved.

It's really got me thinking.

Thinking about my dark side.

We all have one.

You know, those things that need changing.

The things we don't like in ourselves.

I don't want to paint a perfect picture here on my blog.

I don't want any one who comes here to leave feeling inadequate  
because they did not make Flubber with their kids.

Sure, it was fun to make, but

the Flubber got all over the floor and on clothing,

it was not a pretty site.

I don't want you to feel bad because you don't give your kids  
a campfire party.

Truth is, I whipped that together in a few days  
and I couldn't make it half as nice as the parties I googled.

I want you to know, it's not those perfect details that matter,  
it's the effort, the trying to make it a special day.

The love, that's all that matters.

I want you to know that.

I want you to know that I am not perfect.

Not in the least.

I have so many flaws.

My darkside is my family.

My parents actually.

I don't get along with them at all.

We argue constantly.

We argue mostly about religion,

I think they are judgemental,

and the ironic thing is I am judgemental

saying they are.

I turn into this ugly person when I go there.

I need to work on a lot of things.

So it's break time

Time to step away from the computer,

enjoy my kids more

and just be more quiet

so I can hear God, let Him work in my life.

It's summer!

Summer is for kids, right?

Doesn't the word *Summer* bring you back to your childhood?

SO, I might pop in once in a while for a post

but I'll be reading less.

The good thing about that "Bloglovin'" thing is

they have this button "Mark as Read"

I might have to do that without reading.

Time for some re-balancing.

God bless you.

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This contribution is available at <http://makemeasaint.blogspot.com/2013/06/balancing.html>  
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# Gregorian Chant Will Save the World [at The Back of the World]

A few weeks ago, I was sitting at the computer while my two-year-old son noisily played with some tupperware behind me. I clicked on a link to listen to a song from “Angels and Saints at Ephesus”, a new CD by the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of the Apostles (which, incidentally, has been tearing up the Classical music charts). The beautiful, a capella voices of the Sisters came softly over the computer speakers as they began a Gregorian chant in Latin.

Suddenly, I noticed that the banging of tupperware behind me had stopped.

I turned to see my two-year-old, standing, staring at the computer, eyes wide open and mouth slightly agape. He took a few steps forward, and then said, breathlessly: “Dada...that’s Jesus music.”

I was stunned. How on earth did he know that? (Our parish certainly doesn’t do any chanting at the N.O. Mass we attend...). He crawled up into my lap, and we listened to the rest of the chant together. And then we listened to it again. And then again. And then again. My boy was totally captivated, totally transfixed, totally enraptured...each time the chant would come to an end, he would look up at me and plead “again, Dada?”

I bought the album, and now every night my son asks to listen to the “Jesus music” as he falls asleep...

\*\*\*

Fyodor Dostoyevsky once said: “Beauty will save the world.”

Cardinal Ratzinger once said: “The encounter with beauty can become the wound of the arrow that strikes the soul and thus makes it see clearly, so that henceforth it has criteria, based on what it has experienced, and can now weigh the arguments correctly.”

Mother Theresa once said: “You have to learn from the Heart of Jesus. That is why Jesus said ‘learn of me’—not from books.”

And somehow, in ways I will never understand, my two-year-old boy is listening to the beat of the Sacred Heart. He is encountering beauty, and listening to it with childlike ears of faith. He’s learning lessons that only the gentle notes and chords of Heaven can teach him. And all I can do is sit back and treasure up all of these things in my heart...



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This contribution is available at <http://backoftheworld.com/2013/06/03/gregorian-chant-will-save-the-world/>  
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# Our Participation in the Redemptive Suffering of Christ, Through, With and In Mary, Co-Redemptrix [at Apostles of Light of the Immaculate]



Our Lady, Co-Redemptrix

by Jayson M. Brunelle

By now, most of my readers have become aware of what this author considers to be a chief goal of this website; namely, (1) underscoring, explaining and promoting Consecration to Mary; (2) promoting and explaining the theology of Mary's salient and exalted roles as Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix; and (3) our own participation in the ongoing work of redemption, which is renewed daily, throughout the world, in the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Throughout this site, the first two themes have been dealt with at length, both separately and together, with Mary's roles as Co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix serving as the firm, sound theological foundation upon which the great devotion of Consecration to Mary in general, and her Immaculate Heart in particular, rest. Yet, implied in the making and living of one's act of Consecration to Mary and her Immaculate Heart is the reality that through this total gift-of-self, or oblation, that we make to our most holy Mother, we are opening, as widely as possible, the doors of our hearts, inviting Mary and the Holy Spirit, her well-beloved and Divine Spouse, to make their dwelling in our Hearts and souls for the great purpose of conceiving and, ultimately, giving birth to the image of the crucified Christ in our souls; that we, too, might become willing participants in the redemptive suffering of Christ, as so many co-redeemers, in imitation of Our Lady, Co-redemptrix. Blessed Pope John Paul II, who shall likely be canonized later this year, stated the following in his marvelous encyclical letter, *Salvifici Doloris*:

“Declaring the power of salvific suffering, the Apostle Paul says: ‘In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church.’ . . . Thus to share in the sufferings of Christ is to suffer for the kingdom of God.”

Moreover, in Romans 8: 14-17, St. Paul again points out the value and even necessity of salvific suffering, as he states: “<sup>14</sup> For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.<sup>[a]</sup> And by him we cry, ‘Abba,<sup>[b]</sup> Father.’ <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. <sup>17</sup> Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory” (Romans 8: 14-17). Note the last sentence, where St. Paul states quite clearly that “we are...co-heirs with Christ, if indeed, we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” Thus, St. Paul is going so far as to state that participation in the sufferings of Christ is not only a possibility; it’s a necessity for salvation and glorification!

Yet, few Christians grasp this dimension of their faith, this call to participate in the sufferings of Christ, much less respond with the generosity of the saints. While the majority of Christians do seem to understand that they are, indeed, called to imitate Christ, our Lord, in all the sublime mysteries of His life, they’re quite content believing that Christ has suffered for them, in their stead, and that all that is required of them is an act of faith in the once-for-all, perfect redemption accomplished by Christ some 2000 years ago.

Yet, as we shall soon see, there’s no such thing as profound, heroic sanctity without profound, heroic suffering. The two necessarily go hand-in-hand. Those who labor for the kingdom of God never cease to encounter obstacles, difficulties, hardships, persecution, calumny, humiliation, and so on, and so forth.

It has been said that, “the salvation of the many depends of the sanctification of the few.” This statement encapsulates the truth that while only a small handful of individuals actually respond to what the Second Vatican Council refers to as the “Universal Call to Holiness,” which constitutes the title of Chapter Five of Lumen Gentium, it is, however, in accord with the Divine Will that all souls should subjectively cooperate with the grace and mercy that is objectively made available to them through both prayer and each of the Church’s Sacraments, particularly, the Most Holy Eucharist. The soul that generously responds to the universal call to holiness will, indeed, become transformed by grace, and will be configured and conformed to the image of the Crucified Christ. Such souls participate in an especially intimate fashion in the redemptive suffering of Christ, the fruit of which is participation in the meriting of the grace necessary for the salvation of the many, especially in these times of the great apostasy, prophesied in Sacred Scripture, with so many souls in grave danger of eternal perdition.

Further still, these souls most closely resemble Our Lady in her role as Co-redemptrix, for, they too, in imitation of Our Lady, unite their prayers and sufferings to Christ’s perfect offering of

Himself, as both Priest and Victim – that is, the once-for-all, perfect offering of Christ’s Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity to the Eternal Father, which is renewed and truly made present in an unbloody fashion each time the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered by a validly ordained priest.

