

Charismatic

Articles of Spiritual Enlightenment for Christians

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Vocation/ Career? Bro. John Samaha, S.M.

a graduating senior from a Catholic university was interviewing with a prestigious business firm for a position.

The youthful company recruiters explained that the work was challenging and demanded about 70 hours a week but the compensation was outstanding. After many hours in the elegant office setting, the graduate asked the interviewers if they enjoyed their work. The pause was awk-

ward. Gradually came the truthful reply that the work wasn't that enjoyable or meaningful, but the salary and perks were considerable. At that point the graduating senior decided he would not accept the position.

The graduate had a sense of vocation. He was seeking work that would reach into the deeper values he had learned, something that would provide a sense of meaning. He desired more than a job that would pay hills and carry a handsome salary. He recognized that his ambitious recruiters had more than



The Holy Trinity
Sunday, June 6

a job: they had made a commitment to a career. But he was seeking more than a career, more than financial security. He wanted work that would have meaning and make a difference for the common good.

Before Christianity, Socrates had raised the question. "What ought I to do?" The liberal arts tradition and Western education and humanism have always spotlighted this concern. Christian spirituality frames the question in terms of vocation: "What am I called to become?" Graduates faced with multiple career options often falter and allow other influences like family expectation, the opinion of peers, and the voices of the marketplace to dictate the shape of their lives.

Usually the course of

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Our Universal Hunger

Matthew Kelly

throughout human history, there has never been a shortage of men and women willing to point humanity along the right path.

Nor have the needs of the human family ever been a secret: food, shelter, pur-

poseful work, companionship, freedom, forgiveness, acceptance, and love. In every age, there is an abundance of people who are able to articulate the truth of these matters and announce their social implications particular to that time. These people stand at the crossroads and point humanity down a path they have never traveled them-

selves. In our own age, there is certainly no shortage of books, tapes, courses, radio shows, seminars, retreats, and television programs – all of which speak to these needs in various ways.

But amidst this abundance, there is a great poverty. It seems in every place and in every time, the shortage is al-

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Conversion: A Change of Security

John Fuellenbach, SVD

real conversion occurs when we let ourselves be turned towards the Kingdom and let its power in.

Or, to use our other image, "I let its power well up in me." Or, "I put on those new eyeglasses that enable me to get things into focus."

Catherine of Siena put it this way: *Don't you understand! God is running after you day and night as though he has nothing else to do but simply to occupy himself with you.*

What is this power of the Kingdom? It is God's unconditional love for me. Jesus came to tell us who God really is, and he urged us, tried to persuade us to surrender ourselves into the hand of such a God. Jesus pleaded God's cause, he pleaded for God's love. His message was, "Open yourself to this totally new, unheard of, unbelievably amazing reality, surrender fully to this God who is Father."

Jesus' whole mission was to convert us to this God. He came to heal our imagination of any wrong image of God. The Parable of the Lost

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Vocation

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career choice follows the pattern of figure out the lifestyle you want. estimate the level of income you need, and find a job that yields those results. There probably isn't a worse way to discover a meaningful life. It's a faulty logic that runs backwards. It assumes work is only a means to a financial end. Completely ignored is the possibility that work can be worthwhile because it calls on our unique talents and can actually make a difference in our world. One young attorney lamented, "I hate spending 60 hours a week making rich people richer."



in order to translate their desires into practical service. Christ's life made it clear that his followers take their cues from the people they serve, not from their own needs.

Our Christian tradition leads us to understand that the human desire to serve reflects Christ's compassion. It is God's desire for us to be concerned for healing the world in the circumstances of our small arena of family and job and community. This is where we find God, and where God finds us. There is no standard blueprint for life. We learn "on the job" to discern God's will in our earthly pilgrimage. The result is that we eventually end up not with a road map but with a compass. Our continuing challenge is: How can I sustain a vocation while pursuing a career?

Fulfilling the Needs of Others

Christianity offers a different take on vocation and advises us to use our eyes of faith to determine our personal calling, to discover our gifts and aspirations and apply them to the important needs of our world. In the spirit of the Gospel an authentic calling reaches beyond personal fulfillment to a concern for justice and peace that addresses fulfilling the needs of others, even if they are strangers. God calls each to heal, serve, and create.

Champions of the laity like Blessed William Joseph Chaminade and others of the 19th and 20th centuries, and especially the thrust of the Second Vatican Council insist that the concept of vocation extends to all the baptized. All are equally called to holiness and to service for the realization of God's reign in this world. Dedicated followers of Christ follow the example of the Mother of Christ to pay close attention to the actual needs of the world and the church

Called to Solidarity

We are called to educate ourselves to solidarity. The Bible's concern for justice is rooted in love of neighbor and the realization of God's covenant with humanity. Consequently people of faith pay special attention to the suffering children of God. When God's Spirit works in the depths of our being to help us become aware of our gifts and hopes, that same Spirit works through our experience to indicate what the world needs from us. The Spirit helps us to see the problems that our talents are uniquely suited to address.

Without the light of faith and the honest awareness that God has gifted us, the world's needs may seem an overwhelming burden. Then our talents and aspirations would be wasted on mere success.

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

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Wellness In the Power of the Spirit Joe Landi, Editor



Fr. Joe Landi

It was in January and I was looking forward to a day of skiing at Mt. Rose when it happened. It was sudden. It was a shock. I was stepping out of the shower in my room at the Reno Hilton and was confronted with my full-length reflection in the wall-to-wall mirror and there was more of me than I thought. It wasn't a pretty sight.

Where was the 150 lb. young man graduating from high school back when the earth was cooling? He was not in the picture. Questioning my eyesight, I thought, "Is that really me?" Over the past few years, I had grown a mini-me. And when the scale stopped reeling, the little black arrow on it blared the awful news. That mini-me weighed 43 lb. more than the me I remembered.

Something must be done about mini-me so I started making plans to dump him. First, I vowed never to stay in a hotel room with a wall-to-wall mirror in the bathroom. Second, I thought I should join a gym—a thought that passed quickly. The other alternative was joining in that all-American pastime—Dieting.

Fifty million Americans go on a diet every year, so why not me? A friend on one told me gushingly, while arching his shoulders back and sucking in his stomach, "I've lost 12 lbs in two weeks." I graciously didn't mention that they were not lost—just shifted to the rear. But I did wonder aloud after seeing what he was eating, "What diet allows cherry pie ala mode?" His response, "I'm on vacation so I'm treating myself." Apparently, you can fool yourself all of the time.

Diet. Yes. But what diet to pick? Google will have the answer. So "diets" was entered and the first 20 out of 4,110,000 entries were listed with the first being the **South Beach Diet**, by Dr. Arthur Agatston. It's the number one, latest fad diet from Miami. *Newsweek* (3 May 2004) said about it "...the real value of the book is its sound nutritional advice. It retains the best part of the Atkins regime... encourages a well-balanced diet that includes plenty of fruit, vegetables and whole grains, plus

nuts and healthy oils..." Good advice.

Agatston has written several books including a cookbook. There's even the Official South Beach on-line club where you can join with 350,000 other dieters in sharing your innermost secrets.

