



HOMELAND SECURITY

This pretty much says it all.....

Happy moments, praise God.
Difficult moments, seek God.
Quiet moments, worship God.
Painful moments, trust God.
Every moment, thank God.

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Three decades ago, storks were becoming so scarce in Holland that a breeding society had to begin a program to keep them from dying out. The society did their job well, and finally the storks got the point, taking over and letting nature run its course.

(Source: www.nytimes.com)

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Some Other Time

After 21 years of marriage, I discovered a new way of keeping alive the spark of love. A little while ago I had started to go out with another woman. It was really my wife's idea. "I know that you love her," she said one day, taking me by surprise.

"But I love YOU," I protested.

"I know, but you also love her."

The other woman that my wife wanted me to visit was my mother, who has been a widow for 19 years, but the demands of my work and my three children had made it possible to visit her only occasionally.

That night I called to invite her to go out for dinner and a movie.

"What's wrong, are you well," she asked? My mother is the type of woman who suspects that a late night call or a surprise invitation is a sign of bad news.

"I thought that it would be pleasant to pass some time with you," I responded. "Just the two of us." She thought about it for a moment then said "I would like that very much."

That Friday after work, as I drove over to pick her up I was a bit nervous. When I arrived at her house, I noticed that she, too, seemed to be nervous about our date. She waited in the door with her coat on. She had curled her hair and was wearing the dress that she had worn to celebrate her last wedding anniversary. She smiled from a face that was as radiant as an angel's.

"I told my friends that I was going to go out with my son, and they were impressed," she said, as she got into the car. "They can't wait to hear about our meeting."

We went to a restaurant that, although not elegant, was very nice and cozy. My mother took my arm as if she were the First Lady. After we sat down, I had to read the menu. Her eyes could only read large print. Half way through the entree, I lifted my eyes and saw Mom sitting there staring at me. A nostalgic smile was on her lips. "It was I who used to have to read the menu when you were small," she said.

During the dinner we had an agreeable conversation--nothing extraordinary -- but catching up on recent events of each others life. We talked so much that we missed the movie. As we arrived at her house later, she said "I'll go out with you again, but only if you let me invite you."

I agreed .

"How was your dinner date?" asked my wife when I got home.

"Very nice. Much more so than I could have imagined," I answered.

A few days later my mother died of a massive heart attack. It happened so suddenly that I didn't have a chance to do anything for her. Some time later I received an envelope with a copy of a restaurant receipt from the same place mother and I had dined. An attached note said: "I paid this bill in advance. I was almost sure that I couldn't be there but, nevertheless, I paid for two plates -- one for you and the other for your wife. You will never know what that night meant for me. I love you."

At that moment I understood the importance of saying, in time: "I LOVE YOU" and to give our loved ones the time that they deserve. Nothing in life is more important than God and your family. Give them the time they deserve, because these things cannot be put off to *some other time*.

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His Holiness the Dalai Lama's views on war and Iraq conflict

The following is the English translation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's views on war and Iraq conflict shared with Buddhist devotees and others on the first day of the Great Prayer Festival 11 March 2003, in Dharamsala

The Iraq issue is becoming very critical now. War, or the kind of organized fighting, is something that came with the development of human civilization. It seems to have become part and parcel of human history or human temperament. At the same time, the world is changing dramatically. We have seen that we cannot solve human problems by fighting. Problems resulting from differences in opinion must be resolved through the gradual process of dialogue. Undoubtedly, wars produce victors and losers; but only temporarily. Victory or defeat resulting from wars cannot be long-lasting. Secondly, our world has become so interdependent that the defeat of one country must impact the rest of the world, or cause all of us to suffer losses either directly or indirectly.

Today, the world is so small and so interdependent that the concept of war has become anachronistic, an outmoded approach. As a rule, we always talk about reform and changes. Among the old traditions, there are many aspects that are either ill-suited to our present reality or are counterproductive due to their shortsightedness. These, we have consigned to the dustbin of history. War too should be relegated to the dustbin of history.

Unfortunately, although we are in the 21st century, we still have not been able to get rid of the habit of our older generations. I am talking about the belief or confidence that we can solve our problems with arms. It is because of this notion that the world continues to be dogged by all kinds of problems.

But what can we do? What can we do when big powers have already made up their minds? All we can do is to pray for a gradual end to the tradition of wars. Of course, the militaristic tradition may not end easily. But, let us think of this. If there were bloodshed, people in positions of power, or those who are responsible, will find safe places; they will escape the consequent hardship. They will find safety for themselves, one way or the other. But what about the poor people, the defenseless people, the children, the old and infirm. They are the ones who will have to bear the brunt of devastation. When weapons are fired, the result will be death and destruction. Weapons will not discriminate between the innocent and guilty. A

missile, once fired, will show no respect to the innocent, poor, defenseless, or those worthy of compassion. Therefore, the real losers will be the poor and defenseless, ones who are completely innocent, and those who lead a hand-to-mouth existence.

On the positive side, we now have people volunteer medical care, aid, and other humanitarian assistance in war-torn regions. This is a heart-winning development of the modern age.

Okay, now, let us pray that there be no war at all, if possible. However, if a war does break out, let us pray that there be a minimum bloodshed and hardship. I don't know whether our prayers will be of any practical help. But this is all we can do for the moment.

*Translated and issued by:
The Department of Information and International Relations
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Motives for Mortification

St. Augustine

1. Because Sin Separates us From God;

In Advent and Lent Penance is preached to us because sin is the real thing which separates us from God, our Father and Lord.

(a) Christ is the light and we should not separate ourselves from Him if we wish to live:

John was not the light, but came to give testimony to that real, true light, which was Christ ... We are so weak that we have to seek the light of day through other lights, a mere lantern as was John.

(b) Sin separates us From God, who dwells among us:

He is not far from us in Whom we live, move and have our being. Only your own evil can separate you from God. Break down the wall of sin, and you will be once more united with Him . . . We have to Confess that, although God is everywhere by His presence and His power, He is not everywhere by the indwelling of His grace. Those are said to be far from Him who have made themselves unlike Him by their sins; while they are said to draw near to God who, through their good lives, receive His likeness...

(c) But God Continues to Love us and to wait for us:

They (Sinners) are ignorant of the fact that You are present to all, even those who separate themselves from You. Let them be converted and seek You, because not as they abandoned their Creator do You abandon Your creature. Let them but be converted and You will be there again, in their hearts...

(d) God Loves you and hates your sins:

He hates your works; He loves you. He hates what you did, but He loves what God did. Your works are sinful ... you are a man made to God's image and likeness...

"In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." (Eccl. 7:40)

Recommended Mortifications;

Corporal or External Fast, including both fasting in the quantity and frequency of food eaten and abstinence from meat on Fridays and certain other days. In a broader sense, the fast can include limitation of other *things* as well. Any of the following penitential practices might be used:

1. Take less of what you like and more of what you dislike at meals.
2. Take nothing to drink between meals.
3. Do not use seasoning on your food.
4. Do not use any sweeteners with your food or drinks.

5. Take only one helping of each item at meals.
6. Avoid frivolous entertainments; instead, read the Passion of Christ or other scriptures.
7. Say part of the Divine Office or of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
8. Sing one of the chants of the Church.
9. Arise from bed immediately at the first call or alarm.
10. At meals, accept what is served without complaint of fussiness.

Spiritual or Internal Fast, which consists of abstinence from "all evil" -- sin. St. John Chrysostom taught that the "value of fasting consists not so much in abstinence from food, but rather in withdrawal from sinful practices." And St. Basil the Great explains: "Turning away from all wickedness means keeping our tongue in check, restraining our anger, suppressing evil desires, and avoiding all gossip, lying, and swearing. To abstain from these things -- herein lies the true value of fast! "

1. Don't do unnecessary talking; instead, pray when you can.
2. Exercise patience.
3. Don't make complaints.
4. Restrain anger, and go out of your way to be kind to any who caused your anger.
5. Don't be distracted with someone else's business.
6. Refrain from saying unnecessary things.
7. Smile and be cheerful, especially when sad or irritated.
8. Mortify curiosity.
9. Don't complain of little discomforts and inconveniences.
10. When possible, do the will of others instead of your own.
11. Be especially kind and friendly to the person that most annoys you.
12. Say, "Thank You, God," whenever something happens contrary to you will.
13. When others don't agree with you in matters of slight importance, keep silent and don't press your opinion.
14. Don't excuse yourself when blamed.

Spiritual Change, achieved by the practice of virtues and good works, must be the main objective of our fasting. The Fathers of the Church insisted that during Lent the faithful attend the traditional Lent church services available to them, including Ash Wednesday and Holy Week.

More Motives for Mortification:

- To make satisfaction for my sins.
- To overcome my faults and sins.
- To draw blessings down on loved ones.
- To assist the suffering souls in purgatory.
- To gain strength against temptations.
- To obtain the conversion of sinners.

HAPPY ASH WEDNESDAY!

