

October Uplifters

THE HOLY ALPHABET

Although things are not perfect
Because of trial or pain
Continue in thanksgiving
Do not begin to blame
Even when the times are hard
Fierce winds are bound to blow
God is forever able
Hold on to what you know
Imagine life without His love
Joy would cease to be
Keep thanking Him for all the things
Love imparts to thee
Move out of "Camp Complaining"
No weapon that is known
On earth can yield the power
Praise can do alone
Quit looking at the future
Redeem the time at hand
Start every day with worship
To "thank" is a command
Until we see Him coming
Victorious in the sky
We'll run the race with gratitude
X alting God most high
Y es, there'll be good times and yes some will be bad, but...
Z ion waits in glory...where none are ever sad!

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<http://www.catholicexchange.com/bday/index.html>

Above is a neat 2-minute rendering of the Catholic Church.

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GRAFFITI WISDOM

Beauty is only a light switch away.
Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham NC

Remember, it's not,
"How high are you?"
It's, "Hi, how are you?"
Rest stop off Route 81, West Virginia

At the feast of ego -
everyone leaves hungry.
Bentley's House of Coffee and Tea, Tucson AZ

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LIFE - A TERMINAL ILLNESS

This is the commencement speech by the writer, Anna Quindlen, at Villanova this year.

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It's a great honor for me to be the third member of my family to receive an honorary doctorate from this great university. It's an honor to follow my great Uncle Jim, who was a gifted physician, and my Uncle Jack, who is a remarkable businessman. Both of them could have told you something important about their professions, about medicine or commerce. I have no specialized field of interest or expertise. I'm a novelist. My work is human nature. Real life is all I know. Don't ever confuse the two, your life and your work. The second is only part of the first.

Don't ever forget what a friend once wrote Senator Paul Tsongas when the senator decided not to run for reelection because he had been diagnosed with cancer: "No man ever said on his deathbed, 'I wish I had spent more time at the office.'"

Don't ever forget the words my father sent me on a postcard last year: "If you win the rat race, you're still a rat."

Or what John Lennon wrote before he was gunned down in the driveway of the Dakota: "Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans."

You will walk out of here this afternoon with only one thing that no one else has. There will be hundreds of people out there with your same degree; there will be thousands of people doing what you want to do for a living. But you will be the only person alive who has sole custody of your life. Your particular life. Your entire life. Not just your life at a desk, or your life on a bus, or in a car, or at the computer. Not just the life of our mind, but the life of your heart. Not just your bank account but your soul.

People don't talk about the soul very much anymore. It's so much easier to write a resume than to craft a spirit. But a resume is a cold comfort when you're sad, or broke, or lonely, or when you've gotten back the test results and they're not so good.

Here is my resume:

I am a good mother to three children. I have tried never to let my profession stand in the way of being a good parent. I no longer consider myself the center of the universe. I show up. I listen. I try to laugh. I am a good friend to my friends, and they to me. Without them there would be nothing to say to you today, because I would be a cardboard cutout.

But I call them on the phone, and I meet them for lunch. I would be rotten, or at best mediocre at my job, if those other things were not true. You cannot be really first rate at your work if your work is all you are.

So here's what I wanted to tell you today: Get a life. A real life, not a manic pursuit of the next promotion, the bigger paycheck, the larger house. Do you think you'd care so very much about those things if you blew an aneurysm one afternoon, or found a lump in your breast? Get a life in which you notice the smell of salt water pushing itself on a breeze over Seaside Heights, a life in which you stop and watch how a red tailed hawk circles over the water or the way a baby scowls with concentration when she tries to pick up a Cheerio with her thumb and first finger. Get a life in which you are not alone. Find people you love, and who love you. And remember that love is not leisure, it is work. Pick up the phone. Send an e-mail. Write a letter. Get a life in which you are generous. And realize that life is the best thing ever, and that you have no business taking it for granted. Care so deeply about its goodness that you want to spread it around.

