

From the desk of Fr. D...28 October 2007

**IRREVERENTLY YOURS:
A MESSAGE FROM GENERATION X: PART 1**

by Tom Beaudoin

Perceptions aside, young Catholics are hardly slackers when it comes to religion, although they have fashioned a faith and spirituality radically different from their elders. Tom Beaudoin, himself a 20-something Catholic, tells what the church can learn from the so-called Generation X.

I AM WRITING FROM THE FRINGE, as one of the church's own and yet an outsider. You see, I work "for" the church (the institution) and simultaneously resist it. Along with several other 20- and 30-something Catholics, I helped found--and currently co-lead--a Catholic ministry to my generational peers. I am also a catechist in RCIA and help out with various other ministries in my church. I serve the institution.

At the same time, I am constantly fighting the feeling that I am serving a church that is in the process of failing a generation, that is largely unconcerned about unchurched young adults and about not only seeking justice in the world but practicing justice within its own structures, that too often seems concerned with its own survival over risking its resources to preach and live the gospel in the present. In short, I am alternately determined to serve or to leave the church many times within the space of a week (or often, a day).

Perhaps my experience is unusual. If, however, some of my experiences of almost manic ambivalence are even remotely typical of the 20- and 30-somethings who remain "in" the church, then perhaps there is something of value in what I am saying. I know the institution enjoys being a "teaching church," and it seems it is weighing in on matters of orthodoxy with increasing vigilance.

I do not mean to suggest that my peers and I cannot learn anything from the church. On the contrary, my generation is largely religiously illiterate, and we have a great deal to learn--whether in the end we accept or reject it. Still, the teaching church is always also the learning church. I am convinced that the church could indeed learn something from my generation, the so-called "Generation X." I am not qualified to speak for an entire generation; in fact, no one person could speak for a generation as diverse as ours. But I have observed some interesting theological things about our generation by attending to our popular culture, and even more, I have learned a lot in ministering to and with this generation. So I am going to try to be real, if a bit optimistic, for a few pages. While I will undoubtedly only attempt to capture one slice of us, it is an important slice.

I know it is difficult to take us seriously sometimes, particularly given the many bad raps we have been given in the press. The "slacker" label has stuck longer than we thought it would. But rumor has it that the Holy Spirit, rarely one to observe canons of propriety, occasionally hangs out with us. So: What can the church learn from us, the so-called "Generation X"? (For my Top 10 characteristics of our generation, see the list I scrawled on a Starbucks napkin.)

1. Popular culture is important.

If you are going to understand anything about 20- and 30-somethings, you have to take pop culture seriously--in fact, I'll be referring to it throughout this article.

I do not mean that you should take pop culture soberly, though. In fact, many of us have a playful, ironic, or irreverent attitude toward our favorite songs, movies, sitcoms, comic books, and so on. Perhaps this might be a better way to explain it: There is a sense in which we take pop culture religiously, as a major system of meaning for our lives, at least as important as family or church. We are often as dedicated to Thursday-night TV (*Friends*), our favorite rap or hip-hop artist, or a particular CD or movie as we are to any church group or even a particular weekend Mass.

Much of the meaning generated by popular culture in our lives has something of a subterranean effect on us, while other parts of it we are conscious of. This is where the church might be able to help us: by providing a sounding board, at least, for helping us make spiritual judgments about our lives in pop culture. But I'm getting ahead of myself, and I promised you and myself that this would be about what the church might learn from GenX. So what might others learn from our deep immersion in pop culture? Maybe that, amidst all its ephemerality, it bears a spiritual dimension; that it is not purely sinful, but an admixture of sin and grace, distortion and inspiration.

As rock star Courtney Love of the band Hole recently remarked to Spin magazine, "Ninety-five percent of all popular culture is pornography, [and] 5 percent creates inspiration, new aesthetic, and grace in people." She added, "I'd like to be in that 5 percent, using pop." Does the church know how to look for that (at least) 5 percent, to redeem what can be redeemed?

2. Pluralism can be a virtue.

There are lots of people--especially in the church, and occasionally from the pulpit--who think that we are a generation without values. Raised on a steady diet of adult-themed or simply amoral video games, rock idols, and movies, for example, we are incapable of judging right from wrong. You would be right to think that many of us are not quite sure where our moral values come from, except from somewhere deeply private and within, or perhaps in a highly individual, but still private, relationship with God or the universe. But that does not mean we are not struggling to make such moral judgments almost daily, and that we do not already have a fundamental moral commitment. That commitment is to the value of pluralism, which springs from our generational ethic: tolerance.