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SLOW DOWN AND FAST

Each winter I think about how I might enter most authentically into Lent. No matter what else I choose to do-make a retreat, support a special charity, study the life of a particular saint, or attend daily Mass - I will certainly undertake a fast.

<http://www.uscatholic.org/2003/03/pc0303.htm>

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WEB SITE OF THE WEEK
Sacred Space: Worldwide Prayer for Peace

This popular 'pray at your computer' site of the Irish Jesuits is promoting nine days of online Prayer for World Peace. On each of the nine days the site is highlighting a reflection on a theme from Pacem in Terris. <http://sacredspace.ie>

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STUDENTS HOOKED ON SPIRITUALITY

Religion's dead and spirituality is where it's at. That's what David Tacey's university students are saying to him. But as they get further into his university course on spirituality, they start to question the limitations of an entirely self-focused quest for spiritual enlightenment. <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/spirit/stories/s788326.htm>

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Heavenly Father, Help us remember that the jerk who cut us off in traffic last night is a single mother who worked nine hours that day and is rushing home to cook dinner, help with homework, do the laundry and spend a few precious moments with her children.

Help us to remember that the pierced, tattooed, disinterested young man who can't make change correctly is a worried 19-year-old college student, balancing his apprehension over final exams with his fear of not getting his student loans for next semester..

Remind us, Lord, that the scary looking bum, begging for money in the same spot every day (who really ought to get a job!) is a slave to addictions that we can only imagine in our worst nightmares.

Help us to remember that the old couple walking annoyingly slow through the store aisles and blocking our shopping progress are savoring this moment, knowing that, based on the biopsy report she got back last week, this will be the last year that they go shopping together.

Heavenly Father, remind us each day that, of all the gifts you give us, the greatest gift is love. It is not enough to share that love with those we hold dear. Open our hearts not to just those who are close to us, but to all humanity. Let us be slow to judge and quick to forgive, show patience, empathy and love.

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Try this website for some movitation: <http://dailymotivator.com/memberflash/rightnow.html>
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Vietnam miracle reunion

A woman's pursuit of her roots resurrects memories for metro residents of a baby's rescue and struggle to overcome war's brutality.

Bill Osinski - Staff

Saturday, April 12, 2003

DOWNIEVILLE, CALIF. --- Out of the massacre came a miracle.

In a Viet Cong attack on a village in May 1969, everyone was killed --- except a baby girl found wounded in her dead mother's arms.

U.S. soldiers, helicopter crewmen, medics, nurses and doctors saved her life. They gave her a name, Kathleen.

Eventually, the Americans came back home, not knowing what became of Kathleen. But they never forgot her.

About 12 years ago, she began a search for answers about her past.

On Monday, they will finally meet again.

Baby Kathleen is now Kathleen Epps, a Northern California wife with three daughters of her own. The prospect of Monday's reunion at a Texas army base thrills her, yet makes her anxious.

"What would be an appropriate gift for saving my life?" said Epps, who was adopted by a U.S. Navy officer. "I can't show up with nothing. What should I bring after 34 years?"

Two of her rescuers --- a Lithia Springs paramedic and a Marietta real estate broker --- say Kathleen has already given them a priceless gift.

"She was a bright spot in a very bad time. She made all the rest of it bearable," said Richard Hock, a former medic who lives in Lithia Springs and is one of Epps' godparents. "Of all the things that stuck with me from Vietnam, I've always wondered what happened to that child."

Still, Hock said he, too, is worried about gifts for the reunion.

"I wish I had something to bring her from back then," he said. "But all I can bring is my memories and myself."

Bending the rules

Flight records show that Huey helicopter commander David Alderson was called to perform a "dustoff" rescue on May 15, 1969, after American soldiers reported finding wounded Vietnamese civilians in a village. "Dustoff" is the term used for a no-landing, in-and-out helicopter rescue mission.

It was a day when Alderson would log more than 12 hours in the air and make at least three trips to Third Field Hospital.

He recalled a medic telling him that they had a wounded child, who had been locked in the tight embrace of her dead mother for more than two days. The soldiers pried the two apart to rescue the baby girl.

"We thought the baby was going to die," Alderson said.

Had he radioed his base for instructions, he probably would have been told to go to a Vietnamese hospital.

Instead, Alderson headed for Third Field Hospital, a U.S. facility set up in a converted school in the heart of Saigon.

"Every now and then, we just didn't call in," he said. "In this case, a lot of people bent the rules."

For most of that day, the staff at Third Field Hospital had struggled to keep up with a heavy flow of casualties, recalls Donna Rowe, the head triage nurse, who now lives in Marietta.

But when the radio call came in --- "Will you receive civilian casualties?" --- there had been a brief slowdown.

Had she followed the rules, Rowe would have redirected the Huey. Third Field Hospital was primarily for wounded American soldiers. Wounded Vietnamese civilians were the lowest priority guests.

"Tell 'em to come on," Rowe said.

Hock, the former medic, remembers that moment well.

"We (he and Rowe) just looked at each other and knew it was the right thing to do," he said.

Hock took the baby from the ambulance drivers who'd shuttled her in from the helicopter landing pad across the street from the hospital.

The baby was near death, said Darrell Warren, another medic on duty. She was dehydrated, malnourished and had fragmentation wounds in her abdomen and lower chest.

"She was blowing up on her own blood," Rowe said.

Rowe said the baby was rushed to the X-ray room so pieces of shrapnel from the attack could be located.

On the way from X-ray to the operating room, Rowe saw a chaplain, the Rev. Luke Sullivan, and

pulled him into the crowd that was half-running down the hospital corridor.

"Father, come with us, you have to baptize this baby," Rowe said.

She knew that if the baby were baptized by a Catholic priest, and if she survived surgery, she could find a bed at a nearby Catholic orphanage.

Sullivan said he didn't have the holy water for a baptism. Rowe suggested that tap water would suffice.

So there was a Catholic baptism, with Rowe, a Methodist, serving as godmother, and Hock, then a Methodist, and Warren, a Mormon, as co-godfathers.

But no one knew the baby's name. Rowe said she should be christened Kathleen Fields --- the first name from the Irish ballad "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen."

Rowe and the others then took Kathleen to the operating room, where a surgeon removed the shrapnel and stabilized Kathleen.

"She was so tiny, she only went from here to there," Rowe said, indicating the distance from her elbow to the palm of her hand. "They had to use the smallest tools we had."

After the surgery, they made a crib for Kathleen: an orange crate lined with warm towels. They fashioned diapers from washcloths reinforced by sanitary napkins.

Then, a medical staffer wondered about stretching the rules to treat a Vietnamese baby.

"Captain, there's going to be some heat over this," Rowe recalls hearing.

"What are they going to do, send me to Vietnam?" she answered.

The next day the hospital commander approached Rowe.

"Captain, I understand we have a civilian patient," he said.

"Yes, sir, we do," she said.

"Well done," the commander said.

From then on, the baby became the darling of the hospital staff.

"Every spare moment, we spent with her," said co-godfather Warren.

He and the other hospital staffers were touched by the baby who smiled more than she wept, he said.

"Kathleen was one of those special little people who grabs you and pulls the good things out of you," Warren said.

They cadged money from other staffers, telling them to cut back on beer, to buy baby clothes and supplies. They painted the classroom ward where the baby was kept.

"We were like two idiots," Warren said of his and Hock's attempts to care for the child. "If it wasn't for Donna showing us how to be parents, that baby would've been in a lot of trouble."

A few days after Kathleen arrived, three soldiers in combat gear came into the hospital. They asked if the hospital had treated a wounded baby, and if it had survived.

Rowe directed them to Kathleen's room, where they visited briefly, then headed out. As they passed Rowe, one of the men said, "Thank you."

"Those combat troops did something exceptional and wonderful. They could have kept right on walking," Rowe said. "But they were compassionate and caring. They were Americans."

But there were still challenges ahead: The baby couldn't eat. Rowe said Kathleen could not tolerate cow's milk or goat's milk. It wasn't until Red Cross workers brought in soy-based formula that the baby started to thrive.

After about two weeks, Kathleen was healthy enough to be transferred to St. Elizabeth's orphanage. Rowe told the men to scrounge extra food from the hospital mess to take with the baby to the orphanage.

A family for Kathleen

With her medical emergency over, Kathleen was safe, but without a family to call her own.

At a chapel service shortly after Kathleen arrived at the hospital, Sullivan, the chaplain, told the story of the miracle baby. Among the worshippers was a Navy officer, Marvin Cords.

After the service, Cords approached the priest and asked about adopting Kathleen. The priest took him to the hospital.

"When I first saw her, she had a wound dressing that just about covered her entire body," Cords said.

At the time, Cords and his first wife, Sally, had already adopted three children, but they had talked about adopting a Vietnamese child.

He hired a Vietnamese attorney and started to track down Kathleen's birth certificate.

Weeks passed, but still no birth certificate came from the nuns at the orphanage.

At this point, Cords sought help from Sullivan, who did a little priestly arm-twisting.

