

Ask Mason & Teo



Drinking, going to casinos — sins?

Hello Mason & Teo, I read your latest article in the Hawaii Catholic Herald and I found it rather interesting and truthful as to what we need to do to keep a closer bond with the Lord. Being Catholic, I myself have questions for which I don't have clear answers. Such as, is drinking all right as long as you're not getting drunk? Is casino gambling a sin? These questions don't reflect the individual that I am, but are asked more to broaden my knowledge if I am faced with these situations or if I am asked those questions. I would like to know the proper response. Thank you and have a blessed day. (Inquiring Mind)

Aloha, Inquiring Mind, Scripture does not necessarily forbid drinking beer, wine or any other drink containing alcohol. Ecclesiastes 9:7 instructs, "Drink your wine with a merry heart." Psalm 104:14-15 states that God "brings wine to gladden our hearts." Jesus even changed water into wine indicating that Jesus drank wine on occasions. (John 2:1-11)

However, God does command that we should avoid drunkenness. "Do not get drunk on wine, on which lies debauchery." (Ephesians 5:18) Also, Scripture condemns drunkenness and its effects. (Proverbs 23:29-35) Drinking alcohol in excess is addictive and we mustn't let our bodies be "dominated by anything." (1Corinthians 6:12)

As Catholic Christians we must avoid doing anything that might offend others or might encourage them to sin against their conscience. (1Corinthians 8:9-13)

In biblical times, the water was not necessarily very clean. People did not have the modern sanitation we enjoy. Their water was likely filled with bacteria, viruses and contaminants common in many third-world countries today. As a result, people would often drink wine because it was far less likely to be contaminated. Their wine was fermented (containing alcohol) but probably not to the same degree as it is today. Alcohol, in and of itself, is not tainted by sin. Rather, it is drunkenness and addiction to alcohol that lead people into sin.

Alcohol consumed in moderation is not harmful or addictive. In fact, some doctors advocate drinking small amounts of red wine for its heart health benefits. St. Paul says that, ultimately, "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God." (1Corinthians 10:31)

Gambling — whether it involves games of chance (such as card games), wagers, betting or lotteries — is not necessarily evil (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2404). Although Scripture does not plainly mention gambling, it does mention games of chance. In Acts 1:15-26, the Apostles cast lots to determine the replacement for Judas. In John 19:24, as Jesus was being crucified,

the Roman soldiers threw dice to see who would get Jesus' tunic.

Respecting human dignity, by respecting persons and their goods, requires that we practice the virtue of temperance (CCC 2407) whereby we keep our passions and emotions under the control of reason. Always act with moderation. Use material goods in good ways that respect the circumstances in our lives.

When gambling, we must practice the virtue of justice. The game must be fair and all players must have an equal chance of winning. And a person's gambling must not prevent him or her from fulfilling the obligations of supporting a family, paying debts, and fulfilling other responsibilities.

A person must be very careful not to become addicted to gambling, its excitement, or its lure of "quick, easy, big money." He or she must not risk money needed for livelihood and for the livelihood of those entrusted to his or her care.

Scripture warns us to stay away from the love of money. "For the love of money is the root of all evils." (1Timothy 6:10) We must let our "life be free from love of money." (Hebrews 13:5) Gambling can become a spiritual problem when a person thinks he can make easy money through games rather than by simply working hard.

Many people say they play the lottery because the money goes to the church or to some other good cause. While this may be a good motive, the reality is many lottery players are only dreaming of the big payoff and are poor stewards of their money.

Like drinking, there is nothing wrong with gambling as long as it is kept within the confines of virtue and moderation. But we must be vigilant so we don't become addicted by drinking or gambling, while remaining good stewards of the material goods God has given each of us.

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.

133-mile way of the Cross

Cross Walk-ers make their way over a hill bypassing the washed out road at Ka'ena Point on Oahu's North Shore, March 25.



