



From the Heart

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Endless!

That's the word that most of us call to mind regarding the winter of 2003. The bitter cold temperatures, the countless snow and sleet storms, the "flukes" of nature that continued through April have left most of us winter weary and spring-time anxious. In addition to what we New Englanders normally anticipate and dread from December through March, we have had to cope with the emotional roller coaster associated with being a "country at war" once again.

We forget that nothing lasts forever. Sometimes we need the miserable and threatening situations such as weather and war, in order to appreciate and be grateful for the many things that we take for granted. Yes, we can be grateful, if not overjoyed by spring because it was a tough winter. We can appreciate the ordinary routine of life and the feeling of well-being and safety when crises are averted or eradicated. However, as men and women of faith we can only really appreciate our legacy of hope after a season of desert dryness like Lent, if we have lived through it in a true spirit of sacrifice and self-denial.



No, nothing lasts forever...or does it? We subconsciously know that the emptiness and apparent death epitomized by nature's winter hibernation will give rise to a resurgence of new life and warmth. So why do we complain? It's too simplistic to say, "That's the way we humans are." Yes, we're all human, but we are also spiritual people whose lives are rooted in hope and trust, a hope that enables us to recommit ourselves daily to our belief that the one thing that does last forever is God's promise to love us and be with us, even in the difficult and unsettling moments of our lives.

So often people tell me, "If it wasn't for my faith I don't know how I would have gotten through this!" Perhaps the reason we complain so much about the little things that touch our lives is that we really don't have much real faith. When our ability to control or resolve situations seems impossible, we really don't trust in God. We use faith, play with it, shelve it, as if it were some kind of inventory item to be pulled out when needed. Is it any wonder that most things disturb and un-nerve us

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Endless!

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making us into negative, complaining people?

Just as surely as spring follows winter and dawn erupts from darkness, we experience new life out of death because we are a people of the resurrection promise. Ours is not a seasonal acknowledgement based on the laws of nature. It's a daily one, which we make and renew because of our faith.

The challenge for each of us remains the same: be mindful of the fact that God is in control and his way is not our way. Through faith and trust in him alone can we become positive in our approach to life and acknowledge that the really important things do last forever.

Fr. Mark Flynn

Stewardship Update

Passing on the Word

Being a steward in the spiritual sense means taking care of God's kingdom on earth. The Liturgy of the Word for Children does this by bringing the children to Jesus, by making his word available to them in a form and format they can understand and appreciate. We have an active and thriving Liturgy of the Word ministry in our parish.

Earlier this year our stewardship commitment took a bit of a turn when we were asked to take our time and talent to another parish. St. John of the Cross parish in Middlebury asked for help as they started a Liturgy of the Word program of their own. In January we began meeting and planning with their director of religious education, Annette Williams, and her team. Members from our ministry, our own DRE Eileen Dignazio, and members of our Stewardship Committee met with them at Sacred Heart. We explained how our program worked from the adminis-



trative duties of ordering materials and scheduling through the actual weekly proclaiming and invited them to attend some of our Masses and see it in action. With the first week of Lent as their start date, they had about two months to prepare and announce this new ministry to their parish. Their whole team was very excited about Liturgy of the Word for Children becoming a reality at their church and commented to us about the enthusiasm our parish demonstrated by our support of their efforts.

As Lent approached we again asked our own team to help them. Helen Evans, Dave Francke and Joe Ruggiero graciously volunteered to

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From the Heart

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New members, ideas and Ask Father questions are welcome throughout the year. Please contact the rectory or Katherine Pavone at 264-6599.



Stewardship Update

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go to St. John of the Cross and lead their children and new proclaimers through the Liturgy of the Word for the first time. We all received very positive support from Fr. Barry and the entire parish for our assistance in making this a success at St. John of the Cross. It was a wonderful feeling knowing we had a part in bringing God's word to another parish of children. They are the next generation of stewards of God's kingdom.