"He told the nuns, 'Get a birth certificate for that child, or you'll never get another nickel from anyone at this hospital,'" Cords said. Days later, Kathleen had a birth certificate.

After more government red tape and delays, including having to get a waiver signed by then-South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu, Cords brought Kathleen to America.

"She was shy, but very, very stubborn," said Sally Gibson, her adoptive mother.

Mostly, the family lived on military bases around the country. Kathleen recalls that the children, including two more who were adopted later, were summoned to dinner by the ringing of a ship's bell.

The six adopted children created a multicultural rainbow of ethnic heritages: African-American, Native-American, Vietnamese and Caucasian. Kathleen remembers that when they lived in South Carolina, some of the kids on the school bus taunted her African-American brother.

The rest of the Cords kids jumped to their brother's defense, and the name-calling ended that day.

Lost and found

About 12 years ago, Epps started to get serious about searching for her roots.

"I figured once I found somebody from the hospital, they could tell me where I came from," she said.

In June 2002, she left an entry in the guest book of a Vietnam veterans Web site: "I'm looking for any staff and/or military personnel who may have been at Third Field Hospital in Saigon, 1969. Anyone who may have remembered a small Vietnamese girl brought in by helicopter. Her whole village was killed by Viet Cong? . . . I have very few names and no memories except the year and the place. Could you please contact me, if anyone knows anything? Thanks!"

A few weeks later, Ed Russell, a retired federal employee living near Philadelphia, saw the entry.

Russell had served as a chaplain's assistant to Sullivan in Vietnam, but left the country in May 1969, and had never heard the story of Baby Kathleen.

In July 2002, Russell visited Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where there are archives of the U.S. medical forces from the Vietnam era.

He found a story published in a Florida newspaper in 1969, written by war correspondent Helen Musgrove. It was titled "Miss Ecumenical." It was the story of Kathleen's baptism.

Russell sent an e-mail to the woman who'd left the notice in the guest book..

"Finally, I had found somebody who might know something, but I didn't want to scare him off," Epps said. "A couple of e-mails later, I told him I was that Kathleen."

The Florida story gave the names of Donna Rowe, the former Army nurse, and Richard Hock, the former medic. Rowe was the key, but they had no clue where to find her.

Russell kept up the Internet search, though, and found an Army nurses' Web site, where an October 2002 Atlanta Journal-Constitution story had been posted.

Missing link located

Last October, Rowe told the story of Baby Kathleen to filmmakers shooting "In the Shadow of the Blade," a documentary about medical rescues.

"To think that we saved this little scrap of a thing," said Rowe, now a real estate broker in Marietta. "I thought I would never see her again."

Russell told Epps about Rowe's story in the newspaper.

Then, Epps contacted Cheryl Fries, the creative director of the documentary, who led her to Rowe.

After that, a torrent of information poured in, filling the blanks of Epps' past.

"I had to tell Cheryl to let me rest for a few days, it was so overwhelming," Epps said.

The news that Kathleen had found them was no less of a shock to the veterans of the Third Field Hospital. Neither Hock nor Rowe had known that for the past 20 years, they have lived within a half an hour's drive from each other.

About a month ago, Hock came home and found a voicemail from a woman who wanted to talk to him about Vietnam.

He doesn't like talking about much of his wartime experience, but he called back.

A woman called out for someone else to come quickly to the phone: "Kathleen."

Hock knew exactly what the call was about.

Once the story started coming together, the filmmakers decided to reunite Kathleen with her rescuers for the documentary.

Fries said it was too powerful a story not to tell fully.

"This is a story about humanity in the middle of war, about good people in a bad situation," she said. "Kathleen's future exists because good people in American uniforms cared."

On Monday, Epps will fly by Huey helicopter into Fort Sam Houston near San Antonio, Texas, where many Army nurses trained for Vietnam.

Alderson had planned to pilot the Huey, but he died last week of pneumonia at a Virginia hospital.

A substitute for Alderson, one of his co-pilots in Vietnam, will be flying the Huey. Rowe, Hock and Warren will be on the ground, guiding it to a landing.

Epps will be bringing more than herself to the Texas reunion.

Along with her parents, she will bring her husband, Billy, and their three daughters, Mary-Ann, 8; Jo-Jo, 6; and Sean, 5.

They live in Downieville, Calif., a town of less than 500 people in the historic gold rush area of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

A sketch of Epps' family life includes a blue-collar dad and stay-at-home mom, and a house where bears come to climb in the back yard trees.

He said the reunion will help his wife and his daughters "fill in some missing parts of the family history." Now, it's part of his history as well, he added.

As Donna Rowe prepared to come to the reunion to celebrate the story of Kathleen Epps, she was touched by an Iraqi wartime tragedy.

She got a call from a man who works frequently for her, the dad of Diego Rincon, of Conyers. His son, an Army private, was killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Once again, Rowe found herself comforting a family shattered by war.

"I thought that part of my life was over," she said. "That's why Kathleen's story needs to be told now."

For Hock, Kathleen's story is one that transcends the brutality of war, a Vietnam flashback that brings joy rather than dread.

"It's about this baby who had the will to survive and who did. She flourished and became a beautiful woman with a beautiful family," he said. "It's the great American dream all over again."

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Try this website - a nice thing about lightning bugs:

<http://members.accessus.net/%7Etmcdonld/lighthse/foot134.htm>

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Please tell ten friends to tell ten today! The Breast Cancer site is having trouble getting enough people to click on it daily to meet their quota of donating at least one free mammogram a day to an underprivileged woman.

It takes less than a minute to go to their site and click on "donating a mammogram" for free (pink window in the middle). This doesn't cost you a thing. Their corporate sponsors/advertisers use the number of daily visits to donate mammogram in exchange for advertising.

Here's the web site! Pass it along to people you know: <http://www.thebreastcancersite.com>

AND there are 4 other sites - for: hunger, rainforest preservation, animal rescue & children's health.

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Father Matthew Kelty is a Trappist monk of Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky. His homilies are posted on my web page link, but I'll mention them once here - see:

<http://www.monks.org/homilies.html>

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Try this website for LOTS of chocolate info:

http://money.cnn.com/2003/04/16/pf/saving/q_chocolate/index.htm

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HOME REMEDIES

Drinking two glasses of Gatorade can relieve headache pain almost immediately without the unpleasant side effects caused by traditional pain relievers.

Did you know that Colgate toothpaste makes an excellent salve for burns.

Before you head to the drugstore for a high-priced inhaler filled with mysterious chemicals, try chewing on a couple of curiously strong Altoids peppermints. They'll clear up your stuffed nose.

Achy muscles from a bout of the flu? Mix 1 Tablespoon of horseradish in 1/2 cup of olive oil. Let the mixture sit for 30 minutes, then apply it as a massage oil, for instant relief for aching muscles.

Sore Throat? Just mix 1/4 cup of vinegar with 1/4 cup of honey and take 1 Tablespoon six times a day. The vinegar kills the bacteria.

Cure urinary tract infections with alka-seltzer. Just dissolve two tablets in a glass of water and drink it at the onset of the symptoms. Alka-Seltzer begins eliminating urinary tract infections almost instantly even though the product was never been advertised for this use.

Eliminate puffiness under your eyes - All you need is a dab of preparation H, carefully rubbed into the skin, avoiding the eyes. The hemorrhoid ointment acts as a vasoconstrictor, relieving the swelling instantly.

Honey remedy for Skin Blemishes - Cover the blemish with a dab of honey and place a band-aid over it. Honey kills the bacteria, keeps the skin sterile, and speeds healing. Works overnight.

Listerine therapy for toenail fungus - Get rid of unsightly toenail fungus by soaking your toes in Listerine mouthwash. The powerful antiseptic leaves your toenails looking healthy again.

Easy eyeglass protection - To prevent the screws in eyeglasses from loosening, apply a small drop of Maybelline Crystal Clear nail polish to the threads of the screws before tightening them.

Coca-Cola cure for rust - Forget those expensive rust removers. Just saturate an abrasive sponge with Coca Cola and scrub the rust stain. The phosphoric acid in the coke is what gets the job done.

Cleaning liquid that doubles as bug killer - If menacing bees, wasps, hornets, or yellow jackets get in your home and you can't find the insecticide, try a spray of Formula 409. Insects drop to the ground instantly.

Smart splinter remover - just pour a drop of Elmers Glue-all over the splinter, let dry, and peel the dried glue off the skin. The splinter sticks to the dried glue.

Tomato paste boil cure - Cover the boil with Hunt's tomato paste as a compress. The acids from the tomatoes soothe the pain and bring the boil to a head.



Balm for broken blisters - To disinfect a broken blister, dab on a few drops of Listerine, a powerful antiseptic. Heinz vinegar to heal bruises - Soak a cotton ball in white vinegar and apply it to the bruise for 1 hour. The vinegar reduces the blueness and speeds up the healing process.

Kills fleas instantly. Dawn dishwashing liquid does the trick. Add a few drops to your dog's bath and shampoo the animal thoroughly. Rinse well to avoid skin irritations. Goodbye fleas

Rainy day cure for dog odor - Next time your dog comes in from the rain, simply wipe down the animal with Bounce or any dryer sheet, instantly making your dog smell springtime fresh.

