



CGA WORLD

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Catholic Golden Age - "50 and Better"

Living on the Lighter Side

**A daily dose of humor is good
for everyone!**

By Sister Maureen P. Hester

Heaven, hell and humor.

It was 1910 in Ireland.

In a country church the priest was giving a mission— a fire and brimstone mission. As it was coming to an end, the priest wanted to evaluate how the talks went. So he ended the sermon by directed the people, "All those who want to go to heaven stand up." It looked as though everyone stood up. Then he said, "All those who want to go to hell, stand." To his surprise, Flaherty stood up. He asked him, "Why are you standing? Do you really want to go to

hell?" To which Flaherty responded, "To tell you the truth, Father, I do not want to go to hell, but I hated to see you there standing by yourself."

And a second story.

Once there were twin boys, one an optimist and the other a pessimist. Their parents, concerned about the extreme differences between the boys, decided to take them to a psychiatrist. After a family interview, the psychiatrist developed a strategy. She put the pessimistic twin on a playroom full of toys, not only wind ups, but also those that were computerized and motorized. When she

returned in a hour, the child had not moved. "What did you play with?" she asked. The boy responded, "Nothing. I was afraid I would break something."

Now the optimistic boy was put in a room with manure stacked very high and a shovel plunked in the middle of it. When she returned in a hour, the boy was shoveling as fast as she could. "What are you doing?" she asked. "I know there is a pony in here somewhere," he said.

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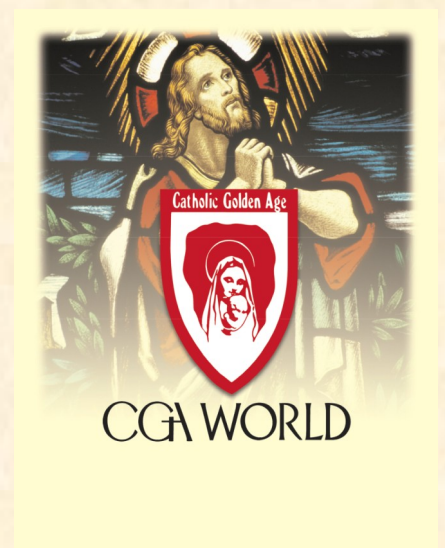
In Memoriam... Rick F. Hezel

Our condolences and sympathies go to the family of Rick F. Hezel.

Rick was a member of Catholic Golden Age for many years. He would attend our annual Mass at the Basilica of

the National Shrine in Washington, D.C., and was instrumental in capturing pictures of our members over the last few years at the Annual Pilgrimage.

God Bless You!





"Yahweh guards you from harm, he guards your lives, he guards you leaving, coming back, now and for always"
Psalm 121:7,8

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Attn: Editor
CGA WORLD**

These two humorous stories are from my past. The first one my Irish father told as an introduction to a talk he gave at age 80. The second one was the first joke I ever told in public, and on old one it is. But these two stories have something more in common. They speak about everyday choices---the choice to sit or stand, to play or not to play. Each new day offers us similar choices: What do I have to do? What do I want to do? What will I do first?

There are choices even when we think we do not have any. But, you may be saying, there are life events we choose and those we do not choose, like sickness or loss of a loved one. Even in those stressful times we have some options. When I compare people who have reached some wisdom or peace in their lives with those who have not, the former often possess an additional ingredient--humor. John Kennedy has been quoted as saying, "There are three things which are real: God, human folly and laughter. The first two are beyond our comprehension. We must do what we can with the third."

Over the past four years, my colleague Jean Ruxton and I have "done what we can with the third." Our goal is to increase self awareness and to encourage humor as an

option when making choices. Our basic beliefs about humor are: everybody has a sense of humor, used or unused; humor is unique; humor can be an option we choose; people can raise their consciousness about humor as a coping tool.

Physiologically, the body feels lighter when we laugh. Even the effort taken to force a smile can make us feel better. Some scientists report that with humor the brain is stimulated to produce chemical pain relievers, endorphins and enkephalins. Into the bloodstream flow adrenalin and other hormones that stimulate heart and lungs. The heart beats faster, arteries contract and blood pressure temporarily rises. Not only is oxygenation increased in the blood, but the body's production of immune cells increases. This is a physiological description of what Norman Cousins calls "internal jogging."