After reading several diet books and coming to the realization that I could not follow any of them, common sense prevailed. I would just stop eating like there was no tomorrow. That and 30 minutes of walking every day helped 22 lb. in 60 days melt away. Mini-me is gone, and since I'm in control, he's gone for good.

My secret steps are yours. However, they are not about dieting but about wellness. They're in my book, **Wellness In the Power of the Holy Spirit—the In-Diet for Christians**, published in inexpensive paperback. It's simple to follow. What's more, you don't have to go to a book store and buy the book for the secret steps or join an on-line club to learn them. You are holding my book containing the seven secret steps in your hand right now.

The following may change your ideas about losing weight, dieting or even who you think you are in God's eyes. The following points helped me take control of my wellness through the healing power of the Holy Spirit.

We are His Temple

Wellness begins when we accept the wholeness of Jesus' love and grasp the healing power from realizing that we are an important temple of the Holy Spirit. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1Cor 6:18-20)

In other words, we and our body belong to God. Our body is not a storage bin for junk food or drugs. It is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit—His gift. And the Holy Spirit within us and the gifts He gives us through the Holy Spirit helps us in becoming the well and swell person He created us to be. So get with the program!

With the power of the Holy Spirit, you can be helping yourself well. **The secret:** Open yourself to the positive energy in the power of the Holy Spirit instead of focusing on the negative energy of consumption and consumerism. My program is about taking care of the Temple. It's about you healing you through wellness by changing your

mindset. It's about eating to live rather than living to eat. Remember: **You are what you eat.**

Change your mindset—Use the 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Gift 1: Wisdom is accumulated learning or good sense. Learn what is good or bad for your temple. What are you doing now to prevent wellness? What are you doing that is good for your temple? Do you drink lots of clean water? Do you walk daily? Exercise?

Gift 2: Understanding is the explanation or justification for putting that learning into practice. Use your understanding of what is harmful to your body to help you to eliminate disease-causing food and drink. For example, twenty substances cause as much as 90 percent of the damage done to our bodies. Do you know what they are? Topping that list are refined foods, caffeine and sugar.

Gift 3: Knowledge is the understanding gained by experience. Use the right foods and start an exercise regimen to stimulate your body with strength and endurance. Remember, you are not working to cure a disease or lose weight. While they may be a by-product, you are working to increase your ability to rejuvenate. You are working for the wellness of the temple. Knowledge is power and you have it, so use it.

Gift 4: Counsel is seeking the proper advice. Finding what foods are right for you and avoiding those that are harmful. Your goal is wellness: how to feel great and prevent disease before it happens. Start with the counsel of your doctor.

Gift 5: Piety is devotion to the God for whom you are the temple. Exercise your prayer life and your body. Get both in peak condition by doing both daily.

Gift 6: Fortitude is the ability to endure. Know that the end result is feeling great—wellness—and sleeping like a baby.

Gift 7: Fear of the Lord is the discernment that God wants you to be the best person you can be. Your wellness matters to your creator. Don't offend Him by soiling His temple. When you begin to slip back into bad eating habits, ask the God within your temple for help and pray:

**In Jesus name I pray:
Holy Spirit in your grace
help me make a better place.**

See you in church.

7 Myths of Working Mothers A book review

WORKING MOTHERS'
Myth #3: "You're So Lucky You Can Stay at Home."

7 Myths of Working Mothers: Why Children and (Most) Careers Just Don't Mix by Suzanne Venker (with a foreword by Dr. Laura Schlessinger) states that luck has nothing to do with moms' staying at home. And despite society's claims, money isn't the determining factor in family life. The author argues that mothers who stay home benefit their kids more than a second income: "If your goal really is to be with your children, you will find a way to make it happen."



We don't "put our wealth into proper perspective," says Venker. As members of the "me" generation, we don't know when to stop seeking more. She encourages mothers to re-prioritize their lives by caring for their children first and their wealth second.

WORKING MOTHERS'
Myth #4: "Set a Timer for 15 Minutes, then Curl Up with Your Child."

We are so obsessed with work that we depend on it for self-fulfillment. And our children suffer for it. Forget about "quality time"—15 minutes a day with your child won't cut it. Venker challenges workaholics; if mothers prioritize their home-life over their work-life, they will find fulfillment for themselves and their children.

Women will be fighting to

make time until they realize there will never be enough time to succeed at work and at home: "No one, male or female, can successfully perform two full-time jobs at the same time." We have more time and more success when we do less, because when we do less, we connect with our families in deeply satisfying ways.

Venker tackles the most contentious issues of working motherhood: women's equality, family economics, the notion of "quality time", women's guilt and stress, and day care. In each chapter, she exposes a different myth about working mothers, drawing on extensive research and her own experience as a mother and a teacher. The result is a powerful case for the link between the problems of today's children and the absence of mothers from the home.

Dr. Laura praises 7 Myths of Working Mothers: "I am grateful for this book. Ms. Venker's contribution to humanity, to families, to marriages, to women is huge. In a way, it is sad that she's got to argue points to prove what ought to be a "given". On the other hand her arguments are beautifully crafted, and right on target for today's anti-childrearing atmosphere. My hope for you, the reader, is that after you read this book, you will be unwavering in your commitment to do the right thing, and reap the incredible rewards."

—Suzanne Venker is a former middle school teacher. She is now a writer and full-time mother.

Book Reviews



A Book of Readings on the Eucharist

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Knowing the Father

—**Understanding the Depths of Love and Mercy that Embrace Us**

By **Benedict Groeschel, cfr, Ed.D.**

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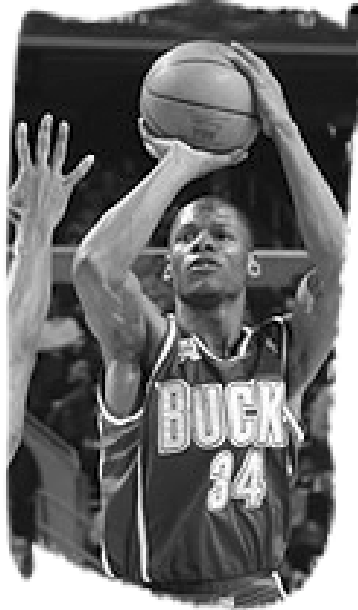
Connecting with the
gospel

On & Off The Field

There's no doubt that **Ray Allen**, the 28-year-old Milwaukee Bucks All-Pro shooting guard, is passionate about basketball. He's an All-Star, an Olympic gold-medal winner, a graceful athlete, and he cares about what people think of him. He's considered the NBA's "nice guy," and his actions and unselfish attitude have earned him the nickname "the class."

But it is off the court that Ray is in a class of his own. For years Ray has been involved in several community service programs, including the Ray of Hope Foundation, which enhances and uplifts the lives of children and young adults through sports-related and community-based programs.

Ray is a member of the All-Star Advisory Council for the Jr. NBA



and Jr. WNBA youth basketball support programs and the Team Spokesman for the "TeamUp" program, created in 1996 to encourage young people to volunteer time to their communities.

Plus, he's the Team Spokesman for the NBA "Read to Achieve" Program, a year-round campaign to help young people develop a life-long love for reading and encourage adults to read regularly to children. Reaching an estimated 50 million children a year, "Read to Achieve" is the most extensive educational outreach initiative in the history of professional sports.

