

CHURCH STUFF

(A newsletter for Catholic cadets)

Week of 10 March, 2002

To my Catholic brothers and sisters in the Corps:

I saw this prayer recently, and I thought that it had an idea or two that made a lot of sense...especially in the face of temptation...the kind of temptation that we all encounter...the kind of temptation that brings us all down.

Thought I'd share it with you:

Lord Jesus, you know what temptation is like.

You know how strongly the wrong thing fascinates me,
and how much the forbidden thing attracts me.

Lord Jesus, help me not to fall.

Help me to remember my own self-respect,
and to remember that I cannot do things like this.

Help me to think of those who love me
and to know that I cannot bring disappointment to them.

Help me to remember the unseen crowd of witnesses
who surround me
and that I cannot grieve those who have passed on
but who are forever near.

Help me to remember your presence
and in your presence to find my safety.

I ask it for the sake of the love you have for me.

Amen.

May the peace of Christ always rest in your hearts.

THINGS CATHOLICS CAN DO:

CATHOLIC CADET PRAYER BREAKFAST
will be held on Thursday, 14 March, at 0615 at
The West Point Club. Donation is \$2.00, if possible.
Sign up through your Company Catholic Rep.

LENTEN RECONCILIATION
The Lenten Parish Reconciliation Service will be

held at Most Holy Trinity on Tuesday, 19 March, at 1900. It's your opportunity for Personal Confession. Confessions are also heard at the Chapel each Saturday at 1630...or you can just stop in at the Chaplain's Office any day.

DAILY MASS

Mass is offered every weekday (except Saturdays and holidays) in the Catholic Chaplain's Office at 0630. Everyone is welcome.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Every Friday of LENT at 1800, there will be STATIONS OF THE CROSS at the Chapel. Each week, the Ceremony will be followed by a simple supper of soup to keep the spirit of FASTING.

QUIET PRAYER

Each Wednesday of LENT, the Blessed Sacrament is present in the Catholic Chaplain's Office from 1830 to 1930. Anyone who wants to stop in for quiet prayer is welcome.

LENTEN LECTURE SERIES

Every Tuesday evening of LENT at 1900 at the Chapel, there will be a Lecture Series, given by Fr. Don Timone of Mount St. Mary's College. Everyone is welcome.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE HINDU VISION OF JESUS:

(This is taken from "Newsweek", 27 March, 2000)

The Gospels are silent about the life of Jesus between his boyhood visit to the Jerusalem Temple with his parents (Luke 2:41ff) and the beginning of his public ministry at the age of 30. But in India, there is a strong tradition that the teenage Jesus slipped away from his parents, journeyed across Southeast Asia learning yogic meditation and returned home to become a guru to the Jews.

This legend reveals just how easily Hinduism absorbs any figure whom others worship as divine. To Hindus, India is the Holy Land, its sacred mountains and rivers enlivened by more than 300,000 deities. It is only natural, then, that Jesus would come to India to learn the secrets of unlocking his own inherent divinity.

As Gandhi was, many Hindus are drawn to the figure of Jesus by his compassion and non-violence - virtues taught in their own sacred Scriptures. But also like Gandhi, Hindus find the notion of a single god unnecessarily restrictive. In their perspective, all human

beings are sons (or daughters) of God with the innate ability to become divine themselves.

The Hindus who read the Gospels are drawn to the passage in John in which Jesus proclaims that "the Father and I are one" (John 10:30). This confirms the basic Hindu belief that everyone is capable through rigorous spiritual practice or realizing his or her own universal "god-consciousness".

The great modern Hindu saint Ramakrishna recorded that he meditated on a picture of the Madonna with child and was transported into a state of "samadhi", a consciousness in which the divine is all that really exists.

For that kind of spiritual experience, appeal to any god will do. "Christ-consciousness", God-consciousness, Krishna-consciousness, Buddha-consciousness - it's all the same thing," says Deepak Chopra, an Indian popularizer of Hindu philosophy for New Age Westerners. "Rather than 'Love thy neighbor', this consciousness says: 'You and I are the same'."

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

...our most recent casualties in Central Asia...and their families.

...several cadet who are having some serious difficulties in their lives.

...all our military brothers and sisters - and their families - throughout the world, especially those in areas of risk.

GOT A QUESTION?

Q: Why do Catholics baptize infants? Doesn't it seem more reasonable that such an important part of a Christian's life be accompanied by a personal act of faith?

A: I know that within some Christian traditions, this idea is very strong: namely, that since infants cannot "think for themselves", baptism of infants does not do what the Scripture requires because a personal act of faith is required for Baptism.

On the other side of the question, you can find the Eastern and Western Catholic traditions, the Episcopal Church and several other traditions within the Protestant tradition, all of whom have preserved the idea of "infant baptism".

