

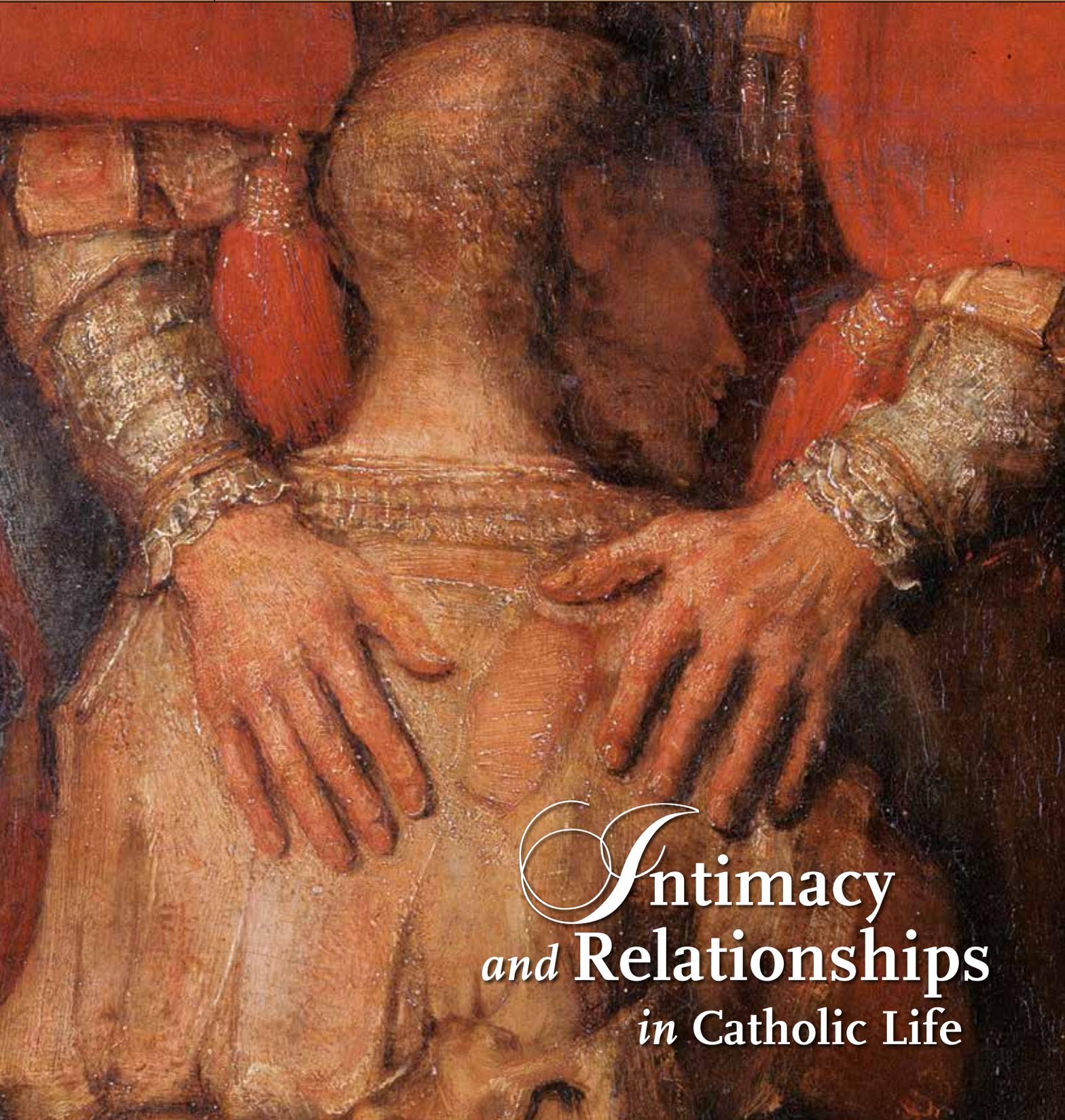
the CHURCH in the 21ST CENTURY CENTER BOSTON COLLEGE

SESQUICENTENNIAL
ISSUE

C21 Resources

SPRING 2014

A CATALYST AND RESOURCE FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



Intimacy
and Relationships
in Catholic Life

The Church in the 21st Century Center is a catalyst and resource for the renewal of the Catholic Church.

C21 Resources, a compilation of critical analyses and essays on key challenges facing the Church today, is published by the Church in the 21st Century Center at Boston College, in partnership with featured authors and publications.

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ON THE COVER

The Return of the Prodigal Son
by Rembrandt, c.1661–1669

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FROM THE C21 CENTER DIRECTOR



Dear Friend:

It can be argued that there is no Christianity without relationships. As Catholic Christians, we are called to a profound tri-union with our true selves, with others, and with God. Time and time again, we learn how God is revealed to us through our loved ones.

C21 presents *Intimacy and Relationships in Catholic Life* through lived experience — sexual relationships, family relationships, and intimacy with God. Personal narrative is certainly the most ancient form of handing on the faith, particularly through stories of intentional wrestling with significant life issues. It seems that we become more aware of God's grace as we authentically share our selves in a loving, mature, and vulnerable way with others.

We are grateful for the thoughtful guidance of guest editors Lisa Cahill and Kerry Cronin who bring a wealth of expertise not only with respect to moral theology but also years of experience working with young people. Please share this magazine with family, friends, students, colleagues, and fellow parishioners. We are happy to fulfill requests for additional copies.

Most sincerely,

Erik P. Goldschmidt
Director

GUEST EDITORS *C21 RESOURCES* SPRING 2014



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C21 Resources

SPRING 2014

INTIMACY AND RELATIONSHIPS IN CATHOLIC LIFE

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INTIMACY

IT'S

Complicated

Kerry Cronin

How I found myself talking with young adults about hookup culture, dating, and relationships is still a bit mysterious to me, but one thing I know for sure is that about 10 years ago I started to sense a genuine loneliness among the otherwise bright, involved, connected, and accomplished students at my university.



When I asked about their lives—not just about their academic lives, but about their personal, moral, and spiritual lives—what troubled and saddened me more than whether or not they were having sex (though that certainly concerns me, no doubt), is how little sex and sexual intimacy even *mattered* to them. Still today, not only do many of them think that sex is “no big deal,” they usually display little hope that it will ever amount to all that much. They are deeply ambivalent about sex having any significant meaning, and in the context of their mostly ironic culture, they are wary of being duped by grand claims about intimacy, sexual or otherwise. As they say, it’s all “just a thing.” And they have plenty of evidence from their own lives, the lives of their families and friends, and from the wider, sexualized culture to prove it. But when I started to really pay attention to what young adults were *saying* and *doing* in their hookups, dating, and relationships, I found what I would call a low-level, grinding despair.

I spotted that despair in a Q&A session following a talk I gave a number of years ago in a residential hall lounge packed full of first-year students about six months into their first year of college. A student thanked me for my talk on hookup culture and said that she wholly agreed with my critique of it. She went on to say that this was all well and good, but what she really needed to know was how to go about making herself *not care* while she was partying and hooking up, because, well, that was just how things went. Her voice broke a bit as she asked the question and the room became really quiet with the question just hanging in the air. I was dumbstruck. She silently but openly wept as I eventually responded that I would never, ever want to make it easier for her not to care about another person and or to ask so little for herself, body and soul. She seemed completely emotionally exhausted. I must admit that though I get questions like this all the time from young adults, each time I am left a little breathless by it.

When I talk about hooking up, dating, and relationships now, I do so in all sorts of venues and to all sorts of audiences, from large crowds in auditoriums to small groups in residence hall programs. And for the most part, I don’t talk all that much about sex, because I find that what really concerns young adults—what really scares them, what fascinates them, what moves them—are not really questions of sex but rather questions of intimacy. In the midst of their ubiquitous posting and twittering and snapchatting, despite their seemingly constant connecting through all modes of social media, the students I meet speak overwhelmingly about feeling quite disconnected, lonely, and fundamentally *not known* by others. This isn’t the death knell of relationships, of men or of sex, as some authors have recently claimed, but it certainly seems to signal a crisis of intimacy. So what is it then that is missing in the lives of these young adults and how can we help them, and ourselves, find what is lost?



Clearly, intimacy is not an easy notion to understand. Its meaning is broad and wide-ranging and it is often only recognized in its absence. While we regularly reduce its meaning to the closeness of a sexual relationship, there's little doubt that intimacy characterizes other relationships in our lives, those of parents and children, siblings, and good and caring friends. Isn't intimacy with God what we are striving for in a prayer life? It strikes me as helpful to pose the question: What are we doing when we are being intimate with another person, and why is *that* being intimate?

Common to all of the intimate relationships in my life is one central and abiding fact: that I have the distinct feeling that I *matter* to the other person. In those relationships, others who love me—my parents who are my biggest fans and like me more than I probably deserve, family members who've known me through all of the awkward moments of my life, friends who have been with me through bitterly sad and tremendously joyful times—share in my cares and concerns *because I matter* to them. And I in turn am willing to try to enter into the meanings and values of their lives and take their cares and concerns on as my own, not as facts and data, but as something meaningful and moving, because *they matter to me*. This may seem overly simplistic, but I find it helpful when talking with young adults about intimacy to ask if they notice these patterns in their different relationships—success and failures alike. Do you

feel like you *matter* to your friends, your roommates, your older brother, your girlfriend or boyfriend? If so, how is that shown to you? Do you know how to show someone else that she truly *matters* to you? How do you know if you truly matter to him? How would you know? What do you do when it becomes clear that you don't matter to a person you love? These are sometimes very painful questions to ask and answer. Young adulthood is when most of us first begin to recognize how very much is riding on our closest emotional ties. And it's a lot. It is also often when we discover how devastatingly precarious some of those emotional ties can be.

When I talk to students about their fears and desires and ask them to think about what they long for most in their lives, they assume that their desire to be loved and to be truly known by someone else will happen in marriage. While that will be true for most of them, I also ask them to consider the different kinds of love and closeness they have in their lives now. In most cases, young people can identify at least one friend who fits the description of Aristotle's "Friend of the Good," the highest and best type of friendship depicted in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. This type of friend comprehends what is good in me, brings more of that out in me, and wants the best for me. But truly wanting the best for someone involves knowing and seeing who she really is, not merely who she is *for me*. To have and to be a friend like this activates our ability *to be moved by someone*

else, to allow the meanings of my life to be changed and transformed by someone who wants what is good for me, which is perhaps not fully known to me. Intimacy that is found in friendships like this allows us to glimpse the best parts of ourselves and brings those parts into the light. It also builds in us a capacity for seeing the good in someone else and for letting the good in us be seen.

As JP II rightly surmised and wrote about beautifully in his *Theology of the Body*, intimacy involves *truly being seen* by another. This seems really right to me. It is in the gaze of someone who thinks I truly matter, who wants to value what I value, who desires what I truly desire, who wants to understand what I mean when I speak and act, that I begin to be recognized and known in the way I really long for. To be held in a gaze like that is the way of love that God wants for us, because it is the way that God loves us.

In the lives of young adults, this isn't easy to come by. Everyone has her own set of needs and worries, and the pace of keeping up and getting ahead means that really stopping and *seeing* another person or *being seen* demands so much time and asks perhaps too much of us. But again, intimacy is keenly felt in its absence, and young adults suffer its absence tremendously. What haunts them most is not the dismal job market, not their ballooning student loans, not the skyrocketing cost of living in most major American cities. What haunts them most is not ever being seen, or recognized, or loved by anyone beyond their own family circles. In worse cases, their fear is not mattering to anyone even within those most important first circles. In the very worst cases, there is the darkness of feeling that you do not matter even to God, that you are not held by God.

To be intimate with someone is to be held—to be held in the gaze of someone who really sees me, to be held up by a friend when I falter, to have my hand held as I go through a moment of grief or joy or beauty, to be held responsible by those I admire for the good and bad I do in the world, to be held in the arms of someone who wants the best for me, and then also, in the words of a friend who prays for me often, to be held in the light.

I have seen students thrive when they find themselves held by someone in a way that lets them know that they matter and that they are seen and known and loved. I have sat and listened as young adults tell me about people in their lives—a friend found in a small faith community, a parent who finally sees the adult instead of just the child, an unexpected mentor, a classmate who challenges them to “the more” on a service trip, a girlfriend or boyfriend who

makes them feel smarter and funnier and more lovable than they thought they were—who have helped them find better parts of themselves that they never imagined they would find. These are wondrous moments to witness. It is where flourishing is found.

Finally, I don't know about you, but even on a good day at Mass when I'm knee-deep in the prayerful rhythm of a liturgy, I get all tangled up in the newly worded response,

“I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.” Because of my entanglement there, I've spent a lot of time thinking about it and it seems to me to be about the intimacy we long for with God. Asking Christ to enter under my roof reminds me that intimacy marks the difference between *living* next to someone and *dwelling* with them—letting another person truly enter into my life, to move my cares and concerns and to be moved by his. When you dwell with

someone else—a friend, a spouse, Jesus—your reality becomes a shared reality and you make the horizon of that person's meanings and values your own. You also let your meanings and values be carried and shaped by someone else. It seems to me that this is the answer to the question, what am I doing when I am being intimate? To the further question, why is *that* being intimate? Well, when I ask my students about intimacy in their own lives, they usually default to a popular Facebook adage: “It's complicated.” Let me tell you, you've got that right. ■

KERRY CRONIN is the coeditor of this issue of *C21 Resources* and has emerged as a “relationships guru,” speaking to student audiences on such topics as “The Imperfect Art of Dating” and “Sex and the Single Student.”

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 Watch several C21 videos featuring Kerry Cronin: “The Imperfect Art of Dating”

“Rules of the 1st Date”

“Love that Transforms: How the Resurrection Challenges Us”

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*...intimacy marks
the difference between
living next to someone
and dwelling with them.*



SEX AND THE SINGLE STUDENT

An interview with Donna Freitas

How would you characterize "hookup culture" for our readers?

