



# Blessings

SACRAMENTORS®: A Process of Sanctification for Catholic Men and Women

December 2007

## Desert Wisdom

by Fr. Bob Camuso

In his new book, *Crossing the Desert*, author Robert Wicks writes of “desert wisdom” gained by the desert fathers and mothers who lived as monks in the deserts of Egypt and Palestine during the late third and fourth centuries. These simple men and women went to live in the desert to be themselves—to escape from a world that kept them from the true self. They saw that the desire for power, possessions and prestige, which is fueled by pride, greed and fear, kept them from spiritual freedom.

But once they got to the desert, what did they do? One of the things they did was to ask four questions of themselves. The first question is this: **What am I filled with now?**

In a recent television news story about fires in

southern California, a middle-aged man was interviewed as he stood at the back of his truck. In the truck bed was piled a number of items that filled the bed about half full. The man explained that he and his wife knew the brush fires might burn their home and so they took time to make a list of the most important items they owned. He was happy to report that he was able to take every item on his list, before his home was burned to the ground. What amazed me was how little he had in his truck.

Our desire to have more and more things keeps us in a state of anxiety and fear. As a result, we do not trust in the providence of God. We trust our things. We think that if only we had more, we would feel safe and secure. Someone once

asked a priest who he would prefer to minister to, the rich or the poor. The priest answered, “The rich, because they know that money cannot buy happiness.”

To withdraw from the addiction of having more things requires great discipline. It requires that we say *no* to ourselves in the name of a higher *yes*. The higher *yes* is to God, who tells us, “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear...But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all things will be given to you as well.” (*Matthew 6:25*)

To say no to ourselves means to let go, which leads us to the second question of the desert fathers and mothers: **What prevents me from letting go?**

See “Wisdom,” on page 5

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### The purpose

of the SacraMentors® movement is to provide men and women with small communities of other men and women, who will support and sustain them in their efforts to live a Christian life which calls them to forgive themselves and others, bless the world,

## Sacred Places

By Lory Misel

Are there sacred, holy places upon this wonderful earth? Oh yes dear ones! Oh yes! These pure places shine so magnificently they confound conscious comprehension, even overwhelming the senses. The only near description of these places when found is to sigh “Whew” and then to

weep. (I wish to note here that there is a difference between crying and weeping. One cries when one has lost something or someone of importance. One cries when one is in pain whether it is social, emotional or physical. Crying comes from the heart. One weeps when the

Divine touches one’s soul. Crying comes from the heart; weeping arises from the soul.)

The sacred, holy places of which I wish to tell you about are not the special places known to the world. Yes, there are popular sacred places that draw

See “Sacred,” on page 7




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“Spontaneity  
 +  
 Joy  
 +  
 Artistic  
 Expression  
 =  
 The Nurturing of  
 my  
 God-Given  
 True Identity!”

~ Cyndie Ulrich

## Reflections

by *Cyndie Unrich, Executive Director, SacraMentors®*

I’m home alone this morning working at my computer. Wearing my headset, I’m singing along with Barry Manilow as I listen to his CD, *Because It’s Christmas*.

*(Note to self: might this be the reason Mike and the dog left quickly for a long walk in very cold weather?????)*

If truth be known, I sing at my computer while my “inner Cyndie” stands regaled in a gorgeous designer gown at center-stage of my “inner McCaw Hall.” (FYI: it’s purple, beaded dupioni silk with a poof of marabou feathers at the shoulder!)

In my reverie, Manilow and I sing together for a standing-room-only audience. And since it’s my daydream, I can tell you we’ve a couple of numbers that are sung with amazing dance routines.

In my daydream, an equa-

tion-of-life is playing out like the unwrapping of a Christmas gift. The equation is:

**SPONTANEITY**  
 +  
**JOY**  
 +  
**ARTISTIC EXPRESSION**  
 =  
**THE NURTURING OF**  
**MY GOD-GIVEN**  
**TRUE IDENTITY!**

In the midst of my mini-drama, my spiritual-self engages me in an interesting conversation.

Why is it that so many of us sit and watch placidly – if not recoil in embarrassment – rather than actively participate in musical or theatrical experiences? If it’s because we’re not experts, then why should we place such high regard on expertise in exchange for expression of our own joy?