Photo courtesy of Dominic Olaso

Hundreds of young Catholics carry their faith around Oahu

By Anna Weaver
Hawaii Catholic Herald

The Way of the Cross took on a new meaning for 322 Hawaii young adults and high schoolers during spring break last month. That's when they carried a wooden cross all the way around Oahu.

The event was called Cross Walk, thought up this year by Dominic Olaso, a member of the Diocese of Honolulu's Youth and Young Adult Board.

From March 23 to 28, through the energetic participation of several dozen Catholic parishes and groups, a 9-foot tall, 10-pound hau wood cross was borne the long way along the coasts of Oahu, over 133 miles, beginning and ending at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace in downtown Honolulu.

The event was timed for Lent and provided a physical reflection on Jesus' own way of the cross. But Cross Walk also sought to be a public witness — that Catholics care. Some walkers wore signs bearing words "euthanasia," "homelessness," "abortion" and "stem cell research."

"We're trying to alleviate the pain and suffering in Hawaii," Olaso said. "I think the participants realized they were part of something that was much bigger than themselves."

'You've got my attention'

Donna Lyn Rabe had been having trouble finding enough young people to participate from her Ewa Beach parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, until she sent out an e-mail saying the walk would be a good way for Ewa residents to heal after two recent murders in the community. The 29-year-old soon had a flood of respondents and her parish ended up with the most participants of any group.

"It was part of our Lenten journey, and what better way of sacrificing ourselves and showing how much we love being Catholic?" she said. Rabe was especially moved by a passing driver who saw the issue signs they wore and stopped to tell them, "You've got my attention."

Mike Stock of InHim Ministries said the Cross Walk was "good PR" for the church. He wore his "I ♥ Jesus" T-shirt while walking on the Windward side with St. Anthony, Kailua, confirmation and youth group members. Cars honked and people shouted, "I love Jesus too!"

Stock, 25, said he got the most hollers of support as he sprinted with the cross for a stretch of Ala Moana Boulevard to make up time on the walk's final day.

"Cross Walk was our statement to God that we're trying to do things about Hawaii's problems and we're aware of our faults," he said.

Cross Walk by the numbers

Courtesy of Dominic Olaso

- 322: total participants
- 133: miles the cross was carried
- 6: days it took
- 93: total number of cross bearers
- 40: number of people in the largest group (Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ewa Beach)
- 8: months, the age of the youngest participant (Josiah)
- 92: years, the age of the oldest participant (from the Chinese Catholic Community)
- 4: number of priests walking (Father Marc Alexander, Father Pat Labasano, Father Lane Akiona, Father Lusius Nimu)
- 27: most miles walked by a single participant, over two days, (Rob of St. Rita, Nanakuli)
- 22: most miles walked by a single group (St. Jude Parish, Kapolei)
- 1: number of people it rained on (Dominic Olaso)

Jeremy Sabugo, a St. Michael, Waialua, parishioner, said the Cross Walk reminded him of another epic stroll he undertook recently.

"Cross Walk was like World Youth

Continued on page 27

Movie reviews



CNS photo/Universal

Fast & Furious (Universal/Relativity): Overheated, morally swerving action sequel in which an ex-con (Vin Diesel) pursuing a vendetta and an undercover FBI agent (Paul Walker) renew their rivalry as they both use their driving skills to infiltrate a cross-border drug smuggling ring and identify its secretive leader. As directed by Justin Lin, the thin story is no more than an excuse for long sequences of reckless racing, while the characters move from one side of the law to the other as it suits them. Vigilantism, brief nongraphic sexual activity, partial nudity, cohabitation, occasional rough language and profanity. L (PG-13)

Adventureland (Miramax): Sensitive but downbeat coming-of-age tale, set in 1987 Pittsburgh, about an awkward college graduate (Jesse Eisenberg) who takes a summer job at a third-rate amusement park and falls for one of his co-workers (Kristen Stewart), not realizing she is having an adulterous affair with an older employee (Ryan Reynolds). Though generally restrained in its presentation of sexuality, director Greg Mottola's wryly nostalgic romance takes a benign view of its characters' frequent indulgence in marijuana and reaches a morally unacceptable conclusion. Nongraphic adulterous and premarital sexual activity, brief partial nudity, repeated drug use, some sexual and fleeting scatological humor, pervasive rough and crude language, and a few uses of profanity. L (R)

