

Your Favorites ...

So many of you liked the Christmas puns (and even used them at your family gathering) that I decided to try a few Easter puns. I promised on Page 1 to behave, but that can only go on for so long. Like I tell the folks at St. Paul's, if I behave for too long a time, I get a psychological hernia. OK ... here goes

Q: What do you call a rabbit with fleas? A: Bugs Bunny!

Q: What do you get if you pour boiling water down a rabbit hole? A: A hot cross bunny.

Q: Why couldn't the Easter egg family watch T.V.? A: Because their cable was scrambled.

Q: How should you send a letter to the Easter Bunny? A: By hare mail!

Q: Where does the Easter bunny eat breakfast? A: IHOP.

Q: What do you call ten rabbits marching backwards? A: A receding hareline.

Q: Why did the rabbit cross the road? A: Because it was the chicken's day off.

Q: What's pink, has five toes, and is carried by the Easter Bunny? A: His lucky people's foot!

Q: Why was the Easter Bunny arrested? A: He was charged with Hare-assment!

Q: What kind of jewelry do rabbits wear? A: 14 carrot gold.

Q: What is the Easter Bunny's favorite state capital? A: Albunny, NY

Q: Where does the Easter Bunny go when he needs a new tail? A: To a re-tail store!

Q: What would you get if you crossed the Easter Bunny with an overstressed person?

A: An Easter basket case!

Q: How does the Easter Bunny stay in shape? A: He does lots of hare-obics.

Q: What would you get if you crossed the Easter Bunny with Chinese food? A: Hop suey!

Q: Why was the father Easter egg so strict? A: He was hard-boiled.

Q: Where does the Easter Bunny study medicine?

A: Johns HOPkins

Q: What did the gray rabbit say to the blue rabbit?

A: Cheer up!

Q: Why did the Easter Bunny order a pilsner?

A: He likes a hoppy beer.

Q: Why did the old man put the Easter Bunny on his head? A: Because he had no hare.

Q: What do you get when you cross a bunny with an onion? A: A bunion.

Q: Why does the Easter bunny have a shiny nose?

A: His powder puff is on the wrong end.

Q: How can you tell which rabbits are the oldest in a group? A: Just look for the gray hares.

CROSS LINKS

CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS, UNITED STATES PROVINCE OF PRIESTS AND BROTHERS
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Dear Hearts and Gentle Souls,

Arriving home this afternoon, I stopped to watch a few robins clustered around a tree with red berries. I wanted to stay there till they got drunk as the berries fermented in their stomachs! They'll get woozy, and lie down to bask in the sun. So if a kitty were to come along, it could say: "I love baskin' robins." I know...that was bad. I'll behave now.

Remember how the Christmas Appeal featured *A Tribute to Father Ted* Fund, designed to support the formation program? I'm happy to report that 597 of you collectively contributed over \$85,000. Wow! You folks do good work ... I'm proud of you.

Overall, more than 950 gifts were received amounting to almost \$635,000.

FIFTY DAYS OF PRAYER

Do you know anyone who could use some extra prayer? Family, friends, neighbors, co-workers? You yourself? Jot the names on the enclosed Prayer Sheet and return it to us.

We in Holy Cross will happily remember them during our Easter Season prayers and Masses. The men at Holy Cross House and Fatima House have been given the specific assignment of praying for you and for your loved ones.

No offering is required for this remembrance, but if one is given, it will be used to aid the mission of Holy Cross to make God known and loved in the USA and throughout the world. That's no small task in a world that teems with violence and mistrust.

As always, there has to be space on this first page for life's transitions. On the younger end of community life, the Saturday after Easter (April 2) will find two men being ordained to the Priesthood: **Rev. Mr. Matthew Hovde, C.S.C.**, and **Rev. Mr. Dennis Strach, C.S.C.** Please assist them with your prayers as they begin their ministry to our Church.

On the older end of community life, we celebrated the birth into eternal life of four men. **Fr. Bartholomew Salter, C.S.C.** (September 28, 2015), **Bro. Francis Gorch, C.S.C.** (November 14, 2015), **Fr. Lawrence LeVasseur, C.S.C.** (December 16, 2015) and **Fr. Robert Kruse, C.S.C.** (December 29, 2015). Fr. Bart's ministry was almost exclusively hospital chaplaincy. Brother Frank was so typical of Holy Cross Brothers. He did a little bit of everything: cemetery caretaker, maintenance, ND Bookstore, fireman, hall prefect, Washington Hall manager, Treasurer's office, and Sacred Heart Basilica. Fr. Larry ministered as a parish priest, high school chaplain and in formation. He also served six years as Assistant Superior General, and seven years as Superior of the District of Chile. Fr. Bob's entire ministry was spent at Stonehill College in North Easton, Mass. as a teacher and administrator. May they rest in peace.

Having covered the younger and older ends of the community, there's one more transition in the middle. That's me. **Effective July 1, 2016, I will be retiring from this ministry to Holy Cross Association.** After 30 years, it's time to move on. More information will be coming in the May *Cross Links*. But I wanted to let you know this early, and to

assure you right now that after July 1, you will still be able to stay in touch with me via ground mail or e-mail. The relationships that have been forged over this time - especially with the "old-timers" - are too important for me; "love 'em and leave 'em" is not part of the retirement plan.

I pray for you a fruitful Lent and a bright and Happy Easter. Thank you again for all you do for Holy Cross ... and for me!