Most people (and studies) define hooking up as (1) engaging in sexual activity in a casual context, and (2) that the range of sexual activity is often described as anything from kissing to oral sex and/or different types of intercourse. (Also, alcohol is typically part of the equation.) While this description is accurate, it leaves out what truly distinguishes a hookup: the shared goal between partners of erasing, at least shutting out emotional (and, for some, spiritual) content from the experience. Theoretically, a hookup should be purely physical. Aspiring to pure physicality for the encounter allows partners to believe casual sexual intimacy (no strings attached) is feasible. This distinguishing factor cuts across gender and sexual orientation.

So, it's possible to see hookup culture as a kind of training ground where, at least on a college campus, students (to borrow from Aristotle) habituate themselves to understand and experience sex/sexuality as devoid of emotional and spiritual intimacy. And this "habit" requires practice, providing a circularity to hook-up culture. Not surprisingly, few students spoke of such "successful hookups,"

where they enjoyed hooking up without any emotional or spiritual cost. The average college student—regardless of what she or he brags or tells is friends—is terrible at shutting out the emotional and spiritual (which for many students is simply "the meaningful") dimensions of sexual intimacy. They try and try (so to speak) and still they fail. Eventually, this exhausts them, sometimes quite literally.

This brings us to why the vast majority of students interviewed at participating Catholic, private secular, and public colleges and universities where hookup culture is the norm when it comes to student sexual practices and ethos on campus are so unhappy with it. Students will say that "everyone hooks up," that hooking up is supposed to be "the best ever" (especially if you are a man), and become skilled at acting this part of the "typical" college student. Yet, deep down, when given a safe space to express how they really feel about peer student attitudes and behaviors about sex on campus with regard to sex, they are quick to express dismay, to distance themselves from it, and to wish hookup culture simply didn't exist.

What is different, or distinctive, about this generation of students with regard to their sexual behavior? Not just different from the pre-Vatican II years, but different from the '60s and '70s?

Let me start by saying that paying attention to generational differences and fostering intergenerational conversation especially to theology and religion is a priority I've defended and advocated throughout my scholarly career. I've often said that scholars and theologians (especially Catholic ones) pay attention to every particularity (gender, ethnicity, class, etc.) *but* generation.

That said, focusing on generational comparisons when it comes to the heart of the issues that *Sex and the Soul* raises gets us off topic, if what we are trying to do is truly understand students' experience of sexuality/sexual activity and its larger (or lack of) meaning in their lives today. Like the scholarly tendency to value hard data (statistics) above qualitative (narrative) data—which does little toward practically addressing the quality of life and meaning for college students on this issue—we (faculty,



clergy, administration, staff) need to do our best to avoid the temptation to default to “what happened way back when vs. now,” and on statistics alone to guide our attitudes, even selection of course materials.

Let's imagine that a group of Catholic students are sexually active. Would they consider themselves good Catholics and might even attend Mass and communion regularly? Would they see this as a contradiction?

Many students I interviewed who identified as Catholic were not practicing, if practicing means attending Mass and communion regularly. (As an aside: I've been speaking a lot recently on how we need to reenvision the nature of practice in ways that better accommodate generational changes and activities, so as to include and respect the way a new generation of Catholics “practice”—just some food for thought.) These students—as I emphasize in *Sex and the Soul*—are not so much apathetic, as so many studies and scholars have characterized younger generations of Catholics, as they are often passionately angry at their faith tradition, hostile, and deeply

searching for spiritual meaning wherever they can find it, usually privately.

That said, I found Catholic students who went to Mass and communion regularly who were also regularly sexually active and participatory in hookup culture, and who saw no conflict between these two dimensions of their lives. The reason most of these students (and others who identified as Catholic but did not regularly go to Mass) gave for this is that (a) the Catholic Church's teachings on sex are outdated and irrelevant to their lives, culture, and generational experience and (b) the only “teachings” they got from Catholicism about sex were what I called the “three word teachings”: “don't do it” and “don't be gay” which, understandably, these students find as impoverished.

In my opinion, the way to enliven the Catholic tradition in ways that are useful for students today is not to default again and again to the “usual suspects” (*Humanae Vitae*, *Theology of the Body*) from moral theology, which typically lead to a lot of dos and don'ts (legalistic teachings) about sex, and which, for most Catholic students, fall on deaf ears. It's instead, to begin with the knowledge that our students are *starving* for practical, spiritual resources to help them reflect on the meaning of sex in their lives, as well as make good decisions

about sex, dating, who they go out with/partner with, etc... The best resources Catholicism has to offer this disillusioned and disenfranchised population are teachings that, at least directly, have *nothing* to do with sex. I typically mine Catholic spiritual traditions for resources and doorways toward new conversations.

My challenge to faculty on campus: Develop a course on relationships (in general), or, even better, on dating, romance, and hookup culture. You not only will have your course fill up in minutes, but I promise lively, engaged discussion of the readings and topics throughout the semester, and best of all, empowering your students to take up their own authority on these issues as members of a new generation. In my experience, at least, it can cause a revolution on campus on all sorts of levels. If it weren't for teaching a course on dating, I wouldn't have done a national study (in conjunction with students from the course) and written *Sex and the Soul*. ■

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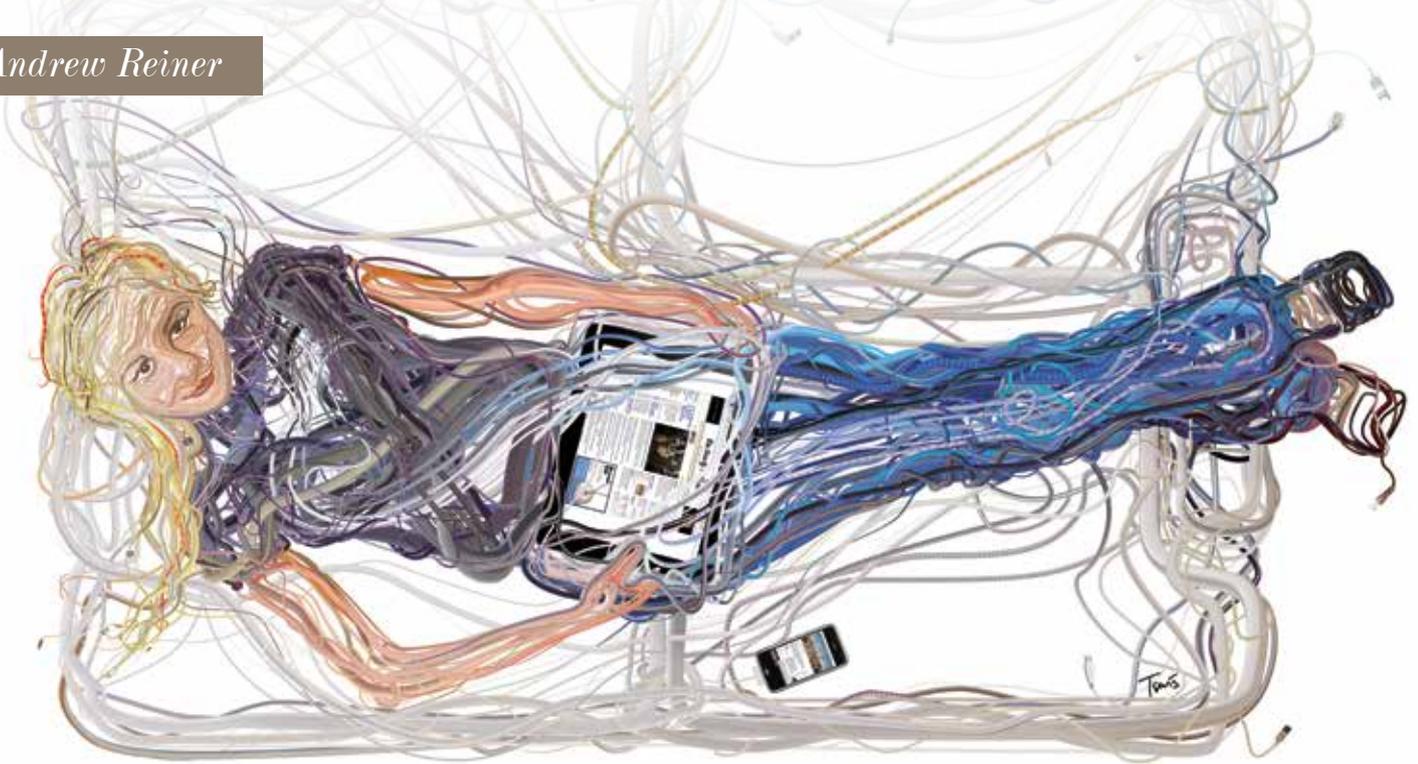
Full interview was originally published Spring 2010 in *Conversations*. Reprinted with permission.

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LOOKING for INTIMACY in the AGE of FACEBOOK

Andrew Reiner



Forming the lives of young people to be capable of loving and committed relationships is a great challenge in the digital age. Young people spend hours carefully calculating how to present themselves to online “friends” through social media profiles. Such obsession with public persona perhaps comes at the expense of the sincerity and vulnerability cultivated through personal interactions—critical experiences needed for a mature journey into adulthood. The rising prominence of social media represents not only a challenge but also an opportunity to engage young people in conversations about the need for authentic (and sustained) intimacy. The classroom is an excellent venue for such work. Andrew Reiner provides a salient telling of intentional classroom encounters between personal vulnerability and public persona. ~ Casey Beaumier, S.J.

“I want you to send a text to a friend,” I told students in my course, *The Search for Intimacy in the Age of Facebook*. “It has to be a text that shares your true feelings about something this friend has done or said that upset you but that you never said anything about. And you can’t spend a lot of time agonizing over the wording. Say what you mean and hit ‘send.’”

Their eyes bugged wider than when we had talked about hookups. “I’m really hating you right now,”

one student murmured, half-jokingly, her eyes locked in the oncoming headlights.

This dilating of my students’ apertures, I’ve come to believe, is exactly what they need both in and outside the classroom if they are going to have the kind of success and fulfillment they desire. That’s because the parts of their lives that truly matter to many of them during college—high marks and solid “A” social lives—are undermined by a widespread, constricting social anxiety that comes,

paradoxically, from two of their greatest pleasures: texting and social media. A small but growing body of evidence suggests that excessive social media use can lead to an unhealthy fixation on how one is perceived and an obsessive competitiveness. Perhaps not surprisingly, this angsting can also lead to an unhealthy quest for perfection, a social perfection, which breeds an aperture-narrowing conformity.

I got my first glimpse of this at Towson University, where I teach. When I entered the classroom for

the first time, I was baffled by glaring contradictions. Students arrived to class early yet they sat still, avoided eye contact, and rarely took part in discussions. (If and when they finally spoke up, it usually came on the heels of another student's comment, and they invariably prefaced their remarks by saying, "First of all, I agree with what you just said," even if they contradicted their classmate in the next breath.) They handed in assignments (on time) that were formatted with the kind of attention to detail and design you might find in a shareholder's prospectus. Yet the ideas darted in so many directions like dragonflies, never penetrating the surface.

I implored students to dig deeper, to mine the complexity and creativity of their ideas; they responded with fancy fonts and grammar check. Frustrated and looking for answers, I took the direct approach and asked students to journal about their risk-taking reticence. A few brave souls confessed to fearing classmates' judgment for saying or writing something "stupid" or, worse, something that "set them apart."

I remembered quiet classrooms from my college days, but this was different. Their avoidant silence ultimately hurt their grades and was part of the reason I developed the intimacy course.

More than another literature or creative writing course, these students needed a guide to the twisted subterranean landscape beneath their plugged-in social lives. Texting seemed like the logical place to drop our first pin. Even though it hasn't yet seduced researchers the way Facebook has, texting incites profound cultural unrest. Literally. Recent studies have found that many participants reacted like addicts when separated from their cellphones, while other studies have found that the "sleeping disorders" some high schoolers experience result from cuddling up with text messages all night.

My students have confessed to both these behaviors, admitting that they fear "falling out of the loop" if they

don't respond to friends' messages immediately, regardless of the hour. This is a generation so consumed with surface connection they will do anything to appear connected, including pretending to text when alone so they don't look, as one student said, "like a total loser without friends."

The brevity of texting, or textese, which calls for a carefully calculated language of emotionless evasion, sidesteps confrontation. In assigning the in-class texting experiment, I wanted students to take a risk and confront one of their biggest fears: stepping into the muck and mire of emotional candor and sincerity.

This was no small feat. One student wrote that she grew most "anxious about simply saying what was bothering me" to a friend. "Showing that I have a different opinion than her," she wrote, "made me worry that she would dislike me." Another student wrote about the quandary of whom to text: "I tried to think of someone I could text without . . . losing a friendship."

Lightning-bolt epiphanies never surfaced, but students had stood apart from their crowd, even if on command. Many of them had liked the way that felt. For a day I basked in this hopeful afterglow.

And the next morning I walked into the classroom.

Students sat in the darkened room, poring over Facebook on their laptops and smartphones. The experiment's luster had faded. It was inevitable, really. Studies show that American college students spend, on average, three hours texting and an hour and 40 minutes on Facebook every day. One of the more recent studies centers on the *Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale*: Norwegian researchers have observed that excessive Facebook use leads to higher rates of anxiety and social insecurity.

As my students roundly admit, much of their time on Facebook is spent on their profiles. They edit, Photoshop, and solicit the "right" messages and photographs for their profiles with an obsession worthy of a lengthy research paper. The ultimate goal? Racking up

"Likes." In the world of Generation Y, that means conforming to the narrow lens of perceived perfection—mugging like a celebrity at parties, hanging with A-list hookups. Such photos illustrate the Facebook code: "Likes" are the new extraordinary. God help the poor soul who bleeds pedestrian, vulnerable feelings like sadness or melancholy onto her or someone else's wall. As a student recently observed to a sea of nodding heads: "That kind of panhandling for attention is just pathetic. It has no place on Facebook."