We--and those younger than us--represent the leading edge of America's ever-increasing ethnic and cultural diversity. Many of us have grown up with, or discovered in our young adulthood, real sexual, racial, religious differences--and struggled to accept them without prejudice. Many of us also have friends across a spectrum of identities: Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Native American, Black, Asian, Latino/a, lesbian, gay, straight, Republican, Democrat, independent--and this is just the beginning.

What this means for the church, and for our spiritual lives, is that a great many of us will be skeptical of--or simply refuse--any talk about a God who is present narrowly in only one community, only one religious tradition, amidst only one race, or who is manifest in only one sexual identity. We know, almost intuitively, that if God is really God, this God is not bound by the walls of one church or the biases of one culture.

3. We work with what we have, to do more with less.

Remember that a great many of us grew up fending for ourselves in day care or as latchkey kids. We were forced to find meaning where we could, which contributed to our emergence into a quick and untutored sort of adulthood. Along the way, we managed, according to cultural critic Douglas Rushkoff, to develop a weird set of survival skills. He writes that our generation has an uncanny "ability to derive meaning from the random juxtaposition of TV commercials, candy wrappers, childhood memories, and breakfast treats." While this may seem a bit sad to those older than us, just remember that previous generations have had their own symbol system that was influenced by pop culture. Just think of silent movies, family radios, or the Kennedys in the White House, who were, recall, before our time.

So in the absence of stable familial, church, or social structures, and living our early years in the depressed 1970s (although my parents both worked, I was on a free-lunch program and we lived in government housing), we have learned to do more with less. That does not mean we are, as a generation, in poverty--far from it. It does mean that we are more of a stripped-down generation: no big civil-rights movements for us, please (a warning to church liberals that we are skeptical that big change is around the corner, or even possible). We will volunteer locally, short-term, where the benefits are immediately visible. And because we are still paying off exorbitant student loans and credit cards, we will do more with less--like \$4 coffees and nice computers. Of course, the ultimate spiritual example of "more with less" is our attempt to fashion our own spirituality at arm's length from religious institutions. We are, by and large, a scrappy lot.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Tom Beaudoin is the co-founder of Xairos, a GenX Catholic ministry at the Paulist Center in Boston, and author of *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X* (Jossey-Bass, 1998). This article appeared in the April 1999 (Volume 64; Number 4) issue of *U.S. Catholic*.

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"The tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you, the latter went home justified,

not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." - Lk 18:13-14

HOLY DAY

Solemnity of All Saints

Thursday, 1 November 2007

Eucharist will be celebrated at
the Church of Saint Stanislaus
at 8:30am and 6:00pm



If you see **Fr. David** on Wednesday, October 31st (yes, Halloween!!), be sure to wish him a **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!**

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST NEWS

Weekly Parish Stewardship Report

Budgeted Expenses for the Fiscal Year 2007-2008:

\$216,390.00

The weekly collection needed to meet our expenses: **\$4,161.35** prior to fundraising efforts. This amount is the compilation of all collections including weekly, monthly, flowers, insurance, liability etc. All these monies are deposited in our Operating Acct and used for our parish expenses.

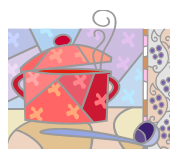
Collection: 10/21/07: \$2,222.00

Breakdown

Weekly:	\$940.00	Monthly:	\$435.00
Miscellaneous:	\$17.00	Diocesan:	\$484.00
Candles:	\$28.00	Renovation:	\$70.00
Fuel:	\$248.00		

PLEASE HELP: St. John's is looking for people to assist in various ministries within the church. Your service in any ministry would be appreciated. Anyone can participate; adult or student, male or female. If you have any questions, please call the rectory office at 842-6851. You may also speak to one of the Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors or ushers to find out what the various duties of each ministry are.

St. John's Annual Harvest Chicken Dinner/Bufferet – Saturday, October 27th 5:30 pm. NO tickets will be sold at the door.



ST. JOHN'S SOUP KITCHEN: Anyone is interested in helping at the Soup Kitchen, please call the rectory at 842-6851. We can use more volunteers so that new teams can be organized.