Yet, Mary’s Co-redemption is not simply an example or model to be imitated; rather, just as she stood at the foot of Jesus’ Cross of Redemption, she continues this same work of maternal love in regard to each of her Spiritual Children, enduring the intensity of each child’s pain, and helping each one to make his or her offering well, through, with and in her divine Son, Jesus, to the perfect glorification, adoration and honor of God, the Almighty and Eternal Father. Thus, we can say that Mary’s Co-redemption extends to the entire Mystical Body, collectively, and to each member, individually, as she continues to carry out, in eternity and with her glorified body, which was assumed into heaven, the same Co-redemptive role that proved to be of such tremendous comfort – the sole comfort – to her dying Son. Mary continues to offer her Son, Who lives, works, prays and suffers again through, with and in all of the members of His Mystical Body, especially those who communicate daily (“The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood lives in Me, and I in him” [Jn 6:56].)

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This contribution is available at <http://mariapanstolate.com/2013/05/15/our-participation-in-the-redemptive-suffering-of-christ-through-with-and-in-mary-co-redemptrix/>  
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# Are All Things Good? [at From the Pulpit of My Life]

... all things work together unto good...

~ St. Paul in Romans 8: 28

Evil exists, or so it seems.

Two terrorists recently perpetrated the horrific bombing that killed and maimed so many innocent people at the Boston Marathon. A young mother gave birth to a baby boy, who became oxygen deprived and needed emergency care in a neonatal intensive care facility.

How can one look at such bad things in the light of St. Paul's words?

St. Paul's words give me hope. What appears to me as evil is truly evil. Yet evil does not and will not have the last word. No. God, the omniscient one, sees a way to vanquish evil. God, the almighty one, works his will. Ultimately God fits the puzzle pieces of life into a whole that is good.

So, are all things good? Not yet. In the meantime, I wait in hope for the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God, a time when God's will will reign.

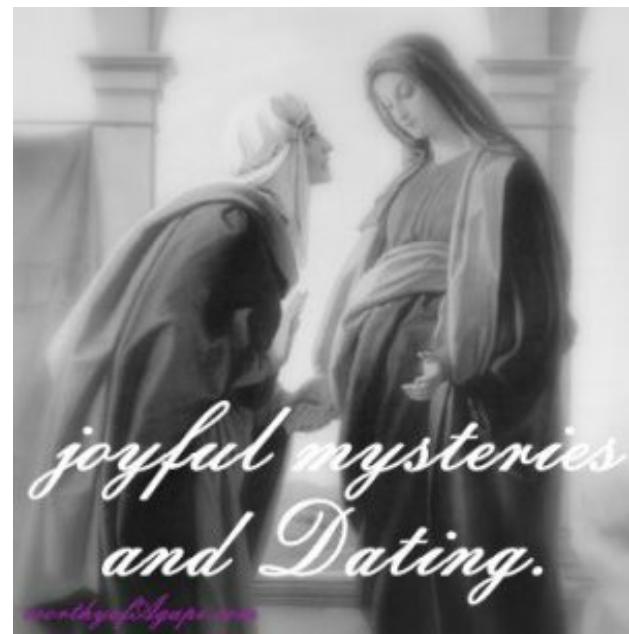
Thy Kingdom come,

Thy Will be done.

Amen.

# Joyful Mysteries and Dating [at worthy of Agape]

If I'd had any idea how much Mary would have grabbed hold of my heart when I started praying the rosary consistently I'd like to believe I would have started praying the rosary a lot sooner. Then again, she knew exactly when she could grab hold of my heart and bring it to her Son. Late one night last August I found myself in an adoration chapel crying my eyes out to Jesus, when I felt strangely compelled to take the rosary bracelet off my wrist and actually pray it. I prayed it for the very intention that had brought me sobbing to the adoration chapel that night. Mary nudged me to pray the rosary every night for this intention for three weeks. "Okay," I thought, "*three weeks, and then I'm done.*"



Mary was right, I was wrong. I've prayed the rosary every day since then and the fruits of it are endless. As I become more familiar with the different mysteries (I'll admit that I only really knew the sorrowful ones until a few months ago), I find such richness in them. Lately I've been stuck on the joyful mysteries and how they relate to dating and budding relationships (keeping in mind that, clearly, I'm writing from a girl's perspective!).

## The Annunciation

I like to think of new relationships as a story. Every story has a beginning, that moment when someone comes along, perhaps an angel or a little birdie in your ear, and announces some good news to you. "*So-and-so really does like you...and they are single!*" Or perhaps in prayer and discernment God reveals to us that He does want us to pursue marriage. All at once, a beautiful new journey has begun.

## The Visitation

Dating begins and a new relationship begins to blossom. Two people spend more time with each other as they get to know one another. Just like Mary and Elizabeth, joy is shared between two

people as they begin to realize that God has brought them together for some purpose. Mary's hopes are confirmed when she sees that nothing is impossible for God, because even Elizabeth in her old age has conceived. Similarly, the two people that God has brought together begin to realize that nothing is impossible for God, and so they come to trust in His plan.

## The Nativity

A new relationship is born! Two people slowly begin to come together in prayer and discernment of exactly where God is leading them. There is a new element of joy between two people as they continue to realize their mutual attraction, *and* that God is leading the relationship and calling them to be together.

## The Presentation

As a relationship progresses, the couple should continue to constantly seek the Lord's will for them, both individually, and as a couple. In essence, the couple *present* their relationship to the Lord, laying at His feet. Mary presents Christ in the Temple and is told that a sword will pierce her heart, and yet she does not turn away. The couple present their relationship to the Lord and, in imitation of Mary, do their best to follow Him, regardless of where He leads.

## The Finding in the Temple

Isn't this the desired goal of a relationship? To be found in God's Temple? I should think so! The couple comes to a point where they have laid their relationship at God's feet and God has blessed their relationship, so much so that He desires to sacramentalize it! Think of Mary's joy when, after three days of searching, she finds Jesus exactly where He should be: in His Father's house. For months and years we've searched for the fulfillment of our vocation, until at last we find it in God's Temple!

All of our relationships have a different journey. Not everyone will be found in the Temple. But some day, God willing, we will find the fulfillment of our vocation in God's house as He seeks to share His joy with us through the spouse that He will lead us to.

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This contribution is available at <http://worthyofagape.com/2013/06/10/joyful-mysteries-and-dating/>  
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# The Remnant [at Journey to Wisdom]

*"They rejected his statutes, the covenant which he had made with their fathers. **The vanity they pursued, they themselves became; they followed the surrounding nations whom the Lord commanded them not to imitate.**" 2 Kings:17*



The word “

***remnant***

“ has been coming to my mind a lot lately and I have been trying to write a reflection on it for days, but I could not pull it together (admittedly this is a frequent problem for me). I keep brushing the word aside thinking that the word

***remnant***

seems a tad over-dramatic. Is our culture dying so quickly that those who are still faithful to the Church’s positions on the issues of marriage, contraception and abortion in our Catholic churches are already a mere remnant (even if the pews seem full)? Surely that is overstating the case!



Yet in

[headline](#)

after

[headline](#)

, and in

[discussion](#)

after

[discussion](#)

, with Catholic individuals who ought to know better, I am finding that adhering to the Natural Law (the Ten Commandments), particularly in political views is

**not even considered**

! Many ( though not all) of my fellow parishioners use a

[soft sentimentality](#)

as the basis for many political positions, how you feel governs your stance. Anything that causes discomfort ought to be re-defined. This is dangerous because so many of these individuals are willingly handing over to

[Caesar](#)

the powers to bind or loose moral teachings – and if you try to make an argument against that, you are completely misunderstood,

because so many lack an understanding of what liberty and freedom really mean!!!

Are we

narrowing

down to a remnant of faithful Catholics?

