

Ask Mason & Teo



My ex is planning to abort my child

Hi Mason and Teo, I just found out that my ex-girlfriend is pregnant with my child and she is planning on having an abortion. I do not want her to have an abortion, but she said it is her choice and I do not have a say. I've tried talking to her but she insists that it is her decision. What can I do? (Lost and Confused)

Dear Lost and Confused, This must be a very difficult time for the two of you. We are praying that the Holy Spirit will touch your hearts to seek and surrender to the truth. The church teaches that life begins at conception. ALL life is sacred, including the life of an embryo with its DNA and soul of a person. The best advice we could offer is suggested by a good friend, Lisa Barayuga, who volunteers at the Pearson Foundation Pregnancy Problem Center, which provides counseling to men and women. As a volunteer counselor for many years, she has helped lots of people in your situation. Here is her sound advice:

"Lost and Confused" should tell his ex-girlfriend:

- He understands this is a difficult time for her, but it is unwise to select a solution without researching every option. Many people have gone through this before, so it would be good to learn from their experiences.

- Legally it is her decision, but they are both responsible. He wants her to make a decision she can live with the rest of her life.

- He has heard that there are consequences for a woman who has the abortion. They need to research post-abortion syndrome and other negative effects on Web sites like www.silentnomore.com and www.hopeafterabortion.com. Some problems caused by abortions include higher probability of breast cancer, infections, future infertility and possibly death. Abortion is not risk-free. A woman undergoes personality changes after an abortion — grief, regret, defensiveness, etc. — which make it very difficult to maintain relationships or develop new ones.

- He should recommend they go to a Pregnancy Problem Center together to learn what is happening in the womb, what to expect during an abortion, and alternatives to abortion. Oahu has two Pregnancy Problem Centers (Honolulu and Pearl City), and Maui has one. Visit www.pregnancyproblemcenter.com. Those centers can refer to other organizations that assist in the decision-making process. Pregnancy Centers offer confidential, free services, so there is no reason not to take advantage of what they have to offer.

- He should remind her of how special the baby she is carrying is — half her genes, her own flesh

and blood. However, the baby has separate DNA and is therefore a new, unique individual who cannot be replaced with another baby. Each baby is different, just as each one of us already born is different.

- He needs to let her know what emotional, financial or other support he will give through the pregnancy and after birth if appropriate.

- He should show her that this is an issue of life and death. He should obtain information on the development of the baby. He should make his ex-girlfriend aware that she is doing more than making a choice; abortion ends a life. By the time a woman finds out she is pregnant, the baby's heart is already beating.

- He should encourage her to have an ultrasound of the baby to understand what she is considering. Later, she will not have to say that no one told her what was really occurring in her womb. The Pregnancy Center can assist in finding ultrasound services.

- He should find an adoption agency (not a private adoption service), someone who has gone through the adoption process (a mother who placed her child, a parent who adopted a child, and a child who was adopted) to talk with his ex-girlfriend about the benefits of adoption and the various adoption processes available.

- He should tell her he cares too much for her and his baby to assist in any way in the death of his child — and that includes finding an abortion clinic, paying for the abortion, or helping her get there.

- He should tell her that many people will stand by her and assist her through the pregnancy. There are services that can provide temporary living arrangements if necessary. Caring people are standing by to help her through this, every step of the way. In the long run, the eight months or less left in the pregnancy is a short time when considering the ability to save a life and bring a gift from God into the world.

- Pregnancy Center personnel have frequently heard from women who regret having an abortion, but it is extremely rare to hear from a woman who regretted giving birth.

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I consecrated you; a prophet to the nations I appointed you. (Jeremiah 1:5)

Mason and Teo Matsuda are parishioners of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Ewa Beach and have served in youth and young adult ministries for years. Write to them at yaadvice@yahoo.com.

Waimanalo to Detroit

UH grad rescuing homeless girls as a Cap Corps volunteer

By Patrick Downes
Hawaii Catholic Herald

What are you doing with your college degree?

University of Hawaii grad and Waimanalo resident Tania P. Brown has put her bachelor of science in family resources to work in Detroit helping homeless young women, ages 16-20, who reside at the shelter program, Alternatives for Girls.

Brown is a Cap Corps volunteer.