Hannah Montana the Movie (Dis-

ney): Breezy romance with music in which a teen singer (Miley Cyrus), who has gained fame under the pseudonym Hannah Montana, is forced by her concerned father (Billy Ray Cyrus) to retreat temporarily from her hectic career and spend time with him and her grandmother (Margo Martindale) on the Tennessee farm where she grew up, where she falls for a local farmhand (Lucas Till) while fending off a British paparazzo (Peter Gunn) out to reveal the secret of her persona. Director Peter Chelsom's delightfully innocent country idyll emphasizes humility, simplicity and the primacy of family obligations over professional goals. A-I (G)

Knowing (Summit): A Boston astrophysicist (Nicolas Cage) discovers that a time-capsule document buried 50 years ago at his son's (Chandler Canterbury) school accurately

predicted all the major disasters of the intervening decades, and sets out to prevent the three calamities, one of them potentially global, it warns will transpire in the near future, eventually aided by the daughter (Rose Byrne) of the woman who wrote it as a schoolgirl (Lara Robinson). Director Alex Proyas' vastly ambitious, genre-melding drama begins as a horror tale but becomes, by its spectacular though sobering climax, a haunting meditation on faith, sacrifice and family unity. Disturbingly realistic catastrophe scenes, brief sexual humor and a few instances of crude language. A-II (PG-13)

Monsters vs. Aliens (Paramount): Affable animated comedy-adventure in which a trio of kindly monsters (voices of Seth Rogen, Hugh Laurie and Will Arnett) led by a once-ordinary woman (voice of Reese

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.

- 12 RoundsA-III (PG-13)
- AdventurelandL (R)
- Bedtime StoriesA-I (PG)
- The ClassA-III (PG-13)
- CoralineA-II (PG)
- DuplicityA-III (PG-13)
- Fast & FuriousL (PG-13)
- Hannah Montana the Movie .A-I (PG)
- The Haunting in Connecticut.....A-II (PG-13)
- Hotel for DogsA-I (PG)
- I Love You, ManO (R)
- KnowingA-II (PG-13)
- The Last House on the LeftO (R)
- Monsters vs. AliensA-II (PG)
- Paul Blart: Mall CopA-II (PG)
- The Pink Panther 2.....A-III (PG)
- PushA-III (PG-13)
- Race to Witch MountainA-II (PG)
- Slumdog Millionaire.....A-III (R)
- Two Lovers..... L (R)

Witherspoon) who became a giant after being struck by a meteor, are released from government captivity in the custody of a gung-ho general (voice of Keifer Sutherland) and commissioned by the president (voice of Stephen Colbert) to combat an evil alien (voice of Rainn Wilson) whose schemes threaten humanity. Co-directors Rob Letterman and Conrad Vernon create a lavish 3-D homage to 1950s-era sci-fi B-movies that also celebrates friendship, teamwork and the heroic potential of everyday people. Also shown in Imax. Moderate action violence and a bit of vaguely sexual and slightly crude humor. A-II (PG)

Poll finds Catholics pretty optimistic about their church

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON

U.S. Catholics are generally optimistic about their church, according to the 2009 Le Moyne-Zogby Contemporary Catholic Trends survey released April 9.

Close to three-fourths of those responding said they were at least somewhat optimistic about the church's future: 36 percent said they were very optimistic and 37 percent were somewhat optimistic.

Those Catholics who identified themselves as progressive were more likely to be pessimistic; even so, on this issue they were a minority within their group. Four percent were very pessimistic about the church's future and 36 percent were somewhat pessimistic.