Then the Supreme Court's ruling striking down DOMA and dismissing Prop 8 came down, not unexpected, but still quite ominous, and after reading Elizabeth Scalia's excellent article titled “

The ‘Party’ is victor; Time to save souls and churches”

I realized I was not being dramatic at all. It was the Spirit that place that word in my heart. Not to cause despair, but to show me that the seeds of renewal are even now being sown.

**“So too at this present time there is a remnant , chosen by grace.” Rom 11:5**

The word remnant first popped into my head during the June 7th rehearsal dinner for my son Matthew and his then bride-to-be Grace. They were married on June 8th (Yes! It was the feast of the Immaculate Heart isn't that awesome!!!) after a real courtship that was based on discernment of God's will for them. These two have a profound respect, for each other and their deepening love, for parental authority and a commitment to Christ through their Catholic faith. In fact, it was their Catholic faith that came shining through all the wonderful parties and joy-filled celebrations. Especially in the beautiful Nuptial Mass, where the Gospel was chanted by a newly ordained transitional deacon and Panis Angelicus , Ave Verum Corpus and Gounod's Ave Maria were beautifully sung. The Mass and all of the celebrations that surrounded it were directly and indirectly proclaiming what marriage truly is: A covenant that is “ordered to the good of the couple, as well as the generation and education of children.” (CCC 1660) Marriage was not just about the two of them, it was a bridging of the past generations to the future ones. It was about the obligations of these two to build up a Culture of Life through their vows to each other and to God.



Both myself and Grace's mother heard from guests who felt renewed and filled with hope after the wedding. It was so joyfully Catholic! Three generations of the priesthood participated in celebrating it and at least one other young man was undertaking serious discernment for a religious vocation. And it was at the rehearsal dinner that I looked around the room and felt the hope and promise of renewal that God is always offering us! I thought here ,in this room, are some of the remnant, the faithful remnant in an increasingly post-Christian world. God always leaves a

### remnant

. And what a joyful remnant it was! I wish I had words for my gratitude.

***Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.***

The darkness of the Culture of Death's attack on marriage, which is an attack on the Church, is even more disheartening because of the ignorant and complacent acceptance of these attacks by so many members of the Church. In the face of this daunting opposition these young people were joyfully, faithfully Catholic. They did not hide their faith under a bushel basket, nor were they stridently holding it over people those they may have serious disagreements with. They simply lived it with maturity and with great joy. Sometimes it takes darkness to appreciate just how bright the light of Christ shines, and in the growing darkness of our world the joy of this marriage shines so brightly for me. I know that some of our readers have also been graced with signs of hope like this as well, and to these things we hold on to.

Because the threats that were once vague and veiled and aimed at my Church are solidifying and they are proving to be formidable. I take no comfort in President Obama's arrogant claim the he

### won't force religious institutions

to accept gay "marriage". It is a

### hollow promise

. And every day more souls are giving up the fight, because it looks hopeless, because it is much

easier to just give in, because no one they know and respect is willing to stand up and proclaim the truth, and take the insult and calumny that will result from it. The Culture of Life is facing the ravenous dragon in the Culture of Death and we appear to be losing. But we are not. Have faith and endure, and be perceptive of God's signs of hope! There is a remnant, praise be to God!

***Go then, rejoice and exalt over the children of the righteous, for they will all be gathered together and will bless the Lord of all ages. Tobit 13:13***



Matthew and Grace

And for more encouragement in strengthening and growing the "remnant" check out Deacon Paul's link

[: Small Faith Communities](#)

or if reading is more your thing:

[Catholic Spirituality Blogs Network](#)

Heidi

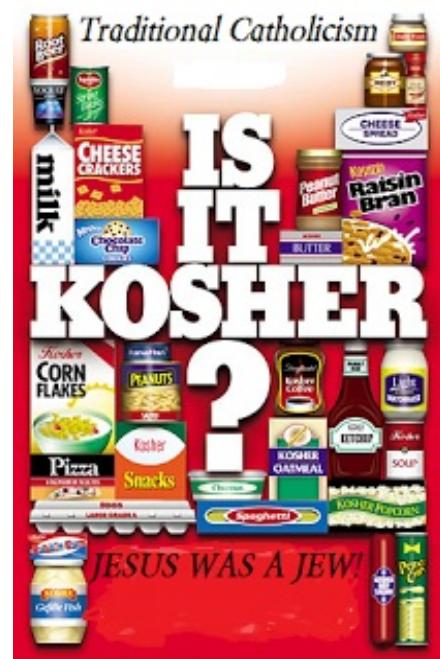
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# Are "Traditional Catholics" Kosher? [at Crossed The Tiber]



Until recently, I had co-administrated a 2500 member group on facebook called Catholics are Christians to explain the faith to anyone who would listen. We had some great discussions and actually won some folks over to see the beauty and truth of the faith. Unfortunately, in the past few weeks I had some "traditional Catholics" fill the pages with divisive and fairly rancorous comments. These included links to a popular but controversial traditional Catholic personality who makes his living by perpetually criticizing the "post-Vatican II Catholic Church." This inspired me to blog about the concept of "traditional Catholicism."

There is a very good chance that this will alienate me from a certain small but vocal segment of Catholics, however, I feel it is important to talk about the proverbial "elephant in the Catholic room" here. My purpose in writing is not to alienate or divide but to warn. I recently came across a blogpost entitled "Who Is Afraid of the Latin Mass?" I thought about it and concluded that I am indeed afraid of the Latin Mass. Quite honestly, the truth is that I am not actually afraid of the Latin Mass, but very afraid of what the Latin Mass can do to some,

**not all,**

faithful Catholics. To further clarify, I think the Latin Mass is a gift of God and the Church has given it to us and it has been the normative form of worship for most of the history of Christendom. However, in the past 40 years since the Ecumenical Council called Vatican II, there has arisen a group of Catholics who believe that the TLM (Tridentine Latin Mass) is superior to the Novus Ordo (NO) mass given to us by Pope Paul the VI in 1969. These folks who refer to themselves as "traditional Catholics" claim to be the only ones who cling to the traditional truths and practices of

the "faith, once delivered to the apostles."

However, our popes have indicated that both forms of the liturgy are valid. Pope Benedict gave his motu proprio in 2007 which allowed the Extraordinary Form (the Latin Mass) to be celebrated freely with no restrictions. Thereafter, the bishops of every diocese must provide the opportunity to have the EF of the mass celebrated if requested by the laity or priests, without requiring an indult. So that's good news! If you desire to worship with the EF, go find one, if you desire to worship with the NO, that's good too. But just to be clear, one form is not superior to another, says the pope.

But what has happened is that some,

**not all,**

Catholics have completely disdained the Novus Ordo mass and anyone who supports it, including the hierarchy of the Church.

Some,

**not all,**

traditional Catholics believe that the NO mass is "barely" valid or not valid at all. They believe that those who assist at the NO mass are liberal or "modernist."

Now cue the twilight zone music. These same folks also hold to the theory that Vatican 2 was hijacked by modernist liberal elements and even Jews, to subvert the true Church. (It is true that there were Jewish converts at Vatican 2, and certainly one could understand their desire to see reconciliation with the Jewish people. )

Some,

**not all,**

traditional Catholics have been extremely condescending to those of us who believe that Vatican 2 was a work of the Holy Spirit and is in continuity with the previous Church councils.

Some,

**not all,**

traditional Catholics are anti-Semitic (they would say anti-Zionistic) and believe that the Jews are behind the destruction of the Catholic faith.

Some,

**not all,**

traditional Catholics believe that the holocaust did happen, but the numbers of those killed have been exaggerated by the "Jewish-controlled media."