As Dave Francke said at the beginning of the Stewardship Fair last fall, "Make the time to share the talent and the treasure will follow." That pretty much sums up what happened here. Our parish shared our time and talent to assist another parish in need, and everyone involved felt a genuine uplifting by having accomplished something special. It was a great start to our own Lenten season.

If the truth be told though, we merely showed Annette and her team what to do and how the Liturgy of the Word for Children works at Sacred Heart. But what makes their program a success is not us showing them how to do it, that only makes it happen quicker, but rather their willingness to become stewards and bring the children to Jesus by sharing his word.

The entire parish should take great pride in knowing that through its support we can offer programs like this, not only to our parish but to other parishes as well. By the dedicated efforts of numerous Sacred Heart volunteers, we are furthering God's kingdom and stewardship.

Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support.

Rick and Deb McGrath

Easter Clothes do not a Christian Make Or do They?

My first thought after having to move from my regular seat at the 7:30 a.m. Mass to make room for the streams of people continuing to arrive for the Easter observance was, "Where did all these people come from?" It seemed that there were more new faces than old, but most had something in common—they were unusually well dressed. (Even I had painted on lipstick for the occasion). "Wouldn't it be wonderful if these fellow parishioners attended every Sunday?" I mused.

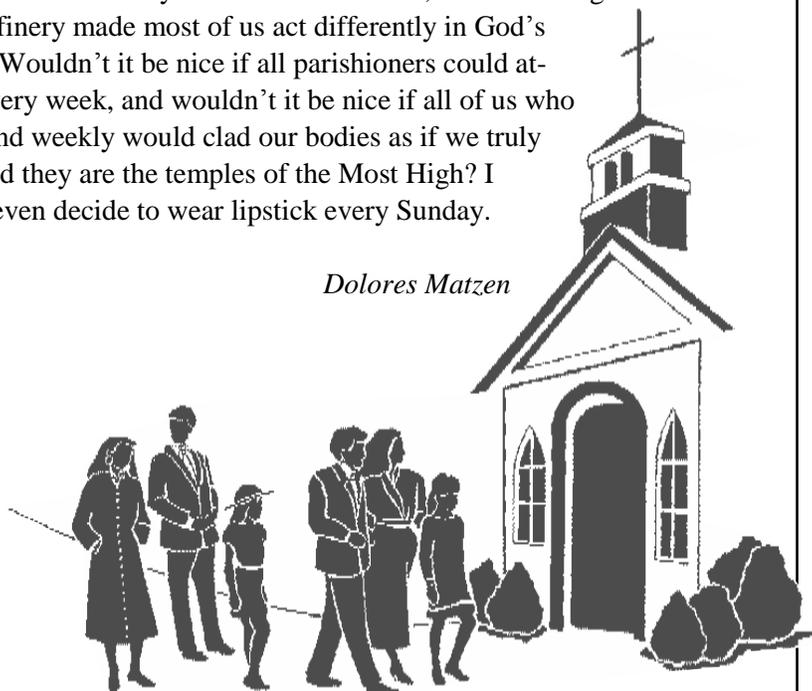
The ensuing thoughts were not quite kind, so I won't share them with you, only that they had something to do with the fancy outfits and the increased numbers, with a distinct correlation between the two. The next thoughts, however, were inspired by grace (thank God); they were how grateful I felt and how grateful our parish family should be at having so many wonderful people so finely dressed attending Mass, and how God's love would ripple out from all of us to touch so many more hearts and souls.

I looked at the mothers with young children all neatly coifed and cleanly clad and thought how difficult it must be and what a sacrifice it required to get all these children ready for church and to keep them quietly attentive during Mass. I understood why many do not attend regularly.

I loved seeing our brothers and sisters dressed, not in jeans and shorts, but in clothes fitting a banquet feast. And, yes, I did notice a more worshipful participation, a more jubilant song, and a more reverent silence during the quiet moments. Even the very young seemed to sense the awe and behaved with respect for the place and the worshipers.