Cap Corps is a Franciscan volunteer program and a Capuchin ministry for college-age students and graduates who want to emulate St. Francis of Assisi serving the poor and disenfranchised.

"I love the agency I work with, and the work that is done here is very much life changing. Brown wrote in a Sept. 9 e-mail message to the Hawaii Catholic Herald.

"Every day is like opening a new chapter."

Brown, 24, grew up in Waimanalo. She is Filipino, Hawaiian, Black and American Indian. Her parents separated when she was about two, so she never knew her father. But she has lots of family in Hawaii including her grandparents, Magdalena and Marcello Mondido, a sister and brother, uncles and aunts, and "a whole bunch of cousins."

She graduated from Kailua High School in 2002. Last year she received her degree from UH-Manoa.

She found Cap Corps in a catalogue of Catholic-affiliated volunteer programs.

Brown had been filling out the Peace Corps application with the help of Angie Carlton, a campus minister at the University Catholic Center (formerly the Newman Center), when Carlton shared her experience working for Mercy Corps. That led to a look at the catalogue of Catholic volunteer programs "Response 2008."

"I found five programs that were of interest to me, one of them being Cap Corps," Brown said. "The recruitment coordinator was very supportive in the application process and never failed to keep me informed about my status. It was a given that I would



Cap Corps volunteer Tania P. Brown



say 'yes' to being a member of the program."

Her commitment with Alternatives for Girls runs until next July 19. After that, she plans to relocate "somewhere other than Hawaii."

"I am looking at maybe attending a graduate school in the mainland or joining another volunteer corps," she said.

The Capuchins are an international community of friars modeling themselves after St. Francis. Hawaii's Capuchin Franciscans belong to a different province from those headquartered in Detroit who belong to the St. Joseph Province.

For more information about Cap Corps, visit www.capcorps.org. To learn about the Capuchins, go to www.thecapuchins.org.

God sends his angels to help people through life, says pope

By Catholic News Service

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy

God sends angels to help people as they make their way through life and toward eternity with God, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"The invisible presence of these blessed spirits is of great help and comfort to us: They walk alongside us and protect us in every circumstance, they defend us from dangers and we can turn to them at every moment," the pope said Sept. 29.

The pope made his remarks on the feast of the archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael as he thanked all the people who helped make his two-month stay at

Castel Gandolfo peaceful and restful.

In addition to mentioning the feast of the archangels, the pope noted that Oct. 2 is the feast of the guardian angels, whose help and protection should be invoked with trust, he said.

"Many saints had a relationship of true friendship with the angels and numerous stories testify to their assistance," the pope said.

As the Letter to the Hebrews makes clear, "the angels are sent by God to serve those who will inherit salvation and, so, they are of valid assistance on our earthly pilgrimage toward our heavenly homeland," Pope Benedict said.



CNS photo

Movie reviews

Eagle Eye (DreamWorks): Well-executed action yarn about two strangers, a gifted underachiever (Shia LaBeouf) and a divorced mother (Michelle Monaghan), who are thrown together when they become the unwilling agents of an anonymous, seemingly all-powerful entity that uses technology and personal information to blackmail them into obedience, while an FBI agent (Billy Bob Thornton) and an Air Force investigator (Rosario Dawson) try to track them down. Though its solution is hardly original, director D.J. Caruso's sleek puzzler provides sufficient diversion along the way. Moderate action violence, brief sexual humor, one use of the F-word, much crude language and some uses of profanity; possibly acceptable for older teens. A-III (PG-13)

Fireproof (Goldwyn): Modest but heartwarming drama about a small-town fireman (a fine Kirk Cameron) who, under the guidance of his born-again father (Harris Malcom), works to save his seven-year-old marriage, despite the unyielding obstinacy of his wife (Erin Bethea). The message — that a successful marriage is grounded in the knowledge that God loves us with all our faults — is the overriding virtue of co-writers and directors Alex and Stephen Kendrick's nicely shot, evangelical-flavored film in which the former "Growing Pains" star is supported by a mostly volunteer but surprisingly capable cast. Domestic discord, extramarital flirtation and pornography references. A-II (PG)