Why is it, we leave acting, singing and dancing

exclusively to those who have earned their way into “professional” ranks? From what source does our unworthiness come?

The answer is no surprise. Fear has inculcated itself into the masses, scaring us away from giving freely of ourselves, even if the gift is only for the sake of enriching our own heart with joy.

Enthusiasm is battered by a social consciousness that judges 1) who is worthy of the gift of self-expression and 2) who shall remain cast aside as unworthy to express but worthy of the mocking from others. How splendidly we have subjugated ourselves into an “I’m not good enough...” mentality that destroys our uniqueness as well as defeats easy opportunities to bless, learn and grow?

Shows like “American Idol” obliterate our innocence within, and trivialize spontaneity and joy. Superiority and judgment, like that

*See “Reflections,” p. 9*

## Testimonial

by *Pete Wright*

Here are a few thoughts about the value of SacraMentors® to me.

For me, the most important element of getting together regularly is accountability for my pain, mistakes, etc. Each time we meet I am forced to do a conscience check beforehand on how I have been living according to the Gospel, especially with those closest to me. In fact, I’ll often ask my wife what her perception is of how I’m

doing. Having to reflect on my behavior and then articulate it to others is like going to Confession, with similar therapeutic benefits, like getting it off my chest. Of course, I can’t look at what I’m doing wrong without formulating some corrective action. This process is especially useful in breaking the cycle of harmful patterns.

Another important aspect of meeting regularly is being

life. Knowing that I’ll be sharing examples of God’s love with my Sacramentor buddies keeps my antenna up for those experiences that might otherwise slip by unnoticed or be taken for granted. I find myself talking to God about this and thanking Him much more often than I did before.

*Pete is a member of St. Louise parish and the St. Louise Sacra-Mentors® Apostles Group in Bellevue.*

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visit our website at:  
[www.sacramentors.org](http://www.sacramentors.org)

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## Yes Lord; Yes, Yes Lord!

by Dean Mannello

We have a terrific youth Mass and band here at St. John's, Vancouver. Last Sunday the youth band played a song where, as part of the participation, we made the "sign" for yes (like knocking at a door with a closed fist) and then making an "L" with our index finger pointing up and our thumb horizontal. If you're right-handed your thumb was pointing to the left. So it went *yes, Lord; yes, yes Lord*. It was a lot of fun.

How appropriate that was, for up at the altar sitting next to our priest was a very good friend of mine who had just been ordained a deacon. It was only one day earlier when I attended the ordination Mass at St. James Cathedral in Seattle, and I'm still not the same. The culmination of three years of study and overcoming fear, uncertainty and doubt came to fruition, and he looked "at home" at the altar. That's the funny thing about saying "yes" to the Lord's calling: you look and feel like you're home.

I couldn't help but reflect on all the gifts I've been given, how I am using them, and how much I was struggling with saying "yes."

I was meddling in my own calling. And I'm not just thinking about the gifts to be used for the Church. I mean all my gifts. The gifts I use at home and in business, or the gifts I have to help others understand and deal with their personal challenges. Just being a friend, just saying "yes, I'll help."

Now, I do not mean volunteering 24/7. That's the ego's way of getting you so buried that you lose your life's balance and burn out. And it's not unusual to bounce off the extremes either. All or nothing. That's not good. But SacraMentors<sup>®</sup> showed me how to listen to the Holy Spirit, and with the right heart, how I could make good decisions. I recommitted myself to saying "yes." All I know is when the day comes that I am before the Lord, I just want to say "Lord, you gave me all these gifts, and Lord, I used them all to their fullest, I wore them out." I think some of our greatest frustrations come from the fact that we know we have the talent and the time, but we don't step up. Then we get angry with ourselves and engage in self-destructive behavior as a way to punish ourselves. Thank God for SacraMentors<sup>®</sup>.

Several years ago, our SacraMentors<sup>®</sup> Apostles Group sponsored an RCIA candidate who didn't have a sponsor. We took turns going to the RCIA meetings, and it was a joyful experience. At one Mass, a group of Catechumens were asked to come up to the front as they took their second step in the long process to become Catholic. Much to my surprise, there was one person without a sponsor. Without any hesitation I decided at that moment I would sponsor that person. And I felt great. I still feel great, no doubts. The Lord always prepares our way when he calls us to help. In a quiet moment, alone, you well up with tears of pure joy. And I don't think those tears are because you volunteered for something. I think it's because you know, absolutely know without any doubt, that you just communicated with your Creator and he answered you. Yes lord; yes, yes Lord!