Easter clothes may not make a Christian, but something about the Easter finery made most of us act differently in God's house. Wouldn't it be nice if all parishioners could attend every week, and wouldn't it be nice if all of us who do attend weekly would clad our bodies as if we truly believed they are the temples of the Most High? I might even decide to wear lipstick every Sunday.

Dolores Matzen



An Interview in the Living Room

“Another Martini? I never thought you’d ask,” so said I sitting in the very comfortable living room of Katherine and Vincent Pavone.

My interviewees sat across from me and while Vincent rose from the couch to make me another drink, I took pleasure in devouring Katherine’s marvelous Italian hors d’oeuvres. In honor of St. Patrick’s day, Mrs. Pavone renamed the dish adding an O’.

Vincent, a closet Irishman, notes his wife, was all-serious about the interview. Katherine? Well, you have to know Katherine.

I decided to open the discussion by asking a few “relaxing” questions. Looking at Katherine, I said, “Tell your adoring public the secret of having a successful thirty-three year marriage.”

“He travels a lot,” answered the lady with an absolute straight face. The man of the house wisely said nothing.

And so the interview began.

“What is so special about Sacred Heart Parish?” I looked at Katherine and continued, “You are involved in so many of the parish ministries. Your current husband (Katherine laughed), I say current to keep him on his toes, I mean we can’t let him get too relaxed now can we?” Vinnie chuckled as I continued, “The man is head usher for the 7:30 Mass. I find out that he was responsible for initiating and helping to run the Knights of Columbus national Corvette raffle which had to be an incredibly time consuming job.”

“Well others have stepped in to take up the triennial challenge. I’m there in case they need me,” acknowledged a humble Vincent.

“I don’t care what you say, I’m impressed,” I replied, “and it takes a lot to impress me. Such as you, Mrs. Pavone (Katherine sat up straight like one does when called upon in school). Social Activities? Welcoming Committee? Extend-a-Hand Committee? Stewardship? Action for Justice? And managing editor of *From the Heart*?”

“How did you get to be the managing editor? You volunteered!”

“Nine years ago (thirty six issues but who is counting), I attended a Communication Committee meeting as production editor. At this meeting the election of officers

for the coming year was held. There was a discussion regarding a production problem to which I was able to suggest a solution because I knew and understood the value of computers.”

I interjected, “The story I heard about your election is that you stepped out of the meeting to go to the ladies room. Someone, at that moment nominated you as managing editor, someone else seconded and you were unanimously voted in, with the entire process taking about ten seconds. The lesson to be learned, I suppose, is that one should never leave a room during an election meeting.”

Both interviewees smiled.

“I hate to disappoint you,” Katherine replied, “but that isn’t what happened. Someone did nominate me, but the reason was ‘because you know computers’ and that was that.”

“Well I suppose in the interest of a reporter’s integrity, we should publish the truth, but my version is far more entertaining.”

Shortly thereafter we retired to the dining room for Katherine’s wonderful corned beef and cabbage. Much of the dining room conversation must be treated either as off the record, or just plain censored, but I can tell you this much. This is a charming Catholic couple, self-effacing to a fault, who both agreed that upon attending Sacred Heart Church, in 1985, they found a home that was vibrant and energetic. Sacred Heart, in short, renewed their zeal in serving a community of the faithful.

Let me stop here, as I don’t want to encourage the liturgical process toward sainthood for these two. It is enough to realize that this parish is fortunate to have a Katherine and a Vincent who graciously opened their own hearts in service for us.

Dennis J. McLaughlin

Spotlight on Youth

Sacred Heart Youth are on a Mission

Following the example set by the youth of many area churches, ten Sacred Heart young people are headed for their first-ever mission trip. Our parish community is excited! The youth will be going on their week long adventure to Elmira, NY from July 20-26. Working through the organization Group Workcamps, the teens will undertake such tasks as scraping and painting, building ramps, repairing porches, putting up drywall or fixing roofs, depending on skill level. The acts of service are offered to the handicapped, elderly and otherwise disadvantaged citizens of the area. In the evenings, the teens will participate in all sorts of activities with many other young people from across the nation who will also be attending camp.