On the heels of this armored bravado, I asked students to take on another experiment, one that challenged their Facebook ethos: to eat in a crowded university dining room without the company of school work, laptops, or smartphones. Or friends. Then they had to journal about it.

The results were sobering. "I gathered my things and bolted out the door," one student wrote about her reaction once she finished her meal. "I was glad that I could feel like I belong somewhere again. . . . What I hated most was being alone and feeling like I was being judged for it." Another student echoed this experience. "By not having my phone or laptop to hide behind, it was amazing how self-conscious I felt," she wrote.

I shared the goal of this experiment with my students recently. Most of their eyes and mouths narrowed as they suggested that I had missed my mark, ignoring the candor in their reflections. Except for one student. She confessed to what could be the anthem for this porcelain generation: "I realized something disturbing after doing this. If I don't feel connected with others, I automatically feel alone, unpopular, less confident." A sea of eyes jarred open in unexpected solidarity. ■

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Thou Shalt

Sex Beyond the List of Don'ts

Lisa Fullam

Walk into a school of music and observe the man in his forties just learning the violin. He struggles a bit with tone and pitch, and his fingers still get sore from the strings, but he wants to be able to express himself musically in the mode that the violin allows. He devotes himself to practice so that he may be not just a man learning the violin, but a violinist.

The virtue ethics of Thomas Aquinas is about this kind of process. In this approach, virtues are defined as “perfections” of our natural capacities, not just for certain types of activity but for human moral life as a whole. Aquinas follows Aristotle, who noted that we “become builders by building and lyre players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.”

What happens when we apply this very traditional mode of ethical reflection to the questions of sexual ethics? The morality of sex has long been the focus of Christian teachings—and prohibitions. I propose a three-fold end or goal, a telos, that might be a starting point for a new conversation about sex.

Christian ethical reflection on sex has tended to focus on what makes individual sex acts morally right or wrong. This view of sex that looks at acts objectively and tends to regard

anything sexual as probably sinful has resulted in a rule-focused sexual morality generally expressed as lists of don'ts: Don't masturbate. Don't have sex before marriage. Don't use contraception when you have sex in marriage. Don't have sex outside marriage. Don't have sex with someone of your own sex. Don't abuse others sexually. I'm not dismissing these don'ts out of hand: Some don'ts are of great value, some are less valuable, and some are grounded in bad biology, bad psychology, or bad theology and should be discarded. But to limit our ethical talk of sex and sexuality to the don'ts is a theological and also a spiritual error, not unlike limiting a discussion of Christian life to talking about sin.

A goal we might seek in our sex lives, I suggest, may be described in three dimensions: a feel for incarnation, an ability for intimacy, and an eye for insight. I'll describe each of them, but they work together like a trinity—three aspects of one reality. I invite you to examine this proposal in light of your own feelings, beliefs, understandings, and experiences.

INCARNATION

Incarnation is a central motif of Christian anthropology. We speak of Jesus as God incarnate, but the very notion that God can be fully human, like us in all things but sin, is a bold

proclamation of the ineradicable goodness of human embodiment generally—not just Jesus' incarnation, but our own. We are not spirits trapped in matter; neither are we mere matter that has stumbled into self-awareness. Rather, Christian tradition holds that we are incarnate spirit, an indivisible body-soul-spirit composite. When we are lost in sexual passion, there's usually not a lot of thinking going on—we are taken up in our bodiliness. Certainly pleasure is one of the obvious ends we hope for in our sex lives: there is a huge array of sexual pleasures, and pleasure by proxy, as it were, when we delight in the delight of our partner.

Developing a feel for incarnation includes mutual pleasure, and goes further. A sense of our incarnate selves leads us to pay attention to our overall well-being—physical, emotional, and spiritual.

INTIMACY

Intimacy is a central goal of sex. Like the other dimensions of excellent sex, it's a goal because it cannot be taken for granted, and because it is something that can deepen with attentive practice. Intimacy is not a yes or no question, but a matter of depth and degree. In a minimalist, list of don'ts ethics, so long as you meet the minimal criteria for permissible sex, all guidance ceases. But a married



couple not breaking any “rules” might still struggle with a lack of intimacy and fulfillment in their sexual relationship.

Intimacy as one of the three aspects of excellent sex is related to incarnation—sex expresses a personal reality, not only a bodily one. At the same time, it calls us to an emotional and psychological openness and vulnerability that can be far more challenging than just physical sex. One of the virtues cultivated in what Christian ethicist Karen Lebacqz called “appropriate vulnerability” is trust. A person who shies away from vulnerability will never know the freedom that can come through trusting another person with our bodies, thoughts, feelings, and desires. To be accepted by another in this intimate way in turn contributes to the third dimension of excellent sex, which is an eye for insight.

INSIGHT

Insight means more than just perception; it implies a deeper level of cognition. While an observation like “she moved out” is a matter of objective fact, the evaluation “she doesn’t love me anymore” is a deeper awareness of a fuller—and more painful—human meaning behind the observed act.

It is insight that invites us to see the echoes of our relationships beyond the immediacy of partners to include family, society as a whole, and our

relationship to God. Insight allows us to come to a better understanding of how sexual relationships have played out in our lives in the past, and how we might use that experience in present and future relationships. Insight calls us to cultivate the virtue of compassion for our own mistakes and those of others, and to be committed to what sustains stronger intimate relationships. Insight reveals connections that may not have been apparent and sharpens our vision of what might be.

Insight is especially engaged when we begin to catch the echoes between our sexual lives and our spiritual lives. Christian tradition has tended to associate spirituality with sexual abstinence, but to think of sex as opposed to spiritual excellence or as inhibiting spiritual growth is inconsistent with a true understanding of our incarnate nature.

The list of virtues for excellent sex, of course, doesn’t end with those I’ve mentioned here. The triune end of incarnation, intimacy, and insight is sought via a panoply of virtues, ranging from patience, humility, and forgiveness to honesty, attentiveness, and playfulness. And the wonder of it all is that it is exactly in the pursuit of excellent sex that we discover the particular contours and textures of the form it will take in our own lives, just as in each generation Christians incarnate the faith anew, responding

to the voice of God as we and those who’ve gone before us have discerned it. In excellent sex, we celebrate that we were created by Love, to be love, and make love, in the world. ■

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 Watch Lisa Fullum's video presentation, "Women, Virtue and Sexuality" www.bc.edu/c21relationships



THEOLOGY of the BODY

Pope John Paul II

The beginning” means that which *Genesis* speaks about.

Christ quoted *Genesis* 1:27 in summary form: “In the beginning the Creator made them male and female.” The original passage reads textually as follows: “God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Subsequently, the Master referred to *Genesis* 2:24: “Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.” Quoting these words almost in full, Christ gave them an even more explicit normative meaning (since it could be supported that in *Genesis* they express *de facto* statements: “leaves, cleaves, they become one flesh”). The normative meaning is plausible since Christ did not confine himself only to the quotation itself, but added: “So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” That “let not man put asunder” is decisive. In the light of these words of Christ, *Genesis* 2:24 sets forth the principle of the unity and indissolubility of marriage as the very content of the Word of God, expressed in the most ancient revelation.

We find ourselves, therefore, almost at the very core of the anthropological reality, the name of which is “body,” the human body. However, as can easily be seen, this core is not only anthropological, but also essentially theological. Right from the beginning, the theology of the body is bound up with the creation of man in the image of God. It becomes, in a way, also the theology of sex, or rather the theology of masculinity and femininity, which has its starting point here in *Genesis*.

The original meaning of unity, to which words of *Genesis* 2:24 bear witness, will have in the revelation of God an ample and distant perspective. This unity through the body—“and the two will be one flesh”—possesses a multiform dimension. It possesses an ethical dimension, as is confirmed by Christ’s answer to the Pharisees in *Matthew* 19 (cf. *Mk* 10). It also has a sacramental dimension, a strictly theological one, as is proved by St. Paul’s words to the *Ephesians* (3), which refer also to the tradition of the prophets (*Hosea*, *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*). And this is so because that unity which is realized through the body indicates, right from the beginning, not only the “body,” but also the “incarnate”

communion of persons—*communio personarum*—and calls for this communion right from the beginning.

Masculinity and femininity express *the dual aspect of man’s somatic constitution*. (“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”), and indicate, furthermore, through the same words of *Genesis* 2:23, they indicate *the new consciousness of the sense of one’s own body*: a sense which, it can be said, consists in a mutual enrichment. Precisely this consciousness, through which humanity is formed again as the communion of persons, seems to be the layer which in the narrative of the creation of man (and in the revelation of the body contained in it) is deeper than his somatic structure as male and female. In any case, this structure is presented right from the beginning with a deep consciousness of human corporality and sexuality, and that establishes an inalienable norm for the understanding of man on the theological plane. ■

Selection from John Paul II’s General Audience address entitled *On the Indissolubility of Marriage*, given September 5, 1979.

Full text and references can be accessed at the Vatican website at www.vatican.va



Catechism of the Catholic Church

2332 *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.

2333 Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual *identity*. Physical, moral, and spiritual *difference* and *complementarity* are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.

2337 Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man’s belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman. The virtue of chastity therefore involves the integrity of the person and the integrality of the gift.

2361 Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, 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 is an integral part of the love by which a man and woman commit themselves totally to one another.

GOD is LOVE

Pope Benedict XVI

There is a certain relationship between love and the Divine: love promises infinity, eternity—a reality far greater and totally other than our everyday existence. Yet we have also seen that the way to attain this goal is not simply by submitting to instinct. Purification and growth in maturity are called for; and these also pass through the path of renunciation. Far from rejecting or “poisoning” *eros*, they heal it and restore its true grandeur.

This is due first and foremost to the fact that man is a being made up of body and soul. Man is truly himself when his body and soul are intimately united; the challenge of *eros* can be said to be truly overcome when this unification is achieved. Should he aspire to be pure spirit and to reject the flesh as pertaining to his animal nature alone, then spirit and body would both lose their dignity. On the other hand, should he deny the spirit and consider matter, the body, as the only reality, he would likewise lose his greatness. The epicure Gassendi used to offer Descartes the humorous greeting: “O Soul!” And Descartes would reply: “O Flesh!”[3] Yet it is neither the spirit alone nor the body alone that loves: it is man, the person, a unified creature composed of body and soul, who loves. Only when both dimensions

are truly united, does man attain his full stature. Only thus is love —*eros*— able to mature and attain its authentic grandeur.

It is part of love's growth towards higher levels and inward purification that it now seeks to become definitive, and it does so in a twofold sense: both in the sense of exclusivity (this particular person alone) and in the sense of being “forever.” Love embraces the whole of existence in each of its dimensions, including the dimension of time. It could hardly be otherwise, since its promise looks towards its definitive goal: love looks to the eternal. Love is indeed “ecstasy,” not in the sense of a moment of intoxication, but rather as a journey, an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward-looking self towards its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God: “Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it” (*Lk* 17:33), as Jesus says throughout the Gospels (cf. *Mt* 10:39; 16:25; *Mk* 8:35; *Lk* 9:24; *Jn* 12:25). In these words, Jesus portrays his own path, which leads through the Cross to the Resurrection: the path of the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies, and in this way bears much fruit. Starting from the depths of his own sacrifice and of the love that reaches

fulfillment therein, he also portrays in these words the essence of love and indeed of human life itself.

Yet *eros* and *agape*—ascending love and descending love—can never be completely separated. The more the two, in their different aspects, find a proper unity in the one reality of love, the more the true nature of love in general is realized. Even if *eros* is at first mainly covetous and ascending, a fascination for the great promise of happiness, in drawing near to the other, it is less and less concerned with itself, increasingly seeks the happiness of the other, is concerned more and more with the beloved, bestows itself and wants to “be there for” the other. The element of *agape* thus enters into this love, for otherwise *eros* is impoverished and even loses its own nature. On the other hand, man cannot live by oblation, descending love alone. He cannot always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift. ■

Selection from Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, published December 25, 2005.

Full text and references can be accessed at the Vatican website at www.vatican.va

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The Embodied Self

Michael Novak

In the very first year of his papacy, Pope John Paul II planted a time bomb in the Church that is not likely to go off until about 20 years from now. Beginning in September 1979, he devoted 15 minutes of each weekly general audience over a five-year period to sustained, dense, and rigorous meditations on human sexuality. Reflecting on key biblical passages, the pope began by wondering what it meant to Adam, walking in the garden, to discover that he was alone as an embodied self. He also asked what it means to Karol Wojtyła, and the rest of us, to be embodied selves.

In the 129 public addresses that Pope John Paul II delivered over those five years he went back to the Word of God to try to fathom the Creator's intentions in this puzzling work of His. The pope began with Adam in his solitude. Adam walked alone as a species, neither vegetable nor mineral, neither God nor animal, and not an angel, either. He stood alone in all creation. He did not have the company of his own kind. Neither could he procreate, and so assure the continuation of his species. His was a poignant solitude, a truly silent solitude. It was not, the Bible tells us, good. It lacked an essential part.

And so from Adam's flesh—to underline the oneness of the human essence—God created Eve. Not just “woman,” but a person with a name, face, shape, and personality. One inescapable point of this account is that the human being is two-in-one. “Male and female He created them in the beginning.” To make man two-in-one was God's intention, from even before time began.

Further, if the human being is made “in the image of God” (the second point the Bible insists upon), it is as “male and female” together. Something in our male-and-femaleness-together pulls back the veil on what God is like. The distinctness of our being male and female is revelatory of God's own being and inner life.

We human beings are not “persons” in the way an angel is. We are each embodied male or female, and it is in our communion with one another that we are “images of God.” Each gender alone is incompletely human. We are made for the communion of male with female.