*Dean is a member of St. John the Evangelist parish in Vancouver, and has been a Sacramentor for nearly seven years. He can be reached at (360) 574-1910 or [jdmannallo@qwest.net](mailto:jdmannallo@qwest.net).*



“All I know is  
when the day  
comes that I am  
before the Lord, I  
just want to say  
‘Lord, you gave  
me all these gifts,  
and Lord, I used  
them all to their  
fullest, I wore  
them out.’”

~ Dean Manello



Father, all-powerful God,  
your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the  
Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan.  
Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which  
announces His glory and open our minds to receive the  
Spirit who prepares us for His coming.



## Day 18

**Ask in  
loving prayer  
for a thought  
from the  
Holy Spirit  
that can  
guide you  
through  
this day.**

~ *Book of  
Kindness II*



All Sacramentors are Invited to Attend

A Spiritual Retreat

Saturday, January 26, 2008

9:00 a.m. till 12:00 noon

St. Louise Parish, Bellevue

A Teaching on  
History of Contemplative Prayer  
with Prayer Styles/Spiritual Exercises

facilitated by

Tim Malone, M.Div.

of the

Ignatian Spirituality Center, Seattle

Please R.S.V.P. by Wednesday, January 23 to

Frank Pease,

SacraMentors<sup>®</sup> Spiritual Development Coordinator

(425) 562-8744 or frank\_pease@hotmail.com

### Help us Renew our SacraMentors<sup>®</sup> Trademark by Scott Webster

Ten years ago, the co-founders of SacraMentors<sup>®</sup>, Fr. Bob Camuso and Lory Misel registered "SacraMentors<sup>®</sup>" as a trademark through the legal firm Lane Powell.

The registration of our trademark name is coming due for renewal in January, 2008. We recently learned that the cost of renewing our SacraMentors<sup>®</sup> name will cost an estimated \$1,100.00.

A fundraising event during the first quarter of 2008 is currently being discussed by the Board. This event could also provide a great opportunity for our membership to gather. More about this soon!

If you would like to make a contribution to assist with the re-registration of the SacraMentors<sup>®</sup> trademark, thank you! Please mail your donation to:

**SacraMentors<sup>®</sup>**  
**P.O. Box 64787**  
**University Place, WA**  
**98464**

Please write "Trademark Registration" on the memo line of your check. We will be happy to acknowledge your tax-deductible donation, at your request, in a future edition of *Blessings*. Many thanks!

*“Wisdom” continued from page 1*

To let go of that which keeps us from being free to be ourselves and free to love is not easy for most of us. It's much easier to blame others for why we are not free—to take on the attitude of a victim. Or we can blame ourselves to the point of self-hatred. That doesn't work either. What works to help us let go is be awake and aware of what is happening to us through reflection. Some good questions to reflect on are these: “Am I unsatisfied with my life because I believe I don't have enough? What is the enough that is missing for me? If I get the enough I am missing, will that really make me freer to be myself and more free to love? Why can I not let go of this desire for more, which keeps me in an anxious state of unhappiness?”

Along with self-analysis, it helps to have someone with whom we feel free to tell the truth about ourselves, someone who can give us honest feedback. When we are able to say how angry and hurt and fearful we are to another person, there is a sense of relief and release within us. That helps us to let go.

Reading Sacred Scripture is always a good way to find wisdom to let go. Attending worship services also helps. Being with the poor, the sick and dying are wonderful ways to help us gain perspective on how important is our desire for more. What prevents us from letting go needs to be discovered, named and given to God. We cannot do that if we don't examine our life and name our demons.

The third question of the desert fathers and mothers is, **How do I empty myself?** One of the desert fathers, Abba Moses, offered this advice to a young brother who wanted to develop a healthy and strong spiritual life: “Go into your room alone and your room will teach you everything.” In other words, find a place of silence and solitude in this world of noise and action, and pray. Silence awakens in us the ego-games we play. The shame we still have about ourselves. The mistakes we've made. The lies we tell about ourselves. But silence also is like a fire in a hearth that burns away the past and allows the embers of discontent to cool and turn to ash. If you spend enough time in silence, solitude and prayer, you are likely to emerge feeling ready for a new beginning, a fresh start and emptied of that which kept you from being free.