Eliminate ear mites - All it takes is a few drops of Wesson corn oil in your cat's ear. Massage it in, then clean with a cotton ball. Repeat daily for 3 days. The oil soothes the cat's skin, smothers the mites, and accelerates healing.

Vaseline cure for hairballs - To prevent troublesome hairballs, apply a dollop of Vaseline petroleum jelly to your cat's nose. The cat will lick off the jelly, lubricating any hair in its stomach so it can pass easily through the digestive system.

Quaker Oats for fast pain relief - It's not for breakfast anymore! Mix 2 cups of Quaker Oats and 1 cup of water in a bowl and warm in the microwave for 1 minute, cool slightly, and apply the mixture to your hands for soothing relief from arthritis pain.

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And check out this website for a whole inspirational library of things...
<http://www.alighthouse.com/helives.htm>

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Try this website for LOTS of chocolate info:
http://money.cnn.com/2003/04/16/pf/saving/q_chocolate/index.htm

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THINGS CHOCOLATE

April 17, 2003: 11:40 AM EDT
By Leslie Geary, CNN/Money Staff Writer

NEW YORK (CNN/Money) – We don't want to knock the Easter Bunny, but let's face it. When it comes to holiday treats, this harried hare doesn't always deliver the best possible chocolate.

That's fine for small children. But if you're looking for really fine goodies meant to be savored, you may have to get it yourself.

Happily, chocolate isn't what it used to be, thanks to an increasing number of artisanal chocolatiers who are creating singular confections made with higher cacao levels, natural flavors, and unusual ingredients (grated lime, chili peppers). Comparing these gourmet treats to the stuff of supermarket or drugstore aisles is like equating a bottle of Petrus to wine-by-the-box.

Like great wine, upscale chocolate can cost a small fortune -- as much as \$70 a pound -- though there are certainly ways to enter the gates of chocolate heaven for less than \$10.

Anyway, great chocolate is well worth the investment, according to Clay Gordon, a chocolate critic and founder/editor of the Web site Chocophile.com.

He points out that Americans already spend a vast amount -- roughly \$13 billion -- on the sweet stuff per year. Despite our national sweet tooth, however, we still have "a way to go" when it comes to learning about chocolate, Gordon says.

"Most of the upper-end of the chocolate market has been dominated by a few fairly well-known brands, many of which have more to do with marketing than with substance," said Gordon.

For truly divine chocolate, smell, taste and try samples before you buy. Or, take our word for it and try some of these. **La Maison du Chocolat**

What Tiffany did for jewelry, La Maison has done for chocolate. There may be no other store that makes as luxurious sweets as La Maison du Chocolate.

Start with presentation. La Maison chocolates are exquisitely arrayed in caramel-colored leather boxes fine enough to hold your grandmother's estate jewelry. Its dark- and milk-chocolate truffles, marrons glaces, caramels, and mendiants (slices of chocolate sprinkled with dried fruits, assorted nuts or orange peel) contain no more than 65 percent cocoa, so they're more sweet than bitter. Ganache fillings are made with cocoa butter, not milk fat.

Each year, La Maison introduces a limited-edition gift to mark Easter. This year, the company is selling leather-bound, egg-shaped boxes crammed with 39 dark- and milk chocolates and a big chocolate egg. This one-pound treat costs \$78; the two-pounder runs \$110.

(www.lamaisonduchocolat.com 800-988-5632) **Dagoba Organic Chocolate**

For years, the prospect of organic chocolate usually boiled down to carob, that largely tasteless impostor that left real chocolate lovers hugely disappointed. Then along came Frederick Schilling, a former chef with a mind for experimentation.

After learning that most cocoa growers relied on pesticides to get beans growing, Schilling founded Dagoba, whose name means "temple of the gods" in Sanskrit. The company buys handpicked, organic beans and cocoa from co-ops in the Dominican Republic and Central America, paying full price for the ingredients to comply with certified "Fair Trade" practices.

Chocolate bar choices include such offerings as hazelnut, milk chocolate, roseberry (a blend of raspberry and rose hips), mint/rosemary, lime and macadamia nut, chai (a mixture of milk chocolate infused with cardamom, anise, black pepper, cinnamon and clover), and a lavender/blueberry bar. A gift box of one dozen assorted bars runs \$36. (www.dagobachocolate.com; 541-664-9030) **Ganache Chocolates**

After 30 years in the pastry business, Norman Love decided to walk away from it all. The former corporate pastry chef for Ritz Carlton, Love spent 42 weeks a year traipsing around the world to oversee the hotel chain's operations. Though he gave up a stellar career -- his honors include a bronze medal from the biennial Coup du Monde de la Patisserie (World Cup of Pastry) competition in Lyon -- it wasn't difficult for Love to switch gears.

"Chocolate is my passion," said Love, who dreamed of making a chocolate that was as visually stunning and delicious. So Love and partner Judy Limekiller founded Ganache.

The duo has perfected a technique in which the colored designs for each candy are hand-painted or airbrushed into chocolate molds, then filled the finest chocolate imported from Belgium, France and Switzerland. They contain fresh ingredients like pureed raspberries, bananas, ginger and hazelnuts.

Call the shop directly to inquire about Easter treats such as the hollow, multi-colored chocolate eggs that hold eight truffles (\$25) or any one of the pastel, galvanized tin buckets that have been filled



with a solid bunny, truffles and other sweets. (\$45) (www.ganachechocolates.com; 239-561-7215)

Garrison Confections

Andrew Shotts was the pastry chef at La Cote Basque in New York when he started making a line of colorful, intricately designed chocolates to serve to the restaurant's patrons after their meals. He then continued to experiment and create chocolates for subsequent employers, including the Russian Tea Room in New York and Guittard Chocolate in San Francisco.

During his stint at Guittard, Shotts created the company's signature *couverture*, a chocolate used to make truffles and pastries like molten chocolate cake and that is sold to pastry chefs across the country. Today, Shotts uses E. Guittard couverture at his own chocolate company, Garrison Confections, which he opened in 2001 with his wife, Tina Wright.

His current Vernal collection includes chocolates flavored with fresh herbs and honey, a mint-flavored mojito and a "spring trio" bonbon that's layered with almond, hazelnut and macadamia nut praline. (A box of 24 vernal chocolates runs \$30.)

Easter offerings include edible white, milk or dark-chocolate postcards adored in colorful designs and holiday messages inspired by classic French greeting cards. Each, separately wrapped card costs \$8 and is shipped in temperature-controlled packaging to prevent melting.

(www.garrisonconfections.com; 212-929-2545) **Richard Donnelly Fine Chocolates**

In 1998, just 10 years after he opened his chocolate shop in Santa Cruz, Calif., Richard Donnelly won the Best Artisan award at the prestigious EuroChocolate Festival in Perugia, Italy.

Donnelly learned his craft in Paris and Brussels before opening his own shop, where he produces no more than 50 pounds of chocolate a day.

His selections can be roughly divided into two groups: "American" chocolates filled with familiar tastes such as caramel and marzipan, and what Donnelly calls "more interesting" exotic chocolates suffused with herbs like cardamom, Chinese five-spice and lavender.

One pound of Donnelly's assorted sweets runs \$65. For that price, Donnelly is happy to custom-fill orders for finicky clients who want a box filled with nothing but their favorites. (www.donnelychocolates.com; 888-685-1871)

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Try this website as a stress reliever. You need to have your sound on since it is an auditory experience. Give it a few minutes to upload. Somebody did some real wizardry of programming to coordinate this! TRY

CLICKING ON THE HORSES FROM LEFT TO RIGHT THEN RIGHT TO LEFT AND THEN

JUST ONE OR TWO AT A TIME... IT'S FUN AND A GOOD STRESS RELIEVER!!! HAVE FUN!!

http://svt.se/hogafflahage/hogafflaHage_site/Kor/hestekor.swf

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HISTORIC EVENT BRINGS TOGETHER 400,000 CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS

Nearly 500 years after the Protestant Reformation, Protestants and Roman Catholics in Germany appear ready to relegate most of their differences to history. Hundreds of thousands of Protestants and Catholics gathered in Berlin May 28-June 1 in Germany's first joint meeting of the Christian church in modern days. The event proclaimed the end of estrangement among German Protestants and Catholics and a significant increase in unity.

<http://www.religionjournal.com/showarticle.asp?id=246>

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BLACK FAITH HISTORY IN U.S. EXPLORED

Written as a companion text to the forthcoming PBS series of the same name, This Far By Faith presents vignettes of the African-American religious historical experience in an easy to read and fairly comprehensive form. It touches on a number of different but related issues such as African traditional religion, African retentions in the Americas, the origins and expressions of the "Invisible Institution," slavery, and the spirituals as religious and revolutionary texts.

http://www.natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2003b/052303/052303x.htm

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This website is worth the time it takes to open...