Going to camp are Alex Tillinghast, Jared Rada, Jessica Karkut,

Carolyn Bradshaw, Nicole Cappuzzo, Neil Griffin, Kevin Kauffman, Rebecca Bradshaw, Carolyn Wlodarczyk and Dayna Hine. Esther and Ron Rada have volunteered to be the adult chaperones.

The Youth Group of St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Oxford, who has been on similar mission trips, kicked off the initial informational meeting for us. They offered a PowerPoint presentation of their own trips followed by a chance for the two groups of students to get together to ask and answer questions. The enthusiasm grew and continues to grow as preparations are made. Ten students quickly signed on for the mission and together they have been preparing, meeting and planning fundraisers. A pancake breakfast was a success as was a collection taken by the parish. Other successful

fundraisers were the sponsorship of the drama *Jesus the Healer*, and a flower and bake sale. Another pancake breakfast is scheduled for Father's Day weekend. The youth are also collecting tools to take with them.

The best part is the interest other young people and their parents are showing in the trip. It is hoped that the trip for the summer of 2004 will be even bigger. Sending forth missionaries is the next step for Sacred Heart Church, well known for its commitment to stewardship. It is a wonderful opportunity for the young people, not only to be of service to others, but also to explore a purpose for their own lives.

Marge Griffin

Pictured are (lower left) Neil Griffin, Nicole Cappuzzo, Carolyn Bradshaw, Jessica Karkut, Jared Rada, Alex Tillinghast. (upper row) Kevin Kauffman, Rebecca Bradshaw, Carolyn Wlodarczyk, Dayna Hine.



R.C.I.A.—2003

The R.C.I.A. class of 2003 is smaller than we've had in the past years, but to Richard and Arthur, this year's class, it was a most meaningful experience. I met with them a couple of weeks before their final acceptance into the faith at Holy Saturday's Easter Vigil. Surprisingly both men had very similar backgrounds, having been brought up in the Anglican faith.

Richard Sibbick was married thirty-seven years to a wonderful woman who was of the Roman Catholic faith. Even back then, one was asked to promise that any children would be brought up Catholic. When you love your proposed bride, it was an easy thing to promise. I know; I did that same thing. The years went by with Richard attending regular services and all the special events for the children, first communion, confirmation etc., but not pursuing any change in his personal status with the church.

The passing of Richard's wife left him with a void and much in need of healing. I'm sure that his sponsor and neighbor Paul Donnelly was able to help with both. Richard expressed his interest in joining the Catholic faith to his family and found his ideas warmly received. The lesson process has brought only minor surprises, and he is looking forward to participating more completely in the life of our parish.

Art Strenkert (he says he's only called Arthur when he's in trouble) was baptized Catholic, in fulfillment of

the promises his father made to the church when he married. Circumstances in his life changed, and Art found himself living with an aunt, who went to the Episcopal church and took Art there for his moral and spiritual upbringing.

When Art married he had to promise his Catholic bride that any children would be brought up in her faith. Now the time has come for those special ceremonies for his daughter, and that is what precipitated his decision to become a Roman Catholic. Art feels that the family will benefit from his action.

Helped through the learning process by Deacon Mike Kulas, his sponsor, he found few things with which he wasn't familiar, and the process has been one of "coming home." Art is also interested in being active in our parish community, possibly with buildings and grounds, as he has an engineering background, or with the youth as part of bringing up children in our society.

Both of these men already have a comfortable association with the parish, have expressed a need for strong faith more than ever in our daily world, and have nothing but praise for all the people who have given of themselves to bring them through R.C.I.A.