Their sexed individuality was given Adam and Eve so that, in becoming one, they might heal their essential incompleteness, and come into existence as the one essence God intended “from the beginning.” By willing the good of the other—that is, by self-giving love—male and female become one in spirit, will, and truth. That gift comes not solely from one, unrequited; the gift of one is matched by the gift of the other, freely given; their love is mutual. To speak of Adam and Eve as “in communion” is to capture their gift of each to each. Their beings come to rest in one another.

Consider the relation of Wojtyła to Aquinas. Thomas Gilby once said of Aquinas that he paid things, in the act of rendering them in their complexity, “the compliment of attempting to do so without breaking into poetry.” Yet, as Gilby shows in putting together a miscellany of Aquinas' texts on love, Aquinas did not fall short of poetry by much:

Love is more unitive than knowledge

in seeking the thing, not the thing's reason; its bent is to a real union. Other effects of love he also enumerates: a reciprocal abiding [*mutua inhaesio*], of lover and beloved together as one; a transport [*extasis*] out of the self to the other; an ardent cherishing [*zelus*] of another; a melting [*liquefactio*] so that the heart is unfrozen and open to be entered; a longing in absence [*languor*], heat in pursuit [*fervor*], and enjoyment in presence [*fruitio*]. In delight, too, there is an all at once wholeness and timelessness that reflect the *tota simul* of eternity; an edge of sadness similar to that of the Gift of Knowledge; an expansion of spirit; a complete fulfillment of activity without satiety, *for they that drink shall yet thirst*.

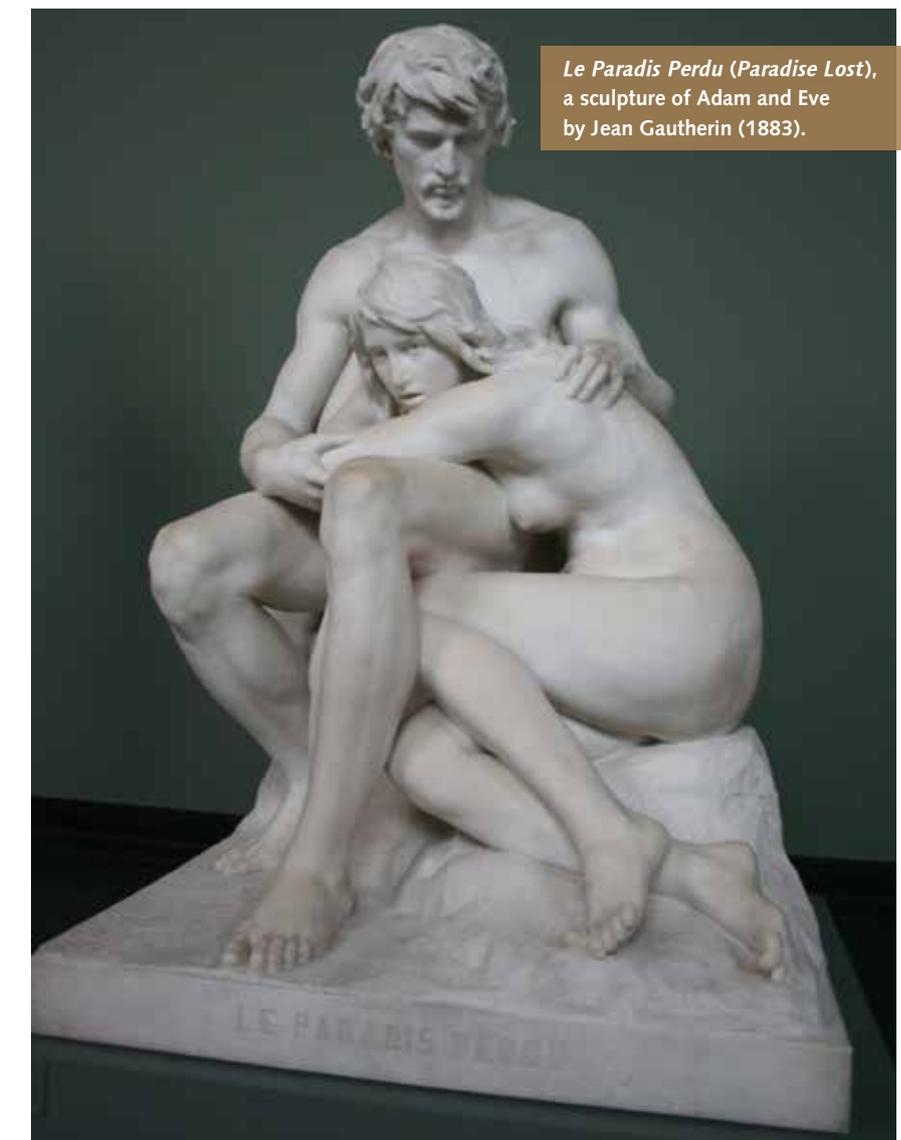
Wojtyła, too, is a poet, but he grew up under Nazi occupation, and was driven to deeper depths by the knowledge of sheer terror and the need for steely will. When all around his friends were being brutalized, dehumanized, and exterminated with ruthlessly systematic purpose, the “communion of subjects” came to seem to him more rare and precious. It was to the interiority of the human subject that events had driven him. Where Aquinas had written, “Love is more unitive than knowledge in seeking the *thing*, not the *thing's* reason,” Wojtyła would write “subject” in the place of “thing.” Rigorously, he would take Aquinas and drive every term of his analysis inward, toward the subject, and toward that *communio* in which two subjects fuse as one. The only trustworthy path, experience had shown the young Wojtyła, is self-donating will, willing the good of the other, no matter how one feels. Under

terror, one's own feelings cannot at all times be trusted.

For the young priest and later pope, even celibacy is understood in the light of matrimony, the sacrament by which the Creator revealed to humankind the *communio* of His own nature. Thus, the second set of the pope's meditations, begun in 1980, concerns the trick question the Sadducees put to Jesus: If a woman was married and widowed seven times, with which husband shall she be joined in Paradise? Jesus answered that the Sadducees misapprehended Paradise. It is not that humans there are bodiless but that *communio* comes to the fore, communion with "the Love that moves the sun and other stars," in Whose will is peace. The unity with God that constitutes Paradise is to will the good of the other, to be one with God's own love for all.

This is the love that enflames the person who commits his life, for that Kingdom of Heaven's sake, to celibacy. He wills totally the will of God, in Himself and for all humankind. His *communio* does not falsify, it vindicates, the love that a man offers to a woman, a woman to a man, in its total self-givingness. The two kinds of love, matrimonial and celibate, shed a kind of light upon each other. Matrimony reminds us of the earthiness of human clay, breathed upon by God's love, and of the completed, united twoness of our essential nature. G.K. Chesterton was being more than merely witty when he defined the married couple as a four-legged animal infused with love. But celibacy dramatizes for us that the source of unity in love is the total giving of two wills, focused on the good of the other. Celibacy is no denial of the body, only a leapfrog over to the gift of will for the Creator and Redeemer's use. Married and celibate teach each other depths of love.

In this perspective, the pope thoroughly refashioned the standpoint of *Humanae Vitae*. Instead of visualizing the moral task in married love as "endurance," the pope asks: How can married love grow into



Le Paradis Perdu (Paradise Lost), a sculpture of Adam and Eve by Jean Gautherin (1883).

the fullness of human nature, in its highest possibilities for self-giving love? Instead of focusing on "birth control," the pope turns to the first of the cardinal virtues, practical wisdom (*prudentia, phronesis*), and speaks of the excellence of prudence in deciding, in God's presence, how many children to have—how to "regulate" fertility. Practical experience teaches a couple that, willy-nilly, they will need to practice abstinence at times, just as they at times enjoy ecstasy—and the tension of that drama is a large part of human excellence. Prudence, temperance, justice, courage—excellence in all four cardinal virtues heightens excellence in married love.

Instead of asking, "What am I forbidden to do?" moral inquiry ought to ask: "How do we shape our

lives of sexual love in ways that fulfill our dignity?" The pope suggests that married couples regard sexual love in marriage as a school, always bringing out in them new excellences, and bringing them deeper into participation in God's own love within them.

At the very head of the Book it is written: "Male and female He made them from the beginning. He made them in His image." Should we miss the point of that, it's hard to believe we'd get much right about the rest. ■

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WRESTLING WITH THE IN BETWEEN

Marianne L. Tierney



Hardly a week goes by without various friends on Facebook announcing their engagement or posting recent wedding pictures. I counted 23 weddings that I have attended since 2008 with several more lined up for this year or next. Granted, I know that I am just “in that age” and that this is not necessarily uncommon, but it does indicate to me how people my age are seriously interested in getting married. I place myself in this space too; I’d like to be married someday. But for now, I’m single (as in “not married;” I am actually in a committed relationship but according to my tax filings, I’m “single.”)

For me, the single life right now is about being in between phases of life, and it can be scary. The Church

has recommendations about marriage and religious life, but doesn’t actually offer a lot of guidance in terms of navigating the single life. Statistics show that people are waiting until they have chosen careers and set a foundation for themselves before they get married, and couples often try on the idea of living together before marriage. My friends and I have discussed all of these ideas and found that we are often left to discern our paths without Church teaching to guide us.

Ultimately, I feel like I am called to be in a committed relationship. I know that there are people who embrace the single life and there are people who live consecrated single lives as well as people who take religious vows, and

I respect all of those calls. Those calls are just not mine. But my dedication to a call I think I have has not always been easy. Just because we are called to something does not mean it happens automatically. There have been times in my life when I didn't know what the future held for me and when I felt incredibly vulnerable. The space of thinking I know what God wants for me and the actual lived reality of it don't always match up precisely, and that can be daunting and even a little lonely.

I have one friend who talks about how he thinks we all experience God in ways that are different but consistent. So the way he experiences God may not be the way I experience God, but he experiences God in a way that makes sense to him over time and follows a consistent pattern. I'm not sure I believe in this theory, but when we were discussing it once, I came to the conclusion that the pattern I saw in my life for experiencing God was that I would make a firm and exacting plan about how things would go and I would think I had things figured out, and then God would say, "Nope. Not like that at all." This was a frustrating realization.

This in-between space of developing myself as an individual and anticipating what I hope to be the fulfillment of a call to get married can get complicated. Don't get me wrong; being not married can be wonderful. I've had 15 different roommates in the last five years since being single has allowed me to live in houses or apartments with friends, and it has been a blast (most of the time). I currently live by myself and I love that, too. These are things I would not have necessarily experience as a married person.

Friendships are an important part of all of our lives, but for me, my friends are often my dinner companions, my conversation partners, and my weekend co-adventurers. Friends whom I have known my entire life, surround me. This comes from being part of a family that is particularly rooted in a certain place and the fact that I am still living in that place. The time I am able to make for my family is also a huge advantage to currently being single. My relationships with my brother and my sister, for example, are invaluable to me and it is important for me to be able to make time for them. Holidays for me are still spent with my parents, my siblings, my cousins, and my grandmother, and since I know that shared holidays are often part of what comes with being married, I'm glad I have had these years with my family.

Despite the advantages of being unmarried, the single life is not one to which most people are excited to commit their lives. God created us to be in relationship with one another and it is human nature to seek intimacy with others. So while we are in this in-between stage of life where we are discerning what kind of people we are becoming and how we will live with others, what kinds of resources from the tradition can we draw on?

The image of the Trinity has been helpful for me when thinking about relationships. I love the communal aspect of the Trinity and the idea that God in God's very self is

"The now prevalent behaviors of sex before marriage, cohabitation, and unwed parenthood are, in part, responses and adjustments to a prolonged period of single life before marriage. The challenge is: How best to guide young single people through the long passage from adolescence to marriage in ways that are consistent with Church teachings? What kind of practical supports would help young people remain faithful to such teachings?"

~ Barbara Dafoe Whitehead

A selection from *Trends Shaping Youthful Sexuality*

modeling a perfect community with not just two but three persons. The agapic love that God displays in God's very being provides a way to think about entering into intimate relationships that affect more than just two people. My life has meaning and purpose because of the people by whom I am surrounded and with whom I am in relationship. Sure, my work is important to me and I derive joy from doing it, but the people in my life, the people who have formed me into someone who is capable of doing my work, are what really matter to me. Thomas Aquinas says that the ultimate goal of human life is friendship with God and we are only capable of this with God's help. I see this ideal of friendship with God through a lens of relationality and intimacy with others and I continue to strive for it. Intimacy for the single person can be about a one-on-one relationship between that person and God, but for me, it has been more important to recognize God as being mediated through those around me. My closest friends and my family have helped me understand God's love in ways that continuously teach me new things.

My life as a currently unmarried woman is very rich and very full. The Church has helped me grow up with a solid foundation and an understanding that God is love, but now that I am an adult, the Church doesn't have much to give me by way of doctrinal teachings on relationships. My faith and my friendships with people who care about me have been some of my best resources when thinking about the questions of how to answer a call when it doesn't seem obvious. As I continue to navigate this in-between space I look to images from the tradition to serve as a compass and guide me. I have experienced that God is love and I have grown into someone who is capable of true intimacy. And I look forward to a future where my friendship with God, through intimacy with others, continues to flourish. ■

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 16: *The Annunciation* by Henry Ossawa Tanner 1898 ©Corbis



God gave me a gay son

Thomas A. Nelson

Mark gazed out the small window of his dorm room. It was Saturday morning and the bitter cold bleakness outside matched his mood. His anguish—realizing that he was attracted to some of the young men around him and the conviction that those feelings would disgust people—fed his terrible feeling of isolation and left him feeling numb. He didn't think it was his fault; he wondered if God had made him that way. But it wasn't a problem he could talk about, not to family, not to friends. No one could help him. Even God didn't answer.

So on this Saturday morning Mark realized nothing really mattered anymore. It could only get worse. And while it frightened him—having considered it for quite a long time—he also knew how he could fix it. The only way to confront this demon was to end it all. Nobody would understand it anyway. *He* didn't understand it. But he knew he was gay, and he knew being gay was an abomination. So he would put an end to his agony. Suicide, he had decided, would be less painful to his family than revealing to them who he really was.