The fourth question: **What will satisfy me, yet leave me open to more?** In other words, “Once I am empty, what do I fill myself with?” Or, “What do I do once the room is swept clean?”

To answer this, Robert Wicks suggests we “feed our soul” with good food. Food beyond prayer and scripture, which I have already mentioned, include such things as gratitude, simplicity, a listening spirit, appreciation of one's vulnerability, and recognition of the fragility of life.

An attitude of *gratitude* satisfies us and makes us want to experience more of

what is good for us. Gratitude gives us perspective and frees us from an embarrassing sense of entitlement, which is one of the greatest dangers to the spiritual life.

*Simplicity* is another attitude that helps the true self to emerge. Simplicity is not just simplifying our lifestyle. Inner simplicity means to think about our thoughts and ask ourselves, “Do I want to think over and over again about this problem or that concern? Why don't I choose to think about something else?” Inner simplicity also means to allow ourselves time to stop during the day and just be, to enjoy nature and our loved ones as they are without our need to change them.

*A listening spirit* allows us to be open to hear others and to be surprised by what we learn from them. Even though we hunger to tell our story to others, there is something deeply satisfying about listening that we cannot find if we are doing all the talking. Those of you in Apostle groups know what it is like to listen to a brother or sister tell you the secrets of his or her heart. You feel in the presence of holiness—that you are in the privileged presence of God.

*Appreciation of one's vulnerabilities* leads us to humility. Humility brings us back down to earth, where we are most real. It gives us perspective on life. It keeps us from denial of the things that abuse us, like alcohol, drugs and other addictions. To see ourselves as we really are is to admit to the lies we tell ourselves.

*Concludes on p. 8*




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“Those  
of you in  
Apostle groups  
know what it is  
like to listen  
to a brother or  
sister tell you  
the secrets of  
his or her heart.  
You feel in the  
presence of  
holiness—  
that you are in  
the privileged  
presence of  
God.”

~ Fr. Bob Camuso





O Radiant  
Dawn, splendor  
of eternal light,  
sun of justice:  
Come, shine on  
those who dwell  
in darkness and  
the shadow of  
death.

~ The Great "O"  
Antiphons



## Catholic Advent Traditions

by Scott Webster

Advent, the beginning of the Church's liturgical calendar, has long been a season of spiritual preparation of eager longing for the birth of Our Savior Jesus Christ. There are many wonderful Advent traditions which can help us continue in the spiritual journey, and to "prepare the way" for Christ in our hearts.

In her book *Advent and Christmas in the Catholic Home*, Mary McLoughlin outlines practices (and their colorful histories) which are great for parents, children, and individuals alike.

**Advent wreath:** Probably the most recognized Advent custom is the Advent wreath, which comes to us from the Lutheran tradition. The wreath is made of evergreens that are bound in a circle with wire. The wreath

symbolizes the years from Adam to Christ where the world anticipated and awaited its Redeemer. It also represents the years that we have waited for Christ's second and final coming. The wreath holds four evenly-spaced candles: three purple ones lit on the "penitential" Sundays of Advent, and a pink one for Gaudete, the joyful third Sunday, which also represents Mary and her great "Yes." There are many prayers and hymns you can find online or in a good Catholic bookstore that can accompany your personal Advent wreath ceremony.

**The Nativity Scene:** Many families and individuals set up a nativity scene, or crèche. The various figures can appear on each of the Sundays in Advent: The stable may be empty on

Advent I, on Advent II the animals appear, Advent III the Shepherds are added, Advent IV is the arrival of the Virgin Mary and Joseph, her betrothed. A popular tradition for families is that acts of service, sacrifice, or kindness are done in honor of Baby Jesus as a birthday present. Children can be given a piece of straw to acknowledge these actions, to put into the manger. Then, on Christmas morning, "Baby Jesus" is placed in the manger. Children and adults alike use the season of Advent to make Jesus' bed as "comfortable" as possible through their good and charitable actions. Parents can explain to their children Christ's amazing and incomparable self-gift at Christmas and Easter, that enables us to be part of God's family.

