

## Ask Mason & Teo



### Holding, shaking hands at Mass mandatory?

Dear Mason and Teo, What is the significance of holding hands at Mass during the Lord's Prayer and then handshaking when wishing peace? Are we required to participate? Is there a suggested way to avoid handholding when a hand is offered? Will the church change handholding now that we are aware that touching transmits viruses? (Traditional Catholic)

Dear Traditional Catholic, Holding hands during the Lord's Prayer at Mass is not an official part of the liturgy. In fact, the General Instruction to the Roman Missal (GIRM) has no prescribed posture for the hands for the laity during the Lord's Prayer. The practice of holding hands probably started around the 1970s in the Protestant Churches and was introduced to Catholic liturgy through the charismatic movement. Eventually, in Hawaii and other places, it became common practice in the Sunday Liturgy.

While the General Instruction to the Roman Missal has no directions for posture for the faithful, it has clear directives for the priest. He is to say the introduction to the Lord's Prayer "with hands joined ... Then, with hands extended, he says the prayer itself together with the other concelebrants, who also pray with hands extended and with the people."

The holding of hands by the congregation appears to be an imitation of the priest's outstretched arms. Adopting the "orans" — hands extended — posture during the Lord's Prayer could easily evolve into holding the hand of the person next to you.

Some say that holding hands is an expression of unity. Others say that unity is adequately demonstrated by reciting the prayer in unison.

But however one feels about it, holding hands during the Lord's Prayer is a spontaneous, personal gesture, and not in the "rubrics," or official directions. It is not prohibited, and therefore allowed, but should not be imposed on others.

Ultimately, and more importantly, the holding of hands should never be a distraction from the prayer itself. People should not become so concerned about joining hands that they do not focus on praying. It is the prayer that is important, not the holding of hands.

The sign of peace or "kiss of peace" that follows the Our Father is a separate matter. In the early church, the Christians greeted one another with a kiss (Romans 16:16; 1Cor 16:20; 2Cor 13:12; 1Thes 5:26; 1Peter 5:14). The writings of the Church Fathers speak of the holy kiss which was part of the eucharistic celebration, occurring after

the Lord's Prayer.

There is a close link between peace and Communion — making peace with one another before receiving the Prince of Peace in the Eucharist.

But how should one express peace? The General Instruction to the Roman Missal states, "As for the sign of peace to be given, the manner is to be established by Conferences of Bishops in accordance with the culture and customs of the peoples. It is, however, appropriate that each person offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner."

In Western cultures, the sign of peace became the shaking of hands or an embrace. Other cultures may express it differently. For example, in Japan, the celebrant bows deeply to the assembly who, in turn, bow to him and then bow respectfully to one another.

Recent swine flu developments have prompted the local diocese and dioceses across the country to alter some liturgical gestures in schools and parishes for health and safety precautions during this crisis. In Hawaii, it has been recommended to exchange the sign of peace with a bow and to refrain from holding hands during the Lord's Prayer.

No matter how it is expressed, all true peace comes from Christ through his church. The peace exchanged is the Lord's peace coming from the sacrifice of the Altar. It is an intimate gesture, the kind of thing one would do within one's family.

The Rite of Peace helps prepare us for Holy Communion. Jesus in the flesh is truly present at Mass. Since the Mass is "a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet" (Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, #47), the chain of love is truly linked between the Eucharistic Christ and the peace he gives to his church. Let the peace of Christ be with you!

*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.*

# COMPLETING THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION Theology of the BODY



By Lisa Dahm  
Special to the Herald

Many believe that human sexuality is a taboo topic in the church. Or at least something you only talk about in a whisper when a child asks embarrassing questions.

Christopher West is here to tell you differently.

The dynamic speaker and author has devoted his life to examining Pope John Paul II's 129 Wednesday audience messages, delivered from September 1979 to November 1984, dedicated to the theme of human sexuality in the light of Christ.

On May 30, West will give a one-day seminar, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., on the late great pope's "Theology of the Body" at St. Anthony Parish, Kailua.