It is so easy to waste our lives, our days, our hours, our minutes. It is so easy to take for granted the color of our kids' eyes, the way the melody in a symphony rises and falls and disappears and rises again. It is so easy to exist instead of to live. I learned to live many years ago. Something really, really bad happened to me, something that changed my life in ways that, if I had my druthers, it would never have been changed at all. And what I learned from it is what, today, seems to be the hardest lesson of all: I learned to love the journey, not the destination. I learned that it is not a dress rehearsal, and that today is the only guarantee you get. I learned to look at all the good in the world and try to give some of it back because I believed in it, completely and utterly. And I tried to do that, in part, by telling others what I had learned.

By telling them this: Consider the lilies of the field. Look at the fuzz on a baby's ear. Read in the

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backyard with the sun on your face. Learn to be happy. And think of life as a terminal illness, because if you do, you will live it with joy and passion as it ought to be lived.

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The following excerpt is from *My Song is of Mercy* by Matthew Kelty, published by Sheed & Ward, an apostolate of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. 7373 South Lovers Lane Road, Franklin, Wisconsin 53132. 1-800-558-0580

A Homily of Fr. Matthew Kelty, O.C.S.O. for the Christmas Midnight Mass (B), 1993: (Lk 2:1-14)

Darkness in the Garden of Beauty

here are a few lines from the poet, R.S. Thomas. He calls it: *The Coming* --

**And God held in His hand
A small globe. "Look," He said.
The Son looked. Far off,
As though through water, He saw
A scorched land of fierce
Color. The light burned
There, crusted buildings
Cast their shadows: a bright
Serpent, a river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
with slime.
On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. And many people
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The Son watched
Them. "Let Me go there," He said.**

If you are flying in a 747, so I read in the Atlantic Monthly, and the 747 takes to lowering its wings, one side or other in the night. You will not know it. Indeed, if the plane should continue to so fly, or even turn over on its back, you would not know that either. The stewardess would still come down the aisle and pour you a drink. You do not think this is so because you never experienced it, and do not know as much about the mysteries of flight as you think you do. It's all a matter of going beyond, in this case going beyond the limits of gravity.

Going beyond has been what we have been doing from the beginning. Primitives in time long ago learned to span a river gorge with great vines from the forest and made themselves a suspension bridge. They went beyond the limits of speech by learning to yodel, and so carried messages from one mountain side, across a valley, to another. They went beyond themselves in ecstatic song and dance, and so entered the world of spirit. We have never done going beyond limits. And the process has gone on for millennia and has reached fever pitch in our day.

It is practically impossible even to list in some brief summary what has been done in terms of going beyond our limits. We can talk and be heard on the other side of the world. And that same talk can be recorded and preserved for time to come. Not merely talk. I can see you as you talk from across a continent, across a world. The limits of speech and of hearing are pushed far beyond their natural limits, not to say sight. For I can see and hear what happens thousands of miles away, and that in live color. And all that -- no small matter -- is but one modest dimension of human achievement in sight, and sound and speech. See the splendor of what we build, the magnificent roads with traffic that span continents, the beauty of bridges that cross stream and river and mighty expanses of water. Not to mention tunnels beneath them. We build superb structures that defy reality in height. And these structures equipped with every facility that makes life not only livable, but pleasant in heat and cool and whatever comfort in food or drink, or clothing. There is no end to a long catalog.

Nor have we touched on beauty. What grace can compare with a speed-skater on ice, a ski-jumper flying through space. Think of ballet, of song and dance, of orchestra and symphony. Of the glories of art: in photography, in painting, in

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sculpture. All in some sense defy the laws of reality and move beyond their imposed limits. All to the glory of God. And to the necessary conclusion: it cannot conceivably be that a people capable of such marvels should be destined to no more than a few dozen years on earth. They are certainly immortal. Any other conclusion is absurd.

Like the astronauts on the moon watching the earth rise above the lunar horizon, we are overwhelmed with awe. How beautiful! How beautiful our world and the works that humankind can do in that world.