Ernie Swanberg

At the Easter Vigil, Fr. Mark Flynn welcomed two candidates into the Sacred Heart faith community—Richard Sibbick and Art Strenkert. Pictured left to right: Sue Palma, RCIA staff; Paul Donnelly, sponsor; Richard Sibbick; Fr. Flynn; Art Strenkert and his sponsor Mike Kulas; and Marilyn Stephens, RCIA staff.



Resurrection Choir

There is a small group of about eight or nine women and one man who, when notified of a funeral, meet a half-hour before the service to go over the music. An outstanding voice is not necessary for participation in this small choir, and it is not mandatory that we sing at every funeral, however, we do try to put our own schedules on hold to celebrate the lives of those in our community who have gone home to the Father.

Many of the deceased we know. Some are complete strangers. Others no longer have any living relatives or family members to mark the occasion. The purpose of this ministry is to make sure that none of them passes into God's care unnoticed.

We wear choir robes and participate in the prayers, answering them clearly to assist those grieving. This is an uplifting ministry, especially when friends and family give the eulogy and tell wonderful stories about the deceased.

Patty Richards, the organist, is also the director of the Resurrection Choir. As we embarked on this ministry, Patty spoke these words to the



group, which I think will give a glimpse into the real heart of the ministry, "To me the Resurrection Choir is something very special because it gives each of us the chance to provide real meaning for those who, for the moment, can only feel

grief. I believe that when people are grieving and are too numb to even understand words of sympathy, music may be the only language that can deliver the message of everlasting life with the Lord."

Melissa Nimmo is the usual cantor at these funeral Masses and her beautiful voice adds so much to the service. Sometimes, family members request special hymns. The two songs most requested are the Ave Maria and Panis Angelicus, which Melissa does so well. Of course the holy Mass is the focus of the funeral service with Father Flynn or a visiting priest presiding. An appropriate homily is presented. One gentleman from out of state remarked after one of the funeral Masses, "I never went to a more meaningful funeral before; a Mass, homily, cantor, organist, and even a choir; how wonderful."

All you need is an ordinary voice, the ability to carry a tune, and a compassionate spirit to join this slowly growing ministry. Come join us. It is worth the effort.

Dina Carella



St. Augustine

“Late have I loved you, beauty, at once so ancient and so new! Late have I loved you! You were within me, and I was in the world outside myself... You were with me, but I was not with you.” These are the words of St. Augustine, the greatest of the fathers and the doctors of the church. He was a man in search of the truth and for many years of his life he battled with his own human weaknesses. In his most famous book *Confessions*, he tells his story admitting the errors of his youth and praising God for his conversion.

He was born of moderate means in North Africa in 354 to his father Patricius, a violent, pagan landowner, and his mother Monica, a devoted Christian woman who never gave up on her son and followed him to different countries constantly praying and pleading with God to see him repent of his sins and become a Christian.

When Augustine was 16 he went to Carthage to continue his education. While always an excellent student he began to join his friends in various pranks that deeply disturbed him later. He recalls an incident when they stole fruit from a neighbor’s pear tree to throw at the pigs. “I chose to steal; not because want drove me to it, for I stole things which I already had in plenty and of better quality. Nor had I any desire to enjoy the things I stole, but only the stealing of them and the sin. Our only pleasure in it was that it was forbidden.” He also began to passionately indulge in worldly pleasures. “Arrived now at adolescence I burned for all the satisfactions of hell, and I sank to the animal in a succession of dark lusts.” After several years he took a mistress and had a son, Addeodatus. But the sin that caused Augustine the most pain, was his condition of mind, which became part of his life for ten years. Always intellectually curious about the world and the mystery of good and evil, he accepted the beliefs of the Manichees instead of turning to God in faith. They believed in a religious dualism that stated that God is all good and matter is the cause of all evil, and the blame for sin was placed elsewhere than on the sinner. Eventually Augustine became disillusioned and traveled to Rome then to Milan. His mother Monica, extremely concerned for her son’s religious life, followed.