WHEN IS IT USEFUL?

Humor is useful when faced with frustration, stress and life events over which we have no control. Stress researchers say that events are neutral; we are the ones

who label them stressful. Typical options at these times are attack (kick the door or curse the other freeway driver) or withdraw or become passive (become moody, go eat or drink). A third option is to go with the flow. For this one, Joel Goodman suggests we think of humor as aikido, an eastern martial art which does not involve an offensive posture. Thus aikido encourages us to go with the flow, and to provide graceful responses to attacks.

Goodman suggests aikido as a metaphor for using humor to defuse confrontations, disarm attackers, and turn situations from "abusing to amusing." He cites an example of a Minneapolis man whose car was crushed by a huge tree trunk. He responded by standing next to his car and waving at all the passers-by. On his car was the hand-lettered sign reading 'COMPACT CAR.'

When my nurse friend was having a breast removed, her normal apprehension was compounded by her knowledge of the potential for medical error. Finally she came upon a solution to deal with it. The night before surgery, she asked for a marker pen and masking tape and attached the following message to her good breast: Open the other



Henriqueta M. Martinez, 94 years old, shown on Left with her sister, Lucy. (85 years old)

Member Spotlight...

Henriqueta has been a member of Catholic Golden Age since 1978. Catholic Golden Age was founded in 1975 which makes Henriqueta one of it's original members.

Henriqueta is especially pleased with the spiritual benefits offered by Catholic Golden Age. The prayers, penances and good works of priests, brothers and sisters throughout the

world is especially comforting to her.

In her 94 years young Henriqueta has met Mother Teresa, and has been blessed by Padre Pio.

God Bless You, Henriqueta!

Find these Saints of Places:

GEORGE
STEPHEN THE KING
GERTRUDE
ANNE
JOAN OF ARC
NICHOLAS OF MYRA
CASIMIR
ANDREW
BONIFACE
WENCELAS
ROSE OF LIMA
JAMES THE GREATER
CYRIL & METHODIUS
STANISLAUS OF CRACOW
OLAF
PATRICK
DAVID
FRANCIS OF ASSISI
JOSEPH
VINCENT OF SARAGASSA
NICHOLAS OF FLUE
WILLIBRORD
FRANCIS XAVIER
ANSCAR
BRIDGET

PATRON SAINTS OF PLACES

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D	A	N	E	F	R	A	N	C	I	S	X	A	V	I	E	R	F	A	D	O	R
E	E	H	S	B	M	F	R	A	N	C	I	S	O	F	A	S	S	I	S	I	R
A	O	E	H	R	E	R	O	E	A	O	L	S	D	E	R	E	O	T	J	R	J
K	A	G	S	I	A	N	G	L	L	F	O	A	O	B	D	W	A	H	A	A	A
P	S	E	E	D	A	R	T	C	E	O	S	S	R	U	N	N	O	P	M	S	R
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O	C	S	G	T	A	D	D	M	R	R	R	W	L	A	L	A	A	O	T	P	N
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Solution to Last Issue's Puzzle...

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D	E	V	U	I	R	E	T	S	A	E	U	T	B	F	T	A	B
R	V	M	G	C	T	M	G	F	R	D	R	K	O	T	N	R	F
U	O	V	G	S	K	C	H	H	G	A	C	Y	N	F	U	M	I
T	D	T	F	R	T	G	E	G	R	F	H	F	N	K	H	K	L
A	T	Q	A	F	V	G	F	R	U	I	L	P	E	F	G	T	Y
S	F	G	H	D	H	T	Y	Q	U	R	G	R	T	S	G	N	P
Y	A	F	S	J	L	G	O	H	K	S	D	A	P	E	E	H	K
L	P	A	I	N	T	E	D	E	G	G	S	I	Y	D	I	G	E
O	R	H	U	O	G	Y	J	O	O	H	L	E	T	R	U	I	D
H	D	U	L	R	G	T	O	H	U	U	D	T	R	Y	E	F	J
U	K	E	U	H	L	D	U	G	T	A	I	F	H	I	U	L	P
L	I	R	P	A	F	R	L	V	R	N	S	D	S	F	T	Y	I
C	F	J	O	R	M	X	F	A	K	J	P	V	H	L	E	D	S
A	E	Q	I	B	J	K	P	O	I	O	R	I	F	D	K	H	I
N	U	D	H	H	M	O	S	L	H	A	I	T	U	V	S	K	P
D	A	Q	F	J	K	A	M	J	H	E	N	U	Y	N	A	L	A
Y	A	D	N	U	S	M	L	A	P	C	G	H	U	L	B	I	G
N	Y	Q	O	U	Q	F	G	N	H	J	K	L	Y	U	D	E	T
I	J	E	L	L	Y	B	E	A	N	S	H	K	O	L	O	F	Y