Some,

**not all,**

traditional Catholics believe that the Vatican is completely infiltrated by a "gay cabal" and that the homosexuals and their gay agenda have subverted American seminaries and seek the destruction of the faith. (Yes, there likely is percentage of active homosexuals in the curia and the pope is aware of it. That's quite different than believing that the Vatican is run by homosexuals as some,

**not all**

traditional Catholics espouse.)

Some,

**not all,**

traditional Catholics broadcast their distrust of our popes, bishops, and the magisterium which sows a seed of discord among the faithful.

Some,

**not all,**

traditional Catholics, believe that they understand the mind of God regarding our Church more than the current pope. They will insinuate that the current and past popes have been deceived and are making bad decisions, by pursuing relations with Jews and Muslims.

Some,

**not all,**

traditional Catholics feel that our current pope is a useless shill for the modernist agenda that has taken over the Vatican and feel he will do nothing to stop heresy.

So, are traditional Catholics kosher? Depends on whether they trust the pope or not. Pope Benedict 15th, in 1914 warned of the danger of calling oneself a traditional Catholic. This was even before Vatican 2 and the "modernist heresy!"

*"It is, moreover, Our will that Catholics should abstain from certain appellations which have*

recently been brought into use to distinguish one group of Catholics from another. They are to be avoided not only as "profane novelties of words," out of harmony with both truth and justice, but also because they give rise to great trouble and confusion among Catholics. Such is the nature of Catholicism that it does not admit of more or less, but must be held as a whole or as a whole rejected: "This is the Catholic faith, which unless a man believe faithfully and firmly; he cannot be saved" (Athanas. Creed). There is no need of adding any qualifying terms to the profession of Catholicism: it is quite enough for each one to proclaim "Christian is my name and Catholic my surname," only let him endeavour to be in reality what he calls himself."

Pope Benedict XV,

### Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum 24

In conclusion, my warning is this, if you are a Catholic and love the devotional practices of traditional Catholicism and the reverent aspects of the Tridentine Mass, go for it. If you wish to receive Jesus on your tongue instead of in your hand, go for it. If you love chant and enjoy it more than the contemporary songs from the new hymnals, go for it. If you love incense, bells and the sense of mystery that is contained in the Latin Mass, go for it. These are all beautiful and wonderful things.....

But if you meet people at the Extraordinary Form of the Mass (TLM) who identify themselves as *Traditional Catholics*

and hold to any of the views I have outlined above, that is definitely not Kosher. I encourage you to embrace the pious traditions and eschew the hate, paranoia, conspiracies and anti-Semitism of some,

**not all,**

Traditional Catholics.

Pope Benedict the 16th on the Novus ordo rite:

*"The most sure guarantee that the Missal of Paul VI can unite parish communities and be loved by them consists in its being celebrated with great reverence in harmony with the liturgical directives. This will bring out the spiritual richness and the theological depth of this Missal."*

# Pray to the Lord of the Harvest! [at Bartimaeus' Quiet Place]

## ***Pray to the Lord of the Harvest: Lay Disciples are Needed***



The Harvest is ready, but where are the workers?

***When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples,***

***“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*** (Matt: 9:36-38)

Dear Brothers and Sisters In Christ,

A season of spiritual darkness is beginning to envelop the world – a period where the godless world system is attempting to impose its values (or lack of values) and its humanistic and godless philosophies on the nations and the communities of Christian believers world-wide. We can already see the signs of the times as the darkness increases: abortion is proclaimed as a liberating good and giving birth as touted as an evil, where deviant sexual practices are to be lauded, chastity and virginity to be decried, and traditional marriage is accused as being unjust.

Clearly, this is a depraved era, just as the one spoken of by Isaiah, a time of ... ***“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.”*** (Is.5:20). It is a God-denying, God-defying era, opening itself for a manifestation of God’s wrath that will subject all humanity to a fiery testing. This, also, is an era where the church itself will be judged and tested to separate the wheat from the chaff and to cleanse it from the leaven of the “world”, the secular humanism through which the forces of darkness are operating to obtain control of all humanity,

Our Lord Jesus himself warned His disciples about the “leavens” His church would need to confront and remove in order to maintain and fulfill the Kingdom of the Father in this world, He specifically warned us of the “leaven” of the Pharisees (religious hypocrisy), the “leaven” of the Scribes (adding human tradition to the Word of God), and the “leaven” of Herod (power and ambition). He also spoke metaphorically of the woman (the world system) kneading “leaven” into

the pure unleavened flour of the church (Matt. 13:33).

All of these “leavens” are spurious and infectious rebellions against the the Divine Will and His revealed Word to which the church must take immediate action to repel the source of these “leavens”with all the spiritual armaments at its disposal. Leavens, which are basically fast spreading demonic proclivities that will bring down others in the church until it so pervades us that we can no longer function on behalf of the Father and His Kingdom.

Unfortunately for us, it is also a time when the church has, in general,has let its guard down regarding spiritual warfare and even has neglected arming its lay troops at the front line with the discipline and understanding of the Spiritual Authority given by the Father to all Christians through the Spirit of Christ that is in us – given, so that ALL (not just Clergy) of the church may stand firm and use the spiritual weapons the Lord has given it to disarm the enemy and bring forth fruit for the Kingdom of God to His Glory!

Discipleship is the means through which the army of God is trained and prepared not only to manifest the Kingdom but to defend and defeat the enemy which challenging God’s reign over His creation. And it is through dedicated disciples that he will make other disciples to increase the troops he has at hand as we enter into this warfare.

Discipleship is the process through which we all enter into the spiritual transformation and renewal of our minds (Rom. 12:1-2) that we are all called to, so that we may truly be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29), not only in holiness but in the power and authority required to take the battle to the enemy instead of the enemy bringing the battle to us! We the laity are being called by God to take our place in the front lines of this battle and become true warriors of Christ against the powers of darkness. This can only be accomplished through the spiritual “boot camp” of “Intentional Discipleship” for the laity.

The Lord intends to use the coming darkness as an opportunity to bring in a Harvest of souls. We must not only be ready to respond by making disciples as He has commended us, but also, to **“pray to the Lord of the Harvest”** so that He may prepare these lay disciples to man the front lines of the Harvest, our world today!

### ***First, we must learn to be Disciples Ourselves ...***

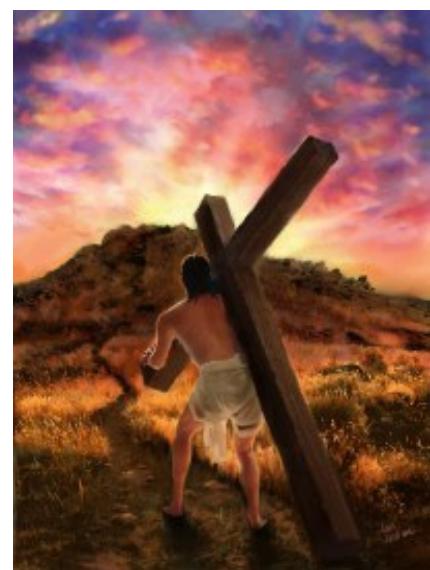
“Intentional” discipleship is the key part of the process of our spiritual transformation that proceeds from conversion and baptism as follows:

[Conversion] =>  
[basic training] => [unintentional discipleship] =>  
[intentional discipleship] => [Instinctive discipleship]

For most of us “basic training” is our initial education in the Faith and the Word of God” after conversion. After that, for most of us, we begin our walk in what I term, “unintentional

discipleship". That is, with every good intent, we attempt to follow all the teaching we have received out of love of God and neighbor. But we do it out of our own self-will as a means of gaining favor with God or doing something for God, rather than submitting ourselves totally to the Father, so that, through the Holy Spirit, He may work His will in us and through us to accomplish His purposes in this World. It is in this phase of spiritual growth that most of us get stuck into, mainly because that is what is expected of laity in the current religious culture we live in. In this phase we could also call ourselves "accidental" disciples because even though our motives are not completely pure, the Lord can still work around us to accomplish His purposes.