In Milan he became acquainted with St. Ambrose, who was the bishop of Milan. Augustine greatly



respected him as an intellectual, and his words made a lasting impression. Augustine began to understand the spiritual nature of God and that evil results from man’s misuse of free will. He learned how to read scripture and find the spiritual meaning behind the literal sense. “You called me; you cried aloud to me; you broke my barrier of deafness. You shone upon me; your radiance enveloped me; you put my blindness to flight. You shed your fragrance about me; I drew breath and now I gasp for your sweet odour. I tasted you, and now I hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I am inflamed with love of your peace.”

St. Ambrose baptized Augustine on Easter Eve in 387. Later that year Augustine’s mother died. She ended her life a happy woman, thankful to God for answering her prayers that he was now living a Christian life.

Augustine returned to North Africa and founded a monastery. In 391 he was ordained a priest. He began to preach and was met with great success within the Christian community. In 395 he was named coadjutor to Valerius, the bishop of Hippo, and the following year was consecrated bishop, upon Valerius’ death. During his 35 years as bishop he defended the Catholic faith against many heresies. Augustine wrote over 113 books and treatises, along with hundreds of sermons and letters. He was responsible for permanently affecting Western Christianity with his brilliant style of thought and word.

St. Augustine died on August 28, 430. He is the patron of theologians, printers, and England.

Diane Tomas

Love Your Enemies

As God's children we are called to live our lives with high standards of spirituality and follow a superior moral compass. However, as humans we tend to be pragmatic and follow less idealistic philosophies than Jesus would want us to. We reserve our love only for people who love us in return. Unfortunately, by doing this we eliminate our chances of reverting sour relationships back into sweet ones. Unless we love our enemies, it becomes easy not to forgive, easy to hold back love, and easy to hate. We must do everything in our power to prevent this.

Recently, coalition forces were battling in Iraq. Whatever your political beliefs are about this war, you have to wonder what goes through the minds of the soldiers. Would God expect American troops to love the enemy? I believe he would. God's laws and teachings remain constant. His principles are eternal and without flaw despite our occasional doubt. After recent events in Baghdad, we have witnessed that the people we were waging war against were welcoming our troops as liberators. We've realized with great joy that Iraqis—our "enemies"—deserve our love and aid following years of oppression from an evil man,

Saddam Hussein.

So how should we feel about the men at the top of the list? The evil men like Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, and even Kim Jong II—North Korea's dictator—are in great need of love according to Christ. "That's crazy!" we may say. The last thing we want to do is "waste" love on men that want to oppress, torture, and kill us. So why does Jesus want us to love these men? The simple answer is that they are God's children like you or I; they are just the lost sheep from the flock. I wonder why most people believe they have

only so much love to give. The concept that we have only a limited amount of love to spend is a foolish, cynical illusion created by nihilistic humans some of who don't believe in God anyway. Loving Osama bin Laden with the hope and *expectation* that he will one day see the error of his ways, correct his attitude, and enter the light is not going to subtract from the love you give to your friends and family.

God expects us to love unconditionally because love always defeats evil and hatred. Apply this to your life and think about your "enemies."

Think about people you haven't forgiven for things they did in the past; think about the people that are cold and distant because you didn't want to show them some compassion; think about the people that dislike you because you may have thought that showing the face of hatred would empower you.

Loving our enemies is an extremely difficult task, but it can and must be achieved for spiritual health. Love your enemies that they may be your friends. Love your friends that they may never be your enemies. Love conquers all, so why not be on the winning team?



Mark Adam Prybylski

A Daughter Responds

When my father informed me that he was sending me a few short stories or remembrances (he likes to call them that) about the family, I was curious. I love my father dearly and still do even after reading all eighteen of them (one must always be exact when one is contemplating litigation). I, of course, forwarded them to my three brothers, Tom (age 33), Paul (age 30) and Sean (age 23). Like any woman, my age is known only to my mother, my father (I am not so sure about him, however) and my husband. My brothers could care less.

