

# Weston

SOUTH FLORIDA SUN - SENTINEL | FRIDAY | MARCH 1, 2002

## Community News

### Clergy THREE LEVELS OF RELIGION

Most of us would recognize that human relations fall into three general categories — that of acquaintanceship, friendship and intimacy.

Acquaintances are people whom we know in a cursory sort of way. These are the persons who deliver mail and ring up our groceries. The people we may see regularly at the gym, the tennis court, the

PTA or church. We know something about them, perhaps enjoy seeing them and have some occasional or even regular interchange with them. We are connected to these persons, but

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loosely. We don't invest a great deal of ourselves with them nor do we expect much in return. If we are active people, we probably have many acquaintances.

Friends are a different level. These are persons with whom we pursue an active relationship. We expect something from them and they from us. Oftentimes this entails a game of "tug-of-war" as we get to know them and what pleases them. Of course, the same thing is going on the side of our friends as they get to know us. If the friendship develops in a healthy way, there begins to be less "tug-of-war" and more mutual reliance in meeting legitimate human needs. Friendship is a labor intensive and requires maintenance. Logically, we have far fewer friends than we have acquaintances.

Intimacy brings friendship to a deep and profound level. Here we open our souls and our spirits to another human being. There is great risk in human intimacy, but there is also great reward. Intimacy is what enables us to become truly and completely human.

These same categories apply to people of faith in their relationship with God. The categories have names — religion, spirituality and holiness.

Religion means that one is connected to a belief in the divine and perhaps connected to a community of believers. There may be a very loose or a very tight connection. Religion keeps a person on the level of the externals of worship and service that maintain religious organizations. Not much is expected from faith or God at this level.

Persons seeking spirituality enter into the "tug-of-war" with God. They begin questioning the meaning of their lives and their interface with the divine.

If spirituality develops in a healthy way, it entails an increasing dependence of God, a deepening investment of oneself and, I believe, an increasing respect for the spiritual journeys of other people.

The move into holiness brings a person into the deepest levels of contact with God and oneself. It is there that the believer finds a "peace that passes understanding." As I read and study the lives and thoughts of people at this level, they seem to say similar things and have like experiences. While maintaining their religious beliefs and doctrines, holy people are able to find a love and care for other humans that goes beyond religious belief, race or ethnicity, politics or economics. In their union with the divine, they find union with their fellow humans, indeed they find union with all of creation.

*Father Paul E. Edwards is pastor of St. Katharine Drexel Catholic Church in Weston.*

### Religion Notes

COMPILED BY VALERIE HERSCH

#### ST. KATHARINE PICNIC

In honor of its first Feast Day Celebration, St. Katharine Drexel Catholic Church in Weston will have a picnic in the park Sunday.

Co-sponsored by the Broward County Parks and Recreation Department, the event begins at 10 a.m. at Markham Park, just north of Weston at 16001 W. State Road 84, Sunrise, with a procession and a Mass celebrated by Bishop **Thomas Wenski** of the Archdiocese of Miami.

**Katharine Drexel** was canonized by Pope **John Paul II** in 2000. A Philadelphia socialite, Drexel died in 1955 after devoting her life to "empowering those less fortunate, especially Native Americans and African Americans," organizers of the Feast Day explain. The Church of St. Katharine Drexel was founded in September 2001.

The picnic, which begins at noon following the mass, also will feature a variety of activities for children and adults. An admission fee of \$1 per person for those more than 5 years old is payable at the Markham gate. Call 954-389-5003.

Friday, March 1, 2002

Column by Father Paul: Three levels of Religion.  
Article about our Church's March 3 CELEBRATION.