

YOUNG ADULTS

Site lets singles flirt on the Net

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

If you're a faithful Catholic single, here are some tips on how to meet a prospective mate:

1. Don't brush your teeth.
2. Don't change your clothes.
3. Don't even bother taking a shower or washing your hair.

Follow these steps, and there are hundreds of Catholic men and women in the country who will be interested in talking to you nonetheless.

Of course, there's one catch — you'll have to do it via the Internet.

And you may have to brush your teeth at some point in the future.

That would be about the time you meet a potential mate with whom you've corresponded via Catholicsingles, a site on the World Wide Web that opened May 1. Interested Catholic singles can find it at <http://www.catholicsingles.com>.

The brains behind the site belong to Anthony Buono, general manager of Scepter Publishing Inc., a Catholic book publishing firm in Princeton, N.J. Although he's happily married himself, Buono said he designed Catholicsingles for Catholics who can't seem to find marriage material anywhere.

"Even in the Catholic world, it's hard to find Catholics who are really loyal to the pope ... especially in the area of sexual morality," said Buono during a phone interview with the *Catholic Courier* from his Princeton office.

In days past, Catholics who toe the church line on moral issues could meet potential mates in their neighborhood, their parishes, their workplaces or at college, Buono said.

"But all of these methods have pretty much turned out to be a dry well for these

type of Catholics ...," Buono said.

Apparently, Buono has tapped into something since the site already claims 652 members, 52 percent of whom are male and 48 percent are female. Most of the men are between the ages of 20 and 35, he said, whereas about 33 percent of the females are in that age bracket. The site has already produced its first engagement. He reported that a woman from Kentucky and a man from Wyoming met through Catholicsingles and will be married in February.

Membership is open to anyone — even non-Catholics — who are serious about seeking a mate and willing to shell out \$8.95 a month (first month free), according to information from the Web site. The New Member Questionnaire lists such queries as "How often do you attend church or church related functions?" and "Are you free to marry in the church?"

Although new members are also asked to write about their opinions on the pope and artificial contraception, Buono stressed that the site is open to Catholics who may not agree 100 percent with everything the church teaches. He added that the site is designed to allow a member to remain anonymous as long as possible.

Buono said that the site seems to attract "busy Catholics" — doctors, lawyers and other professionals who have a hard time finding Catholics like themselves to date in their hometowns. In this day and age, Catholic men and women may have to travel out of state to find their dream mate, he noted, and the member questionnaire does ask "How far of a distance is allowed for your match?"

Although members are asked to provide a photo of themselves, Buono encourages lengthy written communication between members via the Web

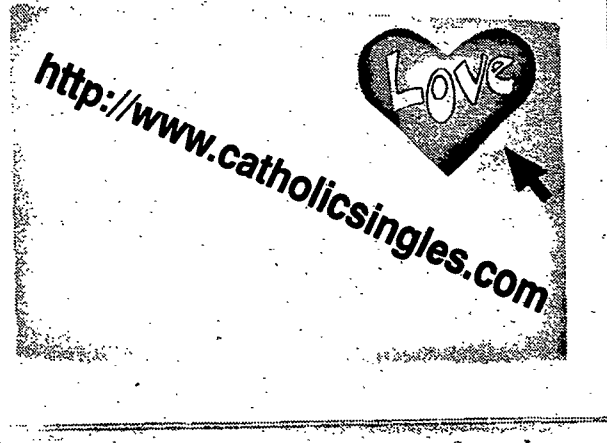
before they choose to meet.

Lengthy missives allow members to gain a fuller picture of a potential mate's values, desires and wants, he noted, pointing out that people who meet and talk in the traditional manner may not be as open with one another as people are on the Web.

"Our members are thrilled with being able to break down the traditional walls of meeting somebody," he said, noting that dating and meeting people often entails social rituals that can be dispensed

with on the Web. Not to mention the fact that the site removes the temptation to engage in premarital sex, he noted.

"It seems like a purer way to begin a friendship in a lot of ways," he said of Catholicsingles.



Events

For information on the following events, call Odyssey, the diocesan-sponsored young adults network, at 1-800-388-7177, then press 1-5-375.

Sunday, Dec. 6: Sisters of St. Joseph retreat for singles, 2-7 p.m., Rochester motherhouse. No fee, but reservations required. Call 716/539-5689.

Tuesday, Dec. 8: Odyssey members will help sort food for Foodlink, 100 West Ave., Rochester, from 6-8 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 15: Volunteers need-

ed at supper program, Blessed Sacrament Church, Rochester, 6-8:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 16: Dinner at the Distillery, 1142 Mt. Hope Ave., Rochester, at 7 p.m. RSVP by Dec. 15.

Monday, Dec. 28: Discussion for 18-to-22-year-olds: "Meeting Jesus during the Christmas season," 6:45-10 p.m., at The Dugan Center, St. Mary's Church, Rochester. Swing dancing afterward: \$6. Reservations requested.

Thursday, Dec. 31: New Year's Eve party at Lakeshore Country Club in Greece. \$48 per person. Reservations needed by Dec. 1.

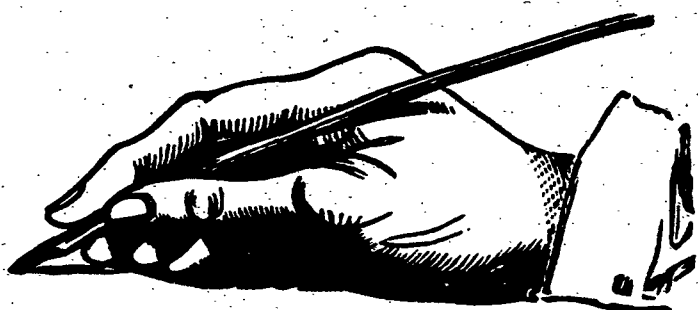
Entrance Exam

grades 7-12

Saturday Dec. 5, 8:30 am

Call 256-6117 for application.

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