

FEATURE

Men, women seek mates who share love of religion

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Is it important that your mate or your potential mate possess strong spiritual or religious values? That was the question the Young Adults page posed last month to readers of the *Catholic Courier*.

Tracy McCabe, a parishioner at Blessed Sacrament Church in Rochester, wrote the *Courier* a thoughtful letter on the subject.

"One of the most important things for me in a potential mate is a belief in the Catholic faith and a sense of spirituality," McCabe's letter said. "Since my beliefs and faith are such an integral part of my life, I desire to be with someone who understands and can share in it. I believe shared faith brings an essential connection and dimension to a relationship."

Why is shared spirituality such an essential connection with a mate? For some, it means that the relationship won't be based on mere sexual attraction, or a series of commonly held, but superficial interests.

McCabe noted that that a spiritual connection between you and your mate "was the basis on which to build mutual priorities and values."

That sounds like a statement with which Lisa Klaver would agree. Klaver tried dating a man who didn't really believe in God, and she doesn't advise anyone with a strong faith to do the same.

"It doesn't jell well," she said, noting the difficulty of sharing her faith with

someone who didn't value it.

Klaver made her comments at a picnic held July 13 by the young adult ministry group at Holy Ghost Church in Gates. The group gathered in the parish's playing fields behind the church.

A eucharistic minister at her parish, Klaver commented that participating in church life should mean as much to your mate as it does to you.

"Being active in the church environment, you want someone to be with you," she said.

"It's basically moral support," added Carole Agosto, also a member of the Holy Ghost group.

Jim Caputo, a lector and commentator at Holy Ghost, saw choosing a mate to whom faith was important as almost inevitable.

"I think it comes naturally," he said. "You're looking for a mate with similar qualities."

Amy Wilkin, a member of the young adult group at St. Mary's Church in Roch-

Young Adult

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ester, echoed Caputo's comments.

"I like diversity, but I'd find it hard to date someone who doesn't have a faith or belief in God in any sort of way," Wilkin observed in a

phone interview.

Even more important to Micaela Gutierrez, also a member of the St. Mary's young adult group, is the sign of commitment that you show by attending church regularly. She doesn't buy what's behind the line that some people utter: "I don't go to church, but I'm spiritual."

"It doesn't connote a commitment to community," Gutierrez said. "Going to church is a sign to people that this is important to you."

Several of the young adults the *Courier* interviewed emphasized that any long-term relationship may lead to marriage, and possibly to questions between you and your spouse about how children should be raised spiritually.

"I think if you have more than one faith, then you have to think what faith

are you going to raise them," said Jim Palvino, a member of the Holy Ghost group.

Agosto noted that couples should consider ahead of time how they will raise their offspring with a knowledge of God.

"I think it's important that they be exposed to some kind of religion whether it's Catholic or Protestant," she said of children.

Arthur Louis DiNieri III, another member of the Holy Ghost group, spoke for many when he noted that love may be the preeminent value in any romantic relationship, but shared faith ranks up there with love in terms of determining a couple's mutual happiness.

"I really think it doesn't matter who you love, you just need some kind of faith in the family," he said.

But McCabe wrote a question that brought up a whole other issue framing the topic of dating and marrying people with religious values: Where do you find them?

Do you have advice for readers of the Young Adults page on this subject? Is it possible to deliberately choose social settings where you can find someone who is an eligible Catholic? Or is it something that you have to leave up to Fate or God, more or less?

Write to the Young Adults Page, c/o Rob Cullivan and Mike Latona, *Catholic Courier*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624-1899. We look forward to your comments.



At the net

Emmaus, the young adult group at Corpus Christi, has been sponsoring pick-up volleyball games this summer behind the Memorial Art Gallery, 500 University Ave., Rochester. Above, Ric Zeller (striped shirt), the organizer of the games, returns a serve from Cindy McKenna (far left). At right, Josh Fernandez (center) leaps to spike the ball as Tim Carlin moves to block. For more information on the games, contact Ric Zeller at 325-2424.



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