See "Advent," p. 8

## Recipe Corner: *Gingerbread Cake*

Softened unsalted butter, as needed  
1 cup vegetable oil  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup dark molasses  
1 to 2 tablespoons minced crystallized ginger  
2 large eggs, at room temperature, lightly beaten with a fork  
3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour  
1 tablespoon ground ginger  
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon fine salt  
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves  
1 cup water  
1 tablespoon baking soda

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F.

Lightly butter a 9 by 13 by 2-inch cake pan and line the bottom with a piece of parchment or wax paper.

In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, sugar, molasses, and crystallized ginger. Add the eggs and whisk until smooth.

In another large bowl, whisk together the flour, ground ginger, cinnamon, salt, and cloves. Whisk the molasses mixture into the flour mixture until evenly combined.

*“Sacred,” continued from page 1*

seekers from all religions and no religion. Cathedrals, temples, mosques, churches and holy lands where people congregate are not the places of which I write. If you are consciously drawn to a sacred, holy place because of what you have been told or read, this place is holy but it is not the place I wish to tell you about.

The sacred, holy places I wish share with you are places you will stumble upon, wander into, places never expected, even considered. If you consciously look for these places, they will not be found. Without expectation, they will capture, enfold and embrace you and when they do, you will know you are standing on holy ground even unto weeping. Could it be that all traveling about is the quest to experience these places, to experience the magnificence and holiness of who you are, your soul?

I desire to share one such holy, sacred place that captured me 52 years ago. There have been many such places since then but this one is especially tattooed within my mind. Not to digress but you need to consider that when you experience the Divine, whether it be angels in physical or spiritual form, or holy people or holy sacred places, the memory will be imprinted within you. Each time you call up this experiential memory, wisdom will flow from it, offering to you new insights, learning and

understanding. These are not just one-time occurrences to be forgotten but drawn upon later for present and future instruction and inspiration.

It was my youthful weekend delight to awaken early and wander alone upon the eastern and western foothills near my home town or I would traipse out into the desert valley just to look and feel what was before me. These wandering days filled me with more than I can describe.

Come with me back to when I was young. I will attempt to describe one such place to you although words ring hollow for they are but symbols of symbols and incapable of offering a taste of the experience that fed me this long ago hot August day. I had spent the morning walking alone upon the desert valley watching, sensing and experiencing the day. I passed a huge glorious yellow rose bush towering above the desert valley sagebrush carpet. It was at least 30 feet in diameter and 7 or 8 feet tall. A cottontail rabbit dashed in front of me and scampered into it. When I offered this desert rose busy my full attention, it called to me to look inside of it. It called me to follow the rabbit and enter it.

Allow me to try to share a taste of what I experienced as I crawled into an open space, a sacred place, a room within this beautiful rose bush.

*I wander the desert valley alone*

*Mindlessly passing your fragrant bloom.*

*Dashing rabbit awakens me*

*And draws my notice to you*

*As he scampers within your embrace.*

*Your glorious golden mantle*

*Seductively calls me to enter you too.*

*I kneel and crawl beneath your fragrant fingers*

*Into your soft, sweet shaded place*

*Your grace-scented body descends upon me*

*Biding me welcome and offering blessings this hot August day.*

*I sit in cross-legged repose within your shaded, sacred parasol room*

*Drinking in the grace and peace*

*You offer to my parched heart and soul.*

*Oh my love, my wild desert rose*

*Here I am, your lover this day.*

*Bathe me, love me, caress me*

*And pour renewal, rest and inspiration unto me.*

*I sit and time is considered not but am*

*Awakened from my reverie with the evening shadows*

*Calling me home.*

*Thank you my love, for then and now and tomorrow.*

These sacred, holy places are usually within nature. To be open to their call, walk slowly, breathe, look and especially listen. These personal, sacred, holy places will call you to them but most importantly, these places speak one message: Come unto Me that I might remind you that you are love, sacred, holy, innocent, eternal and where ever you stand is a holy, sacred place. Come unto Me that we may experience our holiness, our sacredness together.