PIEROGI CREW: Larry will be calling pierogi workers this coming week to discuss plans for the upcoming holiday season. If anyone does not receive a call, please call the rectory and leave your name and number so Larry can get back to you. *"Many hands make light work."*

FAITH FORMATION TEACHERS: There will be a meeting of Religious Education teachers and substitutes on Monday, November 5th at 6:00 p.m. in the rectory. At that time we will discuss the class schedule, communal penance service, Christmas pageant, youth Mass, etc. Please save the date. NOTE: Please check out the flyers and posters on the bulletin boards regarding the various programs and events taking place in the church and community during the next month.

SAINT CASIMIR NEWS

Weekly Parish Stewardship Report

Budgeted Expenses for the Fiscal Year 2007-2008:
\$188,494.02

The weekly collection needed to meet our expenses: **\$3,624.89** prior to fundraising efforts. This amount is the compilation of all collections including weekly, monthly, flowers, insurance, liability etc. All these monies are deposited in our Operating Acct and used for our parish expenses.

10/14/07 Collection: \$1,573.75
Breakdown

Weekly: \$1,573.00 Monthly: \$341.00
Mission Sunday: \$5.00 Lituianian Aid \$25.00
Assumption: \$5.00

Please use the envelopes in your packet for your All Saints and All Souls Day Contributions. Also next Sunday's Monthly Collection . St. Casmir's Ladies Auxiliary sponsored Food Pantry is next Sunday. Monetary donations and nonperishable food items are collected on an ongoing basis for Catholic Charities

We "thank" Father Pat Iannotti for celebrating the Eucharist with us for the last four Sundays. We welcome back Father David.

FAITH FORMATION: Sessions are held on Sunday Mornings at 9:30 am. in the Social Center..

TODAY - CATECHIST MEETING immediately following the 10:30 am. Mass in the rectory office.

KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA-COUNCIL 100 meeting today immediately following the 10:30 am. Mass in the Social Center.

500 Club - October 17, 2007--No Winner

St. Casimir's 500 Club's new year will be starting in November, we still have some memberships available. The cost is \$5.00 a month--\$60.00 for the year. You will receive 2 numbers and the award is based on the weekly Wednesday Evening, NYS Pick Three drawing. We are also in need of promoters. This is the major fundraiser for our parish. Please consider joining and asking your family, friends and neighbors to participate. Please call Aldona Abeling at 842-3391 for more information.

Football Pool- week #7 winner will be announced in next week's bulletin

FALL FOOTBALL POOL:PAYMENT IS NOW DUE!! You must be paid up to win.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS the core team members who will be participating in the monthly meeting in regard to "Called to be Church" at Our Lady of Mount Carmel's Social Hall Tuesday, October 30th at 7:00 pm. **Reminder-**St. Casimir's core team is in charge of prayer and hospitality, please bring a refreshment of your choice.

THE ST. CASMIR'S LADIES AUXILIARY ANNUAL PIE SALE:Orders will be taken starting today and will continue through November 11th. Delivery date is November 18th. The price is \$9.00 per pie and there are many varieties available. Please support our Ladies with this important and delicious fundraiser.

CONGATULATIONS to Sophie Olbie as she celebrates her 65th year as a member of St. Casimir's Ladies Auxiliary.

AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE will be held at the Masonic Temple, 34 Division St. on Thursday, November 1st from 1-6 pm. Please see the bulletin board for more information on this life-saving event.



ANNUAL BROOK'S CHICKEN BARBECUE will be held on Saturday, November 10th. ½ chick, baked potato, coleslaw, roll & butter and dessert – tickets on sale before and after Masses. We will be offering eat-in, take-out or our popular drive-thru. Deliveries within city limits can be arranged by calling

our delivery hotline at 842-5134. A bake sale will also be a part of this special event and we need you help to make this annual event a success by volunteering your time and talents. Call the rectory at

SAINT STANISLAUS NEWS

WEEKLY PARISH STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Budgeted Expenses for the Fiscal Year 2007-2008:
\$400,627.04

The weekly collection needed to meet our expenses: **\$7,704.37** prior to fundraising efforts. This amount is the compilation of all collections including weekly, monthly, flowers, insurance, liability etc. All these monies are deposited in our Operating Acct and used for our parish expenses

10/14/07 Collection: \$5,075.00
Breakdown

Weekly: \$3,944.00 Monthly: \$770.00
Candles: \$74.00 Evangelist: \$70.00
Capital Improvement: \$217.00
Monthly Food Pantry Collection: \$124.00 + 16 bags groceries



TREASURES 'N MORE

are in store for you at our newly renovated and reorganized thrift store! Come help celebrate our **Grand Re-opening on Saturday, November 3rd** from 10am-3pm. Come and explore! You never know what treasures await!