Trivia Teaser

- How much vegetation can a swarm of 3-inch desert locusts eat in one day? a-100 tons, b-5,000 lbs., c-25,000 lbs., d-500 lbs.
- Who was the youngest person to win an Academy Award? a-Anna Paquin, b-Margaret O'Brien, c-Shirley Temple, d-Tatum O'Neal.
- The American Civil War ended when Lee surrendered to Grant. Where did that occur? a-Appomattox, b-Gettysburg, c-Atlanta, d-Nashville.
- Gelatin comes from: a-Seaweed, b-Animal tissue and bone, c-Barley, d-Soybeans.
- The month of July is named for: a-Jupiter, b-Caesar, c-Socrates, d-Jerusalem.

(Turn upside-down for answers)

Answer to Trivia Teaser
1-a, A swarm weighs about 225 tons and can devour 100 tons a day.
2-d, Tatum O'Neal at age 10 for Paper Moon in 1973.
3-a, Appomattox.
4-b, Animal tissue and bone.
5-b, Julius Caesar.

side. These two examples illustrate a choice made for humor in situations that could have led to despair.

Humor is an option to enable us to "go with the flow" of life both in thinking about ourselves and in our relationships with other. Regarding ourselves, a tendency toward unhealthy perfectionism or unrealistic expectations can be counteracted by a bit of self mockery. A favorite expression of a psychologist friend is: I am committed to imperfection. A similar wisdom cites: Humor is the synapse between the perfection we seek and the imperfection we are. Maybe we need a sign on our mirror that says: Don't take this person too seriously. A delicate balance is needed here. We can put down or doubt ourselves easily, even with humor. A bit of healthy self mockery is different than encouraging low self-esteem. Thus the desired balance is "....to care and not to care," as Eliot says.

In relationships with others, humor is a powerful tool which can be both constructive and destructive. Used in a positive way, humor brings release, lightness and closeness. Using humor is hardest when the situation is new, the relationship is unknown, and/or the situation serious. And it can be risky: the effect of laughing-in at

someone brings alienation and pain. However, within personal high stress moments, gallows humor can be an acceptable way of coping. The process of accepting aging, surgery, or death can bring out the dark side of humor. These moments of exaggerating the event, even if darkly, can offer some sense of control over it.

RAISING HUMOR CONTENT

To record humorous life events, one friend gave me a tiny red journal. While I have been irregular in keeping it, it encourages me to be alert to everyday humor. When I write up a story, I find myself retelling it at the dinner table. A mealtime conversation, spiced with humor, can greatly aid digestion. Several ideas to raise the humor content of everyday life are: be around funny or humorous people regularly, form a group to share funny incidents of the week, begin dinner conversation with a humorous story, surprise your family by putting favorite cartoons on a bulletin board or mirror (change them often), give humorous presents, make a funny basket for hospital trips with wind-up toys, funny cards, etc., take an extra minute to add humor to letters or club announcements. Your imagination can spark a longer list that fits your lifestyle.

Humor adds zest to our quality of life: physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Life has events which we cannot control, however we do have choices about our attitude toward them.. Spiritually, humor provides detachment from an event which allows space for God's grace to assist in transforming and integrating it into our lives.

As I began with two stories about choices, let me end with the wisdom of two bards of humor. A typically dark Woody Allen says: More than any other time in history mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness, the other to total extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose correctly. On the other hand, Will Rogers said: An optimist and pessimist are right about the same number of times, but the optimist has more fun.

Heaven, hell and humor? We do have a choice. Humor, rightly used, tips the scales toward heaven.

New to CGA..



One of the newest benefits of Catholic Golden Age is the affiliation with the Catholic Tour Company. The Catholic Tour has itineraries that cover pilgrimages to various Catholic shrines throughout the world.

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