*Lory is a psychotherapist and co-founder of SacraMentors®. He can be reached at [ltmsw@comcast.net](mailto:ltmsw@comcast.net)*



The people  
who walked  
in darkness  
have seen a  
great light;  
Upon those  
who dwelt in  
the land of  
gloom  
a light  
has shone.

~ Isaiah 9:1

Consider  
a gift to  
your local  
**Catholic  
Community  
Services**  
Family Center  
this season  
[www.ccsww.org](http://www.ccsww.org)

*“Advent,” continued from page 6*

**St. Nicholas Day:** The feast of St. Nicholas, on Dec. 6th, is a highlight of the Advent season. Children put out a shoe the night before St. Nicholas Day, in the hope that the kind bishop — with his bag of gifts — will pay a visit. “Santa Claus” is modeled after St. Nicholas, but commercialism has chipped away at the true story. Many families give gifts on both Dec. 6th and Christmas.

**The Christ candle:** Any large white candle can be used for the Christ candle. You can decorate it with symbols of Christ, sequins, holly, etc. The candle can be lit on Christmas Eve to symbolize that the Light of the World has arrived! Some continue to light the Christ candle throughout the year at Sunday dinner, to remind us of our waiting for Christ, as well as celebrating His birth and Resurrection.

**The Mary candle:** Some families have the custom of decorating the Christ candle with a blue veil or ribbon on December 8th, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. On this great feast, we honor the Blessed Virgin, whose “yes” to God enabled our Lord’s coming at Christmas. The candle is lit during meal times to serve as a reminder of Mary’s eager expectation of the “Light of the World.” It can also be a reminder to keep our own light of grace burning as a preparation for Christ’s coming.

**St. Lucy cakes:** The feast of St. Lucy is on December 13th, and marks the opening of the Christmas season in

Sweden. Her story can be found in most saints books, and the recipe for the traditional cakes can be found on -line. The symbolism is rich, and her life story worthwhile reading.

**Christmas baking:** There are many recipe books available to find great traditional Christmas baking ideas. The baking in many households starts around December 20th. As Christmas approaches, the house will smell of freshly baked goods and fresh wreaths!

**Blessing of the tree:** More and more families are blessing their Christmas trees. St. Boniface in the eighth century gave the balsam fir tree to the Druids in place of the oak tree, the symbol of their idol. He said, “The fir tree is the wood of peace, the sign of an endless life with its evergreen branches. It points to heaven. It will never shelter deeds of blood, but rather be filled with loving gifts and rites of kindness.”

There are more stories included in McLoughlin’s *Advent and Christmas in a Catholic Home*. Families and individuals can also participate in Advent by attending daily Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, or by following the weekday Mass readings at home, as the Church anticipates her Savior’s coming. Participating in these activities can help us grow closer to Christ — “The Reason for the Season” — as well as give a great witness to others.

*Scott Webster is a member of the Apostle Group at St.*

*James Cathedral, and is the editor of “Blessings.” He can be reached at [contemplatio2@yahoo.com](mailto:contemplatio2@yahoo.com).*

*“Wisdom” from page 5*

And so, to see our vulnerabilities is to see the truth. To see ourselves as others see us is not easy, but it can be a deeply satisfying and spiritual experience.

*Recognition of the fragility of life* makes us kinder and more compassionate. As we age we learn more of how fragile life can be. Our bones become more brittle, our hearts weaker, our minds more forgetful. To recognize that our life is passing us by and that we can be gone in a moment helps us appreciate more of what we have left. That is satisfying and makes us open to more to life that is all around us.

The desert fathers and mothers learned these lessons in a difficult way. They believed that they were not strong enough to learn these lessons in the world so they went to harsh and dry places where there were few people. How will we learn these same lessons? How will we find our true selves and live in freedom? It is really up to us to make a choice if we want such wisdom.

What will be your choice?

*Father Bob Camuso is pastor at St. Thomas More parish in Lynnwood. He is co-founder of SacraMentors® and can be reached at [bobc@stmp.org](mailto:bobc@stmp.org).*

*“Reflections” continued from page 3*

on the show, abound in our society. And no matter whether on television or in real life, the effects are cruel and deathly. Whether participant or viewer of shows like “A.I”, we all suffer. Yet fear is fed well as we flip on TV sets to witness one of our brothers or sisters being insulted, bashed and sent off hurt and in shame.

