

Ask Mason & Teo



Is suicide victim going to hell?

Hello Mason & Teo, A friend and I were talking about the recent murder-suicides. I am close to the family of the victims of a murder-suicide. In our discussion, my friend insists that anyone who commits suicide goes to hell. I was wondering even if the person is a Christian and they commit suicide would they be going to hell? (Stalemate)

Dear Stalemate,

Suicide, by definition, is the killing of oneself on purpose. As Catholics, we believe that suicide is a serious evil in and of itself. The fifth commandment, "You shall not kill," commands us to respect each and every human person as an image of God, including oneself.

Suicide is a sin against God, who is the giver of life. For God alone decides when a person lives or dies. It is a sin against the love of one's self as a creation of God. Every living creature naturally desires to preserve life. It is a sin against neighbor because it breaks the one's ties with the human family. The whole human community is injured by self-killing.

The Catholic Church teaches that suicide is not permitted under any circumstances. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "We are only stewards of the life God has entrusted to us" (CCC 2280) and we have a duty to preserve that life (CCC 2281).

Although suicide is a serious sin, we cannot make a judgment about the eternal state of someone who committed suicide. We do not know what that person's internal state might be. They may be suffering from emotional pain, mental illness or depression. Those who are already terminally ill may also be suffering from a great deal of physical pain.

To be guilty of serious sin, one must commit the act with sufficient reflection and full consent of the will. Conditions of extreme "psychological disturbances, anguish or grave fear of hardship, suffering or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide." (CCC 2282) We cannot judge a person's guilt; only God can.

As Catholic Christians, we must be especially compassionate and understanding toward families suffering from a member's suicide. They are most likely in shock and consumed with guilt, thinking they could have prevented it. Family members tend to think that "if only" they had done something differently, it wouldn't have happened.

The family is often filled with shame. They may feel socially isolated and spiritually alienated. They may express anger toward God for allowing such an injustice to happen to them. Or they may feel a self-hatred for having nurtured someone who, nevertheless, took his or her life.

We believe in a God who is love. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:17) Jesus reveals to us that God is not focused on anger and punishment for our sins. Jesus shows us the love of God through forgiveness and mercy.

To love is to extend forgiveness and acceptance to one another. Just as God loves us, we must also love. The more we grow in love, the more we are able to forgive and accept people and the more we are able to forgive and accept ourselves. We must trust in the mercy of God who sees into the hearts of all persons.

Jesus understands the pain, hurts and injuries of those who suffer and desires to save all people. He has endured much more suffering than what we will ever encounter.

As Catholics, we can only hope and trust in God's grace for those who have taken their own lives. We must continue to pray and offer our help for the healing of the family left behind and for the soul of the deceased.

"Even when (man) disobeyed you and lost your friendship you did not abandon him to the power of death, but helped all men to seek and find you. Again you offered a covenant to man ... to hope for salvation." (Eucharistic prayer IV)

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.

A retreat for busy people

By Anna Weaver
Hawaii Catholic Herald

For college students and young adults with packed schedules, it's hard to find the time to go away for a weekend retreat. That's why the University Catholic Center will once again hold its "Busy Student Retreat — A Retreat in Daily Life" from Oct. 20-24 that fits in with a daily routine.

And despite the retreat name, this year the center is opening the retreat to all young adults, not just University of Hawaii-Manoa students.

The format of the retreat involves one-on-one guidance with a spiritual director based on the Ignatian method. A retreatant selects his or her director and then meets each day with the director for 30-45 minutes along with spending another 30-45 minutes on personal reflection and Scripture reading.

UCC director Jesuit Father Russell Roide, one of the retreat directors, explained, "You have to be really trusting in God and we give you a method to do that."

"It's getting the head and the heart together," he said. "This is learning to listen to God so you can see your deepest desires and listen to what God wants you to do and not be afraid to respond."

This year's retreat begins Monday, Oct. 20, with orientation, spiritual director selection and dinner, and ends on Friday, Oct. 24, with a prayer ser-

vice, faith sharing and dinner. Five Jesuits, including two young Jesuits from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, Calif., and a laywoman will be the spiritual directors.