Much love ... many prayers!

Fr. Herb

☺ Hugs!

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LOVE? NO. KINDNESS? BETTER. FRIENDLINESS? AHHHHH.

One of the highlights of my long-ago (sigh!) youth was gathering around the TV as a family to watch *Mitch Miller and the Gang*. Do you remember that show? I've never forgotten the first words of the theme song: "*Be kind to your web-footed friends, for a duck may be somebody's mother.*" If you watched the show, I'll bet that song is going to be playing in your head all day now!!

That song came to mind because of the theme of this reflection. During Easter and the Easter Season, we're going to hear a lot of Scripture about love. But that love word can get tiring to hear, because it's so large, so all-embracing. It has so many meanings we can get confused.

In an effort to narrow it down, I then thought of doing this reflection on "Kindness," hence the remembrance of the Mitch Miller song. But that word also seemed too large, too general. I kept thinking something more specific was needed, and then the dear Holy Spirit came through with the word "Friendliness."

We know and believe that God is love. One way love is expressed is in friendship. But friendship is a special relationship, and most of us have a limited number of friends. So that moves me towards friendliness, which can be universally applied to every human being. It's the virtue by which we show to others that we welcome, accept, value and support them. It helps us to make and keep friends, and helps us to 'just get along' with people in all sorts of situations. It also assists us in cooperating with others to achieve goals.

A friendly person has a wide range of personal characteristics which make them very attractive to be around.

Topping the list of qualities would be cheerfulness. Nothing shows friendliness more than a cheerful smile and a pleasant expression. I have seen that over and over again in my ministry to the elders ... in fact, I characterize my work as a "ministry of friendly presence." I've even seen it with perfect strangers going in and out of places like grocery stores. A smile and a friendly look nearly always evokes a smile in return. Try it ... I guarantee you a big dose of amazement. Few things in life are more precious than when someone sees you coming and they break out in a big smile.

Closely following on cheerfulness is an affectionate, warm and welcoming demeanor. You really do like the other and are happy to be with him or her. You show this in some appropriate way, like a smile, a bright tone of voice, slowing down to walk with the other person, a pet name (for example, "Hi there, chickadee!"). Sometimes there is room for appropriate physical expression, such as a handshake, a pat on the back or touch on the shoulder, a kiss of greeting, a hug, holding hands, and so on. Hilda, for example, is a 100-year old resident of St. Paul's. She is such a sweetie, with a sharp mind and a wicked sense of humor. Every time we see each other, she holds her hand high for a High Five ... Wanda is another lady who does the same thing. But with Marilyn and Virgil ... no way! They are very much old-school.

A sense of humor is a huge asset. Who wants to be around a person who is always serious, or who lets it be known, verbally and non-verbally, how important they are? I still remember how I used to walk around the seminary on football weekends when there were a lot of guests. I was Mr. Big Man on Campus, busy about important things. "Look at me; I'm special."

It took a two-year bout with depression to learn not to take myself seriously. It opens up whole new areas of fun and enjoyment in relationships. Last Halloween, for example, I wore a big rasta wig (long black braided locks) as I was setting up for Mass and praying before Mass. It was a hoot to see the folks' reactions as they walked in ... some even took photos with their smartcams. Once I got up to start Mass, I took it off, and there were a few "awws." I told the folks that I don't take myself seriously, but I take what I do seriously. Good advice for any friendly person.

Friendly people are civil, cordial, courteous and respectful. You observe the proper forms of speech and gestures to make the way easy. Once you know another person well, it is appropriate for your civility to become informal and familiar, even sharing ways of relating which are particular to the two of you.

Along the same lines, is there any area in your life in which you give yourself permission to act like a jerk? Some people act this way toward clerks, waiters, customer service representatives, their employees, or people in similar roles. If you realize you are abrupt toward people who cannot harm you back in any way, then a special effort to be friendly to them will help you correct this disorder and become more agreeable to everyone else in your life. At this point I might also mention how important it is to be consistent. A person can be really sweet towards outsiders, but be a real bear when it comes to family. Many times in my life I've heard glowing descriptions of Mr. X, Mrs. Y, and Father Z. I wondered if we were talking about the same person, because they're not that kind of person around family or community.

The characteristics of a friendly person go on and on. You admire and delight in the accomplishments of another. You want good things to come to the other and will actively help him or her when you can. You willingly give of what you have to benefit that person. You are patient, peaceful and easy-going. You're not a person who tries to antagonize others. You don't fly off the handle or show annoyance at her. You don't criticize him. You can calm each other down. You're quick to forgive and forget, especially if it was an accidental offense. You apologize if you're aware you have offended, and graciously accept the apology of another without demanding an ounce of flesh. When working together on a project, a friendly person doesn't have the attitude of "my way or the highway." You'll work together with others, and are generally willing to give in on matters of personal preference in order to achieve common aims. To put it theologically, you very much are attuned to the Fruits of the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23) and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14ff).

Every act of friendliness will find your heart acknowledging over and over again that we are all family. Isn't this what love is all about? Does it help you understand a little bit better what Jesus is asking of us?

Let me just close with a really neat quote from an author named Anaïs Nin: "*I prefer by far warmth and softness to mere brilliancy and coldness. Some people remind me of sharp dazzling diamonds. Valuable but lifeless and loveless. Others, of the simplest field flowers, with hearts full of dew and with all the tints of celestial beauty reflected in their modest petals.*"