

FEATURE

Where's the best place to meet a mate with values?



By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

In the last two months, interviews with young adults for the Young Adults Page have found that diocesan Catholics value spirituality in potential mates and, in particular, hope to find mates who share a belief in Christ.

But where does a young adult find someone who believes in God and who wants to fall in love with someone who shares that belief?

Nightclubs don't hold "Catholic Singles" nights on a regular basis, and Christianity isn't exactly the hottest topic of conversation at most happy hours. Meanwhile, a single Catholic looking for a date through the personal advertisements in any newspaper might conclude that it's far more important to believe in non-smokers' rights than it is to believe in Roman rites.

According to members of the Singles Group at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Greece, finding a true believer to love takes a combination of luck and common sense.

"Obviously, if you're going to a church, and you're going to a bar, in the church you're going to find someone with the same values, whereas in a bar you don't know them," said Joan Schmidt, a member of the group.

She added that parishes can do their young adults a favor by publicizing events

for Catholic singles, who, like their non-Catholic counterparts, often are limited to clubs and bars as spots to mingle with potential mates.

"For me, I would be very wary of meeting someone in a bar, and then going out with them," she said.

Susan Prem, a third-grade religious education teacher at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Greece, echoed Schmidt's sentiment.

"My experience going to bars nowadays is that most people are going there to find a significant other, and the faith and values part isn't as important," she said.

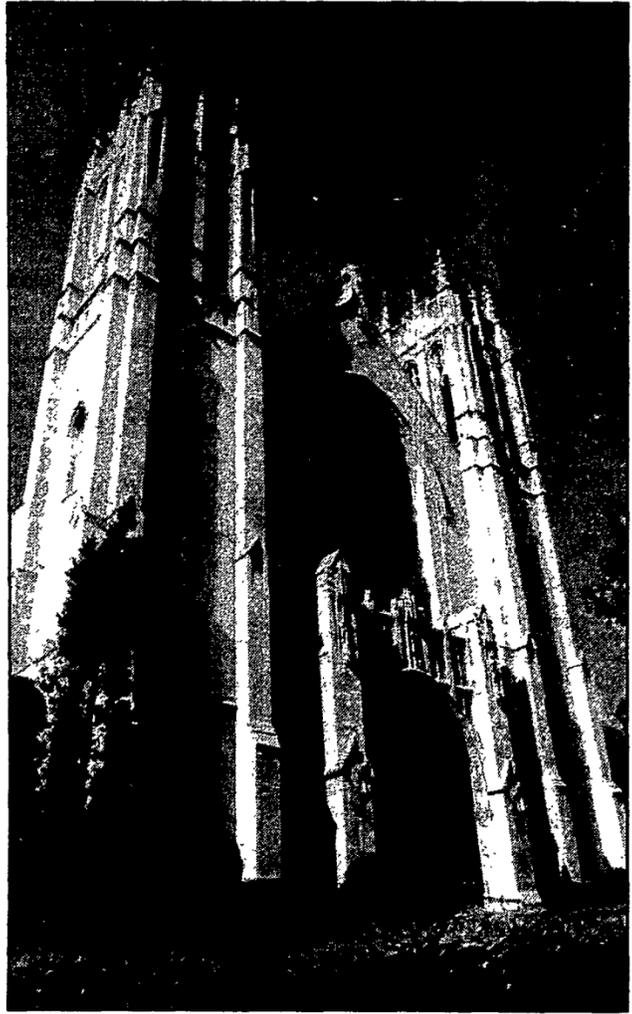
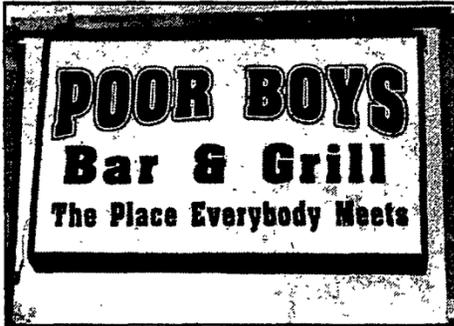
Natalie Razzano, a bingo volunteer at the parish, joined the group at St. Charles "basically to meet people my age," she said.

"If dating comes out of it, that would be fine," she added.

Like Schmidt, Razzano has become disillusioned with the club scene.

"Sometimes, you'll be lucky enough to meet somebody with the same values," she said. "(But) you can't go there meeting someone to date because you'll end up being disappointed."

Jim Pellman, one of the organizers of the St. Charles Singles Group, said the group is primarily made up of adults between the ages of 25 and 35, and was founded to introduce singles to one another. But the group's social events em-



phasize shared fun, not match-making, he said.

"If people meet each other, and things click, that's fine," he said.

In fact, one man who belonged to the group and asked to remain anonymous said Catholics should look beyond such organizations if they want to meet potential mates with Christian values. Ask your friends to set you up with a date who knows ahead of time that a belief in God is important to you, he said.

"It's a lot easier," he said of such "blind" dates. "They know what you're looking for, and you know what they're looking for."

Catholic News Service recently reported that a new book suggests that as U.S. Catholics climb up the economic ladder, their Catholic faith calls them to resist certain "American" ideas: the unqualified right to abortion; individualism in the marketplace, including anti-union sentiment; and personal worship and religious experiences which focus exclusively on personal fulfillment.

Conscience First, Tradition Second reports the findings of a detailed survey Patrick McNamara administered to seniors at a Catholic high school in the Southwest

each year over a 12-year period. The survey support the argument that the more successful Catholics are in the U.S. assimilation process, the less successful they are at transmitting traditional values to their children.

For example, the Catholic teens in the surveys did not agree with Catholic sexual teachings. Nearly two-thirds believe premarital sex is moral. On the other hand, a sizable percentage accept Catholic social teaching on race and economics. And about 50 percent attend Mass weekly.

Are you more "American" than "Catholic"? Or just the opposite?

As a young adult, do you find it difficult to hold onto the values the church proclaims? Or are you actually enriching the marketplace and society with a faith-based outlook?

If you would like to share your thoughts on this issue for the next Young Adults Page, write to: Young Adults Page, Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624-1899. We'll try to include your comments in next month's page.

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