West said that since 1993, he has been on a lifelong journey to explore the pope's work and bring the life-changing message of the church's true teaching to others.

"I see this with countless lives around the world when people hear this message," West said in a telephone interview earlier this month.

"Lives are transformed. Marriages are transformed. Our own lives start making sense — we can understand why we made the choices we made, why we are in the pain that we are in. And we have hope for the future. Not for just our own future, but hope for the church and hope for the world."

West said that the Theology of the Body is the teaching of human sexuality and married love, but it is not just for married people. West invites everyone — young, old, married, single, priests, religious, consecrated celibates — to attend the seminar.

"It is a vision of why we are created male and female and why we hunger for love," he said. "It is an invitation to the banquet that really satisfies the hunger. It is for all of us."

"We are here to reflect on nothing short of the very meaning of our lives and the meaning of the Gospel," he said.

West is married. He and his wife Wendy, who live in Pennsylvania, have five children.

West's seminar is sponsored by InHim Ministries, founded in Hawaii by Marcos Brackins and his wife Kristen. Brackins recently led a six-week series on John Paul II's Theology of the Body at St. Anthony Parish which was attended by 30 to 40 people. He got such an enthusiastic response that he felt the whole island would benefit from hearing West's message.

"In our world today we are bombarded with the wrong messages about the human body and sexuality

starvation diet, where desires are considered bad and must be repressed. Given the choice between starvation and greasy nuggets, he said, most people, himself included, would choose the nuggets.

"It is only when I discovered this Theology of the Body that I realized there was a banquet that really satisfies," he said.

West said that the sexual revolution was responding to a legitimate hunger that was not being fed by the starvation diet. The Theology of the Body goes the distance — it completes the revolution.

"The revolution got us talking about our hunger, but it led us to the wrong food," he said. "This Theology of the Body acknowledges the hunger and leads us to the right food."

Who should attend the Theology of the Body seminar? West said, "If you are hungry, come."

"If you are looking for more than what the culture has to offer, come," he said. "If you thought Christianity was a list of oppressive rules, you will be delightfully surprised."

#### Head and heart

Those who do come will get an additional treat: musician and songwriter Mike Mangione.

West met Mangione when Mangione's girlfriend

"dragged" him to one of West's weekend seminars in 2002. After the event, the two began talking about music and ended up playing together until after 3 a.m. Music (both are serious fans of the Irish band U2), not theology, was the common language, but Mangione nevertheless got the message.

"That was beautiful for me," Mangione said. "He was able to meet me at a level I could relate to."

When West ran into Mangione two years later, he found the musician's life radically changed by the Theology of the Body. Mangione showed West his new material, based on John Paul II's thoughts. West asked him to per-

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Christopher West

and I don't think the church's message is out there," Brackins said.

Brackins called it a "miracle" that West was able to come to Hawaii to speak. As a national and international speaker, he is booked for up to a year in advance. But he had a cancellation. Brackins said that "never happens."

#### Hungry for love

"We are hungry," West said. "God has put in each and every one of us a hunger for love. And when the banquet is not presented, we inevitably go to the culture's fast food menu. The culture offers us a promise of immediate gratification for our hungers. But you can only eat greasy chicken nuggets for so long before you start being sick."

West said that most people who grow up in the church were given the

Movie reviews



CNS photo/Paramount

**Star Trek** (Paramount/Spyglass): Exhilarating prequel to the “Star Trek” franchise as the youthful rabble-rousing James Tiberius Kirk (Chris Pine) forgoes his delinquent ways to join the crew of the Starship Enterprise — including Leonard “Bones” McCoy (Karl Urban), Uhura (Zoe Saldana), Sulu (James Cho) and Chekhov (Anton Yelchin) — where he soon clashes with rival Spock (Zachary Quinto) until they unite against the vengeful Romulan Nero (Eric Bana), intent on destruction. Director J.J. Abrams breathes new life into the series by skillfully balancing the well-executed action sequences with an absorbing human story, leavened with humor and optimism, and likable characters you care about, though some brief gratuitous sexuality and the use of several expletives restrict this to mature teens and up. Intense but not graphic action violence, a short but frisky bedroom scene with skimpy attire, some crude language and a single profanity. A-III (PG-13)