<http://64.177.83.63/liberty/email.htm>

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TRY THIS THOMAS KINKAID WEBSITE - GORGEOUS!

<http://www.wtv-zone.com/grandstaff/harbourlights.html>

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A little "quiz" for kids. The answers below were given by school-age children

Why did God make mothers?

- 1.-She's the only one who knows where the Scotch tape is.
- 2.- It was the best way to get more people. (Think about it.)
- 3.- Mostly to clean the house.
- 4.-To help us out of there when we were getting born.

How did God make mothers?

- 1.- He used dirt, just like for the rest of us.
- 2.- Magic plus super powers and a lot of stirring.
- 3.- God made my mom just the same like he made me. He just used bigger parts.

Why did God give you your mother and not some other mom?

- 1.- We're related.
- 2.- God knew she likes me a lot more than other people's moms like me

What ingredients are mothers made of?

- 1- God makes mothers out of clouds & angel hair & everything nice in the world + one dab of mean.
- 2.-They had to get their start from men's bones. Then they mostly use string. I think.

What kind of little girl was your mom?

- 1.- My mom has always been my mom and none of that other stuff.
- 2.- I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy.
- 3.- They say she used to be nice.

How did your mom meet your dad?

- 1.- Mom was working in a store and dad was shoplifting.

What did mom need to know about dad before she married him?

- 1.- His last name.

2.- She had to know his background. Like is he a crook? Does he get drunk on beer? Does he make at least \$28,000 a year? Did he say NO to drugs and YES to chores.

Why did your mom marry your dad?

- 1.- My dad makes the best spaghetti in the world. And my mom eats a lot.
- 2.- She got too old to do anything else with him.
- 3.- My grandma says that mom didn't have her thinking cap on.

What makes a real woman?

- 1.- It means you have to be really bossy without looking bossy.

Who's the boss at your house?

- 1.- Mom doesn't want to be boss, but she has to because dad's such a goofball.
- 2.- Mom. You can tell by room inspection. She sees the stuff under the bed.
- 3.- I guess Mom is, but only because she has a lot more to do than dad.

What's the difference between moms and dads?

- 1.- Moms work at work and work at home, and dads just got to work at work.
- 2.- Moms know how to talk to teachers without scaring them.
- 3.- Dads are taller and stronger, but moms have all the real power 'cause that's who you gotta ask if you want to sleep over at your friend's.

What does your mom do in her spare time?

- 1.- Mothers don't do spare time.
- 2.- To hear her tell it, she pays bills all day long.

What's the difference between moms and grandmas?

- 1.- About 30 years.
- 2.- You can always count on grandmothers for candy. Sometimes moms don't even have bread on them!

Describe the world's greatest mom?

- 1.- She would make broccoli taste like ice cream!
- 2.- The greatest mom in the world wouldn't make me kiss my fat aunts!
- 3.- She'd always be smiling and keep her opinions to herself.

Is anything about your mom perfect?

- 1.- Her teeth are perfect, but she bought them from the dentist.
- 2.- Her casserole recipes. But we hate them.
- 3.- Just her children

What would it take to make your mom perfect?

- 1.- On the inside she's already perfect. Outside, I think some kind of plastic surgery.
- 2.- Diet. You know, her hair. I'd dye-it, maybe blue.

If you could change one thing about your mom, what would it be?

- 1.- She has this weird thing about me keeping my room clean. I'd get rid of that.
- 2.- I'd make my mom smarter. Then she would know it was my sister who did it and not me.

A young man learns what's most important in life from the guy next door.

It had been some time since Jack had seen the old man. College, girls, career, and life itself got in the way. In fact, Jack moved clear across the country in pursuit of his dreams. There, in the rush of his busy life, Jack had little time to think about the past and often no time to spend with his wife and son. He was working on his future, and nothing could stop him.

Over the phone, his mother told him, "Mr. Belser died last night. The funeral is Wednesday." Memories flashed through his mind like an old newsreel as he sat quietly remembering his childhood days.

"Jack, did you hear me?"

"Oh, sorry, Mom. Yes, I heard you. It's been so long since I thought of him. I'm sorry, but I honestly thought he died years ago," Jack said.

"Well, he didn't forget you. Every time I saw him he'd ask how you were doing. He'd reminisce about the many days you spent over 'his side of the fence' as he put it," Mom told him.

"I loved that old house he lived in," Jack said.

"You know, Jack, after your father died, Mr. Belser stepped in to make sure you had a man's influence in your life," she said.

"He's the one who taught me carpentry," he said. "I wouldn't be in this business if it weren't for him. He spent a lot of time teaching me things he thought were important...Mom, I'll be there for the funeral," Jack said.

As busy as he was, he kept his word. Jack caught the next flight to his hometown.

Mr. Belser's funeral was small and uneventful. He had no children of his own, and most of his relatives had passed away.

The night before he had to return home, Jack and his Mom stopped by to see the old house next door one more time.

Standing in the doorway, Jack paused for a moment. It was like crossing over into another dimension, a leap through space and time.

The house was exactly as he remembered. Every step held memories. Every picture, every piece of furniture....Jack stopped suddenly.

"What's wrong, Jack?" his Mom asked.

"The box is gone," he said.

"What box? " Mom asked.

"There was a small gold box that he kept locked on top of his desk. I must have asked him a thousand times what was inside. All he'd ever tell me was 'the thing I value most,'" Jack said.

It was gone. Everything about the house was exactly how Jack remembered it, except for the box. He figured someone from the Belser family had taken it.

"Now I'll never know what was so valuable to him," Jack said. "I better get some sleep. I have an early flight home, Mom."

It had been about two weeks since Mr. Belser died. Returning home from work one day Jack discovered a note in his mailbox.

"Signature required on a package. No one at home. Please stop by the main post office within the next three days," the note read.

Early the next day Jack retrieved the package.

The small box was old and looked like it had been mailed a hundred years ago. The handwriting was difficult to read, but the return address caught his attention.

"Mr. Harold Belser" it read.

Jack took the box out to his car and ripped open the package. There inside was the gold box and an envelope.

Jack's hands shook as he read the note inside.

"Upon my death, please forward this box and its contents to Jack Bennett. It's the thing I valued most in my life." A small key was taped to the letter.

His heart racing, as tears filling his eyes, Jack carefully unlocked the box. There inside he found a beautiful gold pocket watch. Running his fingers slowly over the finely etched casing, he unlatched the cover.

Inside he found these words engraved: "Jack, Thanks for your time! Harold Belser."

"The thing he valued most...was...my time."

Jack held the watch for a few minutes, then called his office and cleared his appointments for the next two days.

"Why?" Janet, his assistant asked.

"I need some time to spend with my son," he said.

"Oh, by the way, Janet...thanks for your time!"

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away."

Have a great day-and thank you for your time...

Hubble snaps stunning baby pic of cosmos

Galactic whirls from 12 billion years ago

Thursday, June 19, 2003 Posted: 2:19 PM EDT (1819 GMT)

Source: AOL (where pictures may be viewed)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) -- A new wide-angle view of the universe looks back to a mere billion years after the Big Bang, revealing secrets about the lives of galaxies and the black holes at their hearts, scientists reported on Thursday.

The new view is contained in one extraordinary image, compiled by astronomers using a super-high-resolution camera aboard NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, along with a catalog of objects giving off strong X-rays from space, detected by the Chandra X-Ray Observatory, another NASA-affiliated instrument.

The image shows a section of sky about one-tenth the size of the full Moon viewed from Earth. Though this may seem narrow, it is about 30 times wider than the last deep look into the universe, the Hubble Deep Field observation released in 1996.

That earlier vision was described as a keyhole view; this one might reasonably be called a picture window.

Both images sought to peer far enough away from Earth to see back in time to when the light from some of the oldest galaxies headed toward our spot in the cosmos. They also captured cosmic objects from later periods.

As in that earlier path-breaking picture, the galaxies in the new image look like smudged jewels on black velvet, with distinct shapes and colors, their whirling arms and oval forms apparent.

But the new image, known as GOODS for Great Observatories Origins Deep Survey, managed to look back further -- more than 12 billion years to when the universe was a billion years old. Astronomers put the age of the universe at roughly 13.7 billion years.

"In terms of time, we go from when the universe was about 15 percent of its current age to when it was 9 percent of its age," Mauro Giavalisco, a researcher who works with the Hubble data at the Space Telescope Science Institute, said in a telephone interview.

Leap back in time

Again, the difference between the older image and this new one sounds slight, but Giavalisco said the most rapid, dramatic changes occur early in a galaxy's development, much as human development occurs most dramatically at the earliest stages. That means even a small-seeming leap back in time reveals worlds of detail on galactic development.

Starting about 1 billion years after the theoretical Big Bang -- the giant explosion that many scientists believe gave birth to the universe -- the galaxies grew in size and went through a "baby boom" period of furious star formation that lasted about 6 billion years.

At that point, star formation dropped to about one-tenth its earlier rate, and major galaxy building trailed off when the universe was about half its current age, preliminary findings from the new image show.