Mark went to the window and gazed at the gray blur of the winter storm. He thought: It will be easy. Just take that bottle of prescription pain killers. No more anguish. No more self-hatred.

No more struggling. The hell with it then. God forgive me. And the thought became the act...

I enjoyed a thoroughly Catholic education, from elementary school through college. The Church was a central part of my loving family. After graduating from Notre Dame, I had a certitude about religion and morality. My understanding of the contemporary culture was defined by a black-and-white perspective on most issues. I felt comfortable expressing my views on those things, and often did. I was solidly Roman Catholic, more than proud of it and ready to defend it to anyone.

Trish came to our marriage as cloaked in traditional Catholicism as I did. She, too, had enjoyed 16 years of Catholic education, though she wasn't the cocksure moralist that I was. Typical of that time, our children came early and often. Having five girls and one boy in the first eight years of marriage was part of our education.

Life confronted us with the usual mundane hurdles all families experience, and we handled them as best we could. Our best efforts couldn't totally shelter our family from the dangers and challenges of those days.

However, armed with self-assurance and the absolute truth endowed to us by our Catholic background, we confronted each issue with confidence. We sought opportunities to promote

family discussions, and our dinner hours evolved into a ritual of stimulating conversation. We would discuss any topics that any family member wanted to explore.

I indulged in a lot of preaching during those family sessions. Often, I simply pronounced the official Church teaching as the final word on various issues. I cautioned my children to beware of all the false propaganda that bombarded them from virtually every source. When they were confronted with a difficult choice, I urged them to consider the right thing to do.

Eventually, at a few of these dinnertime discussions, the subject of homosexuality was ever so timidly broached. "What do you think, Dad?" I don't remember who asked the question, but it wouldn't have been Mark. It had to be one of the girls. While I'd have preferred to avoid anything relating to sexuality, my answer was fairly easy, and it came quickly. I knew the words of the magisterium: "An abomination. Sex is reserved for marriage. Love the sinner, hate the sin. Natural law. Et cetera." Concluding with a short lecture on the virtue of chastity, I clearly conveyed, "End of discussion . . . next topic."

It was a well-intentioned automatic response, but one that avoided open dialogue of a difficult topic. Little did I realize the struggle my son was undergoing at the time. My brilliant

...and I did not always think it a blessing

pontificating was stifling his attempts to communicate and secretly causing him to question the worth of his very existence.

While I understood there were many things that I didn't know, moral issues were not among them. I knew the rules, and I knew the reasons. The possibility of a gay son was not part of my plan. Not only was I unaware, but my pontificating moral certitude had actually been adding to his anguish. I was unwittingly encouraging my son toward suicide.

I did not know then that the suicide rate for young gay persons is three times that for other teens. Their struggle to accept their sexuality is too often a lonely battle devoid of family support, not unlike my son's. I fear that, like me, too many parents suffer from rigid moral convictions. Unfortunately, the result can be the ultimate of tragedies—the loss of a child.

Mark's act of ultimate despair was overcome only through courage and God's amazing grace. Years later, when I learned of his suicide attempt, Mark would tell me that as he waited for death to release him, he went through what he could only describe as a unique religious experience in which God spoke to him in a special way. Somehow he abruptly realized that God had created him just as he was,

and so there must be some good reason for being who he was. And that God surely accepted him as he had created him, and so Mark should do likewise. He ran to the bathroom and forced himself to vomit the pain killers he had taken. Had he reacted soon enough? The next 36 hours proved to be a benumbed and desperate struggle as he dragged through a drugged twilight, not daring to allow himself any sleep for fear there would be no morning. My son did survive his trauma. Mine was still to come.

My son's disclosure was a personal trauma. Initially, I didn't think about the implications for him. My immediate reaction was mostly self-focused. "What had I done wrong? What will family and friends think? Could he change? What should I do? What can I do?" My heartache alternated between anger and fear. Of course I loved him still. But how could my son be gay? He wasn't like that. It simply wasn't plausible. I just had to fix it. Yet what could I do?

I began by reading every book or article available in the Detroit libraries. I had an insatiable need to learn everything I could about homosexuality. Gradually the myths began to dissolve. I learned that some 5 to 10 percent of the population is estimated to be homosexual. Homosexuality is probably not the

result of environmental conditions but more likely genetic in origin. It is the general professional consensus that it cannot be changed and that attempts to do so can be distinctly harmful. The best minds in the fields of medicine, psychiatry, psychology, and biology generally agree that homosexuality is a normal variant of the human condition and certainly not some disorder that requires treatment.

I began to realize that this issue was about my son and not so much about me. My spell of self-indulgence was fairly brief, but I still feel sad that I wasn't more help to Mark, immediately and without any equivocation. He needed it. He deserved it. My intellect began to awaken from its hibernation. I felt more empathy, a virtue too rare in my past. My predilection for expectations of the conventional gave way to a frightening vision of my son's future. What was he going to face? It was not pleasant to contemplate.

The risks of violence, discrimination, harassment, and ostracism are all too common for the gay community. The chances of my son being accepted as a normal member of society seemed to be slim to none. Otherwise decent people often oppose, with self-righteous moralistic railing, some of the most fundamental human rights for gays that the rest of us take for granted. Homosexuality is not a condition I

would have chosen for my son. So why now celebrate the gift of a gay son?

Since that disclosure some 20 years ago, because of Mark I have come to know many gay persons. We have dined together, walked together, traveled together, worshiped together,

These experiences forced me to confront the fallacy of my former arrogant certitude. Through my involvement in PFLAG (Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) I have come to know many other parents of gay children. I have learned

questions, my beloved Church will not even address, acting as if “the data” were irrelevant. Like me, the Church, too, has feet of clay. I realize now that the absolute truth is a far-off goal, attainable only in the hereafter. Perhaps now, though, I have a better understanding of humanity’s common struggle. For a Christian, I think, the task is to try to comprehend and apply the truth and the full implications of Christ’s final plea: “Love one another as I have loved you.”

God gave me a gay son—a fact I celebrate today—a son who has had a most profound effect on my life. While it was obviously not his intention, Mark, just being who he is, has taught me more about myself, about the nature of the Creator, his unfathomable love, and the diversity of his creation, than perhaps all of the academic and social experiences of my past. I believe most parents would agree that they learn from their children, probably as much as they teach. I have certainly enjoyed this reward of parenting from all of my six children. Being the unique individuals they are, they have all taught me—all in their own special way. But Mark had the advantage of being gay. ■

THOMAS A. NELSON is retired from Ford Motor Company and lives in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Adapted, originally published Summer 2004, *Notre Dame Magazine*. Reprinted with permission.

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“Mark, just being who he is, has taught me more about myself, about the nature of the Creator, his unfathomable love, and the diversity of his creation, than perhaps all of the academic and social experiences of my past.”

and laughed and cried together. I have some new stereotypes as a result. Almost without exception, I have found my gay friends to be likeable, loveable people of high integrity. More than that, most seem to have a resilience, a forbearance for life’s burdens. I have been deeply moved by their tales of adversity overcome. I have seen them subjected to insults and abuse by their government, their churches, their neighbors, some even by their families, then seen them respond with a patience I envy. They have taught me how a quiet tenacity can achieve success in the face of the most discouraging odds. I have watched gay people, young and old, routinely living lives of often heroic charity toward others, done without fanfare. By their example, they have shown me how to truly love my neighbor.

about the anguish and abuse society irrationally inflicts on their families. It has been a journey to a new perspective that has enabled me to understand my own failings and the world around me better. I also have watched my children gain a unique appreciation of others. And I’ve found that not having all the answers has resulted in a closer, more trusting relationship with my God. It has been a bonus to watch Mark mature into the successful, happy adult that he is today.

Now, late in my journey, I find myself with more questions than when I started. Answers that I once was so sure of have fallen far short. Some have proven to be false. I have found many answers in unlikely places and from unlikely people. Most of the answers have given me joy; a few have made me sad. Many of my unanswered

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C21 EVENTS

Making the Move: Navigating Dating Transitions

February 11, 2014 | Lecture

Presenter: Kerry Cronin, Associate Director, Lonergan Institute and Faculty Fellow, Center for Student Formation

Location/Time: Yawkey Center, Murray Function Room, 7:00 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and Center for Student Formation

Dating God: Intimacy, Prayer, and Franciscan Spirituality

February 20, 2014 | Lecture

Presenter: Daniel P. Horan, OFM, author, blogger, and columnist for *America*

Location/Time: Corcoran Commons, Heights Room, 5:30 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and Theology Department

C21 On The Road: Snap Shot of the Heights

February 23, 2014 | Mass and Conversation

Presenter/Presenter: Fr. Terence Devino, S.J., Vice President and University Secretary

Location/Time: Christ the King Jesuit Preparatory School, Chicago, IL, 10:30 a.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and BC Alumni Association

Pope Francis and the Future of the Global Church

February 25, 2014 | Panel Discussion

Panelists:

- Francesco Cesareo, President, Assumption College
- Richard R. Gaillardetz, Joseph Professor of Catholic Systematic Theology, Theology Department
- Mar Muñoz-Visoso, Executive Director, Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church, USCCB

Moderator: M. Shawn Copeland, Professor, Theology Department

Location/Time: Gasson Hall, Room 100, 6:30 p.m.

Sponsors: Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life and C21 Center

Episcopal Visitor

March 24, 2014 | Lecture

Presenter: Most Rev. Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., Archbishop of Indianapolis

Location/Time: Corcoran Commons, Heights Room, 4:30 p.m.

Sponsor: C21 Center

Revelation and Interreligious Dialogue

April 7, 2014 | O'Brien Lecture

Presenter: Rowan Williams, Emeritus Archbishop of Canterbury, Professor of Theology, Cambridge University

Location/Time: Corcoran Commons, Heights Room, 5:00 p.m.

Sponsors: Theology Department and C21 Center

Astonished by Love: Storytelling and the Sacramental Imagination

April 30, 2014 | Lecture

Presenter: Alice McDermott, novelist, Professor of the Humanities, Johns Hopkins University

Location/Time: Brighton Campus, Cadigan Center Atrium, 6:00 p.m.

Sponsors: C21 Center and English Department

The Message of Mercy and Its Importance Today

May 1, 2014 | Lecture

Presenter: Cardinal Walter Kasper, Cardinal-Priest of Ognissanti, in Via Appia Nuova and President Emeritus, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

Location/Time: Corcoran Commons, Heights Room, 4:30 p.m.

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ABBREVIATIONS

C21 Center: The Church in the 21st Century Center
STM: BC School of Theology and Ministry

Waiting for Gabriel

Timothy P. O'Malley



Do you have children?" For most 30-somethings, this harmless question is the opening volley of a round of acceptable chit-chat. Colleagues at the office fill silences with news of recent pregnancies, first communions, and athletic milestones in their children's lives.

For my wife and me, however, a question about our brood never offers an escape route from awkward social interactions, but is rather the prelude to uncomfortable conversations with strangers and confidants alike. "No children," we say, our voices revealing our discomfort with the question. How can you say to a complete stranger, a trusted teacher, a friendly cleric, a college classmate: "We're infertile"?

THE DIAGNOSIS AND AFTERMATH

My wife and I met before our senior year at the University of Notre Dame and became engaged a little over a year after we began to date. Like so many Notre Dame couples before us, our nuptials took place at the university's Basilica of the Sacred Heart, where the priest prayed over us: "Bless them with children and help them to be good parents. May they live to see their children's children." In our first year of marriage in Boston, we decided it was time to begin a family. Month one passed. Month two. Month three. Six months later, our home became the anti-Nazareth as we awaited an annunciation that never came. The hope-filled decision to conceive a child became a bitter task of disheartened

waiting. After a year, we began to see infertility specialists, who concluded that we should be able to have a child. No low sperm counts. No problems with either of our reproductive systems. The verdict: inexplicable infertility.

The aftermath of the diagnosis was painful for both of us. It affected not simply our friendships and our own relationship, but also our spiritual lives. Our infertility gradually seeped into our life of prayer. Every morning, I rise and ask God for a child. I encounter the chilly silence of a seemingly absent God. Early on I found consolation in the language of the psalms, “My God, My God, why have you abandoned me?” (Ps 22:2). Like the psalmist, I had my “enemies”: the friendly priest, who, upon learning that Kara and I do not have children, made it a point to say each time he saw me, “No children, right?”; the Facebook feed filled with announcements of pregnancies and births, a constant reminder of our empty nest. Even God became my nemesis: Why have you duped me, O Lord? Why us? We have given our lives to you, and our reward is pain and suffering.

A SCHOOL OF PRAYER

How did I escape this hell? First, I learned to give myself over to a reality beyond my control. Life is filled with any number of things that happen to us. We are diagnosed with illnesses. Our family, despite our love, falls apart because of fighting among siblings over how to handle the remaining years of a parent’s life. We die. The beginning of true Christian faith is in trusting that even in such moments, God abides with us. This God invites us to offer our sorrow, our very woundedness, as an act of love.

Praying the psalms again was the beginning of my own conversion toward the good. I learned that in uttering these words from a wounded heart, my voice became Christ’s. My suffering, my sorrow has been whispered into the ear of the Father for all time. The echo of my words in an empty room called my heart back to authentic prayer. Whenever I was tempted to enter into self-pity, I used short phrases from the psalms to bring myself back toward the Father. The psalms became the grammar of my broken speech to God.

Second, I began to meditate upon the crucifix whenever I entered a church. Gazing at the crucifix for long periods, I discovered how God’s silence in my prayer was stretching me toward more authentic love. In contemplating the silence of the cross, the image of Christ stretched out in love, I could feel my own will stretched out gradually to exist in harmony with the Father’s, to accept the cup that we have been given. I found new capacities for love available to me. I became especially attentive to the suffering of the widow, the immigrant, the lonely, and all those who come to Mass with a wounded heart.

Third, in my formation into prayer through infertility, I have grown to appreciate the silence and half-sentences of God. Often, words still hurt too much for me to utter.

