

## Your Favorite Page - More Funny Lawyer Questioning

ATTORNEY: What was the first thing your husband said to you that morning?  
WITNESS: He said, "Where am I, Cathy?"  
ATTORNEY: And why did that upset you?  
WITNESS: My name is Susan!



ATTORNEY: What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?  
WITNESS: Gucci sweats and Reeboks.



ATTORNEY: This myasthenia gravis, does it affect your memory at all?  
WITNESS: Yes.  
ATTORNEY: And in what ways does it affect your memory?  
WITNESS: I forget.  
ATTORNEY: You forget? Can you give us an example of some thing you forgot?



ATTORNEY: Do you know if your daughter has ever been involved in voodoo?  
WITNESS: We both do.  
ATTORNEY: Voodoo?  
WITNESS: We do.  
ATTORNEY: You do?  
WITNESS: Yes, voodoo.



ATTORNEY: The youngest son, the 20 year-old, how old is he?  
WITNESS: Uh, he's 20.



ATTORNEY: She had three children, right?  
WITNESS: Yes.  
ATTORNEY: How many were boys?  
WITNESS: None.  
ATTORNEY: Were there any girls?  
WITNESS: Are you kidding me? Your Honor, I think I need a different attorney. Can I get a new attorney?



ATTORNEY: How was your first marriage terminated?  
WITNESS: By death.  
ATTORNEY: And by whose death was it terminated?  
WITNESS: Now whose death do you suppose terminated it?

ATTORNEY: Can you describe the individual?  
WITNESS: He was about medium height and had a beard.  
ATTORNEY: Was this a male or a female?  
WITNESS: Guess.



ATTORNEY: Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?  
WITNESS: All my autopsies are performed on dead people. Would you like to rephrase that?



ATTORNEY: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?  
WITNESS: No.  
ATTORNEY: Did you check for blood pressure?  
WITNESS: No.  
ATTORNEY: Did you check for breathing?  
WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

WITNESS: No.  
ATTORNEY: How can you be so sure, Doctor?  
WITNESS: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.  
ATTORNEY: I see, but could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?

WITNESS: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law.

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# CROSS LINKS

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

I'm writing this in the second floor west card room at St. Paul's, which is where we have the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Thursday mornings after Mass. Sometimes it's busy, sometimes not ... and so far it's "not." I get a kick out of having confessions here, because it's used as the gathering place for the poker players after supper. I walk by and tease them about being in a "den of iniquity" with the gambling, etc. It's all in good fun.

There's been a perfect storm of significant 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries this year: The assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. and the opening of the Second Vatican Council by Pope John XXIII. All three men proposed a vision of the future that was breathtaking in its scope. Kennedy spoke of the divisive power of fear in world affairs; King of equality and nonviolence; and John XXIII of a Church that embraced the world as a mother embraces a child. And where are we today? So much has been done; so much remains to be done.

### CHRISTMAS APPEAL

During the Christmas Season, we in Holy Cross will be remembering at prayer and Mass those who have done so much for us – people like you. Truly, you are gift of God to us.

If there are others you wish us to remember, jot their names on the enclosed prayer sheet and return it to us.

No offering is required, but if you choose to include one, it will be used for the general needs of Moreau Seminary and Holy Cross House.

I don't see another Kennedy or King on the horizon, but I do believe the Holy Spirit is quietly at work. Somehow, somewhere, someone is being prepared to take on the mantle of inspiring leadership. Pope Francis certainly evokes the spirit of John XXIII and it remains to be seen how his pontificate will play out. Nothing has changed, yet everything has changed.

Change has touched the lives of three men in Holy Cross. On Sept. 30, **Rev. William Donahue, C.S.C.**, entered into his eternal rest. Fr. Bill was at King's College in Pennsylvania and a pastor at two parishes in Texas. He was also very involved with the diocesan Marriage Tribunal while in Texas.

The next man to be called home was **Rev. Ronald Tripi, C.S.C.**, on Oct. 31. Fr. Ron spent the first 23 years after his Ordination in the Bangladesh missions. Then he returned to this country and was a fixture at St. Stanislaus Parish and Christ the King Parish in South Bend. He had a special passion for visiting the sick and homebound and that was evidenced by the huge turnout at his funeral. Of Fr. Ron it can be said, "The Lord chooses the lowly to shame the learned and wise."

On Nov. 11, one of Notre Dame's finest teachers died, **Rev. John Dunne, C.S.C.** A few months ago, Fr. John tumbled down an escalator at the Detroit airport and suffered severe brain injuries. At one moment it seemed he would recover,

but the next moment brought a setback. Fr. John was a revered theology teacher at Notre Dame; it is said that he taught more students (including me) than any other professor in the history of Notre Dame. He was a brilliant thinker, and yet you couldn't find a more humble man anywhere.