Many astronomers believe there are monstrous black holes lurking at the center of many galaxies, including the Milky Way that contains Earth. Black holes are thought to be matter-sucking drains in space, whose pull is so strong that nothing, not even light, can escape.

Black holes can be inferred by X-rays emitted from them or near them, and scientists want to know more about how supermassive black holes relate to the galaxies that swirl around them, said Niel Brandt, an astronomer at Pennsylvania State University who worked with the Chandra X-ray data.

The GOODS image is sharp enough at great distances to allow astronomers to try to match up hundreds of X-ray sources -- thought to indicate black holes -- with the galaxies they inhabit, Brandt said by telephone.

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Was Moon Born From Planet's Crash Into Earth?

By Ben Harder for National Geographic News

August 20, 2001

The moon is not made of green cheese, as myth suggests. But the real story of the moon's creation may hardly be more probable.

Many scientists have thought for years that the moon was formed during the early days of the solar system when another planet collided with Earth, ejecting fragments of rocky material that condensed into Earth's only satellite.

Full Moon

The Full Moon is one of the four main phases of the moon as seen from Earth.

Photograph by Roger Ressmeyer/CORBIS

The effect would have been as though a lousy cosmic golfer tore up a giant chunk of turf and sent it hurtling into orbit.

For more than two decades, scientists have sought to determine how large the mysterious intruder planet must have been and exactly how its cataclysmic crash could have helped form the moon. But none of their models have offered a completely satisfying explanation.

Now, new research offers a scenario that may work. It suggests the impact may have come from a much more modestly sized foreign body than previous research has proposed.

Robin Canup, a researcher at Southwest Research Institute in Boulder, Colorado, and her colleague have fashioned an improved model using a sophisticated computer-modeling technique. It explains the size, composition, and orbital properties of both Earth and the moon.

"We determined that a Mars-sized impactor would work the best," said Canup. She and co-author Erik Asphaug, a scientist at the University of California at Santa Cruz, proposed their scenario in a study that appeared last week in the scientific journal *Nature*.

Colossal Impact

"Giant impact" theories explaining the moon's formation were first proposed in the mid-1970s. A decade later, researchers ruled out a Mars-sized object as the source of the impact and began to model larger and larger impacts. The two best models that emerged, however, both had inherent problems.

In one model, the mass of the Earth was right, as was the composition of the moon. But the Earth's

rotation rate after the collision was unrealistically fast. An improbable second impact would have been required to slow the Earth's spin.

A second scenario suggested that the impact occurred when Earth was only half formed. That idea better explained the Earth's modern rate of rotation and the moon's orbit, but it required Earth to continue accumulating matter after the impact. That material would have been rich in iron, which composes 30 percent of Earth's mass. But the moon, which contains almost no iron, would have simultaneously absorbed similarly iron-rich rock. The model offers no way to explain the moon's confounding dearth of iron.

Canup and Asphaug have proposed that the impact came from an object that was smaller than in the previous models, but was nonetheless substantial. At one-tenth the mass of the Earth, it was about the size of Mars, the two researchers say.

The collision occurred 4.5 billion years ago, only 50 million years after the solar system formed. The colossal impact must have nearly rent the young Earth apart.

"It didn't break the Earth up, but it came pretty close," Canup said.

"The Earth was distorted into an oblong shape before it gravitationally rebounded" over the course of several hours or a day, she said. Some of the material flung into space settled into orbit and eventually clumped together to form the moon.

Better Modeling

Canup and Asphaug were able to re-test the discredited mid-1980s hypothesis of impact by a Mars-size object thanks to greater computing power. They used a technique called smooth particle hydrodynamics to simulate interactions among the many rocky fragments that would have been created by the impact.

Using several powerful computers, the two scientists produced simulations involving 20,000 virtual fragments of the Earth and of the smaller foreign planet that collided with the Earth. Earlier simulations of similar impacts had been done with only 3,000 particles, which limited the realism of the simulations.

The researchers ran many simulations, adjusting the key variables—the size of the object that caused the impact, the angle of its course, and the mass of the Earth—to see which combination produced the best result.

The scenario involving a Mars-size object won out. That was when the researchers realized "the resolution makes a big difference," said Canup, referring to the number of particles that were used in the simulations. Three thousand particles, it turns out, is not enough realistically to simulate a collision between planet-sized objects.

In a companion article in *Nature* addressing Canup and Asphaug's study, planetary scientist Jay Melosh of the University of Arizona in Tucson noted, "Encouraging as these new results are, they are not the final word."

One major question is the accuracy of the mathematical equation underlying the new impact model. That equation, developed in 1962, doesn't distinguish well the behavior of ejected solids, liquids, and gases in the hours following the impact.

Treating these states of matter differently in the simulation could explain another peculiar aspect of the moon's composition: its dearth of easily vaporized "volatile" compounds such as water.

A newer, more sophisticated modeling equation has been developed, but Canup and Asphaug did not use it because it was known to have some imperfections. Since their study, Melosh has reworked that equation. Now he is teaming with Canup and Asphaug to test their new model with the more sophisticated equation to see if the results are consistent with their present findings.

THE ORIGIN OF THE MOON

PSI's role:

Two PSI senior scientists, Dr. William K. Hartmann and Dr. Donald R. Davis, were the first to suggest the leading modern hypothesis of the moon's origin, in a paper published in 1975 in the journal *Icarus*.

The idea in a nutshell:

At the time Earth formed 4.5 billion years ago, other smaller planetary bodies were also growing. One of these hit earth late in Earth's growth process, blowing out rocky debris. A fraction of that debris went into orbit around the Earth and aggregated into the moon.

Why this is a good hypothesis:

- The Earth has a large iron core, but the moon does not. This is because Earth's iron had already drained into the core by the time the giant impact happened. Therefore, the debris blown out of both Earth and the impactor came from their iron-depleted, rocky mantles. The iron core of the impactor melted on impact and merged with the iron core of Earth, according to computer models.
- Earth has a mean density of 5.5 grams/cubic centimeter, but the moon has a density of only 3.3 g/cc. The reason is the same, that the moon lacks iron.
- The moon has exactly the same oxygen isotope composition as the Earth, whereas Mars rocks and meteorites from other parts of the solar system have different oxygen isotope compositions. This shows that the moon formed from material formed in Earth's neighborhood.
- If a theory about lunar origin calls for an evolutionary process, it has a hard time explaining why other planets do not have similar moons. (Only Pluto has a moon that is an appreciable fraction of its own size.) Our giant impact hypothesis had the advantage of invoking a stochastic catastrophic event that might happen only to one or two planets out of nine.

What were some earlier ideas?

1. One early theory was that the moon is a sister world that formed in orbit around Earth as the Earth formed. This theory failed because it could not explain why the moon lacks iron.
2. A second early idea was that the moon formed somewhere else in the solar system where there was little iron, and then was captured into orbit around Earth. This failed when lunar rocks showed the same isotope composition as the Earth.
3. A third early idea was that early Earth spun so fast that it spun off the moon. This idea would produce a moon similar to Earth's mantle, but it failed when analysis of the total angular momentum and energy involved indicated that the present Earth-moon system could not form in this way.

Where did the theory come from?

Hartmann and Davis were familiar with the work done in the Soviet Union in the 1960's, on the aggregation of planets out of countless asteroid-like bodies called planetesimals. Much of this work was pioneered by a Russian astrophysicist named V. S. Safronov. Picking up on Safronov's general ideas, Hartmann and Davis ran calculations of the rate of growth of the 2nd-largest, 3rd largest, etc., bodies in the general vicinity of Earth, as the Earth itself was growing. Just as the asteroid belt today has a largest asteroid (Ceres) at a 1000 km diameter, and

several smaller bodies in the 300-500 km diameter range, the region of Earth's orbit would have had several bodies up to about half the size of the growing Earth. Our idea was that in the case of Earth (but not the other planets) the impact happened late enough, and in such a direction relative to Earth's rotation, that abundant enough middle material was thrown out to make a moon.

How did the theory develop?

After we first presented the theory in 1974 at a conference on satellites, Harvard researcher A. G. W. Cameron rose to say that he and William Ward were also working on the same idea, but coming at it from a different motivation -- the study of angular momentum in the system -- and that they had concluded the impacting body had to be roughly Mars size (a third or half the size of Earth). Our paper was published in 1975 (Hartmann and Davis, [Icarus, 24](#), 504-505) Cameron and Ward published an abstract on this idea at the Lunar Science conference in 1976, two years after the PSI paper.

Some work was done by Thompson and Stevenson in 1983 about the formation of moonlets in the disk of debris that formed around Earth after the impact. However, in general the theory languished until 1984 when an international meeting was organized in Kona, Hawaii, about the origin of the moon. At that meeting, the giant impact hypothesis emerged as the leading hypothesis and has remained in that role ever since. Dr. Michael Drake, director of the University of Arizona's Planetary Science Department, recently described that meeting as perhaps the most successful in the history of planetary science.