**Battle for Terra** (Lionsgate): Ambitious animated parable, set on a distant planet that’s being invaded by aggressive refugees from earth, in which a downed human airman (voice of Luke Wilson) finds his loyalties divided when he’s befriended by one of the peace-loving, tadpole-shaped locals (voice of Evan Rachel Wood) his warmongering commander (voice of Brian Cox) is intent on destroying. Director Aristomenis Tsirbas’ feature debut is an honorable, if at times heavy-handed, cautionary tale about prejudice, violence and environmental degradation, but the battle scenes — especially as intensified by the 3-D presentation in some theaters — are too strong for the youngest viewers, and quasi-religious aspects of the aliens’ culture may require family discussion. Moderate combat violence and a suicide. A-II (PG)

**Ghosts of Girlfriends Past** (Warner Bros.): A heartless womanizing bachelor (Matthew McConaughey) is visited by the ghosts of his playboy uncle (Michael Douglas) and those of his jilted girlfriends (Emma Stone, Noreen DeWulf and Olga Maliouk) on the eve of the wedding of his brother (Breckin Meyer), and he comes to realize the depth of his feelings for his childhood sweetheart (Jennifer Garner). Though there’s ultimately a wonderfully redemptive outcome and a strong affirmation of marriage and fidelity, along with a couple of superlative scenes for McConaughey, director Mark Waters’ “A Christmas Carol” reread is marred by far too much crude and smutty humor before getting there. Crass sexual talk and innuendo, some crude language and fleeting profanity, premarital sexual situations and a drug reference. L (PG-13)

**X-Men Origins: Wolverine** (Fox/Marvel): Lavish and flashy action-packed prequel to the popular “X-Men” series exploring the origins of conflicted superhero Wolverine (Hugh Jackman), including his defining childhood, turbulent relationship with his brother, Victor Creed (Liev Schreiber), role in a team of fellow mutants (Ryan Reynolds, Will.i.am, Kevin Durand, Dominic Monaghan) led by the duplicitous Col. Stryker (Danny Huston), and tragic romance with schoolteacher Kayla (Lynn Collins). Director Gavin Hood tries not to lose sight of the human elements with Wolverine generally demonstrating moral conscience, though the kinetic action and violence necessarily predominate. Intense action violence, killings, explosions, patricide, fleeting rear nudity, premarital habitation, some crude expletives, crass expressions and brief profanity, limiting its appropriateness to mature teens and up. A-III (PG-13)

Vatican’s L’Osservatore Romano:

‘Angels and Demons’ is harmless entertainment

By Sarah Delaney  
Catholic News Service

**ROME**  
The newly premiered movie “Angels and Demons” is little more than “harmless entertainment,” with many factual errors and little cultural value, according to the Vatican newspaper.

Two dispassionate articles in L’Osservatore Romano May 7 may disappoint the film’s promoters, who had sought a conflict with the Vatican of the type that surrounded “The Da Vinci Code” in 2006. Both films are based on books by author Dan Brown.

An editorial in the paper called both the film and the book “modest” and “rather innocuous.” An accompanying review said that viewers “must face two hours of harmless entertainment that has little to do with the genius and mystery of Christianity, without getting beyond the usual stereotypes.”

The review said the film was “pretentious” but actually complimented the “dynamic direction” and “splendid photography,” and said the computer and studio reconstructions of the Vatican, Sistine Chapel and St. Peter’s Basilica, which were off limits to filming, were “magnificent.”

The film, an action mystery involving the kidnapping of cardinals from a papal conclave by a secret Catholic sect, is the second collaboration between director Ron Howard and Brown, with Tom Hanks again in the starring role. It was shown May 4 at a glitzy affair at Rome’s Auditorium performing arts complex.