Enjoy the reflection inside as well as the famous page 4. 'Tis the season for a little bit of humor. I join with the folks in the Development Office to wish you and yours a gentle, wonder-full Christmas and a blessed New Year. Thank you for all you have done for Holy Cross in 2013.

Much love ... and many prayers!

*Fr. Herb*

*☺ Hugs!*

# Does Jesus Have a Sense of Humor?

Back in October, a benefactor shared his reflections on whether or not Jesus had a sense of humor. After reading his conclusion, I thought: “Hmmm ... this will make a good topic for a Cross Links reflection!”

Many people see Christianity as a humorless religion. Salvation is a deadly serious business, they say, and there is no room for mirth or laughter. This attitude goes way back to the Church fathers. I had a source on the Internet that gave me several quotes from such luminaries at Augustine, John Chrysostom and Thomas Aquinas, among others, but when I tried to locate it for this reflection, I couldn't find it. To a man, they claimed that humor in religious matters was the work of the devil.

This attitude still exists today. When was the last time, for example, you felt really free to burst out with a huge laugh in church? Maybe there might be a polite chuckle, but certainly not something that would keep you giggling long after the punch line. Heck, I can't even get people to clap joyfully at a wedding when I first introduce the bride and groom as “Mr. and Mrs \_\_\_\_\_.”

In the Gospels, we see twice that Jesus wept over Jerusalem and at the death of His friend Lazarus. Not once do we read that He laughed or even smiled. But does that necessarily mean He didn't? We don't hear of Him brushing his teeth, washing His tunic, going for a swim in the Sea of Galilee, snoring while He sleeps. Just because the Gospels are silent about Jesus' daily activities doesn't mean they never happened. He was fully human, after all, and part of being fully human is having a good sense of humor. One who can't laugh is very much at risk for deep psychological problems.

Sadly, so many of the funny stories in the Gospel come across as quite matter-of-fact. Part of this is due to a language gap. Our Scripture is a translation of the Greek, which in turn is a translation of Jesus' own Aramaic. Without knowledge of Jesus' native tongue, certain wordplays are simply lost to us. For instance, an added layer of Matthew 23:24 (the comparison of gnat and camel) is that the Aramaic word for gnat is *galma* and the word for camel is *gamla*. We wouldn't know this, but those listening to Jesus would have loved it!

We also lose the facial expressions and tone of voice so crucial to successful comedy. David Letterman can make us laugh with a simple facial expression or the inflection of his voice. A transcript of his show wouldn't be nearly as amusing as seeing it live. Unfortunately, the Gospels have been handed down to us as manuscripts, not YouTube videos. So we miss

the non-verbals which are part of a laugh-inducing experience. It's important to remember also that Jesus was a Jew. Historically, the Jewish people have a very unique form of humor. It's how they've survived all these centuries. They love to poke fun at themselves, their traditions, their religious leaders, their parents, their wives. In the Talmud, they try to tease out every last meaning from Jewish law, sometimes bending over backwards to make a point. Take this, for example, Q: Is one permitted to ride in an airplane on the Sabbath? A: Yes, as long as your seat belt remains fastened. In this case, it is considered that you are not riding, you are wearing the plane.

That's why Jesus loved to tweak the Pharisees over their rigid interpretation of the Law. In Matthew 23:24, Jesus describes Pharisees who were so careful that they held a strainer over their soup to be sure they didn't swallow anything evil like a gnat, then turned right around and chomped down on a smelly, dirty camel -- hoofs, humps, fat lips, yellow teeth and all. He would poke fun at the hypocrites who fasted, then got stage paint to make their faces disfigured and ugly so people would think they were really suffering something awful (Matthew 6:16). Later in Matthew, Jesus tells His disciples about a man walking down the street with a wooden beam (could have been as big as a telephone pole by today's standards) in his eye, then stopping to get a splinter out of someone else's eye ( 7:3).

One of Jesus' great desires was to bring people together. Research has shown that laughter predates spoken language as a means of bonding people to each other. Do you really believe that when Jesus dined with sinners and tax collectors, He was a killjoy? There is a reason, after all, why the Pharisees called Him a glutton and a drunkard (Luke 7:34). Did He sit in a corner at the Cana wedding harrumphing at the antics of the guests? Heck, no! He made more wine! Just think of enjoyable dinner parties and celebrations in your own life, full of laughter and good cheer, everyone delighting in one another's company. There is a reason that one enduring image of Heaven is a banquet.