A collection of papers from that meeting was published by the Lunar and Planetary Institute (Houston) in the 1986 book, *Origin of the Moon*, edited by PSI scientist William Hartmann, together with Geoffry Taylor and Roger Phillips. This book remains the prime reference on this subject. In the meantime, researchers such as Willy Benz, Jay Melosh, A. G. W. Cameron, and others have attempted computer models of the giant impact, to determine how much material would go into orbit. Some of these results have been used by Hartmann to make the paintings on this web page, attempting to show how the impact would have looked to a human observer (if humans had been around -- they didn't come along until 4.5 billion years later!)

In the 1990's, Dr. Robin Canup wrote a Ph.D. dissertation on the moon's origin and the giant impact hypothesis, which produced new modeling of the aggregation of the debris into moonlets, and eventually, into the moon itself. Dr. Canup is continuing the modeling of the lunar accretion process.

Current status:

In 1997, Dr. Canup's work received a great deal of publicity by media news sources, some of whom mistakenly thought that the giant impact was a brand new idea. Canup's early work, presented in July 1997, suggested the debris from an impact might not make a moon, but only a swarm of moonlets. Her later work (fall 1997) led to more "success" in aggregating the debris into a single moon.

Thus, the giant impact hypothesis continues to be the leading hypothesis on how the moon formed. Is it right? Can it be disproven by more careful research? Only time will tell, but so far it has stood up to 25 years of scrutiny.

At PSI we have worked with several leading researchers to propose new work on the accretion mechanics using a variant of the PSI planet building model. But this work has not been funded.

For more info:

Hartmann, W. K. and D. R. Davis 1975 [Icarus, 24](#), 505.

Hartmann, W. K. 1997. A Brief History of the Moon. [The Planetary Report, 17](#), 4-11.

Hartmann, W. K. and Ron Miller 1991. [The History of Earth](#), (New York: Workman Publishing Co.)

Hartmann, W. K., R.J. Phillips, and G.J. Taylor, eds. 1986. Origin of the Moon. (Houston: Lunar and Planetary Institute.)

Origins

by Peter Tyson

Whence our moon? Was it a chunk of Earth flung off in our planet's early history? Did the Earth capture a small, roaming planet in its gravity grip? Or did the moon fashion itself alongside our world from the same planetary matter? One of the Apollo program's chief scientific goals was to give lunar researchers the means to decide, once and for all, between these three main theories of how the moon formed.

What transpired in this "battle of the Big Three" after the last Apollo mission flew in 1972 surprised just about everyone. The story provides a revealing glimpse of the workings of the scientific process, while at the same time opening a window on the origins of what one lunar researcher has called "one of the most peculiar bodies in the solar system" -- the moon.

The Big Three

Human beings have surely wondered about the moon since they had brains big enough to do so. Many cultures, from ancient times to the present day, have even worshipped it as a deity. The Greeks were perhaps the first to study our satellite scientifically. Using Earth's shadow on the moon during lunar eclipses as a guide, the third-century B.C. astronomer Aristarchus estimated it lay 60 Earth radii away. (It was a remarkable guess: in fact, the distance varies between 55 and 63 Earth radii, or 220,000 and 250,000 miles.) The biographer Plutarch went so far as to posit that people lived on the moon, whose dark regions, the Greeks thought, marked oceans and the bright areas land. Their belief survives in the Latin names -- *maria* (seas) and *terrae* (lands) -- by which we know these dark and light regions.

Modern scientific study of our neighbor began in 1610, when Galileo, training his spyglass on the moon, became the first person to see the dark and light regions for what they really were: vast plains and rugged mountains, respectively. Galileo's famous trial for heresy -- for insisting that the Earth revolved around the sun rather than vice versa -- apparently kept Descartes from publishing one of the first theories about the origin of the moon until 1664, long after his own death. (His theory was essentially an early version of the planet-capture theory.) Descartes left a fuller explanation for others, admitting "I have not undertaken to explain everything."

The first moon-origin theory to gain a solid foothold was put forth in 1878. That year, George Howard Darwin, son of the famous evolutionist, proposed that Earth spun so rapidly in its early years that the sun's gravity eventually yanked off a chunk of an increasingly elongated Earth; that chunk became the moon. Four years later, the geologist Osmond Fisher added a juicy addendum: The Pacific ocean basin marks the scar left behind where our future satellite ripped away. The so-called "fission" theory became the accepted wisdom well into the 20th century, as this quirky, 1936 U.S. Office of Education script for a children's radio program attests:

FRIENDLY GUIDE: Have you heard that the moon once occupied the space now filled by the Pacific Ocean? Once upon a time -- a billion or so years ago -- when the Earth was still young -- a remarkable romance developed between the Earth and the sun -- according to some of our ablest scientists . . . In those days the Earth was a spirited maiden who danced about the princely sun --

was charmed by him -- yielded to his attraction, and became his bride . . . The sun's attraction raised great tides upon the Earth's surface . . . the huge crest of a bulge broke away with such momentum that it could not return to the body of mother Earth. And this is the way the moon was born!

GIRL: How exciting!

The Darwin-Fisher model eventually met with competition from two other theories. In 1909, an astronomer with the all-American name of Thomas Jefferson Jackson See proposed that the moon was a wandering planet that had been snared by Earth's gravity, like a fly in a spider web. The third theory, advocated by the astronomer Edouard Roche among others, was coaccretion. In this model, the Earth and the moon formed independently, side by side as it were, from the same material that formed all the planets of our solar system.

Some clever scientist eventually dubbed the Big Three "daughter" (fission), "spouse" (capture), and "sister" (coaccretion). Which family member would win out?

Apollo's Impact

By the end of the Apollo program, lunar scientists had elucidated many aspects of the moon's history, giving them clues unavailable to the likes of Darwin or See. Selenology, the study of the origin of the moon, had taken off. Most of the new evidence came from the more than 800 pounds of moon rocks retrieved by the American and Russian lunar missions.

In many ways, the moon turned out to be quite different from Mother Earth. Anybody can see that, of course: It's airless, colorless, lifeless. But the differences run deeper. It is compositionally different, with fewer volatile elements -- those that tend to boil off at high temperature. The moon might have inherited such differences -- maria rocks contain no water, for instance, unlike volcanic rocks on our planet -- from the impactor. The lunar samples also suggest that much of the moon may have once been molten; no definitive evidence exists that the Earth ever melted to such a degree. And while one-quarter its size, the moon has but one percent of our planet's mass, and its density more closely resembles that of Earth's mantle rather than the planet as a whole. Lunar scientists in the immediate post-Apollo years explained these discrepancies by postulating that the moon had but a tiny core. In 1998, the Lunar Prospector, NASA's first mission to the moon since Apollo, confirmed that the moon's core indeed comprises less than three percent of its mass. (By contrast, Earth's core represents 30 percent of its mass.)

In other ways, the Earth and moon have remarkably similar characteristics. Studies of radiogenic elements and isotopes in lunar rocks reveal that the two bodies are roughly the same age, 4.5 billion years old. They also came from the same neighborhood: Unlike those in all meteorites ever analyzed, the nonradioactive, stable isotopes of oxygen in moon and Earth rocks match like blood types, implying the two spheres formed at the same radial distance from the sun. Indeed, results from Apollo showed the pair to be more intimately connected than previously thought. "Apollo tied together for the first time the history of the moon with the history of the Earth," says William Hartmann of the Planetary Science Institute in Tucson, Arizona. "It showed us that we live in a system, the Earth-moon system."

In fact, it's a pairing unlike any other in the solar system. Our moon is far more massive relative to Earth, for example, than the satellites of all other planets save Pluto (whose moon, Charon, is half its size). The Earth-moon system also has an unusually high angular momentum -- that is, the sum of

the our planet's rotational velocity and the speed at which the moon orbits the Earth.

So how do the Big Three stand up in the face of all the new evidence? Not well, it turns out. The fission theory might explain the moon's lack of a large core and the oxygen-isotope similarity, astronomers say, but calculations show that the Earth would have to have had four times its present angular momentum -- a lightning-fast rotational speed that astronomers cannot square in their models. Add to that the understanding reached decades ago that the Pacific basin formed less than 70 million years ago and therefore could not possibly have spawned the moon, and the Darwin-Fisher model suddenly comes up short.

See's capture theory suffers as well. The idea that Earth's gravity caught a rogue planet might explain the compositional differences between the two bodies. But, then, why doesn't the moon have its own regular-sized core? And why the oxygen-isotope similarity if the two formed in different parts of the solar system? Finally, most modelers deem the chance that a speeding planet would gracefully ease into Earth's embrace rather than slam into it or career off into space too remote for consideration.

Coaccretion led the pack through the 1970s, because, for one thing, it doesn't require a low-probability event like capture. But today it faces the same problem regarding the core. As Hartmann says, "It's very hard to imagine the two bodies growing together but somehow the Earth magically gets all the stuff with the iron in it and the moon doesn't get any." Even more troublesome, experts say, the theory cannot account for the enormous angular momentum we see in the Earth-moon system today.