Before the screening, Howard and cast met reporters and tried hard to get some controversy going. Howard said he had run into problems shooting the film in Rome, and blamed the Vatican without explaining what had been

done to obstruct production or by whom.

The Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, would not comment on Howard’s assertions, speculating that he was just trying to drum up a bit more publicity for the big Hollywood production.

The Vatican newspaper editorial acknowledged that the two books and films dealt with hot-button issues: the church and sexuality in the case of “The Da Vinci Code” and faith and science with “Angels and Demons.”

However, in these works “the point of view is always the least problematic possible,” it said.

“The good guys are always the progressives in favor of sex and science, whether they are heretics or popes, and the bad guys are those who oppose them in the name of faith and tradition, who are always committing crimes,” it said.

In the latest film, Hanks’ character, Robert Langdon, an expert in religious symbolism, is called in to untangle the esoteric web spun by the shadowy sect known as “Illuminati” who try to influence the election of the next pope by threatening to blow up the cardinals in a conclave with an ampule of mysterious and powerful antimatter.

The review said that the film “certainly doesn’t deserve the seal of good culture; it’s more of a gigantic, clever commercial operation.”

L’Osservatore Romano’s editor, Gian Maria Vian, was reported in the Italian daily Corriere della Sera as saying that “Angels and Demons” posed no danger to the church. “It only confirms the centuries-old fascination with our faith and our symbols,” he said, adding, “If only all anti-Catholic operations were like this one.”

The movie is set to debut in U.S. movie theaters May 15.

Theology of the BODY

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form with him. Both were on stage together at World Youth Day last July in Sydney, Australia.

“His music has flowered, absolutely blossomed, through the Theology of the Body,” West said. “It has been amazing for me to see the transformation of this guy and the maturing of his heart.”

Mangione will give a concert for single young adults at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace Kamiano Center on Friday, May 29 (See box), in addition to the Saturday event.

Mangione called the mix of West’s talks and his music “a beautiful ebb and flow of head and heart.”

At World Youth Day, West spoke for three nights, attracting more than 3,000 people each night. The sessions were so powerful that afterward he had to be escorted by security guards because people were desperately trying to talk to him.

“It demonstrates the hunger,” he said. “And people, when they hear this vision, respond.”

West said that “anyone and everyone” will feel welcome to the seminar.

“Bring your friends, bring your neighbors, bring people that you would love to expose to the church’s real teaching who have maybe left the church or feel ostracized,” he said. “Bring your Protestant and Evangelical friends. The goal is to present this vision in a language where everyone can feel welcome.”

“Everyone responds to beauty,” he continued. “The goal is going to show everyone the beauty of our own humanity through this teaching and music. Maybe the tag line for the day is the lyric ‘You don’t know how beautiful you are’ (from U2’s new song ‘Get on Your Boots’).”

“My hope is that people will walk away from the day realizing, maybe even for the first time in life, how beautiful they are,” he said.

For more information or to download the registration form, go to [www.inhawaii.org/tob.html](http://www.inhawaii.org/tob.html). Or call InHim Ministries at 542-9736. To learn more about Christopher West, go to [christopherwest.org](http://christopherwest.org).

Sex, mugs and rock ‘n’ roll

Young adults are invited to enjoy the fabulous music of Mike Mangione, meet other Christian singles and hear a frank discussion about Christian sexuality by Christopher West, May 29, 7-9:30 p.m., at the Kamiano Center on the Fort Street Mall next to the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace

The place will have a coffee house jive with West speaking, Mangione jamming, and coffee and non-alcoholic drinks flowing. There is a \$5 cover charge and food and non-alcoholic drinks will be sold. Validated parking will be available in the cathedral lot.

While this is a single’s event, married couples will be allowed in too. To get a preview of Mangione’s music, go to [myspace.com/mikemangione](http://myspace.com/mikemangione) or [mikemangione.com](http://mikemangione.com)

Mike Mangione