Hello, TV network executives? How about this for a story concept? Small groups of men and women share challenges and tears, joy and laughter; they support one another, bless one another and discover what it means to see the brightness of Christ in everything and to receive the light of Christ in their lives. What authenticity! What real drama! What growth! What a show this would be! And the title? How about:

- *Faith’s Anatomy*
- *CSI (Christ’s Special Influence): Your Soul*
- *Beautiful Betty (Beautiful Frank, Beautiful Jean, Tom, etc.)*

Case in point: Michael and I ballroom dance. When I share that with people, many go “ooh and ahhh” and look at me like my first name’s simply got to be Ginger. Mike and I dance at venues like Bellevue’s Crossroads Mall or Lake Forest’s Third Place Books, when our favorite big bands are featured performers.

Inevitably, non-dancers in the gallery stop by our table and say, “Oh! You two dance beautifully! Are you professionals? Do you

teach? You simply must be competitors!”

*(Note to self: stop bright-eyed, big-grinned Ego from taking deep bows, at times of sincere compliments.)*

Good Gravy, NO! We’re not expert by any means! And if truth be told, there are much better amateur dancers than the two of us. But I swear - what these folks pick up on is the unadulterated joy that Mike and I feel as we dance. We’re happy. We couldn’t care less who thinks what about our style or ability. We’re expressing ourselves and, in so doing, we’re trying to bless others with the joy of the music and fun.

We’re happy. Happiness is place where I come to terms with the concept that it’s none of my business what you think of me; it only matters what God believes about me. And this is such a natural, God-given, Spirit-driven state of being. Secure in that holy state is where God wants us to be: His beloved children secure that our expressions are appreciated.

### Correction

In the last edition of *Blessings*, there were two errors in Mary Anne Reynolds’ article *Ego, Lies, and Old Tapes*. On page 3, second column, the first line should read “...example of how to honor...” In the third column, 2nd paragraph, the line beginning “Just as the disciples recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread” should continue to read “I suddenly recognized my mama in the stacking of the blocks. I knew her in the simple joys of spending time with a little one, just as she did for me, for my children and all her grandchildren...” We are heartily sorry for these errors! Please read Mary Anne’s wonderful article in its entirety on line at [www.sacramentors.org](http://www.sacramentors.org). Click on the “Blessings Newsletter” link and access the October ‘07 edition.

So, here’s a suggestion: the next time you feel like hiding behind the curtains and scuffing your feet into the floor with thoughts of “Ah, Gee, I’m not good enough to (fill in the blank)”, get under your headsets, pull out canvas and brushes, don your dance shoes and make like your living room is Carnegie Hall, the Louvre or Radio City Music Hall. Unleash your artistic-self. Or perhaps you could let your “inner performer” take the stage as a SacraMentors® trainer – stand tall and tell stories of your faith journey to groups of candidates who are curious about the blessings of SacraMentors® holy process. (*...and I’ll bet you thought that I wouldn’t ask, right? ☺*)

I guarantee you’ll be amazed by the love for God that will rise in your heart and pour forth to bless you and those around you.

I bid you an Advent filled with great anticipation of Christ’s birth, and a Christmas of deep, unabashed joy that lasts forever.

In peace and with gratitude to you for the blessings you are in my life,

*Cyndie*



Wisdom,  
O holy  
Word of God,  
you govern all  
creation with  
your strong yet  
tender care.  
Come and  
show your  
people the way  
to salvation.

~ Advent Prayer





Oh Emmanuel,  
Jesus Christ,  
Savior of all  
peoples,  
Come and  
dwell among us.

As we prepare for the  
coming of Christ in our hearts,  
Father Bob, Lory,  
and the SacraMentors® Board  
wish you and yours  
Blessings this Advent,  
and the  
Promise and Joy of Christmas!



**SacraMentors®**  
P.O. Box 64787  
University Place, WA 98464

**Phone**

1-877-585-5500  
Toll Free

**E-mail**

executivedirector@sacramentors  
.org

**Website**

[www.sacramentors.org](http://www.sacramentors.org)

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**Editor**

Scott Webster  
[contemplatio2@yahoo.com](mailto:contemplatio2@yahoo.com)  
(reference *Blessings* in subject line)

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