



FAITH: A FRESH TAKE



January 15, 2015



LIZ QUIRIN

NAMED A BISHOP: Franciscan Fr. Fernand "Ferd" Cheri III was named a bishop this month. The article at right gives some background on Fr. Cheri. He will be auxiliary bishop in New Orleans. Here, he celebrates Jesuit Fr. Joseph Brown's (at right) 40th anniversary.

Fr. Ferd Cheri Named Auxiliary Bishop

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Pope Francis has named Franciscan Father Fernand "Ferd" Cheri III, a New Orleans native who currently is director of campus ministry at Quincy University in Illinois as an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

The appointment was announced Jan. 12 in Washington by Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Bishop-designate Cheri, who turns 63 Jan. 28, has a background that includes extensive roles in black Catholic liturgy, music and spirituality, in addition to having served on the Franciscans' provincial council and as their director of friar life.

He originally was ordained as a priest for the Archdiocese of New Orleans May 20, 1978. He studied at Notre Dame University and at the Institute for Black Catholic Ministry at Xavier University, both in New Orleans.

After serving as a priest at four parishes in New Orleans and Marrero, Louisiana, in 1992 he entered the novitiate for the Order of Friars Minor, in

the Sacred Heart Province, based in St. Louis. Bishop-designate Cheri made his solemn profession as a Franciscan in 1994. Since then he has served as a chaplain at Hales Franciscan High School in Chicago and as pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Nashville, Tenn. He served as a choir director and guidance counselor at Althoff Catholic High in Belleville, while part of a contingent that launched St. Benedict the Black Friary in East St. Louis, an outreach to the poor, African-American community.

Prior to beginning his position at Quincy University in 2011, he was director of campus ministry at Xavier University. In addition to his post at Quincy, he is vicar of Holy Cross Friary, located on the campus.

Bishop-designate Cheri also is a board member of the National Black Catholic Congress and has been involved in activities including the NBCC gatherings, the U.S. bishops' subcommittee on Black Catholic worship and the National Joint Conference of Black Religious Planning Committee.

Parenting in a World of Excess

During the past few days, I have found myself engulfed in what can only be described as "clean up" from the



holidays. The piles of presents and wrapping paper sat under the tree for a few weeks until I urged my children to sort through the presents, try on new clothes to ensure they fit and clean out closets

and drawers to make room for their new goodies.

The countless bags of returns are now piled where the tree used to stand and the decorations are securely packed away awaiting next year's holiday season. I can't help but find myself discouraged, though, by the excess. Even though I am grateful that my children are loved and blessed with family and friends who shower them with gifts each year, I wonder if it benefits their well-being and sense of what's important in life.

When I was younger, I remember cherishing the gifts I received, especially when my mother struggled to support three girls on her own. She always did (and still does) manage to put gifts under the tree that held a special meaning, resulting in a "woo hoo" outburst each Christmas morning. One year, it was a manual typewriter that launched my love of writing and publishing. Later in life, it was a homemade scrapbook of every article I had published, with many credits to The Messenger. A few years ago, she paid for a few months of my daughter's dance lessons and it brought me to tears. It showed me that she understood what I really needed at the moment and she was happy to provide some peace of mind and relief for me, as well as providing opportunities for my daughter.

Growing up, it never felt like excess — each gift had meaning. We didn't count the number of gifts under the tree as many children do now. Instead, we cherished what we were blessed

to receive because we understood the financial struggle.

The countless lessons I learned during childhood have stuck with me well into my journey as a parent, yet I often struggle with how to provide my children with the same lessons that will aid them into adulthood. Too many times, children are focused on how much they receive versus what they receive and the sentiment and goodwill behind that gift.

Both of my children were extremely grateful this year for what I could provide and both know that as a single mom, sometimes the struggle is very real to provide presents under the tree. However, as gifts pour in from well-meaning family and friends, I can't help but worry that they may not truly understand that the season is about giving versus receiving.