As far back as high school, Allen yearned to be admired. He took an interest in people, especially in young kids, said James Smith, Allen's high school basketball coach in rural Dalzell, S.C. He wanted young kids to look up to him.

"I enjoy doing all that I do," said Allen. "But I get the most pleasure out of being able to help others and being a positive role model."

—Courtesy Liturgical Publications, Inc.; based on information at: www.jsonline.com/sports; www.nba.com; huddlin.com; psx.gamezone.com/news

Ask Sherry?

I met someone in a chat room on the Internet. We have been e-mailing each other for a few months now and he wants to meet me. I've heard some scary things about meeting strangers on the Internet, but I don't feel that "Joe" is really a stranger any more and I'd really like to meet him. What should I do?

-Anxious to Go

Dear Anxious:

Like you said, there are some scary things about meeting strangers on the Internet. I'm not sure how old you are, but, regardless, keep this in mind: People often use the anonymity of the Internet to pose as someone they aren't. There are many examples of people misrepresenting themselves. Pedophiles, for example, often pretend that they are children to gain the confidence of real children.

You need to take several precautions and promise not to meet "Joe" for awhile yet. For starters, while you're corresponding with Joe, be careful about any information you give him, and don't disclose anything about yourself that would make it easy for him to find you (like an address or phone number).

Make sure that Joe is for real. For starters, ask lots of

questions via e-mail including friends, teachers, and family names. Get to know everything you can about him. If something doesn't feel right, it may not be. Plan to call him using a pay phone (he may have caller ID and could find out your phone number and address). A phone call is necessary to really get to know Joe before you even consider going to meet him.

If you're not 18 yet, you should discuss the meeting with your parents first. No matter what your age, only plan to meet in a well-lit public place where there are several people around. Bring a friend along or have them watch from a slight distance. If Joe is the real thing, he won't mind your caution. Even if everything seems cool after you meet, don't leave with him alone. Play it safe and be prepared for all eventualities, especially in this age of increased violence. Report any serious problems to the police.

Caution needs to be used. Don't learn the hard way. Be smart and play it safe.

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Conversion From Page 1

Sheep demonstrates this most beautifully. God acts "irrationally" when it comes to someone who is lost. It is not reason, but love that moves him. For instance, no real shepherd would leave ninety-nine sheep in the desert, i.e., expose them to wolves and lions and run after one lost sheep. This same attitude we find in the story of the Prodigal Son when the Father explains to his older son, "Can you not understand, your younger brother was lost and now he is found. We just had to celebrate with all we have!" (Lk 15:32).

As stated before, the opposite of love is not hatred nor fear but indifference. We just don't think God could really be like that. Real conversion is possible and will take place if I can imagine such a God, if I can envision such a love for me now as real and actual. It is not difficult for most of us to accept such an image of God theoretically. We have heard about it in thousands of sermons and conferences, but the real test comes when I am asked to entrust my whole existence completely and unconditionally to such a God. It is only the reflection on our actual living, the way we look at and relate to ourselves, to

others and to the world that will reveal to us what God image we have accepted for ourselves and what kind of God we worship. Conversion means, therefore, a change of lords; as Jesus put it, "You cannot serve two masters" (Mt 6:24).

Who is the master of my heart? Where in the last analysis does my heart lie? "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:22; Lk 12:34). What Jesus is asking in these texts is: "What is it that give meaning to your life? What is your ultimate security?"

Need for Acceptance and Love

All human beings cry out for love, acceptance and recognition as foundations to stand on. We all know from experience that recognition and acceptance by others are prior to achievement and usefulness. We need the former for our own security. If we do not receive recognition and acceptance, we adopt all kinds of other measures to make ourselves feel secure. We direct these security measures towards our fellow human beings and even towards God because we do not find the acceptance and recognition we need in order to be ourselves. The security measures



often take arise from the most important basic instincts: i.e., the ones that emerge from the human need for prestige, power and pleasure (H. Muehlen, *Charismatic Theology*).

These needs are the expression of what is called the most disastrous effect of original sin which is our ingrained tendency to have, to accumulate to possess and to dominate in order to make ourselves secure.

1. Prestige—Withdrawal

If I am not accepted by others, I will try anything to gain that acceptance and recognition. Then people will have to accept me and I won't be hurt. I do not seek their acceptance of me as a human person. I find my security not in that recognition but in my profession, my skill, my work; in short, in my own achievement, which people cannot over-

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Hunger

From Page 1

ways of men and women willing to *lead* humanity along the right path with the example of their own lives. In each moment of history, authentic lives are ever so rare.

Appearance vs. The Authentic

Our own age seems to be governed by illusion and deception. We have built a whole culture based on appearance. Everything looks good, but scratch just below the surface, and you will discover little substance. Appearance has become a standard. We have grown so numb to the realities of good and evil that lying and cheating have become almost universally accepted as necessary evils. So we tolerate them, as long as they are performed in the dim light of "respectability." Occasionally, in the midst of this cultural darkness, the great light of the human spirit shines forth with honesty and integrity. At those times we seem surprised, even taken off-guard. Honesty, loyalty, and integrity seem almost out of place in the modern schema.

But beneath the surface, under the guise of appear-

ances, this age like any other is made up of people like you and me. And if you listen carefully, if you look closely, you will discover that the people are hungry. Created to love and be loved, we feel a restlessness, a longing for more, a profound discontent with our lives and with our culture. Our hunger is not for appearances, but for something of substance. We are hungry for truth. The people of today are starving for the authentic, thirsting for the tiniest droplet of sincerity, aching to experience the genuine.

Why Has Christianity Been Rejected?

At this same time, Christianity has been largely rejected. There are many people who faithfully attend church each Sunday, but increasing numbers are choosing not to come to church. This is particularly true among younger generations.

Those of us who call ourselves Christian do so because we believe that the life and teachings of Jesus Christ are the personification of truth, sincerity, and authenticity. If this

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Choosing a Candidate

By Fr. John S. Rausch

When George Ryan ran for governor of Illinois in 1998, he brought to the election platform impeccable credentials as a Midwestern conservative. A Republican pharmacist from Kankakee, he joined the Illinois legislature in 1970 as a law and order candidate. Later, he could boast, "I supported the death penalty, I believe in the death penalty, I voted for the death penalty."

During his tenure as governor Ryan oversaw one execution, but the experience triggered a flood of moral anguish. A study released after the execution revealed that one-third of the 285 capital convictions in Illinois since reinstating the death penalty were reversed because of fundamental error. No fewer than 13 men were completely exonerated. In January, 2003, shortly before he left office, Governor George Ryan issued a blanket commutation that saved 156 inmates from execution, because he was convinced that capital punishment could not be justly administered. Confronted by the facts, George Ryan stretched his thinking to embrace a greater, and more consistent life ethic.

In this election year, 2004, many Catholics feel no one candidate reflects fully the social teachings of the church.

No candidate appears to have stretched his thinking to adequately include the life issues that range from abortion to cloning, from fair trade to a living wage, from poverty to war. The U.S. Catholic bishops in their document, "Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility," highlight our moral priorities. The church must protect human life, promote family life, pursue social justice and practice global solidarity. Unfortunately, politics pivots around ideology rather than principle. Presidential candidates bow to special interests, big contributors and assorted political realities. So, how can a Catholic choose a presidential candidate?