CONGRATULATIONS TO DANIEL MCNAMARA!!

12th grade STUDENT OF THE MONTH

at Amsterdam High School for his positive and upbeat attitude and positive influence on his classmates.

THE FELICIAN SISTERS at Our Lady of the Angels Convent, 1315 Enfield Street, CT invite you to attend their Annual Pre-Christmas Fair on Saturday, December 1, 2007 from 10:00am to 5:00pm. The day will include an opportunity to purchase hand-made items, pastries and homemade bread, enjoy home made food and play Turkey Bingo from 1:00-3:00pm. Mass will be celebrated at 4:00pm. The event will benefit elder and infirm Felician Sisters.

PARISH STAFFS AND INFORMATION

SAINT CASIMIR

Parish Office: 842.5481
 Parish Social Center: 842.5134
 Fax: 842.5283
 Gloria Martuscello,
 Pastoral Associate for Business Administration
 Regina Kot, Secretary
 Linda Risch, Coordinator of Faith Formation
 Gerry Drenzek, Plant Manager
 Raymond Draus, Musician
 Larry Steiger Cemetery Caretaker

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

Parish Office: 842.6851
 Fax: 842.5283
 Carol Steiger, Secretary
 Alice Larson,
 Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation
 Bernard Rizzo, Accountant
 Raymond Draus, Musician
 Larry Steiger Cemetery Caretaker
 Matthew Richardson, Cemetery Caretaker

SAINT STANISLAUS

Parish Office: 842.2771
 Fax: 842.2771
 Convent: 842.2621
 Cemetery: 842.4972
 St. Stanislaus Center
 for Learning and the Arts: 842.6710
 Linda Werner, Secretary
 Mary Ann Dignazio Louison, Catechetical Leader
 Joanne McNamara, Plant Manager
 Gretchen Braun & James J. Dybas, Center Managers
 Bernard Rizzo, Accountant
 Patricia Flint, Musician
 Daniel McNamara, Sacristan
 Robert Raczynski, Cemetery Caretaker

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Weekday masses are celebrated at St. Stanislaus at 8:00am

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29

Gabriel Vertucci, req. Jean Trainosky
Joseph Speranza, req. John (Sr.) & John (Jr.) Markowicz
Joseph (Ann.) & Julia Cetnar, req. Joe Cetnar

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30

Raymond Keosaian, req. William & Sandra Motyka

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31

Leo Romsiewicz (Ann.), req. Leo (Jr.) & Susan

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1 (SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS)

8:30AM – FOR PARISHIONERS

6:00PM – FOR PARISHIONERS

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2

Alois Sumigray, req. Mr. & Mrs. Larry Szala & Family

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3– 4:30 @ St. John's

Charles Lis, req. Kevin, Pat & Kelly Lis
Gabriel Vertucci, req. St. Stanislaus Futures Committee
Richard Shea, req. Albina Sikorski
Donald Wojnar, req. Uncle William Dybas, Aunt Isabel & Joan Allen
Emily & Michael Chybion, req. Daughters
Teofila (Ann.), **Frank & Francis Tamulewicz**, req. Winifred Bien

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4–8:30 @ St. Stan's/10:30 @ St. Casimir

8:30am **Deceased Members of the Franciszek & Anna Migut Family**, req. Grandchildren Edward & Christine Andrzejewski
Anthony "Jim" Draus, req. Wife & Families
Dorothy Markowicz, req. Family
Virginia Krajewski (Ann.), req. Husband & Family
Irene (Ann.) & John Cisek, req. Family
Frank Bubniak (22nd Ann.), req. Wife Dorothy
 10:30am **FOR PARISHIONERS**

SANCTUARY LAMP –October 28-November 3, 2007:

In memory of:

Ben Kroup from Son & Family
Joseph & Stella Kryzak from Joe, Marcia & Don



HAVE A HAPPY & SAFE HALLOWEEN!