After praying about my inner struggles with excess, this year, I was determined to model my mother's actions and provide gifts with meaning versus a handful of cash and a pile of gifts that would be returned — for cash or store credit. My practical side was apparent when I filled my daughter's stocking with makeup and hair products and my son's with shaving cream and hair gel. My sentimental side prompted me to create an inexpensive shadow box for my son's football jersey, so he could proudly display it on his bedroom wall. Instead of handing over cash for the letterman jacket my daughter was saving for this year, I created a cardboard cutout of a money tree with a few dollars on each branch.

I wanted this year to be different, I wanted my children to see that gift giving requires faithful thought and effort and I wanted to see the underlying reason for the season. The smiles on their faces and the gratitude shown was a small indicator that this year was about success — not excess.

— Shannon Philpott

Shannon Philpott is a freelance writer and college journalism instructor, but most of all a mother of two teens. You can see her work at www.shannonphilpott.com.

When Broken Resolutions Don't Have to Die

By now, many have broken some of those New Year's resolutions that seemed so promising weeks ago.



Research shows that the majority of Americans engage in this practice of setting goals at the start of a new year, yet few of us see it through with resolute consistency. I am among that mass,

I regret to say, and have not yet lost those pounds as promised year after year.

"Why bother?" some may ask, of making resolutions. Is this just a perfunctory ritual taken on without thought and commitment? Would we be more honest with ourselves to simply stop? As one who has failed frequently, I have pondered this. I'm happy to say, I've come out of my musings affirming the practice and cheering for my compatriots who keep trying.

The name of the month January takes its root from the mythical Roman god Janus, with his two faces confronting the past and the future. Because Janus could turn his gaze in both ways, the Romans, beginning in the reign of Caesar, made the New Year a time to atone for the past and appeal to Janus' forgiveness through acts of kindness.

From their inception, New Year's resolutions as expressions of the desire and the agency for improvement are inherently self-critical and optimistic. There is something fresh, renewing and energizing about the ability to imagine a better future through one's efforts. It is the Charlie Brown in us unbowed by the hard-nosed realism of the Lucy. It is a vote for ourselves saying that we will not just throw in the towel.

Despite my spotty track record, I am glad I have made my collective resolutions over the years. Weight may not have peeled off, but I have learned a lot about nutrition, healthy foods and better eating habits. These now inform my choices. I may not exercise with an iron will, but it has become part of my regimen, and I miss it when I get away from it.

From actions prompted by past resolutions that eventually took hold as habits, I now take my vitamins daily, chug down a big glass of water when I wake up in the morning and explicitly acknowledge God's presence in everything I am about to do that day. I may not have gotten an "A" for perfect execution, but taking the long view, I see that not all is lost.

For resolutions to stick, they need to be small, denominated into specific actions. This means the opposite of grand intentions such as "become fit," or "be thoughtful," "get organized," or the like. Instead, say you'll take the stairs instead of the escalators out of the subway three days a week, or mark the birthday of your assistant or closest colleague in your calendar and send a greeting; organize one drawer a month.

While resolutions point the way to the great expanse of the future, our actual living is done day by day, moment by moment. To give up on our resolutions because of a lapse ignores the fact that every day is a gift filled with its own opportunity and invitation. While the New Year naturally denotes a beginning of sorts, each dawn offers the same fresh start.

The hopefulness that fills us at the beginning of the New Year can present itself every day if we choose to claim it.

— Carolyn Woo,

president/Ceo Catholic Relief Services

Fresh Take: a way to look at faith from a different perspective

This is an online-only page dedicated to young adult Catholics, their interests, their needs, their challenges and their faith.

We want to give young adults something to "chew on," to think about

when they're looking for something more than an on-line horoscope or the latest star news.

This page offers columns we believe will interest our young adults. Let us know.

Email us at cathnews@bellevillemessenger.org