In such sorrow, I have no energy in prayer. All I have left is an imitation of the very silence I hear in response to my petitions. Through entering into God’s own silence, I find my own bitterness transformed into trust and hope, a kind of infused knowledge of God’s love that I have come to savor. At times, albeit rarely, this silence results in a gift of exhilarating bliss—as if for a moment, I am totally united to God. Most often, it is a restful silence in which I hear no words. I savor such moments because only here do I receive the balm for the sorrow that often floods my soul throughout the day.

Fourth, our infertility has slowly led me to a deeper appreciation of the eucharistic quality of the Christian life. For years, I talked with far too much ease about the “sacrifice of the Mass”—how all of our lives must become an offering, a gift to the Father through the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit. In fact, true self-gift is hard. It is hard to give yourself away to a God who does not seem to listen to your prayers. It is hard to wait for a child who may never come. It is hard to love your spouse when you are distracted by the phantasms of sorrow that have become your dearest friend. It is hard to muster a smile when your friends announce that they will be having another child. It is just hard.

At such moments, I do not know what else to do but to seek union with Christ himself; to enter more deeply into the eucharistic logic of the Church, where self-preservation is transformed into self-gift. The Eucharist continues to teach me that I cannot do it myself. I cannot climb out of the sorrow, the sadness, the misery. But I can give it away. I can slowly enter into the eucharistic life of the Church, to become vulnerable, self-giving love even in the midst of sorrow. Knowing, of course, that in the Resurrection, such love has conquered death.

Sometimes I allow myself to daydream about having a child. I recognize now that such a moment may never come, that nothing in human life is sure. That is why learning to pray through infertility has been a reformation of my vision of grace as gift, not guarantee. If grace were guaranteed, would such moments be grace, a gift beyond what we could imagine? So we stand waiting for Gabriel, learning to hear the angel’s voice in new ways: in time spent with our godchildren, in signing up to serve as foster parents, in delighting in each other’s presence. And the more I enter into the grace of prayer, the more I see that Gabriel has already come in these moments: Let it be done to me according to your word. ■

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Family Ethics

Practices for Christians

Julie Hanton Rubio



If we are to honor the Christian tradition's elevation of sharing food around a table, we have to find "a deeply satisfying way to eat."¹ This would mean, first of all, sitting down together. Getting this practice right not only provides a context for making just choices but also trains family members in being in community with others. When families fail to eat together, they practice a problematic kind of individualism where personal tastes and priorities trump the value of community.

According to anthropologists, family meals are a primary means of "civilizing children. It's about teaching them to be a member of their culture."² Around the table, a family talks about the stories, jokes, and issues that become central to its identity. Here children learn how a conversation is structured, how to ask others about their days, how to respond to questions or to extend a discussion. Moreover, in sharing food that is not always their preference, children and adults learn compromise

and tolerance, for "meals together send the message that citizenship in a family entails certain standards beyond individuals whims."³ The practice of eating civilizes and stretches us because it teaches people to participate in something larger than themselves.

Christian families are called to be schools of virtue where communal bonds are forged and the sociality of human beings is taught via experience.⁴ When a majority of families do not even sit down together for an evening meal, they lose an opportunity to be schooled in the solidarity implied in the Eucharist. Deciding to eat together even when it may be more convenient to eat separately is a way in which families shape themselves into persons conscious of their social bonds and responsibilities. Not doing so can cause family members to lose their sense of connection to each other and the broader community.⁵

Often families place individual needs above communal values. Finding a time to eat is difficult when

parents work late or need time to unwind at home, children participate in sports or other activities that overlap with the dinner hour, and teens hold jobs that take them away from home in the evening. Because we now have so many choices about food, finding food everyone can agree on has become more difficult. It seems easier for everyone to grab the food they want at home or outside it when it is convenient for them. Making a choice to reject these trends means choosing sacrifice and family over individual needs and wants. It is a choice that can affect families in the difficult work of being in communion with others.

Beginning a meal with grace is a gathering practice that connects families to God and one another and prepares them for a deeper commitment to social justice. Expressing gratitude is a recognition that the goodness in our lives is not all of our own making. Neither is it all God's blessing. Surely those with abundance do not deserve all that they



have anymore than the many who live on less than two dollars a day deserve their lot in life. Paul criticizes the Corinthians for eating their memorials while others go hungry (1 Cor. 11:17-28). He suggests there is something scandalous about eating while ignoring others' hunger.⁶ With grace, families can recognize this scandal, express thanks for the privileges that are theirs, and communicate solidarity through prayers with those who are far needier. Communal consciousness of undeserved abundance can then become a foundation for growth in solidarity.

Conversations at the table are another important way to gather families together and make them more a part of one another's lives. Discussions at the dinner table are powerful opportunities for valuable formation. Learning to ask about someone else's day and appreciate their stories takes us out of ourselves and our own concerns. Moreover, through listening to the discussions

of parents, children can become aware of the world and their responsibilities within it. If conversations center only on family concerns and interests, children may get the message that what moves their parents is the good of their family alone. What else is the family committed to? Discussions about social issues and how family members approach money, time, charity, politics, and so on can broaden the concerns of both parents and children.

The value of coming together, saying grace, and engaging in conversation should not be understated. Eating, especially, has formative power because it is a practice families must engage in every single day. Few other practices offer this kind of consistent, ongoing opportunity for cementing a family's identity as Christian community. ■

JULIE HANLON RUBIO is an associate professor of Christian ethics at Saint Louis University. She is the author of *Family Ethics: Practices for Christians*, from which this essay has been selected.

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¹Jung, *Sharing Food*, 6. [L. Shannon Jung, *Sharing Food: Christian Practices for Enjoyment*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2006).]

²"Magic of the Family Meal," 53. ["The Magic of the Family Meal," *Time*, June 12, 2006, 52.]

³Ibid.

⁴*Familiaris consortio*, no. 42.

⁵Jung, *Sharing Food*, 42.

⁶Powers, "Eucharistic Justice," 858-59. [David N. Powers, "Eucharistic Justice," *Theological Studies* 67, no. 4 (2006): 856-79.]

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Everyday GRACE

Guardian angels at work

Peter Folan

It was an early August morning and the sun had only begun to peek through the foggy Cape Cod morning; it would take a few hours to melt the morning dew sprinkled across the yard.

The glittering spiderwebs that danced on the tips of the disheveled lawn would soon disappear in the heat of the day. The morning would rise shortly as would the day, sending my grandfather, whom we called Puppy, back home for another week and me off to my summer routine. Snuggled next to him, we reminisced about his childhood and recounted tales from our family lore.

During those early summer mornings, my grandfather and I also explored questions about God, Jesus, and miracles. He told me that everyone has a guardian angel to help them see God's work in their daily lives. At 10, I searched everywhere but could not see mine or understand. I adored Puppy, and we shared a world filled with laughter, stories, hugs, and smiles. Puppy's subsequent death the next morning in his own bed a little over 100 miles away shook my very foundation and core beliefs.

My relationship with my grandfather provided me with confidence and encouragement to use my imagination, to embrace reading, to run with the pack while also daring to lead. It also provided me with the courage to play sports without being consumed by them or the fanaticism that corrodes them. His love and patience gave me the strength to buck trends, to question authority, to love wildflowers and songbirds, and most importantly to be me. This model of caring inspired and encouraged me as a boy to imagine a world filled with limitless possibilities.

In my work with high school and college-aged students, I try to engage young men with the same patience that Puppy showed me. I hope that through our conversations these men can begin to examine their lives and rekindle aspects of themselves that they have neglected. All men need authentic relationships through which they can examine and talk about their lives, and within these relationships a reciprocity develops that allows each person to gain new insight. I know that I have learned much about myself from the countless students that I have talked with

“Grandparents are like wisdom of the family:
They are wisdom of a people.”

~ Pope Francis

over the years, and hope that they have gained half as much as I have from them.

Over the years, it has become clear that many young men find it difficult to talk about their faith given that our society asks them to privatize it and questions its relevance. Their reticence to explore questions concerning faith is troubling. Through my grandfather's mentorship, I was able to avoid the allure of stereotypical hegemonic male behaviors, apathy, or ambivalence that befalls many young men. His guidance and encouragement at a young age made a lasting impression on me that I am grateful to have.

I feel fortunate to have been initiated into a definition of manhood in which faith was integral. In *Guyland*, Michael Kimmel describes the lives of American men in their early twenties and the impact of a "Guy Code" that socializes and encourages men to act out, take risks, and rely on other male peers to initiate and validate their masculinity. Kimmel explains how men encourage and socialize other men to drink in excess, be irresponsible, have anonymous sex, and avoid any responsibility for being a grown-up. Within today's American male culture, destructive forces indoctrinate men who initiate other men into ways of being that are emotionally, physically, and spiritually detrimental.

The deepening of one's faith needs to be part of any larger solution to counteract the cyclical masculine gendered conflicts and the gender-based performance gap that is often discussed in popular literature. There is great promise within the hearts of today's men as they long for a deeper connection with God, but lack the guides to help them discover it. We must intentionally lead young men toward reflection, self-discovery, and self-transcendence through which they can develop a greater sense of self, meaning, and purpose. Achieving this end requires that men of faith help other men to discover God in their lives. A faith-based, Christian mentorship requires that younger men trust in the example, teaching, patience, and reassurance that comes through developing positive relationships with other men of faith. This discipleship and companionship that develops is dynamic and powerful.

I try to follow my grandfather's advice to feel the presence of God in my life. For me, I search out those *God winks* in the simple everyday moments; those extraordinary ordinary moments that we can take for granted: holding my son's hand as I walk him to school, watching my daughter swim underwater with her eyes open, laughing with my wife at the breakfast table, calling my best friend to reminisce about old times, or sharing my hopes and dreams with my father. For me, these moments define, shape, and deepen the relationships in my life, open my heart to God's love, and allow me to recognize what I treasure most in life.

As men of faith, we need to provide authentic mentorship that infuses hope, inspiration, and strength. Within our community, we need to identify authentic role models who can inspire other men to walk a similar path of faithfulness. Encountering, believing in, and emulating

those people whose character and strength is fortified by their faith can shape and inspire children, teenagers, college-aged students, twenty- and thirty-somethings to become people who live a life filled with the fruit of the Spirit that was described in Galatians as love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (5:22-23).

Younger men want guides to believe in and walk with on their faith journey. By having other male companions who help us to find God in all things or to contemplate the patterns of our lives, we can create a new normative masculine behavior that embraces prayer and reflection and values the power of love and compassion. In my own life, I have struggled with my faith and have doubted people in my life, my beliefs, my ideals, and myself. In these moments, I reflect on the guardian angels that have shaped my journey and through them I am reminded of God's hand at work, for it is through meaningful relationships in my life that I learned faith is contagious.

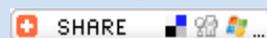
“We must intentionally lead young men toward reflection, self discovery, and self-transcendence through which they can develop a greater sense of self, meaning, and purpose.”

My grandfather taught me that everyday miracles still occur. I am reminded of him each time I walk into my son's bedroom, as Puppy's wooden cross now hangs there. The most impactful and important relationships in life provide room to explore questions about life, God, miracles, and, yes, guardian angels. As a father and educator, I know the best guidance and mentorship works through genuine love and the capacity to search for God's grace at work, as it is through His love that we can nurture others and develop meaningful relationships.

I can feel the influential work of my guardian angel, Puppy, every day. As a father, I strive to raise a son who will grow into a man with a generous and loving heart. Boys confront many pressures as they grow into men; I felt them as a boy and still do now. I pray my loving relationship with my son will give him the strength to negotiate the snares, traps, and pitfalls that exist today. I also try to model that same relationship with the students that I meet each day as I ask them to examine the loving relationships in their lives to find their guardian angels and God's abiding love. I hope that by openly sharing my faith with the young men that I meet as an educator that I can influence them to allow their faith to rest at the core of their masculinity ■

PETER FOLAN is the assistant director of First Year Experience at Boston College.

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INTIMACY

Between Generations

Drew Christiansen, S.J.

Intimacy, we think, is for young friends; for lovers, spouses, longtime colleagues, perhaps even for the mature consumers of Cialis, but not for the frail, infirm, dependent elderly, nor especially for dependent elders and their overworked family caregivers. We are oblivious to intimacy in late life. But more and more men and women are caring for their aged parents, relatives, and friends, and finding in their caregiving a special form of intimacy, more exacting in its demands and more expansive in its generosity than the others.

PHYSICAL INTIMACY AND DIGNITY IN OLD AGE

Nearly 30 years ago I returned in the summer to Berkeley after a year as a visiting professor at Notre Dame. While I was away one of the neighbors, a retired professor of sociology at CAL, had begun coming to the community for lunch. After a few days, however, Elizabeth failed to appear in the dining room, and the rector asked me to carry lunch to her apartment. That I gladly did. A few days more, however, and Elizabeth began to fail dramatically. She suffered auditory hallucinations and then difficulty controlling her bodily functions. She would ask me to help her to the commode and to assist her in washing. “Don’t fret,” she coaxed me. “Think of me as your mother.”

Our situation, Elizabeth’s and mine, shows that physical intimacy is a far broader experience than shared confidences between friends and the delights of sexual pleasuring between lovers. Fundamentally, intimacy involves trusting ourselves to others;

and in late old age we offer that trust at a time when we are more likely to be rejected, shamed, or injured by others. Adult caregivers receive elders’ trust to support and protect them in their vulnerabilities. Washing, grooming, feeding, the chores that make up caregiving, uphold the dignity of the infirm elderly at a time in life when they are most at risk.

FROM RESENTMENT TO FORGIVENESS

Once I offered a guest lecture for a night class of counselors to caregivers to the elderly. I chose to illustrate a point with an example of forgiveness. Suddenly hands flew up. I took questions on forgiveness for the remainder of the class time and for 45 minutes beyond. At some point I realized that the questions were not for the benefit of the students’ counselees but for the counselors themselves. They were working through lifetimes of resentment and trying to find how they might reconcile with their own parents.