UH senior Shane Hoey attended the retreat last year and plans to participate in the upcoming retreat. "So many times as students we get caught up in tests and what we have for class tomorrow that God sometimes gets [put] out on the backburner," he said in an e-mail. "The busy student retreat is a great way for people to refocus on what is important in our lives."

Fellow student Chelo Manlagnit has gone on two busy student retreats before and said both times his spiritual directors tailored their guidance to his individual concerns and questions.

"Having a spiritual director personally guiding and working with me provided me with direction to be more focused in examining myself and the need to constantly nourish my spiritual life," he wrote in an e-mail message.

Father Roide said, "It's really a special five days for our center and everything kind of stops while we do this." The Busy Student Retreat costs \$45, which covers dinners and individual spiritual guidance and helps to defray the cost of flying in the two Mainland Jesuits.

To sign up for the retreat, people can pick up a form at the University Catholic Center at 1941 East West Road, Honolulu, or e-mail Father Roide at fruss@ucchawaii.org.

Book review

Sex and spirituality on campus

"Sex and the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance and Religion on America's Colleges Campuses" by Donna Freitas. Oxford University Press (New York, 2008). 299 pp., \$24.95.

Reviewed by Regina Linskey
Catholic News Service

Parents, college administrators, youth ministers and students would benefit from reading Donna Freitas' "Sex and the Soul." If not for its inside look into college campuses today, then for the important discussions it would provoke about sex, gender, freedom, spirituality and religion.

These issues, which help form the identity of the college-age, maturing young adult, come up in college dorms and campus life, but perhaps not so much in the classroom and in the pews. They should be discussed and addressed, and in an atmosphere that balances freedom with guidance and rules — a point Freitas especially emphasizes in her book.

Written in the first person and anecdotal form, in which the students talk about campus life, "Sex and the Soul" is a quick read relative to the complexity and sensitivity of its topic. Though Freitas herself is an assistant professor of religion at Boston University, this book is not just for academics. It's written for the layperson.

Freitas visited seven colleges and

interviewed a sampling of the students in attendance. The colleges were categorized as either "evangelical" or "spiritual," based on the priority that students place on religion and spirituality.

Catholic schools fit into the spiritual college category because, Freitas finds, students at Catholic colleges identify with their spirituality more than with Catholicism. Simply put, students said their relationship with God was something separate from their religion. These students might not go to church or follow church teaching because, to them, it actually restricts a relationship with God. The author devotes an entire chapter to this seemingly contradictory discovery.

Throughout "Sex and the Soul," Freitas and her interviewees at spiritual colleges discuss the college party scene. There's no real dating, as in dinner-and-a-movie dates. Instead, after working hard, students play hard — there's lots of hooking up, drinking and pimps and "ho's" parties. This might be a surprise to parents, an eye-opener to incoming college freshman, and an in-house secret

of some college administrators.

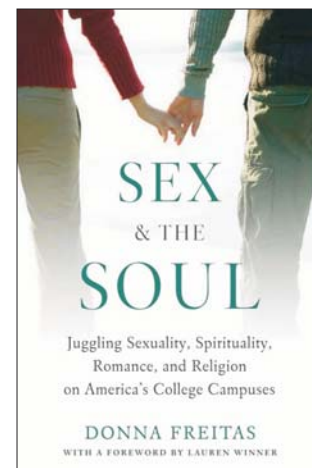
Commendably, Freitas addresses how this hookup culture cheapens women and places them in a subordinate position — even if the young women themselves were not able to articulate this in the interviews.

Freitas also discusses the pressure both young men and women face to do things they do not want to do. And, it seems, at spiritual colleges, there is no knowledgeable authority to talk to about these issues.

Aside from the anecdotes and their implications, Freitas offers advice to parents going through the college admission process. She tells them to know

what they are paying for and urges them to ask prospective colleges about campus life, the social scene and dating. Many parents would never think to ask some of the questions, but the answers will help a family decide if a college will support their values regarding sex and the soul.

Linskey is assistant international editor at Catholic News Service and a contributor to Catholic Radio Weekly in Washington.