Some voters emphasize abortion to the exclusion of other political considerations. While the right to life stands as a primary human right, getting the child born does not finish our moral, economic and political responsibilities to defend life. Indeed, the bishops proclaim a consistent life ethic. Human life is also assailed by hunger, poverty, violence, the death penalty and modern warfare. The bishops write, "A political commitment to a single isolated aspect of the Church's social doctrine does not exhaust one's responsibility towards the common good." A single issue voter trivializes the complexity of the life process.

At the heart of political decision making stands the common good. That common good, constrained by political realities, consists of the moral values necessary to achieve a just society. The bishops ask, "What kind of nation do we want to be? What kind of world do we want to shape?" Presidential candidates project that vision. Sometimes voters get half a loaf, sometimes only a slice must suffice.

The example of George Ryan could prove instructive. People of faith might vote for the candidate most open to life issues. Which candidate might stretch his thinking to embrace a greater, and more consistent, life ethic? Who possesses enough integrity to admit mistakes, apologize, change and show genuine compassion?

Since a president appoints key administrators, who will select people respectful of the immigrant, the working poor, the most vulnerable in society? Who will hold corporations responsible for the care of creation and the rights of workers? Who has the vision to alleviate global poverty by fair trade and challenge terrorism through international law and collaboration among nations?

Political greatness is defined as someone who puts the common good ahead of party and career. Given the political climate today, how can people of faith set the expectation for a candidate to meet that challenge?



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

Conversion From Page 6

look. The danger is that I do not trust persons who can give me true security, but that I will look for security in myself. The opposite of wanting recognition is **WITHDRAWAL**. Its effect is the same. I might withdraw into myself to protect myself against disappointment and hurt. If I don't take others, myself and even God too seriously, I cannot get hurt. Withdrawal is basically a security measure taken to avoid the loss of meaning of my life. I do not trust anyone.

2. Power — Submissiveness

To strive after power, possession and superiority can easily become another security measure. Jesus saw this danger. His warnings against riches and possessions are stern (Mk 10: 23-25). By having more, I think that I am more. If I am powerful, no one can touch me and I cannot get easily hurt. I have secured myself by what I possess. I do not have to depend on

anyone. The acceptance and recognition I need I can buy or will get through my status. Once again, it is my own doing that gives me security.

The question you might ask yourself is the following: What is the "key" I control and what recognition do I demand before people can get what this key can provide?

SUBMISSIVENESS, the opposite of power, possession and superiority, can also be a pure security measure. If I do whatever I am asked to do, I am secure; they cannot hurt me. One can even believe that this attitude is the best security before God. Some Jewish leaders at the time of Jesus believed that God would be compelled to give them the Kingdom. They tried to secure themselves against God by keeping the Law.

3. Pleasure — Self Contempt

Pleasure can become a security measure. If I enjoy myself, nothing can upset me. The usual compensations for loss of prestige, acceptance and recognition are drink, drugs,

(See "Conversion" Page 11)

Catholic Radio Hour



KEST 1450 AM
7:00 pm

Confirmation Reflections

Editor's note: The following are reflections given at their Confirmation by two students.

In the Acts of the Apostles we hear the passage "then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them."

This passage reminds me of the beginning of our Confirmation program, when we came together as a group for the first time.

I felt the Holy Spirit present amongst all the candidates. The fire was already lit and burning with them. They all were ready to begin the journey toward becoming adults in St. Cecilia's Parish.

Throughout the year, I watched my fellow candidates and felt myself becoming even closer to Christ and the Holy Spirit. Just as in the passage where it says, "...came to rest on each one of them" I watched and felt the Holy Spirit rest on each of us. We became confirmed Catholics and the fire burns with us stronger than ever.

I really felt the Holy Spirit growing stronger with me during the confirmation retreat. I was feeling a lot of sadness and anger inside. Just a week prior to the retreat my father passed away. His death made me really question God. I would ask, "Why would you take him away from me?" Questions like this were still very strong in my heart and mind that Saturday night at the retreat.

While we were doing a project about our family, called The Family Tree, one of the kids in my group asked me about my dad. I asked to be excused and started to cry. My group leader Megan Campbell asked me what was wrong and I told her about my dad. Megan discussed it with Monsi-

gnor Harriman. Monsignor asked me if he could share about what happened to my dad with the rest of the candidates. I said ok and then he asked the whole group to pray for my family.

After everyone had finished praying, I suddenly felt a stronger bond with God. I then realized that my dad was in a better place. After the retreat I felt I could connect with God and I grew closer to him. I could really feel the Holy Spirit's flame growing stronger with me. I no longer blamed God, but instead continued to draw closer to him.

I would like to thank Monsignor Harriman, Mike Gallus and all the team leaders for guiding me through this program, especially Megan who helped me through the Confirmation retreat. Thank you to Paul Hupf from the CCD program for helping me understand my Catholic Faith. Also I would like to thank my mom for helping me through the hard times and Bishop Ignatius Wang for conferring the Sacrament of Confirmation.

To the newly confirmed—I challenge you to continue to grow closer to God and the Holy Spirit. Although we are now adults in the parish, the Holy Spirit's flame continues to grow even stronger on us.

"As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ." When I heard those words from Scripture, it sounded like the perfect way to describe this year's confirmation. In the beginning of the confirmation program in September, it seemed like we

were separated from each other and Christ. No one really knew much about others in the program. After the confirma-

tion program, I feel as though we are united as one in the body of Christ as confirmed Catholics.

To me I felt as though we really began to unite in December at our confirmation retreat at the CYO McGucken Center. At the retreat, we were involved with many activities. One activity that to me brought me closer to my fellow candidates in our small groups was the sharing of our lives, which was called "THE CANDLE PASSING".

In this activity we shared our experiences, people who meant a lot to us, our lives, and our feelings towards our friends and family. To me this was the activity in which everyone was really, truly open. Here I felt as though I really

knew and understood my fellow candidates in my group. To be honest I really never socialized or even talked to the people in my group at our monthly confirmation meetings, but at the retreat I was open and I grew to like them as friends. In the meetings following the confirmation retreat I was more open to people and made some new friends.

My experience during these nine months is one I will never forget. This experience has helped me to be a better person and a better Christian. Here I grew in faith, met a lot of great people, made new friends and grew closer to God. Now as a newly confirmed Catholic, I will continue to unite with my parish in the body of Christ.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Monsignor Harriman, for encouraging us to grow in faith and to become closer to God. To Mike Gallus, for helping throughout the nine month confirmation program. To my group leader, Ernesto Cortez, my sponsor Beto Morales and all of the other high school leaders, for helping all of us grow in faith and guiding us throughout the confirmation program.

Lastly, I would like to pass on a message to the newly confirmed and to all—that we stay united, and continue to grow as one in the body of Christ throughout our lives.

—Chris Maldonado
St. Cecilia's Parish, S.F.



—Monica Saint
St. Cecilia's Parish, S.F.

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On The Lighter Side

We Get To Choose Sides

There was a large group of people. On one side of the group stood Jesus. On the other side of the group stood Satan. Separating them, running through the group, was a fence.