In caregiving between generations forgiveness is essential. To provide care, we have to put the burden of resentment aside. For adult children and their parents, their new relationship, therefore, is an occasion for conversion. In addition, the menial tasks entailed by caregiving can feel degrading, not just to the caregiver but also to the dependent elder. There are constant adjustments to be made on both sides, and so lots of occasion to take offense. Jesus’ maxim about how often to forgive—“70 times seven”—will rarely seem as literally true as in caregiving relationships.

SPIRITUAL FRIENDS

Fr. Harry Corcoran was the dean emeritus at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley when I arrived there in 1980. He was the heart of the house. He had led the transition of the seminary from Alma in the Santa Cruz Mountains to Berkeley. Harry was a raconteur, and like many old-timers, he tended to repeat his stories. Some in the community grew impatient with his repetitiveness. Picking this up, one night at dinner I asked him if he had new stories to tell us, and sure enough he did.

Telling old tales and listening to them is one of the ways in which seniors and adult children can become friends. Storytelling does not mean seniors are living in the past. Rather, they are trying to close the circle of their lives, finding integrity in their life histories. It is an unconscious spiritual search. So, listening to elders, coaxing more from them, even asking them to repeat a story now and then are ways of affirming their lives and allowing them to find meaning.

Between the onset of the reversal of roles between parent and child and the senior’s final decline, there is a period when genuine friendship is possible between the generations. My mother, who died at age 99 in 2012, and I shared a lot with each other, especially after she was widowed at 60. But in her late eighties, a moment arrived when Mom and I were finally able to share as friends. We would divide up chores, and at some point she delegated to me the principal steps, say, in baking eggplant Parmesan, as she took on the less onerous ones. The mother-son relationship had changed. She was

acknowledging that she was no longer in charge, and I could take the lead.

Intergenerational friendship can grow further into spiritual friendship. Elders share their anxieties, their fears, their hopes, and their joys with caregivers. That sharing can be an uncomfortable inconvenience; or it can be an occasion for mutual spiritual

age, chief among them the trials of impairment and the prospect of death. Bound in the caregiving relationship, they accompany one another as they undergo the paschal mystery of life, death, and resurrection.

Among the spiritual gifts children can offer parents are praying together and facilitating sacramental ministry.

She was as ready for the resurrection then as she had been for confirmation as a teenaged girl.

The icons of intergenerational friendship are Saints Monica and Augustine. He spent his early life fleeing her and the Church she loved. Once converted, Augustine told his fellow philosophers that Monica

was their teacher. When they met one final time in Ostia, their conversation on spiritual things led them to shared ecstasy.

When the vision ended, Monica spoke of her longing to be united with God. "Son," she said, "for my own part I no longer find love in anything in this world. ... What then am I doing here?" Days later Monica died. Sharing a parent's readiness to die and her desire for God is the final intimacy adult children can share, one in which a parent's trust and a child's reverence should meet. ■

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ILLUSTRATION CREDIT : Page 29:
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growth. Late old age is a threshold before death, a window on eternity, where profound issues arise. Elders and their children can together share the challenge of facing the losses of

Toward the end, no matter how unresponsive Mom might have seemed, when I brought her Communion, she sat up alertly in her chair and began to recite the Our Father in a clear voice.

Of Years of Love, AND A LONG GOODBYE

Dianne Williamson

"Those who celebrate the sacrament [of marriage] say, 'I promise to be true to you, in joy and in sadness, in sickness and in health; I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.' At that moment, the couple does not know what will happen, nor what joys and pains await them. They are setting out, like Abraham, on a journey together."

~ Pope Francis

NBA Legend, Bob Cousy poses with wife Missie and daughters Ticia and Marie at the unveiling of his statue at the College of the Holy Cross (2008).



The game plan, as he called it, rarely varied. Each morning, he'd awaken first and set things on the kitchen table—her pills, the newspaper, a fiber bar, a banana. Then he'd return to the bedroom and rouse his wife. Often, she balked at leaving the warmth of the covers, so he'd gently coax her. Always, he was gentle.

Once she was up, he'd lead her to the kitchen to read the newspaper. It took two or three hours to get through the pages, because she'd underline each sentence in every story with a black pen. After a while he found comfort in

reading between the lines, because it was something they shared.

"She was leading a happy life," he said. "It was part of the game plan."

Bob Cousy knows a bit about game plans, and he and his wife, Missie, were always a team. In the early days of their marriage, when the Celtics star was gone for weeks at a time, Missie made her husband a presence in the family home by telling her daughters where he was and what he was doing. Decades later, when Missie slowly succumbed to the ravages of dementia, her husband ensured that the woman he called "my bride" was always by his

side, even as her mind wandered where he couldn't follow.

Last week, after 63 years of marriage, Bob Cousy said goodbye to his bride. His loved ones say he's bereft, inconsolable. And they're surprised that he agreed to an interview, because Cousy is a private man who cared for Missie alone for more than a decade, never seeking help, services, or sympathy. That wasn't in the game plan.

Cousy married his high school sweetheart, the raven-haired Marie Ritterbusch, six months after he graduated from the College of the

Holy Cross, where he helped his team win an NCAA championship in 1947. He spent his wedding night playing point guard for the Celtics. Days later, he left for a two-week road trip.

The grueling travel schedule would define the first half of their marriage. While her husband was transforming the game of basketball and later worked as a coach and sports commentator, Missie raised two daughters and instilled in them her passion for civil rights and the peace movement. Quick-witted, beautiful, and kind, she was a mentor to the new Celtics' wives and especially embraced the wives of black players such as Bill Russell and Jo Jo White. She was a Girl Scout leader and a gardener, a fiercely independent woman who could discuss politics with the same skill she applied to the faulty plumbing in the family's English Tudor on Salisbury Street.

"I was busy playing a child's game," Cousy said last week, sitting in the living room with daughters Marie and Ticia. "I thought putting a ball in a hole was important. Looking back, I should have participated more in the lives of my family. But my girls were in the best possible loving hands."

Today, the Celtic legend known as "Cooz" is 85 but looks younger by a decade. Articulate and gracious, he tears up easily when discussing his wife and the love affair that flourished as the couple aged.

"Our marriage was somewhat contrary to tradition," he said. "Most couples have the most intensity in the beginning. But I was always working. So we had the best and most romantic part of our marriage at the end. We literally held hands for the last 20 years."

Missie's cognitive decline was gradual and began a dozen years ago, Cousy said. She would ask him the same question, over and over. She hallucinated, grew disoriented, and struggled with balance. But she always knew her husband, and she bristled at any suggestion that she suffered from dementia.

So Cousy worked hard to create the

perception that his once-independent wife was vital and healthy. Because she believed she could still drive, he shipped her station wagon to their place in Florida each winter so she could see it in the driveway. Artificial red flowers were planted in her garden. He did all the household chores and let her think she performed them herself.

"My dad provided an environment that allowed her, in her mind, to be a fully functioning adult," said daughter Marie. "It was amazing to watch."

The couple's social life vanished as Missie's symptoms worsened. Other than a Thursday night "out with the boys" and some quick rounds of golf, Cousy spent all of his time alone with his bride. He watched *General Hospital* with Missie and patiently answered the same questions. He stocked the fridge with her favorite candy, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. At night, she'd cover him with a blanket and he'd stroke her arm.

"I love you honey," he'd say.

"I love you, too," Missie would always reply.

The sports legend who led the Celtics to six World Championships said he never felt defeated by the challenge of caring full time for his ailing spouse.

"It drew us closer together," he said. "It was never a chore, because I knew she would have done the same for me. You just have to go with the flow. Every three months, I'd scream out something just for release."

On September 7, Cousy took his wife for an early dinner at Worcester Country Club. On the way home,

in the car, Missie suffered a massive stroke. She died peacefully two weeks later and was buried in St. John's Cemetery.

Today, Cousy is consoled by memories of his bride and the knowledge that she was happy until the end of her days. Ever the class act, he marveled that the son of poor French immigrants could enjoy such a charmed, fortunate life—athletic fame, loving daughters, grandchildren, and a wife he adored. Only when asked what he missed most about Missie did he struggle for composure.



"I can't put the pills out in the morning," he said. "And I can't care for her anymore."

Still, every night he goes to bed and tells his wife that he loves her. For a man as devoted and steadfast as Bob Cousy, it's hard to alter the game plan. ■

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The Art of Dying

A Christian Fears Suffering and Loss

Sidney Callahan

As aging brings death ever nearer, my fear of dying increases. These surges of anxiety are dispiriting. Shouldn't faith in Christ's resurrection liberate me from bouts of cowardice? I would hate to think that my fear is a sign that my faith is actually self-deception. I have often thought that my "atheist" friends in their heart of hearts really believe in God, but maybe it is the other way around. A Christian who is so loath to die is not giving much of a witness to faith in the resurrection. A real yes to God should be bone deep, not merely a notional assent.

Yet I can detect nothing but firm and heartfelt convictions when I examine my mind and heart. In gratitude, I affirm Christ as the way, the truth, and the life. Everything that I know intellectually and have learned from living confirms my faith in the Gospel message. My fear of dying seems unrelated to doubting but rather wells up as some shuddering dread from the depths of a divided self. When I examine this fear precisely, I find at its core the awful anxiety that in dying I will be overwhelmed by panic and the dissolution of self. As consciousness is extinguished, I dread losing any capacity to think, to pray, and to feel the loving presence of God.

Unfortunately, I know that such a psychological collapse is possible, since I have been there before. Forty years ago I suffered two full-blown panic attacks that have been burned into memory. After the loss of a baby to sudden infant death syndrome, I was assaulted twice by an overwhelming terror that I was being helplessly extinguished and suffocated; my sense of self was dissolving into nothingness. The ego, or I, was disintegrating along with the external grounds of reality. The desolation and agony of a disintegrating self is identified in my mind with dying. It is "the horror of horror," or a hell-like nothingness. Such dreadful experiences of psychological suffering appear in mental illness and suicidal despair. It is desolating to imagine how many human beings suffer such traumas as victims of disease, accidents, natural disasters, war, and cruel torture.

But less severe losses also seep into my fear of dying. Intense sadness arises over giving up one's part in the ongoing dramas of one's daily life and one's times. The familiar

local round and love of one's own family and people (including my adored dog) strongly bind us to our specific and beautiful world. To have this story interrupted is a painful prospect when we could go on forever. When your life is a blessed Sabbath banquet given by God here and now, leaving your place at the table can be hard—even for a more glorious celebration. In dying we will inevitably be entering into an unimaginable, novel existence, like a fetus being born. Despite the promised wonders in the world to come, I am afraid I identify with the happy, contented fetus in the warm womb who does not want to come out.

Of course if one's present condition becomes excruciatingly miserable, death may be welcomed as a relief. Undergoing debilitating disease and loss of all function or being caught in circumstances of torture can make dying less difficult. This is the cure for fear of death offered by Montaigne. He argues that when you become very debilitated and ill, you cease to really care about anything or anybody and will be able to die calmly, as animals die. Oh really? I am willing to bet that Montaigne never had a panic attack, and he certainly lived in a time when people became inured to death, as spouses, infants, children, friends, and victims of violence died around them.

Earlier Christians could also be deathly afraid of dying because they would have to face an angry God's judgment and possible condemnation to hellfire. Today, Christians who believe strongly in the forgiveness of sins and God's tender mercy do not fear eternal punishment. But we can still be filled with anxiety about confronting shame when we must stand in the Light of Light that reveals all. Self-judgment can be painful and humbling. Here I identify with the overconfident Peter leaping into the sea bent on walking to join Jesus, only to sink and require rescue. Later still I acutely imagine Peter's shame when Jesus looks at him in the high priest's courtyard. Even receiving forgiveness and unconditional love can be awe-full and overwhelming.

So is there balm in Gilead to heal the entangling fears of death? At the end of the day, in the time remaining, can we help remove the sting, if not the horror, of death? Obviously ancient spiritual practices are needed, as well as welcome

new remedies. The great commandments of Christian spirituality are familiar: live, give, love, pray; unite mind, heart, and will with Christ. Embrace the sacrament of the present moment and the sacraments and Scripture of the worshipping Church. I take great consolation from meditating on Jesus' victory over his distress and sorrow in the garden of Gethsemane.

Other strategies can also be pursued. To counter fear of loss we can visualize the friends and family members who have already died—an ever-increasing group. We can imagine that with the divine liveliness the eternal conversation continues within a constantly joyful company. Surely God's infinite truth will provide infinitely more learning and creativity for us to pursue. These and other reflections can turn us to God, who is our future. Dying is an arduous venture, for which we need all the help we can get from everyone in heaven and earth and from anything that can give courage and lift up our hearts.

Happily, the art of dying is given life with the advent of the hospice movement and the growth of palliative medicine. Care is offered through the comfort of companionship, family, friends, and lots of tender physical ministrations. Visual beauty, laughter, and music can lift the spirit. And most fortunately, drugs can ease physical pain and, for the phobic among us, psychotropic medications are available to calm agitation, anxiety, and panic. Better yet, we may have been able to learn ancient and new meditative techniques of breathing and relaxation that bring mindful

control of attention. I first learned of the human psyche's power to control physical and emotional responses when practicing natural childbirth techniques to control pain and fear. Admittedly only one out of seven births was completely painless, but I managed never to use medication and experienced ecstatic joy each time. If mental, spiritual, and physical practices, along with the availability of drugs when needed, can work to ease childbirth, why not the process of dying?

One of the wonderful promises in Scripture proclaims that God's power "working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine." Facing certain death, I cling in hope to Christ, my anchor. ■

SIDNEY CALLAHAN is a scholar, writer, and licensed psychologist. Her most recent books are *Created for Joy* and *Called to Happiness*.

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Tattoos on the Heart

The Power of Boundless Compassion

Gregory Boyle, S.J.