He speaks of invitations of God's big wedding celebration. (Luke 14:16-24) The responses to the invitation were ridiculous. It would be like me saying “I've just bought a house on eBay and I need to go see whether it really does have bathrooms.”Or perhaps: “I've just bought a used car over the phone and I need to go see if it has wheels.” Don't we laugh at the flimsy excuses people give us?

What about all those comebacks Jesus made? Every single time the leadership tried to trap Him verbally, He would

utterly flummox them. “*Render unto Caesar that which is Caesars, and to God what is God's.*” (Matthew 20:20-22) “*Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.*” (John 8:7) In response to a lawyer's question about one's neighbor, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan and concluded with a question: “*Who do you think was neighbor to the man?*” The lawyer grudgingly relied, “*The one, I suppose, who had mercy on him.*” Then came the hammer: “*Then go and do likewise.*” (Luke 10:29-37) Imagine yourself as a typical follower of Jesus. Wouldn't you have laughed at the way the pomposity of the leadership got punctured?

Or take the Apostles: I just know that Jesus rolled His eyes many a time over the often-stupendous density of those 12 men, especially Peter. In the beginning of the Gospel of John (1:43-51), for example, comes the remarkable story of Nathaniel, who has been told by his friends that the Messiah is from Nazareth. Nathaniel responds, “*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*” This was a standard joke about how insignificant the city was, similar to modern jokes about Peoria! Nathaniel's humor doesn't bother Jesus at all. In fact, it seems to delight Him. “*Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!*” says Jesus. In other words, here is someone I can trust.

Move from the Apostles to ourselves. I believe that Jesus Christ loves me and I know you believe that He loves you. I cannot imagine that anyone without a sense of humor could do that. How could He possibly take a look at my life -- my foibles and my sins -- and still declare that He loves me, without at least a little smile? How often He must shake His head at me, yet He looks ahead to my eternity in Heaven, where my own laughter will never cease. By way of footnote, I always make a point to say that while grief and sorrow are the language of the human heart at the loss of someone you love, the laughter and mirth as you share stories of the deceased is the language of the Divine Heart, for laughter is the language of Heaven.

Jesus nicknamed James and John “sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17) because they had a temper and were very quick to dish out punishment to bad people. Jesus called Peter a “rock” when the man was anything but ... perhaps he was referring to what was inside Peter's skull.

If you were a bystander walking along with the disciples when they were talking about who was the greatest, wouldn't you have laughed when Jesus suddenly stopped short and applied a bit of fraternal correction. Can you imagine the embarrassed looks on their faces when they found out Jesus knew what they had been talking about?

Or take Mark's account of Jesus walking on the water during the storm (6:45-52). Notice how it's phrased: “*He was about to pass by them ...*” Don't you love that? As if a guy sauntering across the lake was no big deal. Of course, He knew the effect it would have and the lesson in it. He could have walked up to the boat immediately and assured them; instead, He let them freak out a bit then calmed their fears. Is it possible the Lord was a bit mischievous?

Do you really think that such massive crowds would have followed Jesus were He a dour, humorless man? He had to possess a *joie de vivre* that was enormously attractive to people. Joy and laughter were as much hallmarks of His ministry as suffering and sorrow. In fact, in His Farewell Discourse the night before He died, when His heart was most sorrowful, Jesus was able to say, “*I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*” (John 15:11)

There's nothing worse than a humorless Christian. You know the type -- tight lipped, judgmental, unsmiling, puritanical. Someone who views frivolity as sacrilege and humor as heresy. Perhaps you've even met the type -- online or in person.

But this understanding of the Christian life is incomplete. Jesus uses humor to teach, heal, convert and, ultimately, redeem. For Him, laughter and seriousness are not mutually exclusive. We tend to shy away from visions of our Lord smiling and joking and engaging us in laughter. Yet there is great evidence that Jesus desires this important piece of our humanity to shine forth. Laughter is good for body and soul and it allows us to confront the darker sides of life with grace and composure. Without humor, life would be unbearable. Humor is used as a means to deal with the burdens of life. It makes light the yoke of sin, death, and human frailty and Jesus did encourage us to take His yoke upon our shoulders.

By the way, do you want a real insight into Divine humor? How about this: the Son of God, the Messiah, was born as a baby; born in backwater Bethlehem, not a national capital; born in a cowshed, not a palace; born to a woman barely into her teens, with a much older husband (so says tradition); and even better, conceived in not-quite-the-normal way. Christ's first visitors were not members of His extended family, but shepherds from the fields smelling like sheep (to use Pope Francis' wonderful words!); and who was later visited by royalty from another country. And then God laughed at everyone's chagrin, “It ain't supposed to happen this way!!!”