

CHURCH STUFF

(A newsletter for Catholic cadets)

Week of 1 September, 2002

To my Catholic brothers and sisters in the Corps:

Well, everything sure started with a bang.

I know people who are stressed already...under pressure...anxious...

It can all be numbing and can certainly obliterate any sense of equilibrium.

Prayer restores equilibrium.

If you're under pressure, perhaps you could use some prayer:

O Lord,

In the turbulence and the loneliness

of my living from day to day and from night to night,

keep me in touch with my roots,

so I'll remember where I came from and with whom;

keep me in touch with my feelings,

so I'll be aware of who I really am and what it costs;

keep me in touch with my mind,

so I'll know who I am not and what that means;

keep me in touch with my dreams,

so I'll never forget where I want to go and for whom.

Nourish within me the boldness of a prophet

and the courage of a disciple.

Amen!

May God give you His peace!!

THINGS CATHOLICS CAN DO:

NO WH5300 MASS ON SUNDAY

because of the holiday weekend. Masses at the Chapel will be as usual:

Saturday at 1715 (preceded by Confessions)

Sunday at 0900 and 1100

NO 0630 MASS ON MONDAY

because of the holiday. The 0630 Mass in the Chaplain's will resume on Tuesday.

PARISH PICNIC

The Fall PARISH PICNIC will be held at Camp

Buckner on Sunday, 8 September. No special Mass will be held at Buckner. The PICNIC will begin following the normal 1100 Mass at the Chapel. Archbishop O'Brien, of the Military Archdiocese, will invest Father Burns as "Monsignor" at the 1100 Mass, and after the Mass, people will head to Buckner for the PICNIC. Transportation will be available for cadets; more information to follow.

DID YOU KNOW?

CATHOLICS AMONG THE MORMONS:

(Note: this is from an article in "St. Anthony Messenger" of October, 1997)

Utah's Catholics live in one of the largest dioceses, square-mile-wise, in the USA. The boundaries of the diocese are the boundaries of the state itself. Officially, Catholics are four percent of the state's population. Among Utah's seasonal and service workers are many additional Roman Catholics, uncounted in any official census but part of the flock to whom the Church ministers.

The entire state has 43 parishes and 13 missions, 2 Catholic high schools and 9 Catholic elementary schools. There is no Catholic college, university or seminary. Compare that with the Archdiocese of New York, which has 413 parishes, 17 Catholic hospitals, 13 colleges and universities, 25 high schools, 224 elementary schools and 17 homes for the aged.

Initially, the railroad and the mines - coal, silver and copper - drew the original Catholic immigrants to the Utah territory. Today, 80 percent of the state's Catholics live on the Wasatch Front (the western base of the Wasatch Range of the Rockies), close to the industries that drew their forebears to the area.

The Utah Territory held many Catholic mountain-men and trappers in the early years of its settlement (1776-1847), including the famed Kit Carson. Jesuit missionary Father Pierre Joseph DeSmet is rumored to have met Brigham Young (the Mormon leader) and recommended that Young lead the Mormons to the valley of the Great Salt Lake to settle.

A recent interview with a Mormon elder - Alexander B. Morrison - touched upon some of the differences between Catholic and Mormon belief. Elder Morrison said: "We believe that there is a prophet on the earth today - President Hinckley (head of the Mormon Church). Coupled with that is, of course, the notion of revelation. God does speak to the world through the prophets."

Latter-Day Saints (LDS) wish to be considered Christian, although their concept of Christianity is unique, and many Christian theologians debate whether they are, in fact, Christian. Joseph Smith's (the founder) vision of God is at odds with the "trinitarian" view of classical Christianity, but Elder Morrison says that "Christ is our Savior, our Redeemer, the atoning Messiah".

LDS members "see life on this earth as just a stopping-place on the eternal journey.

We believe that we lived before we came to earth and will live after we leave this earth. We are eternal beings," says Elder Morrison.

Among the early Mormons, polygamy created much controversy and opposition, even though LDS members cited examples from the Old Testament, and under severe pressure from the Federal government, the practice was banned in 1890.

Sacramental practice also differs from that of the Catholic tradition. LDS members have a sacramental meeting each Sunday at their "Ward House". Communion is seen as a renewal of covenant but is open to unbaptized children in attendance. At the meeting, several speakers deliver prepared remarks on spiritual themes. Baptism, typically received at the age of 8, is seen as a cleansing from sin and may be repeated if the baptized person falls away and returns.

The 50 Temples of the LDS are not places of regular Sunday worship and are closed to non-believers. They are reserved for "temple ordinances" (a type of "sacraments"), including "endowment" (a covenant of obedience to God's law), "celestial marriages" (marriages which will continue in eternity) and "proxy baptisms" for deceased ancestors.

LDS members believe that these ancestors must accept such actions on their behalf before the general resurrection can take effect.

(To be continued next week)

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

...everyone who will be traveling this Labor Day Weekend.

...all our military brothers and sisters - and their families - throughout the world.

GOT A QUESTION?

Q: Father, in this day and age, so many people are having sex early that it seems like the concept of waiting until marriage is almost completely gone. When the Church says that one should wait till married, do you think that was the actual intent, or was it that people would just reserve sex for the people they are/were in love with, so that people would not "sleep around"?

A: Within the Catholic tradition, human sexuality is a sacred power.

As the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" says:

Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others.