Alas. It is not quite so, not quite. In the midst of that glorious garden of beauty -- for you have seen our parks, our cultivated fields, our national sea-shores -- in the midst there is some power of darkness. Here stalk monsters of evil, terrifying and surely demonic. These mortals who have gone beyond so much and in so many ways can write a word that is read in Hong Kong the next moment, can travel to the moon and back, can heal so marvelously -- these humans: they kill, they maim. These people: they steal, they cheat, they defraud, they lust, they are greedy. They assault, they burn, they bomb. In the womb and out of it, young, old, male, female -- no limit! How sad. How unutterably sad.

Sometime, somewhere, somehow, something went wrong. The astronauts could not see it from outer space. The world to them was a jewel. But the Son -- He saw more when the Father showed Him. He was filled with pity. And with compassion.

And so He said, "Let Me go there." And the Father let Him. He knowing as well as the Son what would come of it. He would come among them and take the consequence of His goodness.

He is gone, but is still with us. He has come, but is still coming.

And we with Him prepare for His coming again at the end, when the world will have reached its term. When all the hidden glory will make joyous forever the Kingdom of our kind -- humankind -- in Christ.

And we take part in that. We are involved in that, ways hidden to us. Like a yeast hidden in the mass. And the mass will rise.

William Blake said it:

**Did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the Countenance divine
Shine upon these clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills?
Give me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear, oh clouds unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental strife
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land!**

Well said. The chariot of fire is Christ in His Church. And in the chariot we take the bow of prayer and the arrows of desire and engage in spiritual strife that is the conquest of darkness and evil with Christ the Lord. And we do not cease till we have built Jerusalem in our green and pleasant land.

Merry Christmas. God bless you.

[cf <http://www.monks.org/homilies.html> for other homilies + other things from Gethsemani]

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3 Cheers for THIS Judge!!!

This is a special one well worth reading. It makes you wish we had more Judges like this one!

JUDGE WILLIAM YOUNG, SENTENCES THE SHOE BOMBER

US District Court Judge William Young made the following statement in sentencing "shoe bomber" Richard Reid to prison:

It is noteworthy, and deserves to be remembered far longer than he predicts.

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I commend it to you and to anyone you might wish to forward it to.

January 30, 2003, United States vs. Reid. Judge Young: Mr. Richard C. Reid, hearken now to the sentence the Court imposes upon you.

On counts 1, 5 and 6 the Court sentences you to life in prison in the custody of the United States Attorney General.

On counts 2, 3, 4 and 7, the Court sentences you to 20 years in prison on each count, the sentence on each count to run consecutive with the other. That's 80 years.

On count 8 the Court sentences you to the mandatory 30 years consecutive to the 80 years just imposed.

The Court imposes upon you each of the eight counts a fine of \$250,000 for the aggregate fine of \$2 million.

The Court accepts the government's recommendation with respect to restitution and orders restitution in the amount of \$298.17 to Andre Bousquet and \$5,784 to American Airlines.

The Court imposes upon you the \$800 special assessment.

The Court imposes upon you five years supervised release simply because the law requires it.

But the life sentences are real life sentences so I need go no further. This is the sentence that is provided for by our statutes. It is a fair and just sentence. It is a righteous sentence. Let me explain this to you.

We are not afraid of any of your terrorist coconspirators, Mr. Reid. We are Americans. We have been through the fire before.

There is all too much war talk here. And I say that to everyone with the utmost respect. Here in this court, where we deal with individuals as individuals, and care for individuals as individuals, as human beings we reach out for justice, you are not an enemy combatant. You are a terrorist. You are not a soldier in any war. You are a terrorist. To give you that reference, to call you a soldier gives you far too much stature. Whether it is the officers of government who do it or your attorney who does it, or that happens to be your view, you are a terrorist. And we do not negotiate with terrorists. We do not sign documents with terrorists. We hunt them down one by one and bring them to justice.