Repercussions you ask? Oh yes. Although Dad will never truly appreciate my own special art of diplomacy and advocacy, the bottom line is there will be no Parental Termination Proceeding. Tom and Paul remain talking to him (their wives thought the stories were hilarious) and inviting him (only with Judy) to their respective homes. The exchanging of Christmas cards is still under serious consideration.

Sean, the future lawyer, remained understandably silent, since Dad is helping to defray the cost of Fordham Law School. My little brother may be called many things, but stupid is not one of them.

With blessings from my brothers (a rarity, believe me), I offer the following:

I remember (Dad always begins his stories that way) it was a glorious spring evening about twenty years ago and a few days before Easter. My father was sitting in his favorite chair by the fireplace, in our large step-down living room in Bronxville. Standing at the foot of the living room, I could see that he was lost in thought.

Upon acknowledging my presence, he glumly said, "No tickets available for the 10 a.m. Mass." I loved it when he treated me like an adult.

For the reader's information, in those days, 10 a.m. Easter Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City was so popular, attendance tickets were necessary to gain entrance. This day was treated as the pinnacle of our fam-

ily's spiritual life because Dad felt that all grace for our faith renewal, flowed from Christ's resurrection. In more practical terms, Easter also meant partaking in a sumptuous breakfast buffet at a private men's club, of which my father was a very proud and devout member. Dad was now making the arrangements for this Easter celebration.

"We don't have to go into the city," I answered in my most sincere voice. I would have loved to avoid the whole trip, since I discovered over the years one must be

in a special mood to watch my three brothers imitate hungry hogs. "True, favorite daughter (favorite child would have been more appreciated but I took what I could get), but the boys do like the Sunday breakfast buffet." Translation? Dad likes the Sunday breakfast buffet.

Using my most officious voice (forget sincere, this time), I said, "Shall I

call the club and make a reservation for us?"

"Don't bother. It shouldn't be that busy at 11:15," so answered the family's great decision maker.

"Oh, Oh," I remember thinking. My feminine antennae were twitching.

"About those attendance tickets, Dad..."

With assurance, my father told me that there would be no trouble about getting seats for Mass. And that was the end of it as far as he was concerned.

I remember distinctly a second Oh, Oh in less than a minute; this definitely was not a good sign.

Well, you can imagine.

Cardinal Cook's thirty-minute homily was inspiring, the orchestra and chorus were magnificent; yet one cannot truly appreciate the spiritual significance of the event standing for over an hour wearing new two-inch heels. In short, my feet were killing me, and with Paul and Tommy continually whining, my big sister compassion was being pushed to the breaking point.

Did Dad say anything? Nope. And if he would have, it



would have been his classic, "Offer it up for Christ's Passion." That sentence inevitably stopped a complainer in his/her tracks. As a matter of fact, I use it myself in dealing with my own children's complaints. It still works.

We headed back to Central Park South, all grumbling, I in pain. It was not easy being a female in new heels. At least I could anticipate a glorious breakfast even if it was with the animal-like brothers.

When we finally reached the club's entrance, there was a big printed sign on the door. I will never forget that scene. Paul proclaimed (and that is the right word):

RESTAURANT CLOSED FOR ALTERATIONS. SORRY FOR THE INCONVENIENCE. HAPPY EASTER.

"So the little boob can read," I remember thinking.

We all turned and looked at our benevolent dictator, our founder of the feast, our dad. Quickly recovering from the shock he announced, "Easter Sunday will be celebrated in true McLaughlin tradition." The morning did end in thanksgiving and renewal of sorts, when Dad said those heartwarming words, "McDonald's, here we come."

We got older of course and moved away from the security and warmth that the family provided us, whether we wanted it or not. I still love telling my children, Dylan and Meghan, about our Easter at McDonald's. The problem is since I told them, my little darlings now want to go to McDonald's for Easter, every Easter—so much for the turkey and pies.

And so life goes on.