Ghost Town (DreamWorks/Spyglass): Bittersweet romantic comedy set in New York in which a misanthropic dentist (Ricky Gervais) finds he has acquired the ability to see ghosts after he is clinically dead for seven minutes during a routine medical procedure and is persuaded by the spirit of a recently deceased husband (Greg Kinnear) to break up the engagement of his widow (Tea Leoni), falling for her himself. A melancholy



CNS photo/Touchstone

Miracle at St. Anna (Touchstone): Powerful World War II drama about a kindhearted African-American soldier (Omar Benson Miller) who, together with three others from his segregated unit (Derek Luke, Michael Ealy and Laz Alonso), becomes trapped behind enemy lines in Italy where they must rely on a sympathetic villager (Valentina Cervi) and a partisan leader (Pierfrancesco Favino) for safety, while he protects a wounded local boy (Matteo Scibordi). The script, adapted from his own novel by writer James McBride, contains much spiritual debate and reflection and pits Catholicism, as embodied by a heroic priest, against the brutality of the occupying Nazis. Director Spike Lee's ambitious effort to blend action, mystery, pathos and social commentary — though it sometimes leads to jarring tone shifts — ultimately proves an ardent emotional journey. Intense combat violence with gore, nongraphic sexual activity, adultery, upper female nudity, much rough and crude language, several uses of profanity and racial slurs. A-III (R)

tone pervades director and co-writer David Koepp's cross between "A Christmas Carol" and "Topper," but the laughs are there, along with an overriding message about living life in service to others, and ultimately "letting go" of our deceased loved ones. Some rough language and brief profanity, sexual humor, partial male nudity and drug references; acceptable for older teens. A-III (PG-13)

My Best Friend's Girl (Lionsgate): A spurned lover (Jason Biggs) pays his best friend (Dane Cook) to take his

ex (Kate Hudson), a seemingly conservative lawyer, on a date so traumatizing she'll flee back into his arms, but his scheme has unpredictable results. Long before its romantic and altruistic climax, director Howard Deutch's comedy detours into flagrant sexual and irreverent humor while also tacitly endorsing casual physical relationships until the right person comes along. Much nongraphic sexual activity, upper female and rear nudity, much sexual and some irreverent humor, and pervasive rough and crude language. O (R)

Ratings

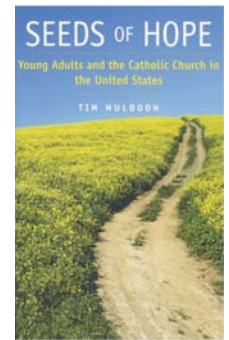
Conference of Catholic Bishops Office for Film & Broadcasting classifications: A-I — general patronage; A-II — adults and adolescents; A-III — adults; L — limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling; O — morally offensive.

Motion Picture Association of America ratings: G — general audiences, all ages admitted; PG — parental guidance suggested, some material may not be suitable for children; PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13; R — restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian; NC-17 — no one 17 or under admitted; NR — no rating.

- Burn After ReadingL (R)
- Bangkok DangerousL (R)
- ChokeO (R)
- The Dark KnightA-III (PG-13)
- The DuchessA-III (PG-13)
- Eagle EyeA-III (PG-13)
- FireproofA-II (PG)
- Forever StrongA-II (PG-13)
- Frozen RiverA-III (R)
- Get SmartA-III (PG-13)
- Ghost TownA-III (PG-13)
- HancockA-III (PG-13)
- IgorA-I (PG)
- Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal SkullA-II (PG-13)
- Iron ManA-III (PG-13)
- Kung Fu PandaA-I (PG)
- Lakeview TerraceA-III (PG-13)
- The Lucky OnesL (R)
- Mamma Mia!L (PG-13)
- Miracle at St. AnnaA-III (R)
- MirrorsL (R)
- My Best Friend's GirlO (R)
- The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon EmperorA-II (PG-13)
- Nights in RodantheA-III (PG-13)
- Righteous KillL (R)
- The RockerA-III (PG-13)
- Star Wars: The Clone Wars ...A-II (PG)
- Tell No One (Ne Le Dis a Personne)L (NR)
- TowelheadO (R)
- TraitorA-III (PG-13)
- Tropic ThunderO (R)
- Tyler Perry's The Family That PreysA-III (PG-13)
- WantedO (R)
- The WomenA-III (PG-13)
- Vicky Cristina BarcelonaL (PG-13)