The scene set, both Jesus and Satan began calling to the people in the group and, one by one, each having made up his or her own mind, each went to either Jesus or Satan.

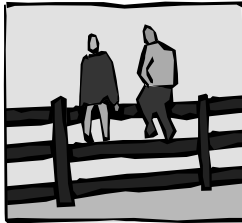
This kept going. Soon enough, Jesus had gathered around him a group of people from the larger crowd, as did Satan.

But two men joined neither group. Instead, they climbed the fence that was there and sat on it. Then Jesus and his people left and disappeared. So too did Satan and his people. And the two men on the fence sat alone.

Presently Satan came back, looking for something which he appeared to have lost. One man said, "Have you lost something?" Satan looked straight at him and replied, "No, there you two are. Come with me."

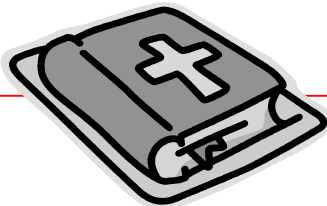
"But", they protested, "We sat on the fence. We chose neither you nor Him."

"That's okay," said Satan. "I own the fence."



A SHORT HISTORY OF MEDICINE:

"Doctor, I have an ear ache."
 2004 BC - "Here, eat this root."
 1000 BC - "That root is heathen, say this prayer."
 1850 AD - "That prayer is superstition, drink this potion."
 1940 AD - "That potion is snake oil, swallow this pill."
 1985 AD - "That pill is ineffective, take this antibiotic."
 2004 AD - "That antibiotic is artificial. Here, eat this root!"



Which Virgin Was It?

The little girl was sitting with her grandmother, who had presented her with her first little children's Bible, in an easy-to-read translation, because she was very young.

Now, a decade or so later, the elderly lady was ready to spend a few sweet moments handing down the big old family Bible, in the time-honored King James Version, to her only grandchild.

Understandably excited, the youngster was asking a number of questions, both about the family members whose births and deaths were recorded therein, and about various aspects of the Scriptures themselves.

Her grandmother was endeavoring to answer all the child's questions in terms she could understand, but the one that stopped her cold was this sincere inquiry:

"Which Virgin was the mother of Jesus? Was it the Virgin Mary, or the King James virgin?"

A guy is at the pearly gates, waiting to be admitted, while St. Pete is leafin' through this Big Book to see if the guy is worthy of entering. Saint Peter goes through the books several times, furrows his brow, and says to the guy, "You know, I can't see that you did anything really good in your life but, you never did anything bad either. Tell you what, if you can tell me of one REALLY good deed that you did in your life, you're in."

The guy thinks for a moment and says, "Yeah, there was this one time when I was drivin' down the highway and I saw a giant group of about 50 KKK Biker Gang guys assaulting this poor girl.

I got out my car, grabbed a tire iron out of my trunk, and walked straight up to the leader of the gang, a huge guy with a studded leather jacket and a chain running from his nose to his ear. As I walked up to the leader, the KKK Biker Gang formed a circle around me.

So, I ripped the leader's chain off his face and smashed him over the head with the tire iron. Then I turned around and yelled to the rest of them, 'Leave this poor, innocent girl alone, you slime! You're all a bunch of sick, deranged animals! Go home before I teach you all a lesson in pain!'"

St. Peter, impressed, says, "Really? When did this happen?"

"About two minutes ago."



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

Proverbs 17:22

My friend was in front of me coming out of church one Sunday, and the pastor was standing at the door as he always is to shake hands. He grabbed my friend by the hand and pulled him aside.

Father said to him, "You need to join the Army of the Lord!"

My friend replied, "I'm already in the Army of the Lord, Pastor."

The pastor questioned, "Really? How come I don't see you except at Christmas and Easter?"

He whispered back, "I'm in the secret service."



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Learning to Trust

Cardinal Suenens

We have learned to recognize the love God has in our regard, to recognize it, and to make it our belief.— 1 John 4:16

Educationalists are always telling us that the secret of education is confidence in the person you want to educate. Nothing makes a child develop faster than confidence; nothing upsets him more than knowing he is not trusted. To trust is to run risks, but they are risks worth running.

The system of education in our schools is far from being a system of trust. Talking about a thing does not make it exist. We are too easily satisfied in this field.

Training in confidence ought to be undertaken seriously. What is true in human education is equally true in religious education. We must teach man to trust God. Our Lord was particularly insistent on this point. We certainly admire St Peter when he walks on the water. That seems to us a magnificent gesture of self-abandonment and courage. Now see St Peter stumble. Our Lord comes to his rescue, and what does he say to him? : "Why didst thou hesitate, man of little faith?" What God wants us to do is to give him our absolute trust, keep our eyes fixed on him. But we, we want to rely on ourselves; we want to take out guarantees, insurances. We find it so difficult to hand over the control of our lives to God.

Confident prayer

We find it so difficult to pray with confidence. For too many Christians, prayer is an insistent pleading to God to do our will, an announcement of what needs doing, and doing quickly, for what we think is our good. There is not an ounce of confidence in all this, but there is a good deal of anxious self-sufficiency. There is no need to petition God for our happiness, for that is something he never ceases to want. It is we who put obstacles in his way and hold his love in check. God always hears man's prayers, and God himself is the eternal answer. It is man who, too often, refuses to answer God.

So there is no need to ask ourselves whether all prayers are answered. They are answered the moment they

become real prayers and to the extent that they are prayers, since they are really nothing more than the opening of the heart to the sacred entrance of the divine Presence. It is all summed up in the supreme appeal of the Apocalypse: "Come, Lord Jesus."

Praying with confidence does not mean praying with the conviction that God is going to do all I ask. It means praying with certainty that God is going to answer me as God knows how to, that is, like a Father who is infinitely loving, who knows everything, sees everything and who will give me the best of answers. But this answer may disappoint my expectation and be the exact opposite of what I want. God loves us infinitely more than we love ourselves. To trust is to believe in the overwhelming love of God; just as firmly when he goes against our wishes as when he seems to walk in step with us and fall in with our views. Trusting means closing our eyes and leaving everything to him. There are so many prayers which are just expressions of impatience and selfishness. They lack the serenity of the child who knows he is loved and in safe hands.

"I can see you and that's all that matters: jump!"

This is a news item which was reported in the papers. A fire started one night in a house. The moment the flames broke out, the mother, father and children came rushing out and stood gazing in despair at the sight of their house on fire. Suddenly they noticed that the youngest child, a little boy of five, was missing. He had been frightened by the smoke and flames, and just as they were leaving the house he had turned back and had run upstairs again. They all looked at each other. There was no possibility of venturing into what was already beginning to be a blazing furnace. Then a window opened upstairs. The child was calling for help.

His father saw him and called out to him: "Jump." The child could see nothing but the smoke and the flames, but he heard his father's voice and an-

swered: "Daddy, I can't see you." "But I can see you," his father called back, "and that's all that matters: jump!" And the little boy jumped. He was caught as he fell, and found himself safe and sound in his father's arms.

Is not this child, standing by himself at the window of a house on fire, an image of the Christian before God? He, too, hears in his distress the voice of God saying to him: "Trust me, jump into my arms."