Inching ourselves closer to creating a community of kinship such that God might recognize it. Soon we imagine, with God, this circle of compassion. Then we imagine no one standing outside of that circle, moving ourselves closer to the margins so that the margins themselves will be erased. We stand there with those whose dignity has been denied. We locate ourselves with the poor and the powerless and the voiceless. At the edges, we join the easily despised and the readily left out. We stand with the demonized so that the demonizing will stop. We situate ourselves right next to the disposable so that the day will come when we stop throwing people away.

Kinship is what God presses us on to, always hopeful that its time has come.

I don't recognize Lencho when he steps into my office. Though that is the first question he asked. "Member me?" Truth is, I don't. He is two days fresh out of Corcoran State Prison. He has been locked up for 10 years—a juvenile tried as an adult. He was 14 years old when I met him at Central Juvenile Hall. Now at 24, his arms are all "sleaved out"—every inch covered in tattoos. His neck is blackened by the name of his gang—stretching from jawbone to collarbone. His head is shaved and covered with alarming tattoos. Most startling of all (though impressive) are two exquisitely etched devil's horns planted on his forehead.

He says, "You know...I'm having a hard time finding a job."

I think, *Well, maybe we can put our heads together on this one.*

I'm about to nudge him in the direction of our tattoo-removal clinic, when he says, "I've never had a job in my life—been locked up since I was a kid."

I suggest that we change this. I tell him to begin work tomorrow, Tuesday, at Homeboy Silkscreen. In operation for more than 10 years, nearly 500 rival gang members have worked there, screen printing and embroidering apparel for more than 2,500 customers. On Wednesday, I call the Homeboy Silkscreen factory to check on *Chamuco* (the affectionate way of addressing Satan), our newest worker. Lencho is brought to the phone.

"So," I ask, "how's it feel to be a workin' man?"

"It feels proper," he says, "In fact, I'm like that *vato* in the commercial – you know the guy—the one who keeps walkin' up to total strangers and says, 'I just lowered my cholesterol.' Yea. That's me right there."

I admit to him that this whole cholesterol thing has flown right over my head.

"I mean, yesterday, after work, I'm sittin' at the back a' the bus, dirty and tired, and, I mean, I just couldn't help myself. I kept turning to total strangers—'Just comin' back, first day on the job.' (He turns to another.) 'Just gettin' off—my first day at work.'"

He tells me this, and I can't help but imagine the people on the bus—half wondering if mothers are clutching

their kids more closely. Surely someone is overhearing Lencho and thinking: "*Bien hecho—nice goin'.*" I suspect it's equally certain that someone catching Lencho's outburst reflects inwardly, *What a waste of a perfectly good job.*

Lencho's voice matters. To that end, we choose to become what child psychiatrist Alice Miller calls "enlightened witnesses"—people who through their kindness, tenderness, and focused, attentive love return folks to themselves. It is a returning—not a measuring up.

At Homeboy Industries, we seek to tell each person this truth: They are exactly what God had in mind when God made them—and then we watch, from this privileged place, as people inhabit this truth. Nothing is the same again. No bullet can pierce this, no prison walls can keep this out. And death can't touch it—it is just that huge.

Fifteen years ago, Bandit came to see me. He had been well named by his homies, being at home in all things illegal. He was "down for his varrio" and put in time running up to cars and selling crack in Aliso Village. He spent a lot of time locked up and always seemed impervious to help. But then that day, 15 years ago, his resistance broke. He sat in my office and said he was "tired of being tired." I escorted him to one of our four job developers and, as luck would have it, they located an entry-level job in a warehouse. Unskilled, low-paying, a first job.

Cut to 15 years later, Bandit calls



me near closing time on Friday. He now runs the warehouse, owns his own home, is married with three kids. I hadn't heard from him in some time. No news is usually good news with homies. He speaks in something like a breathless panic.

"G, ya gotta bless my daughter."

"Is she okay?" I ask. "I mean, is she sick—or in the hospital?"

"No, no," he says, "on Sunday, she's goin' to Humboldt College. Imagine, my oldest, my Carolina, goin' to college. But she's a little *chapparrita*, and I'm scared for her. So do ya think you could give her a little send-off *benedición*?"

I schedule them to come the next day to Dolores Mission, where I have baptisms at one o'clock. Bandit, his wife, and three kids, including the college-bound Carolina, arrive at 12:30. I situate them all in front of the altar, Carolina planted in the middle. We encircle her, and I guide them to place their hands on her head or shoulder, to touch her as we close

our eyes and bow our heads. Then, as the homies would say, I do a "long-ass prayer," and before we know it, we all become *chillones*, sniffing our way through this thing.

I'm not entirely sure why we're all crying, except, I suppose, for the fact that Bandit and his wife don't know anybody who's gone off to college—except, I guess, me. So we end the prayer, and we laugh at how mushy we all just got. Wiping our tears, I turn to Carolina and ask, "So, what are ya gonna study at Humboldt?"

She says without missing a beat, "Forensic psychology."

"Daaamn, forensic psychology?"

Bandit chimes in, "Yeah, she wants to study the criminal mind."

Silence.

Carolina turns slowly to Bandit, holds up one hand, and points to her dad, her pointing finger blocked by her other hand, so he won't notice. We all notice and howl and Bandit says, "Yeah, I'm gonna be her first subject!"

We laugh and walk to the car.

Everyone piles in, but Bandit hangs back. "Can I tell you something, dog?" I ask, standing in the parking lot. "I give you credit for the man you've chosen to become. I'm proud of you."

"*Sabes qué?*" he says, eyes watering. "I'm proud of myself. All my life, people called me a lowlife, a *bueno para nada*. I guess I showed 'em."

I guess he did.

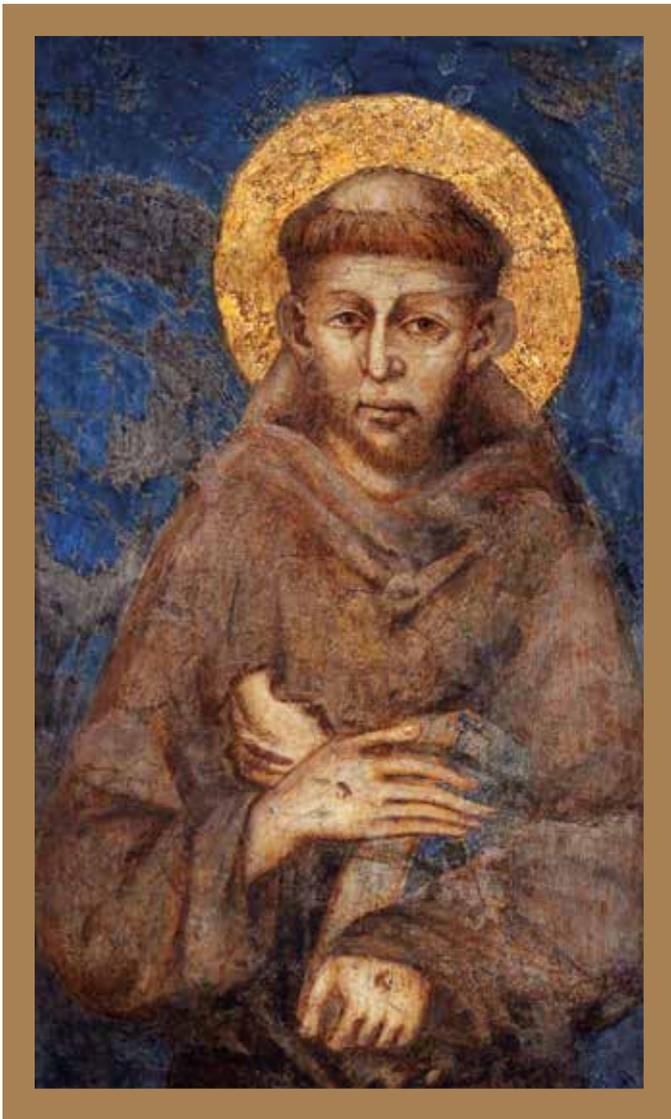
And the soul feels its worth. ■

GREGORY BOYLE, S.J. is the founder and director of Homeboy Industries, a gang-intervention program located in Los Angeles and author of the best-selling book *Tattoos of the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, from which this selection is taken.

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THE INTIMATE JOURNEY *of* RELATIONSHIP *with* GOD

Daniel P. Horan, OFM

Every relationship begins somewhere. Some begin romantically with our hearts alive in the excitement of getting to know someone who we are drawn to for the very first time. Some begin at our birth with our introduction to our family. Some begin at school or work, where we first meet our peers and colleagues. Some begin at our baptism, when the immersion into water symbolizing both our dying and rising with Christ signifies our inherent immersion into a set of relationships (the entire Body of Christ, which is the Church) that can never be undone. Yet, there is one relationship that begins before all others.

Some relationships are deeply intimate, where we reveal our true selves and are open to the other person's true self, as with a spouse, close sibling, or best friend. Sometimes those same relationships are difficult or strained, causing us to become disinterested in another. Some relationships are simply professional, casual, or superficial and nothing more becomes of them. Some relationships will last for a lifetime, while others last for just a short stint. Yet, there is one relationship that will last forever.

Everybody, whether conscious of it or not, has a relationship with God. The fact that you or I exist, or that anybody exists, testifies to the reality that we are in *relationship with our Creator*.

One medieval theologian describes this relationship as that of an artist to her artwork. There is a preexisting relationship between a painting and a painter: The choice to create when one does not need to do so can signal love, the reflection of the particular artist in the image through unique and unrepeatable brushstrokes can point beyond the creation to the creator, and the beauty of the image—even with its inevitable imperfection—brings to mind the truth that there is something wonderful about life. But we are more than paintings and God is more than a painter.

I believe that all human beings, by virtue of simply *being human*, have a capacity for God that is fundamental and part of the deepest core of who we are. I also believe that God is already and always extending an invitation to us to be in relationship. But how do we recognize this presence of God in our lives?

It can be difficult to consider the importance of intimacy in our relationship with God because, whereas we are all familiar with the effort and attention necessary to work on our relationships with various people in our lives, our connection to God can appear to be so different. In a sense, our relationship with God is indeed different from those experiences of intimacy with others in our lives, but we nevertheless bring ourselves to every relationship we form, including the one with our Creator. Our hopes and joys, our anxieties and sorrows are carried into how we relate to God just as much, if not more than, they are in relationship to others. We don't even have to overtly express these things to God. The reason is, as St. Augustine wrote in his *Confessions*, because God is closer to us than we are to ourselves.

This inherent sense of intimacy can be daunting for those of us who live in a technologically saturated world, which allows us to keep a distance from one another through the creation of screens, masks, and social-media "profiles" that give us a false sense of control over what people can or cannot see of us. God does not need a Facebook account or an online-dating profile to learn about us. God already knows us better than we could imagine.

Awareness of God's closeness has always felt like a two-sided coin to me. On the one hand, it's intimidating to know that, unlike a social-media profile, there is nothing I can hide from God. God knows those things about me that might be considered good and those things about me that are not so good. Yet, on the other hand, there is a freedom and a peace that comes in contemplating the closeness or intimacy of being fully recognized, loved, and accepted—at times in spite of my less-than-perfect self. Because God cannot be fooled by the appearances we present to the world, we can take comfort in knowing that we are truly loved completely and without limit for who we really are and not what we pretend or wish to be. When considering this intimacy with God we might also recognize the challenge to live more authentically as ourselves created to love, forgive, and reflect the image and likeness of the Creator.

This lifelong, intimate, and, at times, challenging relationship with God is not always understood or realized right away. Like any significant relationship, our connection with God is perhaps best described as a lifelong journey of discovery. As the Trappist monk and author Thomas Merton says in his book *New Seeds of Contemplation*, it is in discovering God that we come to discover our true selves. Because it is only through our intimate journey of relationship with God that we come to understand our own identity, our connection with God is the cornerstone and foundation of all of our relationships. Not only is God responsible for bringing each aspect of creation into existence and sustaining that reality, but every authentic relationship we share is also rooted in and made possible by our primary relationship with God whether we are

conscious of this or not. In order to truly know another I must also know myself, and to truly know myself I must first know God.

At the heart of the Franciscan tradition stands the primacy of relationship. St. Francis of Assisi eschewed the traditional forms of religious life in his day that kept women and men in consecrated life away from the rest of society within a cloister. Instead, St. Francis desired that the world be his cloister and that nothing should get in the way of his relationship with others. This was, after all, the example Jesus Christ set out for his followers according to the Gospels: No one should be turned away.

St. Francis intuited the significance of intimate relationships as the centerpiece of the spiritual life. He wished to be as aware of God's closeness to him as possible while striving to follow in the footsteps of Christ. This opened his eyes to the world around him, which included women and men that his privileged upbringing allowed him to ignore previously. He would embrace those people thought to be unembraceable and love those that no one else dared to love: the poor, the sick, the forgotten, the outcast. Like Christ who always identified the will of God as the source of his mission, St. Francis lived his vocation of solidarity and service to others according to a life of prayer and humility, which continually reminded him that God was the primary source and ultimate goal of all he did.

As a Franciscan friar, I am able to look at the path that St. Francis has laid before all of us. It is an intimate journey of relationship with God that necessarily spills over into every other relationship we have. It challenges me to recognize my inherent connection to the entire created order that extends far beyond the boundaries of our human family to include the rest of creation. It calls me forward to focus on the ways I can reconnect with my Creator again and again to renew my awareness of the most intimate relationship in my life, a relationship that grounds and sustains all others. ■

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Espresso Your Faith Week 2013

In October, the C21 Student Board, in partnership with Campus Ministry, launched the second annual week-long celebration of faith through community building, conversations, lectures, liturgy, prayer, art, and service. Positioned between Parents' Weekend and Homecoming, Espresso Your Faith Week closed with "Frisbee with the Jesuits" on Stokes Lawn. Like us: www.facebook/agapelatte