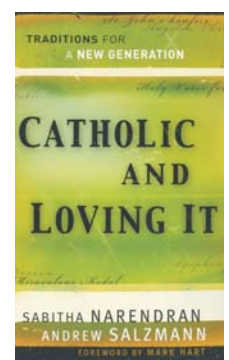
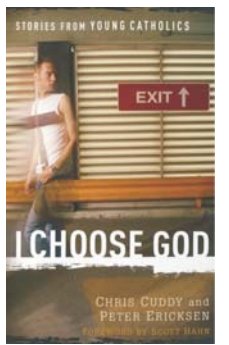
Read a book

Books on young adult Catholics offer hope for church's future



"Seeds of Hope: Young Adults and the Catholic Church in the United States" by Tim Muldoon. Paulist Press (Mahwah, N.J., 2008) 225 pp. \$24.95.

"I Choose God: Stories from Young Catholics" edited by Chris Cuddy and Peter Ericksen. St. Anthony Messenger Press (Cincinnati, 2007) 130 pp. \$10.99.



"Catholic and Loving It: Traditions for a New Generation" by Sabitha Narendran and Andrew Salzmänn. St. Anthony Messenger Press (Cincinnati, 2007) 178 pp. \$12.99.

Twenty something



Christina Capecchi | Butterfinger guilt: Forgiving yourself is hard to do

I bought a dress that didn't fit in hopes it would on the day of my friend's wedding.

It seemed, at the time, like a powerful incentive to shed a few pounds. But as the wedding approaches, I'm starting to wonder whether it'll make its grand debut or if it'll stay in the closet.

I've succeeded in exercising more, but the Halloween candy is doing me in, particularly those innocuous seeming fun-sized candy bars.

They should carry a fine-print caution: You can eat one after another with ease and quickly consume a King-sized number of calories.

That happened to me the other night with Butterfingers. I went to bed with a stomach ache and a stinging guilt. How would the dress fit now? How could I let myself go like that?

I'm generally pretty good at

forgiving others. Forgiving myself is another story. I hold myself to high standards and I'm bitterly disappointed when I don't meet them.

St. Francis de Sales once instructed, "Deal gently and lovingly with your heart, raising it up when it falls and longing ardently for its perfection."

What an important reminder for us high-reaching, goal-setting Americans, strivers who cancel social events and forgo hard-earned vacations days to achieve more because "losing is not an option."

But losing is an option. And we're rarely losing when we chose to rest or adjust an unreasonable expectation. We're winning, gaining wisdom, maturing.

When our hearts fall, we must raise them up — a mission we have never been taught, a mandate no textbook can explain. We

must develop our own devices, crafting customized formulas that lift spirits and nurture wounds.

It begins by being patient — with God and with self. We learn this from the infinitely patient French saint. St. Francis waited years and years to pursue his religious vocation. When he attempted to convert the Calvinists back to Catholicism, he experienced defeat after defeat, door after door. Still, he pressed on. And the prolific correspondent never let a heap of unanswered letters unhinge him.

"I have more than 50 letters to answer," St. Francis noted one day. "If I tried to hurry over it, I would be lost. So I intend neither to hurry nor to worry. This evening, I shall answer as many as I can. Tomorrow I shall do the same and so I shall go on until I have finished."



Maui YA Congress

Chance for ride da Superferry

Our Lady of Perpetual Help's Young Adult Ministry is organizing a group to attend the Maui Vicariate's Young Adult Congress on the weekend of Oct. 24-26.

Several OLPH young adults went last year and enjoyed connecting with neighbor islanders as well as the "kick back" retreat feel.

The \$60 cost includes food and lodging at the Maui YMCA Camp Keanae in Haiku. Participants would also have to cover the transportation cost.

OLPH's YAM is working to coordinate either airfare or Superferry travel and rental cars. The registration deadline is Oct. 17.

Anyone interested in joining the group should e-mail olphyam96706@gmail.com. For information on the retreat itself, call Maka Secretario at 808-283-1672 or Peter Acpal 808-264-5275.

Words of saints

"The Lord walks among the pots and pans..."

—St. Teresa de Avila

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