Movie reviews



CNS photo/Focus Features

Burn After Reading (Focus): Witty dark caper comedy about hapless Washington-based gym employees (Frances McDormand and Brad Pitt) who find the memoirs of a fired CIA analyst (John Malkovich) on a computer disc and believe they're in possession of classified information they can sell to the Russians. Joel and Ethan Coen have written an extremely clever script, directed with assured timing, and their film showcases a top-flight cast including George Clooney, Tilda Swinton and Richard Jenkins, all of whom reveal surprising comic chops. Overt sex and violence are minimal, but many will be disturbed by the strong language. Pervasive use of the F-word and some profanity; two brief instances of violence, one gruesome; implied nonmarital sexual activity; and a sexual sight gag. L (R)

Bangkok Dangerous (Lionsgate): Grim shoot-'em-up about a solitary hit man (Nicolas Cage) who travels to the titular city to carry out four contract killings for a local crime boss (Nirattisai Kaljareuk), but finds his emotional isolation thawed by his friendship with the petty thief (Shahkrit Yamnarm) he hires as an assistant and his feelings for a pretty pharmacy clerk (Charlie Young). As directed by the Pang brothers, this remake of their 1999 Thai film features considerable violence and muddled moral values, with its hero instructing his protegee in the art of killing even while ostensibly reassessing his own viciousness. L (R)

Tyler Perry's The Family That Preys (Lionsgate): Sudsy African-American domestic saga, set in

Atlanta, charting the unlikely friendship between a white real-estate tycoon (Kathy Bates) and a hardworking and devout diner owner (Alfre Woodard) whose ambitious married daughter (Sanaa Lathan) is having an affair with the tycoon's son (Cole Hauser), who connives to take over his mother's business. As written and directed by Tyler Perry, the drama unfolds at a leisurely pace, often telegraphing the mostly shallow characters' schemes long before they are revealed and, though the restaurateur's Christian faith is overt throughout, the morally problematic climax is treated neutrally. Adultery theme, a suicide, brief domestic violence, tacit acceptability of divorce, some sexual references and occasional crass language. A-III (PG-13)

Righteous Kill (Overture): Ludicrous police drama involving longtime partner cops (Robert DeNiro and Al Pacino) who, amid growing suspicion that the killer may be someone within the force, are on the trail of a serial killer who's bumping off felons who have eluded just punishment. Fans of the charismatic stars may welcome this chance to see them working in tandem, and they are both in characteristic form, but Jon Avnet's flashy but muddled direction, the wildly implausible plot, uninspired dialogue, intentionally choppy editing and an easy-to-guess denouement are serious detriments. Much rough language and crude talk, some profanity, moderately strong violence and sexual content, vigilante justice, reference to a pedophile priest, and brief drug use. L (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.

- Babylon A.D.L (PG-13)
- Burn After ReadingL (R)
- Bangkok DangerousL (R)
- The Dark KnightA-III (PG-13)
- Death RaceO (R)
- Disaster MovieO (PG-13)
- Fly Me to the MoonA-I (G)
- Frozen RiverA-III (R)
- Get SmartA-III (PG-13)
- HancockA-III (PG-13)
- The House BunnyA-III (PG-13)
- The Incredible HulkA-III (PG-13)
- Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal SkullA-II (PG-13)
- Iron ManA-III (PG-13)
- Journey to the Center of the EarthA-I (PG)
- Kung Fu PandaA-I (PG)
- The LongshotsA-II (PG)
- The Love GuruO (PG-13)
- The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon EmperorA-II (PG-13)
- Pineapple ExpressO (R)
- Righteous KillL (R)
- Star Wars: The Clone Wars ...A-II (PG)
- Tell No One (Ne Le Dis a Personne)L (NR)
- TraitorA-III (PG-13)
- Tropic ThunderO (R)
- Tyler Perry's The Family That PreysA-III (PG-13)
- The WomenA-III (PG-13)
- Vicky Cristina BarcelonaL (PG-13)
- The X-Files: I Want to BelieveA-III (PG-13)

Calendar

● Faithful Citizenship: Workshop explaining USCCB's statement on our call to political responsibility and Catholic social teaching; 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Sept. 20; Chaminade University, Ching Conference Center; Contact Eva Andrade at eandrade@rcchawaii.org to register.