To anyone who prays badly due to lack of confidence I would like to say in a similar way: "God can see you; that's all that matters: jump!"

And I venture to add that when you do jump, when you make, that is, an act of confidence in God, you will by that gesture of self-abandonment be saying the most beautiful of prayers, the prayer God always answers by throwing his arms wide open.

"But I can see you; that's all that matters: jump!"

We ought to let these words sink deep into our souls.

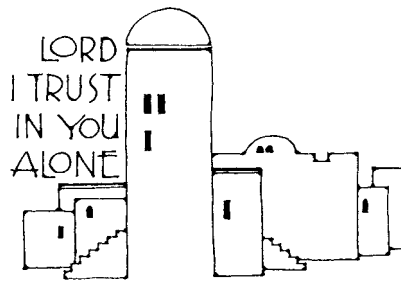
There is no need for us to see; we must not expect the beatific vision in advance. On earth we are walking in the dark. God sees us, that's the thing that matters. He never leaves us at any time. He is holding us by the hand, even if we cannot feel him. God sees us. God knows. That is all we need to make us jump into his arms.

Mary's School of Absolute Trust

Ask the Blessed Virgin for the grace of filial confidence. Mary walked in the darkness, knowing nothing, seeing nothing. But she said "yes" like a child, and God worked miracles of grace in her.

What we must do is go to her school, the school of absolute trust. And God will know how to answer us, far more than we hoped or desired, by opening to us here on earth the kingdom of those things "no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart conceived," but which "God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

--Condensed from *Christian Life, Day by Day* by Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens. English Translation © Burns & Oates Ltd., 1963. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. The late Cardinal Suenens was the former Archbishop of Malines-Brussels and an ardent supporter of the Charismatic Renewal.



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Jun 4 FIRST FRIDAY MASS—Of the Sacred Heart
A bilingual Healing Mass
7:00 pm Rosary, 7:30 Mass.
Fr. Peter Sanders, Orat., Principal Celebrant
with Fr. Joe Landi
St. Timothy Church
 (3rd Ave. and Norfolk)
 1515 Dolan Ave., San Mateo
 Music by El Shaddai (San Leandro)

Jun 18 BIBLE STUDY (3rd Friday of the Month) 7:30 pm
with Fr. Balaswami,
Corpus Christi Church Parish Hall
 Alemany Blvd at Santa Rosa Ave., SF
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Jun 20 SUNDAY CHARISMATIC MASS 2:00 pm
St. Patrick Church,
 756 Mission St (between 3rd & 4th Sts.) SF
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Jul 2 FIRST FRIDAY MASS—Of the Sacred Heart
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Fr. Joe Landi, Principal Celebrant
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Conversion

From Page 7

stimulants, over-eating, gambling or sex. The misuse of one's sexuality is normally a search for security, a turning in on oneself to safeguard oneself. All these are attempts to secure meaning for myself without which I cannot live.

The opposite of pleasure is contempt for the world and for oneself. He who does not succeed in enjoying life, easily disassociates himself from himself in unjustified self-criticism and reproaches. His or her motto is: What I cannot enjoy, I despise.

It's a Sad Fact

The sad fact is that we all live in a sin-permeated world and that means that even the most perfect parents can never give their children that full acceptance, recognition and love they cry out for. The result is that we all carry within us to some degree a mistrust of others and with it of the God we came to know through our parents.

The range of security measures that we can invent is almost infinite and often amazingly subtle. It is here that we might feel most the effects of original sin, which consist in having lost the ultimate security on which we stand as creatures. We cannot live without securing for ourselves meaning in our lives. The question is: Where can I find my security? Do I seek it by protecting myself from any possible hurt, disappointment, or loss of meaning; by making myself independent of others who can give me that recognition I need, but who can also hurt me? If I do so, it is because deep down in my heart, I don't trust them. But since I cannot live without trust, I have to find meaning in my own security measures. After all, since I have nowhere to stand within myself, I have to hold on to something!

What Is Your Answer?

The question to ask yourself is: What do you have gripped tightly in your fist? What is it that you would not dare give up from fear of losing yourself?

Knowing Oneself to be Secure

This brings us back to our theme. Conversion means making "a change in the sources of my securities". The Hebrew word for "faith" is AMEN, which literally means **TO KNOW ONESELF TO BE SECURE**. Isaiah, the prophet of faith, shows in particular that faith and existence belong together. For him to live by faith is the only possible mode of existence; it radically excludes any autonomy for a human being or any commitment to any other god.

—Condensed from *Proclaiming His Kingdom* by John Fuellenbach, SVD © 2002 Society of the Divine Word. Logos Publication, Inc., Republic of the Philippines.



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Hunger

From page 6

belief is correct, if the people of this age really are hungering for truth, sincerity, and authenticity, then as Christians we must ask ourselves, Why are they not enthusiastically embracing Christianity? Why, in fact, are so many people so hostile toward Christ and his Church?

I sense it is because the people of today believe that Christians, Christianity, and perhaps Catholics in particular, are as much a part of this culture of appearance and deception as anyone else. Their desire for truth has not diminished, but people have become wary, doubtful, skeptical, and sadly, even cynical in their search for truth. And to be honest, I cannot blame them for their attitude. I do not agree with their position, but I understand it. And perhaps more importantly, I can see how they arrived at that place of philosophical confusion and theological desolation.

The cause of much of this confusion is the unprecedented proliferation of words, symbols, images, and every manner of communication in the latter part of the twentieth century. People are tired; they are worn out, overloaded with information, and overwhelmed with the social, political, and economic climate. They are not *striving* to thrive, they are merely trying to survive. This is a tired culture.

The Cry for Help

More than ever, non-Christians and non-practicing Christians are sending you, me, and all of Christianity a message. Though they are not aware of it, they are indirectly giving witness to the Gospel. For within the message, there is a profound challenge for you and me to embrace: a life rooted more fully in the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. Their message is clear, unmistakable, and disarmingly simple. Our siblings, parents, and children are sending us this message, as are our friends, neighbors, and col-

leagues. They are saying, whispering, crying out, "Don't tell me, show me!"

Their plea comes from a longing deep within them and represents their great hunger. They don't want to see another television evangelist, they don't want to read another book or hear another tape about Christianity, and they don't want to hear your amazing story of conversion. They want the real thing. They want to witness someone, anyone - just one will do - living an authentic life.

Someone whose words are spoken by the authority of his or her actions. Someone striving humbly but heroically to live by what is good, true, and noble in the midst of and in spite of this modern climate.

They are not sending us this message merely to sound the childish cry of "hypocrite." Rather, theirs is a natural cry - a cry for help. They are saying to us, "Don't tell me, show me!" because they are so hungry

for a courageous example of the authentic life, a life lived to the fullest, in this day and age. Seeing the conflicts and contradictions of our lives, they cry "hypocrite" out of their hurt and anger, because the disappointment of discovering that we are not living the life we espouse robs them of their own hope to live an authentic life. They are calling out to us like sheep without a shepherd, wanting to be fed, wanting to be led to the pastures of kindness, compassion, generosity, forgiveness, acceptance, freedom, and love.