By contrast, those who identified themselves as "orthodox" Catholics were much more optimistic. Only 6 percent of that group said they were somewhat pessimistic, and just 1 percent very pessimistic.

The Contemporary Catholic Trends survey polled 767 Catholics out of 3,812 randomly sampled members of the Zogby Interactive Panel Feb. 23-25. The margin of error was plus or minus 3.6 percentage points.

Cross Walk

Continued from page 28

Day, walking miles and miles away to get someplace," the 20-year-old said, recalling the trek he made this past July in Australia with thousands of other youth from the Sydney Harbor Bridge to Randwick Racecourse.

Sabugo and another World Youth Day attendee even wore their official backpacks and bandanas from that event. "It was nice to be walking for Jesus and God again. It was a good pilgrimage."

'Surprises along the way'

"There were so many surprises that happened along the way," Olaso said. He was awed by how, on each day, when he thought there might not be enough cross bearers or escort vehicle drivers, people showed up at the last minute or volunteered to go beyond their initial commitment.

On March 25, when he and vicar general Father Marc Alexander thought they would be the only ones to tackle Kaena Point, a Catholic homeschool group called and showed up with 18 people. At a difficult stretch, two elderly strangers Olaso called "angelic tour guides" drove up, got out and led the way over a ridge.

Participating Maryknoll School students bubbled with enthusiasm during their stretch near Kahana Bay. They waved at cars and shouted, "Honk for Jesus." (The cars often did.) They called out to a fisherman, "Fish for Jesus." (He waved back.) And they hollered at a barking dog to "Bark for Jesus." (He kept barking.)

Olaso was pleased at the number of religious and priests who walked or showed their support. It was good for young people to see that, he said, and a way to encourage vocations.

Olaso is planning next year's Cross Walk for spring break 2010.

Twenty something



Christina Capecchi | No second thoughts: the Easter promise of a fresh start

Some days life feels gray and predictable: moving in the same direction, making the same turns, waiting at the same lights. Dirty dishes, unfolded laundry, nothing good on TV.

Some days the notion of house swapping seems like just the ticket.

Which is why every day hundreds of people stuff messages in bottles and cast them into the cyber sea, hoping their homes will appeal to others far away because of the hot tub, the gas stove, the nearby golf course ... or simply because of the novelty.

There's something for everyone on house-swapping sites like HomeExchange.com and Craigslist.org – whether you're trading for a weekend or a lifetime, moving in or out of the city, upsizing or downsizing, seeking

sun or snow, pines or plains, East or West.

Some swaps are easy to understand. An Omaha, Neb., resident hopes for Honolulu. Charleston, W. Va., requests Istanbul, Turkey.

The incredible thing is that these desires go both ways. On one site 1,328 Italians are looking to leave. Alfombra, Costa Rica, asks for Allentown, Pa. Alta Gracia, Argentina, yearns for Boston.

Other bids are broader, "open to all offers" – whoever emails first, any city they've never seen, any name they can't pronounce.

When you peek online, one picture will catch your eye and tickle your imagination as you take out the trash, teasing out some long-ago dream. Maybe you can write the Great American Novel under the Tuscan sun or take a cooking class in Paris or learn to salsa in Puerto Rico. Maybe you can get away, get a tan, get rich, get over him, get a life.

Maybe you can render the

seemingly impossible possible with the swift click of a key-stroke.

It's a heady antidote to an economy that can easily depress, instilling a sense of limitation, of blocked avenues and restricted paths.

The beauty of our Christian faith is that it offers us a fresh start every day. There is no such thing as a dead end for believers, no rut that can't be scaled, no sin that can't be forgiven. Every muddied slate can be wiped blank.

We can leave bad jobs, bad relationships and bad decisions far, far behind with the saving power of our risen Lord. We are Easter people; we believe in the ultimate triumph of life over death. Old made new. Sin turned into grace. Darkness shattered by light.

The resurrection is not a one-time miracle. It's a lifestyle, something we can experience every day, an ongoing adventure.

This year we remember St.