So war talk is way out of line in this court. You are a big fellow. But you are not that big. You're no warrior. I know warriors. You are a terrorist. A species of criminal guilty of multiple attempted murders.

In a very real sense Trooper Santiago had it right when you first were taken off that plane and into custody and you wondered where the press and where the TV crews were and he said: you're no big deal. You're no big deal.

What your counsel, what your able counsel and what the equally able United States attorneys have grappled with and what I have as honestly as I know how tried to grapple with, is why you did something so horrific. What was it that led you here to this courtroom today? I have listened respectfully to what you have to say. And I ask you to search your heart and ask yourself what sort of unfathomable hate led you to do what you are guilty and admit you are guilty of doing. And I have an answer for you. It may not satisfy you. But as I

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search this entire record it comes as close to understanding as I know. It seems to me you hate the one thing that is most precious. You hate our freedom. Our individual freedom. Our individual freedom to live as we choose, to come and go as we choose, and to believe or not believe as we individually choose. Here, in this society, the very winds carry freedom. They carry it everywhere from sea to shining sea. It is because we prize individual freedom so much that you are here in this beautiful courtroom. So that everyone can see, truly see that justice is administered fairly, individually, and discretely. It is for freedom's sake that your lawyers are striving so vigorously on your behalf and have filed appeals, will go on in their, their representation of you before other judges. We are about it. Because we all know that the way we treat you, Mr. Reid, is the measure of our own liberties. Make no mistake though. It is yet true that we will bear any burden, pay any price, to preserve our freedoms.

Look around this courtroom. Mark it well. The world is not going to long remember what you or I say here. Day after tomorrow it will be forgotten. But this, however, will long endure. Here in this courtroom and courtrooms all across America, the American people will gather to see that justice, individual justice, justice, not war, individual justice is in fact being done.

The very President of the United States through his officers will have to come into courtrooms and lay out evidence on which specific matters can be judged, and juries of citizens will gather to sit and judge that evidence democratically, to mold and shape and refine our sense of justice.

See that flag Mr. Reid? That's the flag of the United States of America. That flag will fly there long after this is all forgotten. That flag stands for freedom. You know it always will.

Custody Mr. Officer. Stand him down.

*How much of this Judge's comments did you hear on our TV sets? ZERO!
Please pass this around.*

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When 'Personal Morality' Slams Into Societal Reality

Gerald L. Rowles, Ph.D.

August 3, 2003

When Kobe Bryant made the decision to commit adultery he was undoubtedly caught up in a moment of personal election; a moment of 'personal morality'. Set aside, just for the moment, the unresolved allegation of rape. Many have seized upon and accepted at face value that latter charge. It is thus accepted by them as sensible that Kobe Bryant, the public persona, was so isolated from reality he actually believed he could inflict physically evident harm without incurring dramatic consequences. Well, more and more it looks like this case will hinge on the millisecond between 'yes' and 'no'; which is a trifling diversion from the real issue.

Adulterous sex between two - ah, briefly - consenting adults is not criminally illegal - maybe. But it is a matter of moral judgment. And we know in all probability, from Kobe's admission, that adultery was committed - briefly.

In today's do-your-thing, god-is-dead cultural revisionism, morality as a cultural and societal construct has been eschewed in favor of the personal. We are all our own autonomous judges of what is moral and what is not. Taking it a step beyond timing, was that which Kobe committed personal immorality? Or, can there really be such a thing as personal morality? Had Kobe's personal moral judgment,

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assuming that was what was operating, not come to public light, who's to say that he committed immorality, eh?

But it did come to light. And the resulting exposure had a dramatic impact. Vanessa Bryant, his wife, was brought the floodlight of embarrassment that only a jilted spouse can know. His fans, who had long believed him to be a beacon of personal integrity, had that belief shattered. His teammates now became suspect by association. And black males were robbed of an erstwhile role model. But how can that be if it was merely a matter of personal morality? Are we not disallowed from judging him under that operating system?