Gandhi's Observation

I have heard this cry a thousand times, but the words of one man echo in my mind like a bad dream that keeps returning to haunt a terrified child. They are the words of Mahatma Gandhi. He is a man for whom I have great admiration - a man whom I believe strove with all his might to live an authentic life. I have

studied his life and

writings extensively, but one passage stands out. It speaks to me with a clarity that pierces my heart. In relation to the well known fact that Gandhi read from the New Testament every day and often quoted the Christian Scriptures, a reporter once asked him why he had never become a Christian. He answered, "If I had ever met one, I would have become one." In his own way, Gandhi was saying, "Don't tell me, show me!" and simultaneously revealing his yearning for an example of an authentic life.

Desire for an Authentic Life

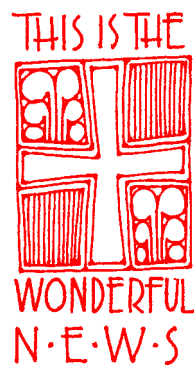
With all this being said, I believe there is also a desire within each of us to live an authentic life. We desire not only to witness authentic lives, but also to live an authentic life ourselves. We genuinely want to be true to ourselves and true to God. At times, we have perhaps resolved to live such a life with all the fervor we could muster. But, distracted by the sweet seduction of pleasure, possessions, or power, we have wandered from the narrow path. We know the truth, but we lack the discipline and strength of character to align the actions of our lives with that truth (cf. Matthew 26:41).

We have given ourselves over to a thousand different whims, cravings, and fantasies. Our lives have become merely a distortion of the truth we know and profess. We know the human family's need for kindness, compassion, generosity, forgiveness, acceptance, freedom, and love, but we have divided our hearts with a thousand contradictions and compromises.

At every moment, the entire modern world kneels before us, begging, pleading, beckoning, for some brave man or woman to come forward and lead them by example of an authentic life.

Amidst the abundance of this age, which at times may seem all-prevailing, there is a great hunger in the people of today. We have a universal hunger for the authentic.

—Condensed from *Rediscovering Catholicism: Journeying Toward Our Spiritual North Star*. © 2002 Matthew Kelly, Beacon Publishing, Cincinnati and is available at major bookstores or new and used at Amazon.com. It is a spiritually uplifting book that reveals the essence of authentic Catholic spirituality while addressing some of the most important questions we face today as individuals and as a church.



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studied his life and writings extensively, but one passage stands out. It speaks to me with a clarity

Dear Grace By Grace MacKinnon

Q: Can a Catholic attend a wedding between a baptized Catholic who never participated in any other sacrament, and a non-Catholic?

A: A person who was baptized in the Catholic Church, and later left it by the formal renouncing of the faith in the public act of joining another church, is now considered to be non-Catholic, for the purposes of marriage. Since this is the case, yes, it is possible for a Catholic to attend such a wedding.

As the 1967 Directory on Ecumenical Matters states, "Catholics may be allowed to attend occasionally the liturgical services of other separated brethren if they have reasonable ground, e.g., arising out of public office or function, blood relationship or friendship, etc....so long as they are not at variance with Catholic faith" (no. 59).

What makes it permissible to attend this particular wedding is that the person is no longer Catholic. If the person were Catholic, then the situation changes; if the person baptized Catholic had never left by a formal act, he or she would still be considered to be Catholic. If this person were marrying a non-Catholic and the marriage were being celebrated in the Catholic Church, it would be considered a mixed marriage – one between a baptized Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic Christian. While this type of marriage is not encouraged in the Church, it may take place, but only with the express permission of the competent authority. The diocesan

bishop can grant this permission if there is a just and reasonable cause (Canon nos. 1124–1125).

But can a Catholic attend the wedding of another Catholic who is marrying outside the Church? Although there is no legislation to prevent a Catholic from attending, in the document *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (no. 26) of the Second Vatican Council, we learn that divine law forbids any common worship (*communicatio in sacris*) which would damage the unity of the Church, or involve formal acceptance of falsehood or the danger of deviation from the faith, of scandal, or of indifferentism (a tendency to think it makes no difference what we do). Therefore, whether or not it is wrong for you or any Catholic to attend the wedding of a Catholic marrying outside the Church depends on the possibility of your presence or participation causing such things to occur.

Many Catholics do not understand the seriousness of the sin of scandal. But Jesus Himself warned, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of things that cause sin! Such things must come, but woe to the one through whom they come!" (Matthew 18: 6-7). "Scandal is a grave offense if, by deed or omission, another is

deliberately led into a grave offense" (CCC# 2284).

Often, we tend to think and behave as though we are living off on some island, isolated from the rest of the world. How easily we forget that in every part of our lives we are involved in relationships with others. And, in these relationships and circles of people, we are constantly being observed. Do we exemplify good Christian living in our actions? As Catholics, when we willingly witness and participate in the wedding of a Catholic outside the Church, what are we saying to others in that? Are we saying that it does not matter? It should matter. We believe Holy Matrimony to be a sacrament, and therefore "it is for the supreme authority of the Church alone to approve or define those things which are required for its validity" (Canon no. 841).

The laws of the Church are the laws of God. Is it okay to sit back and witness someone offend God openly, simply because we do not wish to hurt their feelings? No, it is not. There are ways to still express our love for the persons involved in sin without giving witness to something that is wrong in the eyes of God. On the day when we meet the Lord face to face, will we be able to say we did all we could to help our brothers and sisters to attain heaven? It is something to think about.

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



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



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

The Charismatic Renewal needs to be:

1. joyful and excited by our mission
2. vigilant to the Word of God
3. awake to the danger of the present evil
4. mutually supportive in service to each other

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

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

La virtud de la esperanza

por la H.na Nancy Kellar, S.C

En

Su fidelidad

su epístola a los Hebreos, San Pablo habla de la esperanza como un ancla. "...asiéndonos a la esperanza propuesta, que nosotros tenemos como segura y sólida ancla" (cf. Hb 6,18-19). ¿Cuál es la fuerza de un ancla? En sí misma es bastante pequeña comparada con los enormes barcos que puede sostener firmemente en su sitio en el océano. Su fuerza está en la tierra que la mantiene firme. La tierra de nuestra esperanza es el amor constante y la fidelidad de Dios. De nuevo en Hebreos 10 Pablo dice que la esperanza es la confianza inquebrantable y la tranquilidad absoluta para el cumplimiento de las promesas porque aquel que hizo las promesas es fiel.

La esperanza es la confianza en la inquebrantable promesa que se nos ha dicho una y otra vez. "No temas, que yo estoy contigo" (cf. Is 43). "...yo estoy con vosotros todos los días hasta el fin del mundo" (Mt 28,20).

Nuestra rendición

Cuando abandona el barco, el ancla tiene que hacer un recorrido a través de aguas oscuras antes de alcanzar la tierra. También nuestra esperanza tiene que hacer ese recorrido a través de la incertidumbre agarrándose a la confianza de que Él está siempre allí como la tierra bajo nosotros. La promesa básica de Dios de estar "con nosotros" no ofrece respuestas, ni seguridad, ni reinos de nuestra propiedad, ni justificación. En Lamentaciones 3 el profeta clama al Señor desde el abismo, "Has visto, Yahveh, el entuerto que me hacían: ¡lleva tú mi juicio!" (Lam 3,59). El Señor se acerca y dice simplemente: "No temas, yo estoy contigo" (cf. Lam 3,57).