The next phase, "Intentional discipleship", however, is the real entrance into true discipleship, it is where we learn to take up our "cross". It is where, through a sincere decision of our will, we offer ourselves as living sacrifices to the Father (Rom 12.1-2) so that His will and not ours may be done through our lives – thus opening the Door for the Spirit of Christ to truly be Our King, Our Lord, and Our God so He and He alone can work in us to work the true purposes of the Father in our lives. This phase is also a process that takes time because the Holy Spirit is gentle with us in our transformation, but, because we have freely consecrated our very selves to Him, He will use us to the utmost to achieve His purposes through us. It is in this stage that we truly are able to act out our obedience to the father "in Jesus' Name" because it is really Jesus at work in us to the Glory of the Father!



## The Way of True Discipleship

This, then, is the challenge of true discipleship that He lays out for us: "**And he said to all, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. "** (Luke 9:23-24)

Once we have accepted our cross of placing God's Will over ours, Jesus will then truly reign in us, in ALL things in our lives, and then and only then do we enter into what I term "instinctive" discipleship. This is the stage in our spiritual growth where we are so united to the Spirit of Christ in us, that we no longer have an awareness of ourselves in what we think or do or say. It is the

stage where we, like the Apostle Paul, can truly say: " It is no longer I that lives but Christ who lives in me", where we are in such a spiritual union with Christ that we no longer need to discern between our will and the Father's will because we know instinctively that the Spirit of Christ reigns in us to such a degree that we "know" that all that we think or do or say emanates from His presence within us.

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*In order to inform the Body Of Christ as to the dire dearth of true lay discipleship and our need for it, I am attaching to this writing with a paper written by a group of lay Catholics in a rural parish in Northern California, discussing the subject of lay discipleship. This paper summarizes the historical dissolution or diminishment of lay discipleship within the church over the centuries. The paper will be presented by me in two separate posts. This being the first.*

*The first part deals with the first thousand years of church history and the second part will deal with the last thousand years. I will leave its message to your own discernment through prayer and meditation. And I pray that the Holy Spirit will work through what I am presenting to you to guide you in determining your response to the message.*

*But above all, pray that the Lord of Harvest will send forth workers into His fields!*

*May the Lord Bless you and Keep you. May the Lord be gracious to you and Shine His Face upon you and Bring you His Peace!*

*Your Brother in Christ and fellow pilgrim .... Bartimaeus*

For Further Information on "Intentional Discipleship" please Click on ["Cast your Net on the Other Side"](#)

(© B.R.Timeo and Bartimaeus' Quiet Place, [2008-2013])

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*The views presented in the following papers are those of the Issues Group and are not necessarily representative of the people of St. Aloysius Parish nor the Roman Catholic Church.*

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***Catholic Issues Series : The Church Today***

***The Role of Clergy and Laity***

***Part I : Cleric and Lay in the First One Thousand Years of the Church***

Volumes could be written and have been, on either the lay or cleric states in the Church. I have attempted an overview in only a few inadequate pages. What binds these two states together is the discipleship of Christ they equally share. It is in this shared discipleship that we will attempt to understand cleric and lay as we move through two thousand years of history. And all this in less than two thousand words.

Our faith is in a person. Jesus Christ. He is the source of and the model for all we are to be. In faith He has called us to be his followers, his disciples. There is not one discipleship for clerics and another for lay persons. There is only one discipleship. The New Testament is a written record of our call to follow. In our responding together to Christ we become a community, the Christ faithful, the Church. Without Christ there is no church, but without his community of faithful living out their discipleship there is also no church. It is in this sense then that we say in Christ we are the Church.

From the Resurrection to the beginning of the fourth century the Church was far different from what we know today. Not only different because it was new and evolving, but different in the very way its members related to each other as equals, depended on each other in worship and service, and sought together as a community to live out their discipleship in Christ. There was no clear distinction between a cleric and a lay person, between those appointed to service and those who brought other talents and skills to the community. Each was valued for his or her discipleship, not for their roles or functions. Young or old, Jew or Greek, man or woman, it was their living faith that defined them. If a person was chosen for a leadership or service role by the community, it was based on the merits of his or her discipleship. No one chose these roles for themselves, they were chosen by the community, for the community. And it was the community and its well being that was of the utmost concern to the early Christians, how to protect it in a hostile world, how to nurture its faith, how to help it grow. From these concerns evolved the communal liturgies: baptism to accept the newly faithful, the Eucharist to spiritually nourish the faithful, reconciliation to reunite those who had failed to live up to their faith, and the service/leadership liturgy to select and consecrate those thought worthy to administer to the needs of the community. These liturgies, including service and liturgies, existed for the community, not vice versa. For a leader to be imposed was inconceivable. Structure existed from the beginning of the Church, but it was communal and elective not hierarchical. It was from the bottom up, not from the top down.

But in the beginning of the fourth century a dramatic change took place in the Church that would determine its course down to our present time. A much maligned, threatened, and persecuted Church was suddenly accepted and smiled upon by the Constantine emperors and given the chance to flourish. Seizing this opportunity, the Church embraced the empire. It was a powerful marriage. The Church was now Roman and the Roman Empire was now Holy. One church, one empire. The Church became the official church, intolerant of all others. Church leaders soon broke with the past by adopting the order or hierarchical structure of the Roman world. It was henceforth a person's position, and or function that determined their status in the Church, not discipleship. As the institutional church developed its own power class by emulating the power structure of its new secular counterpart and partner, the church of discipleship, the church of community, the church of

the gospels and the early Christians was replaced. The line between cleric and lay was no longer fluid, but sharply drawn. All power was assumed by the new clerical class, and the lay or nonclerical was disempowered.

As the empire was all powerful, so now was the institutional church. As the empire was Roman it was also now Christian. Secular authority as well as clerical authority touched every aspect of a person's life. The Church gave the empire unity and stability and the empire advanced the Church's doctrines and moral teachings. Each believed that as long as they were one the world had reached its ideal and salvation. This world was divided into the governed and the governing, the common Christian citizen and the often times overlapping royal and pontifical courts.

By the year 700, it was generally accepted that the positions of king and pope were divinely instituted, and these domains were frequently at odds as each sought power over the other. In this medieval period up to the year 1000, the split between the leadership and the disempowered members of the Church became even more defined. Monasteries were firmly in the hands of the clerics. All aspects of liturgy were taken over by clerics. The lay person was relegated to the role of passive observer. As Latin increased as a common language, liturgy became even more unintelligible to the largely uneducated common person. Unless a lay person was of the noble class, he or she was generally excluded from any meaningful role. The term church gradually came to mean the hierarchical institution and not the community of faithful. Wealth also played a part in the growing disparity between lay and cleric, the taxed and untaxed, the nonprivileged and the privileged. Like society, the Church had become feudal.

To conclude then, once the secular world, through a mandate of imperial power became the Christian world as happened in the fourth century, the Church began to incorporate the secular order and the structure of that world. Historically it made good sense. The Church became strong and universal. The morals and teaching of our faith were promulgated throughout Europe and Asia Minor. But the new ordering inevitably led to the disempowerment of the lay person and a break between the cleric and lay states. This did not happen by design or manipulation, the educated became disconnected from the uneducated, the untaxed from the taxed, the leaders from the led, the powerful from the powerless. We can only understand our historical church and our positions today as lay or clerical members if we understand this history. No other institution transcends these past two thousand years like the Church. Empires, kingdoms, and states have passed. The Church remains. It is the vessel of our heritage and faith. The fact that it survived at all and played the great part it did in history is a tribute to its greatness and glory and the presence of the Spirit. But if we are to define ourselves in terms of discipleship as we have done throughout this paper then by the end of the first one thousand years we would have to say that the lay voice was no longer equal to the cleric as it had been in the beginning. There was an essential wrong at the Church's core. For in the Church of the gospels all of us are called, not some of us; all of us form the community, not some of us; all of us share in the ministry of Christ, not some of us; all of us share in the service/leadership of the Christ believing, not some of us; all of us are the Church, not some of us.