The Big Whack

Rather than clarifying the issue of the moon's origin, the Apollo data only complicated it. As Hartmann declared in *Origin of the Moon*, a 1984 book he co-edited with two other researchers, "neither the Apollo astronauts, the Luna vehicles, nor all the king's horses and all the king's men could assemble enough data to explain the circumstances of the moon's birth." Many felt something else was needed.

It came in the mid-1970s, when a new theory of lunar origin began to emerge. It rose phoenix-like from the ashes of constraints not adequately met in tests of the three other models. First, Hartmann, along with Planetary Science Institute colleague Don Davis, determined that a roving planetoid, large enough to blast off enough mantle material to make the moon, could have struck the Earth shortly after its formation. (Previous work had held that the solar system had long since run out of planet-sized meteors.) Working independently, Alastair Cameron and William Ward of Harvard University concluded that an impact from a body at least as large as Mars could have supplied the rough material for the moon and also given our bipartite system its angular momentum.

The "Big Whack" theory was born. The giant-impact hypothesis, as it's more formally known, initially had little impact of its own. If Nature abhors a vacuum, researchers generally abhor catastrophic solutions to geophysical problems, Hartmann says; such solutions are too tidy. So the theory languished for a decade. As Robin Canup, an astrophysicist at the Southwest Research Institute in Boulder, Colorado, put it, "At first it was seen as ad hoc, probably unlikely, possibly ridiculous." But in 1984, a seminal conference devoted to the moon's origin that was held in Kona, Hawaii jumpstarted research.

Canup, for one, leapt in with both feet beginning in the mid-1990s. Cameron's models had left off after the giant impact, when a debris cloud from which the moon would arise formed around Earth. She extended the modeling from debris cloud to finished moon. Canup's calculations showed that most debris from the collision would either fall back to Earth or fly off into space, leaving only 20 to 50

percent to make a moon. The Big Whack, she figured, required a much bigger whacker -- one two to three times the mass of Mars. But that resulted in an Earth spinning at two to two and a half times its present angular momentum. She addressed that problem by introducing a Big Whack II: a second impactor that hit Earth against the grain of our planet's rotation millions of years after the first, thus slowing its spin.

In contrast to the Big Three, the Big Whack stands up nicely against what we now know of the moon. According to theoretical models, the impact would have destroyed the impactor, sending most of its remains, along with huge amounts of the Earth's mantle, into an Earth-orbiting debris cloud that ultimately coalesced into the moon. This would explain the reduced density of the moon, which is believed to be composed of two-thirds impactor and one-third Earth mantle. And it explains its tiny core: Since the models suggest that all of the impactor's core wound up in the Earth's core, the moon must have got its core iron from later, smaller impacts. By the same token, Earth got its additional volatile elements from later impacts from comets and carbonaceous meteors. Finally, the Big Whack can account well for the Earth-moon's angular momentum and even our planet's odd, 23.5-degree tilt off the ecliptic plane (the invisible platter on which nearly all planets orbit the sun).

While currently the frontrunner, the Big Whack needs more work. Many would like to see it account somehow for the oxygen-isotope similarity, which, by definition, would seem to argue against an impactor formed elsewhere in the solar system. Canup, for her part, has a running list of research questions she'd like to see addressed. These include: Make the Big Whack model work with just a single impact, rather than the more ad hoc multiple. Explain the formation of Charon, Pluto's moon, which scientists have postulated might also have been the offspring of a giant impact. And finally, chemically match the moon's characteristics with what would have happened in the proto-lunar debris cloud.

"If we can get to a point where we can *naturally* explain with our theoretical models the chemical signatures and elemental abundances in the lunar material," Canup says, "to me that's the nail in the coffins of the other theories." Cameron concurs. "Quite independently of the giant-impact theory," he says, "they were sealed long ago."

Peter Tyson is Online Producer of NOVA.

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Some Other Time

After 21 years of marriage, I discovered a new way of keeping alive the spark of love. A little while ago I had started to go out with another woman. It was really my wife's idea. "I know that you love her," she said one day, taking me by surprise.

"But I love YOU," I protested.

"I know, but you also love her."

The other woman that my wife wanted me to visit was my mother, who has been a widow for 19 years, but the demands of my work and my three children had made it possible to visit her only occasionally.

That night I called to invite her to go out for dinner and a movie.

"What's wrong, are you well," she asked? My mother is the type of woman who suspects that a late night call or a surprise invitation is a sign of bad news.

"I thought that it would be pleasant to pass some time with you," I responded. "Just the two of us." She thought about it for a moment then said "I would like that very much."

That Friday after work, as I drove over to pick her up I was a bit nervous. When I arrived at

her house, I noticed that she, too, seemed to be nervous about our date. She waited in the door with her coat on. She had curled her hair and was wearing the dress that she had worn to celebrate her last wedding anniversary. She smiled from a face that was as radiant as an angel's.

"I told my friends that I was going to go out with my son, and they were impressed," she said, as she got into the car. "They can't wait to hear about our meeting."

We went to a restaurant that, although not elegant, was very nice and cozy. My mother took my arm as if she were the First Lady. After we sat down, I had to read the menu. Her eyes could only read large print. Half way through the entree, I lifted my eyes and saw Mom sitting there staring at me. A nostalgic smile was on her lips. "It was I who used to have to read the menu when you were small," she said.

During the dinner we had an agreeable conversation--nothing extraordinary -- but catching up on recent events of each others life. We talked so much that we missed the movie. As we arrived at her house later, she said "I'll go out with you again, but only if you let me invite you."

I agreed .

"How was your dinner date?" asked my wife when I got home.

"Very nice. Much more so than I could have imagined," I answered.

A few days later my mother died of a massive heart attack. It happened so suddenly that I didn't have a chance to do anything for her. Some time later I received an envelope with a copy of a restaurant receipt from the same place mother and I had dined. An attached note said: "I paid this bill in advance. I was almost sure that I couldn't be there but, nevertheless, I paid for two plates -- one for you and the other for your wife. You will never know what that night meant for me. I love you."

At that moment I understood the importance of saying, in time: "I LOVE YOU" and to give our loved ones the time that they deserve. Nothing in life is more important than God and your family. Give them the time they deserve, because these things cannot be put off to *some other time*.

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His Holiness the Dalai Lama's views on war and Iraq conflict

The following is the English translation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's views on war and Iraq conflict shared with Buddhist devotees and others on the first day of the Great Prayer Festival 11 March 2003, in Dharamsala

The Iraq issue is becoming very critical now. War, or the kind of organized fighting, is something that came with the development of human civilization. It seems to have become part and parcel of human history or human temperament. At the same time, the world is changing dramatically. We have seen that we cannot solve human problems by fighting. Problems resulting from differences in opinion must be resolved through the gradual process of dialogue. Undoubtedly, wars produce victors and losers; but only temporarily. Victory or defeat resulting from wars cannot be long-lasting. Secondly, our world has become so interdependent that the defeat of one country must impact the rest of the world, or cause all of us to suffer losses either directly or indirectly.

Today, the world is so small and so interdependent that the concept of war has become anachronistic, an outmoded approach. As a rule, we always talk about reform and changes. Among the old traditions, there are many aspects that are either ill-suited to our present reality or are counterproductive due to their shortsightedness. These, we have consigned to

the dustbin of history. War too should be relegated to the dustbin of history.

Unfortunately, although we are in the 21st century, we still have not been able to get rid of the habit of our older generations. I am talking about the belief or confidence that we can solve our problems with arms. It is because of this notion that the world continues to be dogged by all kinds of problems.

But what can we do? What can we do when big powers have already made up their minds? All we can do is to pray for a gradual end to the tradition of wars. Of course, the militaristic tradition may not end easily. But, let us think of this. If there were bloodshed, people in positions of power, or those who are responsible, will find safe places; they will escape the consequent hardship. They will find safety for themselves, one way or the other. But what about the poor people, the defenseless people, the children, the old and infirm. They are the ones who will have to bear the brunt of devastation. When weapons are fired, the result will be death and destruction. Weapons will not discriminate between the innocent and guilty. A missile, once fired, will show no respect to the innocent, poor, defenseless, or those worthy of compassion. Therefore, the real losers will be the poor and defenseless, ones who are completely innocent, and those who lead a hand-to-mouth existence.

On the positive side, we now have people volunteer medical care, aid, and other humanitarian assistance in war-torn regions. This is a heart-winning development of the modern age.

Okay, now, let us pray that there be no war at all, if possible. However, if a war does break out, let us pray that there be a minimum bloodshed and hardship. I don't know whether our prayers will be of any practical help. But this is all we can do for the moment.

*Translated and issued by:
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This is worth waiting for the download. Make sure your sound is on.

Visit the site now by going to:

<http://www.cantcryhardenough.com>

Can't Cry Hard Enough - A very moving Tribute to the Victims of Sep. 11, 2001.

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

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

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LIFE - A TERMINAL ILLNESS

This is the commencement speech by the writer, Anna Quindlen, to the graduates at Villanova this year (2003)

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 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 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!