La esperanza exige el abandono, para nuestra rendición a Su fidelidad. El salmista dice: "Los que siembran con lágrimas, cosechan entre cánticos" (Sal 126,5). El campesino llora porque debe abandonar la aparente seguridad de tener la semilla en su mano. Debe soltarla, cubrir la semilla con la tierra y confiar en que la semilla produzca fruto. Nuestro abandono, nuestra confianza en Su fidelidad libera el poder de Dios ¡para actuar en nosotros! En Hechos a Pablo se le pregunta por qué está procesado. Podía haber respondido: "Resucité a los muertos, curé a los enfermos, escapé de la

prisión, sobreviví a un naufragio". En vez de eso fue al corazón de lo que él sabía era la fuente del poder de todo lo que hacía. "Y si ahora estoy aquí procesado es por la esperanza que tengo en la Promesa hecha por Dios a nuestros padres" (Hch 26,6).

De María, nuestro modelo de esperanza, dice la Escritura, "¡Feliz la que ha creído que se cumplirían las cosas que le fueron dichas de parte del Señor!" (Lc 1,45).

Los Retos

"El Dios de la esperanza os colme de todo gozo y paz en vuestra fe, hasta rebosar de esperanza por la fuerza del Espíritu Santo" (Rom 15,13). La esclavitud del miedo es uno de los enemigos de la esperanza. El miedo nos paraliza, nos mantiene cerrados, incapaces de confiar en Dios y dejar que Sus promesas se cumplan en nosotros. Dios comprende nuestro miedo a la rendición. En las lecturas de la Natividad en el Evangelio de Lucas, los ángeles introducen cada promesa a Zacarías, a María y a los pastores con "No temas" (Lc 1,13.30; 2,10).

Tememos lo que Dios nos pueda pedir si nos rendimos a Él. Yo vivo con una hermana que tenía miedo de que si se rendía totalmente a Dios Él la enviaría a algún sitio remoto. Dios le dijo: "Gloria, si yo quiero que vayas allí pondré tal deseo en tu corazón de estar allí ¡que no querrás estar en ningún otro sitio!". Otro reto para nuestra vida en la esperanza es la necesidad de paciencia: paciencia con el plan de Dios, de unos con otros, y con nosotros mismos es la práctica diaria de esperar en el Señor. El campesino necesita esperar con paciencia a que la tierra dé fruto. En Romanos, Pablo dice que debemos contentarnos con esperar que seremos salvados: nuestra salvación no está en algo que se ve, si fuera así no tendríamos que estar esperándola... debemos aguardarla con paciencia (cf. Rom 8,24-25).

Necesitamos mirar a la paciencia de Jesús en la pasión mientras aceptaba el sufrimiento por el reino. "Padre mío, si es posible, que pase de mí esta copa, pero no sea como yo quiero, sino como quieras tú" (Mt 26,39). La esperanza no es la ausencia de sufrimiento. La esperanza no es esperar si no implica abrazar la Cruz, confiando en que toda las cosas irán bien para aquellos que aman a Dios (cf. Rom 8,28).

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**Necesitamos
mirar a la
paciencia de
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Misa con Padre Peter Sanders, Orat.

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Francis Canavan, S.J.

Liberalism as we know it has become a radical individualism that permeates our culture. As Robert Bellah once remarked, political discourse in this country is carried on between conservative liberals, who believe only in the free market, and liberal liberals, who believe only in individual rights.

That is the liberalism, on both sides of the aisle that the Catholic Church has consistently rejected. In his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Paul VI rejected what we too often call conservatism as "unchecked liberalism," and described it as a system "which considers profit as the key motive for economic progress, competition as the supreme law of economics, and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right that has no limits and carries no corresponding social obligation." Today's liberalism is the most recent development of what Pope Pius IX had in mind when, in his famous Syllabus of Errors, he condemned the proposition that "the Roman Pontiff should reconcile himself to and come to terms with liberalism."

Yet there is and always has been a Catholic individualism. Cardinal Ratzinger has spoken of "God's unconditional respect for the freedom of his creature." Pope John Paul II has explained that freedom is not simply the lack of restraint of man's appetites, but rather the ability of the human will to make self-determined choices: "All of God's action in human history respects the free will of the human 'I.'"

In *Populorum Progressio* Paul VI had already stated that freedom entails a responsibility of the highest order:

"In the design of God every man is called upon to develop and fulfill himself,

for every life is a vocation. . . . Endowed with intelligence and freedom, he is responsible for his fulfillment as he is for his salvation. He is aided, or sometimes impeded, by those who educate him and those with whom he lives, but each one remains, whatever be these influences affecting him, the principal agent of his own success or failure. By the unaided effort of his own intelligence and his will, each man can grow in humanity, can enhance his personal worth, can become more a person."

Then Pope Paul added: "However, this self-fulfillment is not something optional . . . human fulfillment is, as it were, a summary of our duties." Duty is prior to, and commands and guides free choice. Human nature is a very rich nature that offers us a wide range of opportunities, careers and ways of living, all of them legitimate, if they are contained within a framework of moral obligation set by the will of God as revealed to us by our nature and by His special revelation of His will for us.

The relationship between God and us revealed in the Bible, is a history of creation, sin, punishment, repentance, forgiveness, and salvation. In the earlier books of the Bible, the relationship was principally between God and His often erring and rebellious people. The people of Israel sinned and were punished as a people.

But in the sixth century B.C. the prophet Ezekiel, speaking for God, declared that the sins of the fathers were not visited upon their sons. (The consequences of parents' sins obviously do descend upon their children, but not their guilt.) "The child," said Ezekiel, "shall not share the burden of the parent's guilt nor shall a parent share the burden of a child's guilt; the righteousness of the righteous shall be accounted to him alone, and the wicked-

ness of the wicked shall be accounted to him alone"(18:20). In the New Testament we read: "It is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment" (Hebrews, 9:27).

That is a biblical and Christian individualism. But it is not a denial of the implications of our common nature for our life in society. One of the most obvious examples of our nature as social beings is the reality of two sexes, which are designed by nature to join in marriage and to raise children. Perhaps the most important obligation of every generation is to beget and raise its own next generation. That is a project which all of us, married or not, should aid and promote for the common good of all.

An example of an opposite and radically individualist view is furnished by the late Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun in the case of *Bowers v. Hardwick* (1984):

We protect the rights [of privacy] not because they contribute in some direct and material way to the general public welfare, but because they form so central a part of an individual's life.... And so we protect the decision whether to marry precisely because marriage is an association that promotes a way of life. . . . We protect the decision whether to have a child because parenthood alters so dramatically an individual's self-definition.... And we protect the family because it contributes to the happiness of individuals, not because of a preference for stereotypical households.

With these and other words in his opinion, Blackmun reduces human rights to individual desires, and human society to a collection of self-centered individuals seeking personal happiness. That is a liberal individualism radically different from the Catholic one.

—Fr. Francis Canavan, S.J. is professor emeritus of political science at Fordham University in New York. Condensed from *Catholic Eye*. Used with permission of the author.

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