#2332

Our tradition has always considered that God had an intent in creating human beings as "sexual" creatures...and that intent is expressed by two words: procreative and unitive.

Basically, they mean that we believe the purpose of the sexual power is

a) to create life; and

b) to join a man and a woman in a union not only of bodies
but also of hearts.

If the sexual power is exercised in any other way, we think of that as "disordered"
because it frustrates the design of God. As the "Catechism" says:

Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought
for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive
purposes.

#2351

So for Catholic morality, practices such as masturbation or fornication or rape or
prostitution violate the dignity of the sexual power and the dignity of the individual.
The power of the "sex act" is designed to bring together a married couple and to
re-inforce their mutual "giving of self"...because, as the "Catechism" says again:

Sexuality...is not something simply biological but concerns
the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized
in a truly human way only if it an integral part of the love
by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally
to one another until death.

#2361

So in spite of the fact that for many people, sex has become a "pastime" rather
than a statement of true and lasting love, the Catholic tradition holds very
strongly to her ideals about what God's purpose is. It's a serious conclusion, and
it represent the Catholic perception of what God intended in creating the sexual power
in the first place.

The practice of "sleeping around" or using sex simply as a source of personal
pleasure frustrates the designs of God and reduces one's "partner" to the role
of simply an object of personal pleasure...and sex thus becomes a selfish, rather
than a self-giving, act.

Hope this will give you a basic understanding of the seriousness with which the
Catholic Church looks at sex and the deeply-powerful potential that it has in the lives
of human beings.

Thanks for the question.

THEOLOGY EVERY CATHOLIC SHOULD KNOW:

SOUL:

A fancy definition I once read described SOUL in the following words:

The human individual's inherent capacity for selfhood,
self-awareness and subjectivity; the principle of
human knowing and responsible freedom...

Sounds a bit complicated, but then, the terms that some philosophers have used are just as
confusing: "infinite striving" (Lessing); "self-explication of the Idea" (Hegel); "the difference
between ego and super-ego" (Freud); "existentiality" (Jaspers); "thereness" (Heidegger);
"primordial realization of the future" (Bloch).

Great stuff, but what does it say?

For most of us, our understanding of SOUL has been influenced by Plato, who thought that the SOUL was the "principle of life", was pre-existent to the body and was also immortal. He described it as "simple, spiritual and divine".

He also thought that it was imprisoned in the body for a time and that the best thing that could happen was that the body die and the SOUL be released to return to the "ideal" world.

When Christians later read Plato, they said: "Yup, and that ideal world is what we call 'heaven'."

So we've got an analysis that makes the body and the material world seem less important than the SOUL and the "ideal" world.

But the Bible doesn't necessarily see it that way.

The Old Testament folks had two words for SOUL: "nephesh" and "ruach". "Nephesh" seems to have meant "the inner being of a person", and it was associated with a person's breath and the blood that runs through the body. It was also understood to be the seat of the emotions and the passions. "Nephesh" was subject to death. The early Jews thought that when your time came to die, your "nephesh" would escape through a bodily opening (like your mouth, your nostrils or even an open wound). When God breathed into Adam's nostrils (Genesis 2:7), Adam became a living "nephesh", and when the minor prophet Balaam delivered his oracle (Numbers 23:10), he ended it by praying: "May my 'nephesh' die the death of the just".

On the other hand, the word "ruach" doesn't have the same material overtones. It literally meant "wind" or "breath", and it usually implied intense activity or energy: the life-giving breath of God or the inner strength and vitality of a human being. In describing the coming of Emmanuel, (Isaiah (11:2) says that "the spirit ('ruach') of the Lord shall rest upon him". The word implies the life-giving breath that comes from God to humans, endowing them with extraordinary power, wisdom and insight.

The New Testament inherited these Hebrew concepts, and in Greek, the words became "psyche" and "pneuma", although the meaning had developed a little. The Christians combined the two ideas and concentrated them on "life in the spirit of Christ" as the only TRUE life.

The idea of SOUL thus entered a new phase, and it would be correct to understand that the idea meant "selfhood" and "LIFE that has eternal value". Jesus says: "Whoever wishes to save his LIFE will lose it" (Matthew 16:25) and "What profit is there for somebody to gain the whole world and forfeit his LIFE?" (Mark 8:36).

So in the New Testament, the idea of SOUL seems to imply "fullness of LIFE" and "living according to the spirit of Jesus", and it includes everything we mean by body, spirit, soul, flesh, etc. Modern psychology would describe it as "the TOTAL person".

Thus, Catholic theology does not speak of the SOUL without also speaking of the BODY, because one can't conceive of a "total person" without including both factors. Both are essential to humanness and holiness.

According to Catholic understanding, each SOUL is the immaterial, immortal, directly-created principle that constitutes each individual as "human". Each SOUL is created directly by God and simultaneously with the BODY. Each human SOUL is naturally and intrinsically related to the BODY, but our view is that the BODY is not the "prison" of the SOUL (as Plato thought).

And so, the expression that one hears a lot - "to save your SOUL" - is not an accurate expression of Catholic belief. It would be more accurate to say "to save YOURSELF".

UNSOLICITED SPIRITUAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

"If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature -
even a caterpillar -
I would never have to prepare a sermon...
So full of God is every creature."

Meister Eckhart
13th-century mystic

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!!

All best wishes for a great weekend.
Remember that you're in our prayers
all the time.

Woodie