*In this paper we looked at the first one thousand years to see where we came from and how we*

*grew. In the next paper we will complete this process in the second thousand years and bring history to our own doorsteps. From here perhaps we will discern the parts we must play in launching the third one thousand years.*

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This contribution is available at <http://quietplace4prayer.wordpress.com/2013/06/25/%-pray-to-the-lord-of-the-harvest/>

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# What unites the extreme Gay Rights and Pro-abortion Activists? [at Inadequate Disciple]

We were having a graduation party for the graduating 8th graders and their families at a community church. It was a wonderful event inclusive of a praise and thanksgiving service in the church worship area itself. After the dinner and service we had fire pits going outside so the kids and parents could continue to talk with each other.

The church's pastor and I were two of the last adults around the fire pit. He asked me, "Do you know what unites the extreme Gay Rights and Pro-abortion Activists?"

Do you? What do you think unites them?

During the service part I put in a little pitch to get some more of the students active in our Prolife club at the school, of which I am a chaperone, adviser. The Pastor had been active in the prolife movement many years ago. I had heard many stories about being active in the eighties during the Clinton era. These were the days of Operation Rescue, when prolife activists tried to block access to the clinics and block the abortionists, whether their cars, or the abortionists themselves from entering the clinic.

Some of these events ended in prolife and proaborts being in jail together. In one such jail experience, my friend's mother and her friend, whom he described as resembling the church lady from Saturday Night Live, were in with a goth looking woman with a super-short black haircut, and the numbers 666 tattooed on her forehead. This woman began using crude gestures and language toward the prolife women. They gave her a look that said the equivalent of today's expression, "Really?!" Then one said to the other, "We need to pray for her."

So they did.

And then, this 666 lady began to scream! My friend was in the male side of the jail and he could hear this screaming.

"Get me out of here, NOW! I need out of here right NOW!"

He yelled over to his mother, "Mom, are you OK?"

She yelled back, "Yes, Son. We are just praying over here. Everything is fine."

And the screaming continued.

Reminds me of a verse from my reading on the back patio at sunset last night:

*Let us lay traps for the upright man, since he annoys us and opposes our way of life, reproaches us for our sins against the Law, and accuses us of sins against our upbringing. He claims to have knowledge of God, and calls himself a child of the Lord. We see him as a reproof to our way of thinking, the very sight of him weighs our spirits down; for his kind of life is not like other people's, and his ways are quite different. In his opinion we are counterfeit; he avoids our ways as he would filth; he proclaims the final end of the upright as blessed and boasts of having God for his father. Yet people look on, uncomprehending; and it does not enter their heads that grace and mercy await his chosen ones and that he intervenes on behalf of his holy ones. When the count of their sins has been drawn up, in terror they will come and their crimes, confronting them, will accuse them. Stricken with remorse, they will say to one another with groans and laboring breath, Clearly we have strayed from the way of truth; the light of justice has not shone for us, the sun has not risen for us. We have left no path of lawlessness or ruin unexplored, we have crossed deserts where there was no track, but the way of the Lord is one we have never known. What good has arrogance been to us? What has been the purpose of our riches and boastfulness? All those things have passed like a shadow, passed like a fleeting rumor. --*

Wisdom 2:12-16, 4:14b-15, 4:20, 5:3, 5-9

You must of heard this week of how in Texas, after the blue-shirted prolife people finished singing "Amazing Grace", and remarkably after finishing the line, "I was blind but now I see" (IRONY!), an orange-shirted proabort for killing babies after 20 weeks gestation came into the camera and said "Hail Satan!" and stuck out her tongue.

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/07/02/watch-abortion-supporters-chant-hail-satan-while-pro-life-activists-sing-amazing-grace-outside-texas-capitol/>

So let us not be blind! Let us see! And let us pray, and let us praise and thank our God who intervenes on our behalf, who if we are holy, or pray, or praise, or bear any fruit it is through his grace, his loving and powerful inviting presence among us.

The answer to the pastor's question?

"Do you know what unites the extreme Gay Rights and Pro-abortion Activists?"

You know don't you? It is Satan and the evil spirits. If you think I am a loon, I would disagree and quote Billy Graham, "I've never seen the wind, but I've felt the effects of the wind." Satan and evil spirits are part of unseen reality. They can be denied, just like gravity. But when you jump off a building you come to realize the reality of both.

When God's children, created in his image to know, love and serve him are murdered it is only Satan that is served. If you venture into comment land on some of the proabort blogs you'll soon notice some of the screen names like "BrazenQueer". Some of these folks are not gifted with amazing logic or rhetorical skills. Some compare getting a baby killed in a violent, dismembering, unaestheticized murder to getting treatment for cancer. Seriously! One woman, who said she is a

lawyer, asked me why I didn't have our students picket outside of a cancer treatment facility.

It is easy for me to be a prolife activist. I had a personal need to do something to bear fruit. I love praying, reading my Bible, attending Mass and making holy hours, but I thought I was on the very low yielding side as far as a disciple of Jesus Christ was concerned.

*"It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit and be my disciples."* -- John 15:8

Prolife activism now is not like the Operation Rescue days. We go to be a prayerful presence to give the women entering the center pause. We go to be a prolife presence praying and holding signs that give the passer-bys pause. We pray that God will intervene in the hearts and minds of the women, the men who are the parents of the unborn babies, in the hearts and minds of the clinic workers and the NARAL affiliated volunteer escorts, several of whom are recruited from college campuses and are in their late teens or early twenties.

This "Hail Satan" moment is not isolated outlier event. It is just a moment when the veil is lifted, and some in the broader population have a chance to have an epiphany ah-ha moment.

Please join us in the prolife cause. We are going to witness for life in downtown Chicago today, in approximately one hour. It is tense down there, and the spiritual warfare is actually palpable.

Please pray for all involved.

We trust in our Sovereign, All-Powerful, Merciful, and Loving God to intervene on behalf of his little ones and behalf of us, his praying and grateful children who place all our trust and all our efforts and our whole lives in his providential hands.

*"The retribution of God from heaven is being revealed against the ungodliness and injustice of human beings who in their injustice hold back the truth. For what can be known about God is perfectly plain to them, since God has made it plain to them: ever since the creation of the world, the invisible existence of God and his everlasting power have been clearly seen by the mind's understanding of created things. And so these people have no excuse: they knew God and yet they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but their arguments became futile and their uncomprehending minds were darkened. While they claimed to be wise, in fact they were growing so stupid that they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an imitation. That is why God abandoned them in their inmost cravings to filthy practices of dishonoring their own bodies--because they exchanged God's truth for a lie and have worshipped and served the creature instead of the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. That is why God abandoned them to degrading passions: why their women have exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural practices; and the men, in a similar fashion, too, giving up normal relations with women, are consumed with passion for each other, men doing shameful things with men and receiving in themselves due reward for their perversion. In other words, since they would not consent to acknowledge God, God abandoned them to their unacceptable thoughts and indecent*

*behavior. . . . They are well aware of God's ordinance: that those who behave like this deserve to die--yet they not only do it, but even applaud others who do the same." --*

Romans 1:18-28, 32

The quote "ever since the creation of the world" struck me, because there is also a correlation there, haven't seen the study, but have seen the slick Darwin fish with feet on the back of one of the male escort's cars parked at the abortion clinic. Those who are not blind are keen to the history that the half-baked theories of Darwin on the origin of the species were their ticket to help indoctrinate many that the invisible existence of God and his everlasting power are not to be seen clearly in the creation of the world. Surely there are adaptations, and mutations among plants and animals that result in classifying new species, but there is no amount of magical thinking that could lead me to accept lightning hitting organic soup to create life, etc., etc. But if it justifies living lawlessly and worshipping the creature (oneself, one's friend, one's lover) in place of the Creator, then better publicize, and defend and teach as many children as possible this theory as fact and declare anyone that believes God created the world as an uneducated fool.