And what of the young woman who elected to go to his room? Well at least with the charge of rape, her personal moral election seems less a topic of condemnation; for now. But if rape was not a matter of consideration, did her personal morality not also impact Mrs. Bryant, the fans, the teammates, the young black males?

But since we do not ask that question of unwed mothers who elect to become pregnant, often imposing a burden of support on all of society, and instead blame their decision on the errant male, so it is with the alleged Bryant 'victim'. All men are potential rapists, after all, taking away the question of personal morality for the female.

But what do the offspring of a woman who has had a prior abortion think when they learn of this personal moral decision by their mother? Are they not impacted? Or what of any woman who chooses to have an abortion? How does that personal moral decision impact her coworkers, extended family, and future potential mates? And what of the single mother who intentionally gives unwed birth. How does that impact the subsequent course of that child's life and all within their social milieu?

What of the personal morality of one Jayson Blair, who not only invented his journalistic reports out of whole cloth, but subsequently bragged of being able to put one over on the editors who provided him multicultural support? How many millions of New York Times readers were impacted by that bit of personal (im)morality? Was it then merely the personal morality of Jason Blair in play, or that of a large part of the culture?

Just recently a story was published about a [7 year-old](#) who is, at his young age, addicted to pornography. It seems that his grandfather, who watched over him, liked to watch x-rated VHS tapes. As a matter of personal morality, it seems, the grandfather supposed that his decision had no bearing on the child. Yet, "When he was about three years old, his mother found him fondling his penis while a porn film was showing on TV." So grandfather was obviously wrong in assuming no harm to the child, and his personal morality became no longer personal.

What are the implications of this 7 year-old's saga for the wholesale exposure of elementary school students to sex education and homosexual diversity training in fisting and other variations on sodomy? Both of these 'progressive' education advances are the product of a shared mindset by a group of individuals who share a common personal morality perspective. There is no research to support the notion that such training is a morally good thing, only shared personal convictions that outweigh centuries of cultural prohibition against promiscuous sexual evangelism. Meanwhile, the children are practicing oral sex in just about every possible venue ... after all it's not really sex. Heck, they learned that excuse from none other than a President of the United States exercising his personal morality.

And what about the local [art gallery owner](#) who chose to have painted a mural of a nude Eve on the outside of his building. Exhibiting another bit of personal morality in play, gallery owner Wes Miller said, "I don't feel it's my job to jeopardize my financial stability for the constitutional rights of the citizens of Pilot Point." Nor apparently did he find anything personally immoral about exposing passing children to adult nudity. But for the parents and children, it was no longer a matter of one man's personal morality.

Consider this bit of alarming reality. Young, college attending males are subsidizing their college education by what, working at the 7-11? Nah, that's too time consuming. As co-conspirators in the 'choice' industry, these enterprising lads are spanking out a tad bit of sperm at the local sperm banks, and being handsomely paid for their 'efforts'. As a result of this personal (im)morality, some youngster is going to grow up wondering, "Who's my daddy." A sad story, you say? Well what about this?, asks columnist [Mary Laney](#):

"If students are depositing in sperm banks, - multiple times - at sperm banks located near universities and couples are bearing children through the use of that sperm, what's to stop people in a given area from producing half brothers and sisters who have no idea that they're half brothers and sisters? And what happens when they grow up and start to date? What if a half brother and his half sister meet and fall in love without knowing their relationship? And what happens if they get married and have children? Are we going to have village idiots running around?"

Wham! How's that for a sudden reality encounter?

Well, back to Kobe. If there ever truly was such a thing as personal morality, he has been body checked by the reality that it only remains operative in the darkness of a motel room and the back alley of societal moral ignorance.

We are all potential Kobe's, on a lesser scale. This grand tacky soap opera should be a reality check that the whole notion of 'personal morality' is a ticking time bomb; even for us lesser gods, and self-absorbed goddesses.

This article: <http://www.dadi.org/persmorl.htm>. I found it on www.dadi.org. I got to DADI's web site by following links from Ethics instructor Marriane Jennings from Arizona State University.