Ongoing

- Young Adult Ministry Night: Potluck dinner, Divine Mercy, and bible study; Wednesdays, after 6 p.m. Mass; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ewa Beach. E-mail olphyam96706@gmail.com.
- St. Elizabeth Young Adult Ministry: Scripture discussion; 7 p.m., Tuesdays; St. Elizabeth Church Hall Meeting Room 8, Aiea; Call Chucky at 478-9917, George at 783-4303, or e-mail YAMstelizabeth@aol.com.
- Basic Christian Community young adult cell group: Rosary, dinner, faith sharing, bible study; 6:30-9:30 p.m., Tuesdays. Chancery Building (1184 Bishop St.), next to the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace; Call or e-mail Anna at 226-2675 or aweaver@rcchawaii.org for more information.
- Young Adult Holy Hour (Adoration): Followed by "The Lord's Day" Celebration; 7-8 p.m., Thursdays; Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Pearl City; Dallas Carter, 223-3249.

Want to see your parish or organization's young adult activities listed here? E-mail herald@rcchawaii.org.

Realcatholic TV

Internet TV for a Catholic audience

Billing itself as the Internet's first Catholic television station, www.realcatholic.com is up and running and looks forward to expanding operations in October. The Internet site debuted Sept. 1, and a \$10-a-month subscription service will make its bow Oct. 1. "Prior to the technology of the new media era, this would have been essentially impossible without doing the traditional means of buying time on television and the distribution vehicles, satellite (delivery) and all that stuff. That would have been prohibitively expensive," said Michael Voris, senior executive producer of the fledgling operation. "For a lot less money – though it's still expensive – we can reach a lot of people for pennies on the dollar."

Wee list

Want to volunteer?

- Service opportunities exist all over Hawaii. Here are just a few:
 - Help plan events for the Make A Wish Foundation: www.makeawishhawaii.org
 - Boost the literacy skills of kids and adults: www.readaloudamerica.org, www.hawaiiliteracy.org
 - Tutor children or prepare and serve meals at the Institute for Human Services: www.ihshawaii.org
 - Prepare and deliver meals to seniors with Lanakila Meals on Wheels: lanakilapacific.org/meals-on-wheels.asp

Our turn



Therese J. Borchard | Ten handy tips on how to survive your 20s

Everyone expects 20-somethings to be footloose and stress-free. But just because many of them aren't yet saddled with the responsibilities of feeding a family or taking care of elderly parents doesn't mean they aren't immune to anxiety.

In fact, Generation Y, also called the "millennial generation," has been labeled the "melancholy generation" because of all the trauma it has witnessed: the Oklahoma City bombing, Columbine, 9/11, Hurricane Katrina and Virginia Tech.

"They've seen the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history, the worst natural disaster in U.S. history and the worst mass killing ever," explains Dave Verhaagen in a USA Today story about Generation Y. Verhaagen is a child and adolescent psychologist and author of "Parenting the Millennial Generation."

From this resilient generation has emerged leaders such as Christine Hassler, author of "20-Something, 20-Everything"

and "20-Something Manifesto." She recently featured "Tips to Survive Your 20s" on Beliefnet.com. Here they are:

● **Up your financial IQ.** Hassler is absolutely right when she writes that the first few years after college are crucial to establishing your financial behavior. The sooner you get on a budget the better, because spending habits can get out of control. Fast.

● **Spend some time doing self-investigation.** I think we Catholics have a head start here. I know my college years were a time of finding myself. For those who graduated from school without having cracked open a self-help book, they

might want to visit a bookstore.

● **Own your future.** Hassler talks about the needless weight of expectations and comparisons. I learned a helpful phrase early on: "compare and despair." There will always be someone who is a little better than you and has more than you. And there are always those who are worse off.

● **Get your balance.** Hassler writes: "Real life is all about balance. You remember the old story about the tortoise and the hare? Fastest doesn't always win the race."

● **Take it one step at a time.** I try to remember this one when I get overwhelmed and frazzled. I look at my "to