*"So no matter who you are, if you pass judgment you have no excuse. It is yourself that you condemn when you judge others, since you behave in the same way as those you are condemning. We are well aware that people who behave like that are justly condemned by God. But you--when you judge those who behave like this while you are doing the same yourself--do you think you will escape God's condemnation? Or are you not disregarding his abundant goodness, tolerance and patience, failing to realize that this generosity of God is meant to bring you to repentance. Your stubborn refusal to repent is only storing up retribution for yourself on that Day of retribution, when God's just verdicts will be made known. He will repay everyone as their deeds deserve. For those who aimed for glory and honor and immortality by persevering in doing good, there will be eternal life; but for those who out of jealousy have taken for their guide not truth but injustice, there will be the fury of retribution."*

-- Romans 2:1-8

That being a very useful reminder. If I seem in any way to be judging proaborts or homosexual activists, I am not. I do need to repent and make reparation and persevere especially in praying so that I can do good:

*"Remain in me, as I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, unless it remains part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a branch--and withers; these branches are collected and thrown on the fire and are burnt."*

--John 15:4-6

I am actually hopeful and will pray that if anyone happening to see this blog post at some point that they will come to repentance and prayer and for standing for the life of the unborn, and above all for lives conformed after Jesus Christ, following his teachings and the truth of God's commandments.

God's mercy is there for all of us! Praise be to God!

*"So, my dear brothers, keep firm and immovable, always abounding in energy for the Lord's work, being sure that in the Lord none of your labors is wasted."*

-- 1 Corinthians 15:58

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This contribution is available at <http://inadequatedisciple.blogspot.com/2013/07/what-unites-extreme-gay-rights-and-pro.html>

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# Translating St Benedict [at Dominus mihi adjutor]

In the universal Church today is the Feast of St Benedict, Patron of Europe, Father of Western Monasticism, founder of the oldest order (as it were) in the Church. At Douai we have a holiday of sorts, with talking meals, a festal lunch, and a reduced regime. However, at Mass we did *not* have incense nor did we sing (or say for that matter) the Creed nor the Sequence. An odd way, you might observe, to commemorate our monastic patron. Have we gone low-church all of a sudden?

Many of you will already know the reason why. Today is for most Benedictines, and certainly for us English ones, what we might term *Little St Benedict's Day*. For us, the major feast for St Benedict is the Solemnity of the Transitus of St Benedict on 21 March. Thus we keep his day of death as the main feast day. Traditionally 11 July was the feast of the Translation of St Benedict's relics (though whether his relics went to Fleury in France or Monte Cassino in Italy is a vexed question: both abbeys still lay claim to possessing the true St Benedict). After the Council the reformers opted to omit the Transitus and keep the Translation in the Calendar for the universal Church, possibly because the Transitus always falls in Lent. This is no bar to English Benedictines keeping the Transitus in full fig, a God-sent break from the rigours of Lenten penance (well, not so rigorous any more to be honest, but that is another story).

The Prior preached this morning on St Benedict's teaching on poverty, which set me to reflecting in the light of the new pontificate. Pope Francis is laying great stress on simplicity (rather than a neutered humility as the secular-minded wish to make out). Thus [Pope Francis recently exhorted priests and religious](#) to eschew fancy cars and go for a more unprepossessing jalopy, or even a bike. That strikes the disinterested hearer as perfectly sensible, though he (or she) might wonder why priests and vowed religious should need to be reminded of this. We religious especially should stop and take stock, and ask if in fact our lives reflect the evangelical poverty we profess.

However, the word *poverty* could use some fruitful elaboration, or even translation, in the context of the religious vows, and even more basically, to Christian life in general. Poverty is not the same as destitution or squalor. To be dressed in rags, living in a hovel and eating gruel is sadly the plight of many in the world today, but it is not the poverty to which religious are called (though some do indeed live so, to the glory of God). Benedictines do not make a vow of poverty at all. We *do* make a vow of conversion of life, in which evangelical poverty and chastity are integral elements. St Benedict saw no need to single these out for separate vows: evidently they are essential to the life of the evangelical Christian, and even more so to the monk who has committed his life to ongoing and authentic conversion.

St Benedict has little to say on poverty. The point he does labour is *private ownership*. In chapter 33 of the Rule, *Monks and Private Ownership*, St Benedict writes,

Above all, this evil practice must be uprooted and removed from the monastery. We mean

that without an order from the abbot, no one may presume to give, receive or retain anything as his own, nothing at all ... not a single item, especially since monks may not have the free disposal even of their own bodies and wills... *All things should be the common possession of all*, as it is written (Acts 4:32), so that no one presumes to call anything his own.

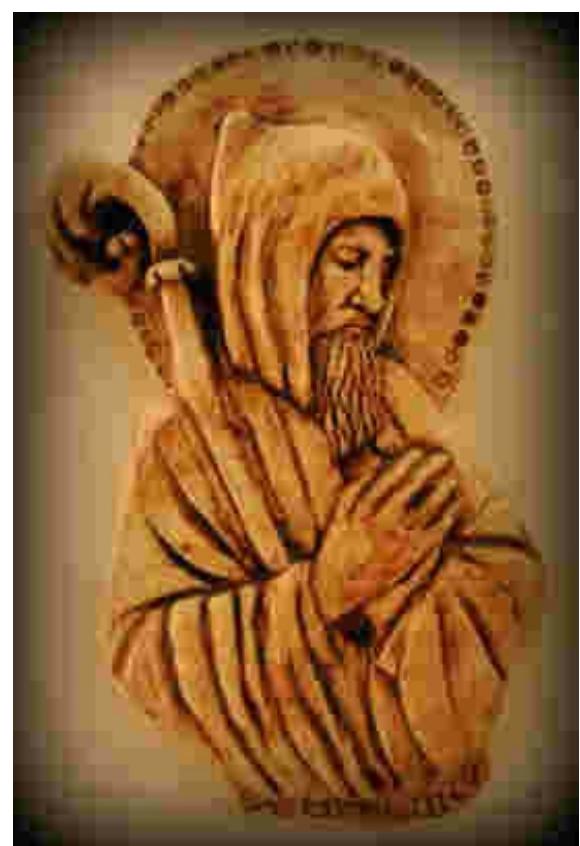
The crucial phrase is *as his own*. The quotation from Acts refers to the life of the primitive Church, a common life that reflected the Lord's radical self-emptying. The Christian life is one of sacrifice, just as Christ's was, who sacrificed his own body for our salvation. Thus the Christian is called to conform to the lifestyle of Christ a freedom born of indifference to material possessions and to one's own preferences. It is not things that matter, but our attitude to things. Even our Lord and his apostles had a common purse (held by Judas). In today's gospel from St Matthew (19:16-21) the rich young man can do everything but divest himself of his possessions. His property and wealth were not the obstacle as much as his possessiveness of them. It reveals a deep-seated selfishness which is at odds with the essence of Christian life, self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice.

