

### More Proverbs

Once upon a time, in a certain kingdom, a ruler called two of his servants to him. Because he was as kind as he was just, he had decided to give each of these servants a gift of equal value. To each servant, the king gave a tiny seed.

Now, the two servants meant no disrespect, but when presented with such strange gifts, they couldn't help but look a bit confused. The king was quick to see their questioning looks and said: "From each of these seeds will grow the most perfect flower that this kingdom has ever seen. I give you his gift with only one condition — make my people happy. Now go and do as I have commanded."

Each servant eagerly planted the tiny seed he had been given. Every day, the servants watered the seeds just the right amount. The soil was tilled very gently to prevent disturbing the tender roots that were starting to take hold. Pretty soon, a few tender shoots began to appear above the surface of the ground.

And then one morning, to the delight of both servants, it happened. Just as the king had promised, each seed had produced the most magnificent flower that had ever grown anywhere in all of the kingdom.

"Oh, aren't they splendid? They are so sweet-smelling," one of the servants said.

"Have you ever seen such glorious colors?" the other asked.

Soon people from all over the kingdom came to see the beautiful flowers.

"Is this what the king meant about making his people happy?" one of the servants asked the other.

They agreed that the people who came to see the flowers certainly looked happy.

Then one day something unexpected happened.

"May I have the flowers, please?" a small child asked the servants. Before they had a chance to recover from the first bold question, she asked it a second time.

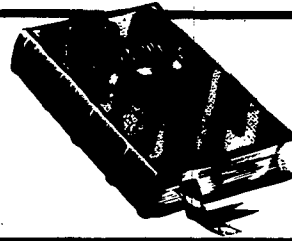
The question went unanswered a second time. The child did not move.

One of the servants said, "The king said that we are to use our gift to make his people happy. Maybe it's not such a bad idea."

"The people of the kingdom can come here anytime they like and gaze upon the flowers. I could never part with my flower, especially to waste it on a small child," the other servant said.

The child looked very sad then. But once more she asked, "May I have the flowers, please? They would make my whole family very happy."

The kinder servant said: "If you promise to take care of the flower, I will give it to you as a gift to use to make your family happy."



### The Bible Corner

Cindy Cottone

"Oh, yes. I promise!" she said eagerly.

The servant was a bit sad after he had cut off his flower. But when he saw how happy it made the child, he was glad.

"I have done as the king commanded," he said.

The next morning, out of habit perhaps, the generous servant took out his watering can and went toward where his flower had grown. As soon as he had gotten outside, he heard the other servant crying.

"I don't understand. My beautiful flower has died. There is no reason; I took such good care of it!" he sobbed.

It was true. The flower that once had the glorious colors and the sweet smell had shriveled and died.

"Now there is nothing left of the most beautiful flowers in all of the kingdom. They are all gone," the other servant said.

As he spoke he stared in disbelief at the spot where his flower had once grown. Where just a single flower had been yesterday, a bush filled with even more magnificent flowers now stood in glory.

Proverbs 11:24-25 — "It is possible to

give away and become rich! It is also possible to hold on too tightly and lose everything. Yes, the liberal man shall be rich! By watering others, he waters himself."

Two frogs sat on a lily pad in a pond. Only a few yards away sat a frog, their common enemy.

"I am the quickest fly that ever lived," said one fly to the other.

"This is true," his companion answered.

"Because I have such incredible speed, I have no fear because no one, not even that frog, can catch me," the first fly continued to brag.

"I certainly won't argue with you on that score," said the other fly.

"In fact," said the first fly, "I am so fast, I can fly on that frog's nose and not be caught."

so impressed by his own importance that he did fly on the frog's nose. He was promptly eaten.

The fly that was left said: "I will never be so quick or so stupid to have fear of nothing."

Proverbs 14:16 — "A wise man is cautious and avoids danger; a fool plunges ahead with great confidence."

## Priest says new poll suggests shift in birth control views

**New York (NC)** — A natural family planning and population specialist, commenting on a New York Times-CBS News poll of Catholic attitudes, said the figures seem to reflect a shift toward greater Catholic acceptance of church teaching on birth control.

The birth control figures were part of a Times poll reporting that a majority of U.S. Catholics disagree with church prohibitions against women priests, married priests, remarriage after divorce, and abortion in any circumstances. The survey was taken on the eve of the extraordinary world Synod of Bishops.

Although nearly identical percentages of Catholics and non-Catholics surveyed

favored a complete ban on abortion, Catholics were considerably more opposed than non-Catholics to abortion on demand. Most Catholics opposed legal abortion except in very limited cases.

Both groups favored use of artificial birth control, with 71 percent of non-Catholics and 68 percent of Catholics taking that position.

Msgr. James McHugh, a natural family planning and population specialist, said if the poll's birth control figures were accurate, they appeared to reflect a significant change from earlier studies. An in-depth 1977 study reported that 76 percent of U.S. Catholics used forms of birth control considered wrong by official church teaching, he said, and

more recently sociologist Father Andrew Greeley estimated that nearly nine out of 10 Catholics reject church teaching on that point.

American social trends of sexual permissiveness since 1977 would lead one to expect even greater rejection of church teaching now than eight years ago, Msgr. McHugh said, but the Times poll results suggest the opposite has happened.

He said he was at a loss to explain such a shift unless it was due to Pope John Paul II's frequent and forceful efforts to affirm the teaching.

Msgr. McHugh directs a national project to develop natural family planning programs in U.S. dioceses, but he said the relatively small percentage of couples reached by those

programs so far would not be enough to account for such a shift.

Among other issues covered in the poll:

- Non-Catholics surveyed were evenly divided on whether clergy should be allowed to hold public office, but Catholics opposed it by nearly a 2-1 margin.

- Fifty-two percent of Catholics favored women as priests, 35 percent were opposed. Among non-Catholics, 45 percent said they favored the idea, while 25 percent opposed it. A 1974 poll had shown only 29 percent of Catholics favoring ordination of women, and in 1979 that had risen to 34.

- Catholics favored letting priests marry by 63 percent to 29 percent, while non-Catholics favored it 67 percent to 9 percent.

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