I'd like to simply present the Catholic view as an answer to your question.

The Catholic Church believes that the practice of "infant baptism" has existed in the Church from the beginning. Granted, the phrase "infant baptism" doesn't appear in the Scripture; nevertheless, the New Testament speaks in several places of people being baptized "with their households" (read Acts 16:15 and 16:33 for this phrasing), so Scripture seems to make no distinction between any "age-groups".

One of the oldest of Church Rituals - from the early 200s - contains this precept:

Baptize the children first of all;
any who can speak for themselves are to give the answers;
in the case of those who cannot speak for themselves,
their parents or someone else in their families are to speak for them.

Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus of Rome, #21,
c. 220 AD

Early Church writers like Origen (184-253 AD) and Augustine (354-430 AD) called infant baptism "a tradition received from the Apostles".

So Catholics baptize their infants because they regard the practice as having been a part of the Church from the beginning.

The reasoning is this: salvation is a gift from God. It is not accomplished by a personal decision. This is what the Church refers to as "grace". And the fact that the Church baptizes babies into the conversion-process without their having to perform any special "works" on their own shows that God's love is freely given to all who come to him.

Just as children are completely accepted into their natural family at birth, so too they're accepted into their "supernatural" family at birth as well. And just as babies receive citizenship in an earthly nation at their birth because of their parents, so too do they become citizens of a "heavenly kingdom" at birth because of their parents.

What about "personal decision"?

The Church believes that such decisions are made and strengthened each Easter at Mass, when Catholics are asked to renew their baptismal promises and are sprinkled with the water that recalls their original Baptism.

Basically, Catholics baptize infants so as to share with them as soon as possible the redemptive grace of Christ and to follow the practice of the earliest Christians. For us, infant baptism is a vehicle of faith, a symbol of God's free gift of love, an initiation into the family of the Church and the beginning of a conversion-process that lasts a lifetime but which is accomplished with the support and the corporate strength of the family that we call "The Church".

THEOLOGY EVERY CATHOLIC SHOULD KNOW:

WEAKNESS AND VULNERABILITY:

These may not seem like very attractive concepts to anyone, especially in a "warrior" culture, but they've played a central part in understanding the life of Jesus AND in trying to imitate that life.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, Paul quotes God as saying the following to him:

My grace is sufficient for you...

and then Paul draws the following conclusion:

I would rather boast most clearly of my weaknesses,
that the power of Christ may dwell with me.

The kind of WEAKNESS that he was talking about is not the "human weakness" that easily gives in to temptation.

And it's not the "weakness of the flesh", as opposed to the "strength of the spirit", either.

What is meant is the willingness of the Catholic follower of Jesus to GIVE UP one's personal strength and power...and to replace them with the strength of God.

In their versions of THE BEATITUDES, both Matthew (5:3-12) and Luke (6:20-26) present the following categories of "weak and vulnerable" people:

- those who are defenseless;
- those who are broken by human tragedy;

- those who sorrow and mourn;
- those persecuted by evil forces;
- those who are belittled;
- those who are rendered insignificant
by the strong and robust of the world.

Jesus calls such people BLESSED.

It goes against every value of "the world", but he insisted on it...even to the extent of giving himself into the hands of evil in order to overcome evil.

So, in his infancy, in his agony, in his death...we see him choosing WEAKNESS for the sake of God's will...and God rewarded him by RAISING HIM UP.

In his Letter to the Philippians, Paul quotes the words of an ancient Christian hymn. He recommends that the Philippians follow the example of Christ:

Have among yourselves the same attitude
that Jesus had.

Though he was in the form of God,
he did not regard equality with God as
something to be grasped.

Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave
and coming in human likeness.

He humbled himself
and became obedient to death,
death on a cross.

Because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name that is above
every name.

So that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bend...

Philippians 2:6-11

Jesus refused the kind of power that controls and dominates.

He accepted WEAKNESS AND VULNERABILITY in his life.

And he gave himself over to the power of his Father.

So he could enter the lives of others at their most vulnerable point.

Catholic spiritual life cannot be based in any way on control, domination or manipulation.

But following the example of Jesus as presented in the Scriptures, we should cultivate care, compassion, self-sacrifice, reciprocity and mutuality. These are the only STRENGTHS that can actually have an effect in the world.

UNSOLICITED SPIRITUAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

"The cheerful person will do more
in the same time,
will do it better,
will persevere in it longer,
than the sad or sullen person."

Thomas Carlyle

And that's the way it is, a day like all days, filled with those events that alter and illuminate our time...

and YOU ARE THERE!!

Hang in there!

Spring Break is fast approaching.

You can make it!!!

Woodie