*Lauren Distefano
nee McLaughlin*

FROM THE LIBRARY OF DEACON MIKE

"Our real journey in life is interior; it is a matter of growth, deepening, and of an ever greater surrender to the creative action of love and grace in our hearts."

-Thomas Merton

If you would like a reflective and enormously enriching book for your summer reading pleasure may I recommend *Holy & Human—Mystics for Our Time* by Fr. John D. Powers.

Meet these seven mystics:

Hildegard of Bingen, an energetically assertive and creative woman known for her ability to stand strong in an age of unyielding male domination, expresses her intuitive and artistic nature through music and painting.

Metchild of Magdeburg, a layperson dedicated to the process of religious commitment, and a radical voice for proper use of the church's funds for the poor.

Meister Eckhart of Hochheim, a Dominican scholar and popular preacher known for his imaginative and creative use of metaphor in speaking of God.

Jan Van Ruysbroeck, a parish priest, contemplative guide and author compelled to speak out against the outrageous heresies of his day.

Johannes Tauler, also a Dominican preacher, who proclaims the everyday birth of God in the soul and with such beautiful strength.

Julian of Norwich, an independent and solitary woman who has captured in her writing the beauty and orthodoxy of God as "mother."

And finally, **Teresa of Avila**, who, through perseverance and insight, gives us, with her own life, a wonderful example of the belief that a by-product of seeking God is mental health.

Because this book is about "mystics," please do not think you will be reading "theological gobbledegook." Using a unique interview style, Fr. Powers reaches into the centuries between these seven mystics' times and ours, to bring their lives, thoughts and deeds into our contemporary world. Open this book. You will find here people like us who live, breath and work in an often-imperfect world of everyday life. You will find the God who exists in the tears and laughter, pain, joy, and boredom, in the senses, prayers, and physical efforts of both the mystics' lives and ours. You will meet real people who loved, laughed, hurt and struggled through life. You will find seven men and women, known today as "mystics," who are truly holy and human. Most astonishing of all, as Fr. Powers writes, "Whether you are man or woman, barkeep or nun, nurse or monk, father, mother, teen student, baker, priest, construction worker, or lawyer, you too are called to be a mystic in your everyday living."

May this book bring to you endless hours of reading pleasure and a perpetual source of spiritual enrichment.

*God Bless
Mike*

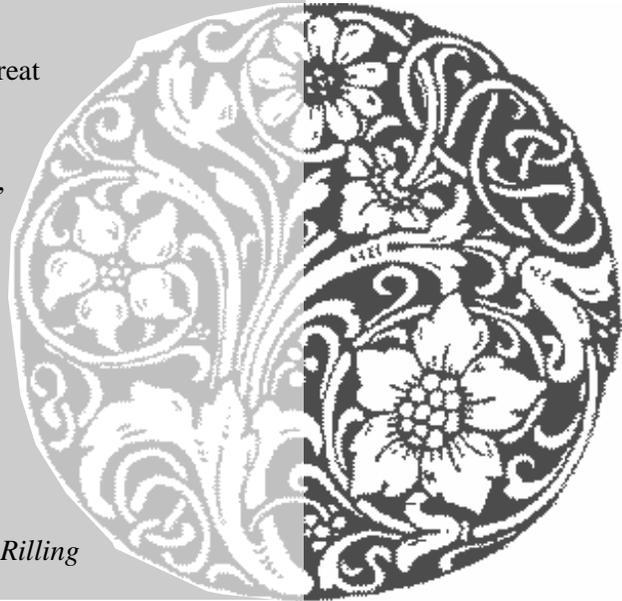
Contrasts

I wouldn't appreciate sunny days
If there weren't days of rain.
I wouldn't know what it means to feel great
If I never experienced pain.

I wouldn't know the pleasure of lending,
If I never had to borrow.
I wouldn't know what true joy is
If I never experienced sorrow.

The beauty of life is its contrasts—
Its pleasures, its laughter, its tears,
The innocence of the very young,
The wisdom gained through the years.

Irma Rilling



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