Since religious life is the Christian life reduced to its concentrated essence, religious (like all Christians) are not called so much to get rid of everything but to renounce any right to possess something as their own, for themselves and their exclusive use. For the monk, nothing can be "mine" but only "our". Only when we have removed our attachment to a thing can we be free to use it properly. That is the freedom of Christian poverty: a simplicity that allows us to retain or discard anything with peace of heart. The monk, as too the Christian, says with Job, "The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

So Pope Francis is quite right to remind seminarians and novices of the need to aim low when it comes to things we buy and use in our lives of service of the gospel. And if we do so, we become a reminder to the Church and the world that all things are passing, and that our true and lasting possession is God and his grace which mammon will displace if our priorities are not right. Pope Francis is not advocating some sort of neo-Marxism; he is calling us to practice what we preach. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

Happy Feast!

O God, who made the Abbot Saint Benedict an outstanding master in the school of divine service, grant, we pray, that, putting nothing before love of you, we may hasten with a loving heart in the way of your commands. Through Christ our Lord.



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This contribution is available at <http://hughosb.wordpress.com/2013/07/11/translating-st-benedict/>  
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# A New Look at the Suffering Church [at salliesART]



**"Christ Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane", by the hand of  
Sarah "Sallie" Thayer, 2013**

Here is a new, simple drawing of Our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane in His agony. I was actually working on what kind of colouring I might use to indicate direct moonlight (or any kind of Heavenly light). I am far from satisfied and so I will continue to experiment, I'm sure.

As I was working on this drawing, however, I was meditating on the question: What was it that caused Our Lord the most suffering -- what was it that affected Him so deeply that His sweat was mixed with blood? These questions seemed particularly important to me with the feast day of Sts. Peter and Paul yesterday and the remembrance of the first martyrs of the Faith at Rome after Nero blamed the Christians for burning the part of the City which he already had plans for rebuilding! Anyway, back to the question... As I pondered this question, I came up with a number of answers -- all of which you have probably considered yourself in your own meditation and prayer.

However, I would like to share just a bit of what the Lord brought to my mind during these prayerful times of drawing.

First, there is the obvious -- our Lord Jesus knows what is going to be done to him and his human mind and body can barely tolerate the terrible images in His head of what lies before Him. Any of us would be the same. Just the imagining of any severe damage to our bodies causes us to recoil in fear and anguish.

But then there are the less obvious possible causes of his extreme grief. Chief among these would have to be the weight of the sins of humanity, from the beginning of time until the end, which were now placed upon His shoulders. I can't even begin to imagine the horror of this pure and sinless man when seeing all those sinful, violent and evil intents and actions found in the minds and hearts of human beings. We all know how much evil there is in the best of us. In those who are holy, such evil is disciplined and kept to a minimum; however, if we are honest with ourselves, we sense the level of depravity to which we might sink were we to throw off every restraint and cease to care how we might offend God.

Finally, though, there is one area of possible grief and suffering which might have burdened Our Lord even more than these things. Something I really had never thought about previously. Something which now causes my own heart to ache as I consider the part I have played and am playing in this terrible weight that was on the heart of Our Lord. I am speaking of God's determined effort to establish His Church, His Bride, which would be His representative on earth until He returns at the Final Judgement.

He had already seen how fragile was the faith of those He had chosen and instructed over those three years. And as He looked into the future of the Church, He was able to see the flourishing of the Faith then see that Faith challenged time and again by those who would choose their own path, refusing to listen to His Body on earth.

Because, we believe that God is not "in time"; that all things are present to Him from the "beginning" to the "end", then we might say that Our Lord is still kneeling there in the Garden, weeping and sweating blood over the agony that we, in our selfishness, continue to cause His Body the Church.

The images God gave for His People, Israel, found in the Old Testament/Jewish Scriptures come to mind. Especially the ones where His People were imaged as an unclean woman sitting by the side of the road, waiting to play the harlot for any man who comes along. Even then, God spoke of weeping over his People, Israel. How much more then must He weep over the the desecration of His own Body, the Church.

I still have a lot of pondering to do over this image, but that is what this type of prayerful meditation is all about -- the type I so often do while I am drawing images of Our Lord, His Blessed Mother, St. Joseph and all the saints and angels. In spite of these deep and troubling thoughts, I am not depressed or "weighed down" because I know in whom I have believed and I am sure that He is able to keep me and all those who seek Him safe until that Day.

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## SOME MORE FAMILY MEMBERS

These are my sister, Janet's, grandchildren. She is very blessed indeed. I would love to see her and her family often but life just hasn't worked out that way. I will be seeing my sister and her husband, her children and grandchildren sometime before this year is over, however. Now, let me tell you about these wonderful young people.



**Here is a photo of my sister's only grand-daughter. This is a recent photo taken at summer camp. She is very active and seems to have little fear about trying these sorts of activities! Very much unlike her Great-Aunt Sallie!**



**Here is the same grand-daughter seen in the photo above. This time she is spending time with her brother.**



**And here is that same grandson with his Dad, my sister's son. I really love this photo.**



**Here is my sister's other grandson.  
He is dressed up as a soldier while  
visiting the Jamestown Settlement  
in Virginia, USA I think he makes a  
very handsome soldier!**



**Here is the same grandson only this time he is having a talk with Thomas Jefferson while visiting Williamsburg, Virginia. I hope he got lots of good ideas for essays when he is taking U. S. History in high school!**

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## **SUKI AND SALLIE**



**Black cats with yellow eyes look very similar so it is difficult for me to tell if this is a photo of Suki or of some other black cat! Anyway, the look in the eyes certainly reminds me of Suki!**

Suki once again has a full belly and is deeply asleep on the back of the sofa. What she doesn't know is that in about half an hour from now, Braden will be arriving for a visit! Braden thinks Suki is very, very interesting, but the last time he was here, he was not walking. Now, he is walking! Suki does not realize what danger she will be in once little Braden arrives... He is one of those little boys who likes to take things apart! Poor Suki -- her nap will soon be interrupted most abruptly. I tried to get her to move into her "crow's nest" bed in the bedroom, but she felt she knows best. Oh, well... I will give you a report on what happened in my Wednesday posting. As you may recall, yesterday was the big celebration for Braden's birthday at his grandparents' home in Mississauga. So, I expect he will be a bit tired when he gets here. I hope we are able to

get some good pictures plus I want his parents to share the photos from yesterday's party with me. Then I will have lots of photos to choose from and I will be able to share the best of the lot with all of you in my next post.

I really thought that I was going to have a fairly quiet long weekend, but gradually everything has changed. I knew there was the possibility of seeing Braden and his parents this weekend (I thought that all the activity in downtown Toronto today might prevent them from making the trip).

However, I just spoke with Braden's father who said that they would only turn back if the traffic situation became really bad -- so now I will wait and see.

As well, I heard from my dear friends, the Clifford's, who suggested a visit tomorrow with a visit to a local restaurant in honour of their daughter's recent birthday. I am delighted to be included as I haven't seen them for some time now.

So, with all these visits plus my daily trip to the gym, I am really staying quite busy.

As far as my health is concerned, I continue to do much the same -- in other words, nothing new has come along thus far to cause me any new problems. The gym is helping me once again to feel better, especially right after I finish my hour or so of exercise! It is great to experience all those little endorphins busily doing their happy dance!

Well, I had better finish this off if I want to get it posted before Braden arrives.

I wish all of you in Canada a very happy Canada Day tomorrow.

May the first martyrs of Rome pray for us that we may stay strong in our Faith and in our sense of what the Church really is. May we never forget that when we harm our brother or sister in Christ we affect not just ourselves and that other person, but we also cause another drop of bloody sweat to fall from the brow of Christ's Body, the Church.

Now, may the peace of the Lord be with you all, today and always.

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This contribution is available at <http://salliesart.blogspot.ca/2013/06/a-new-look-at-suffering-church.html>  
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