



Second Sunday of Lent February 24, 2013 C

- **Parish Mission this week**
- **Jack Jezreel next week**

You heard Fr. Darrin speak at Mass today. I hope you will consider coming to one or more of his mission presentations.

Jack Jezreel is coming Thursday, March 7th

A week from Thursday, Ascension will host Jack Jezreel, founder and president of JustFaith Ministries, who will speak on *“The Call to Transform Our Hearts and Our World.”* Jack is a nationally-known speaker who most often addresses audiences in the thousands at national and diocesan Catholic gatherings. He is very eager to visit Ascension, which has the largest group of *GoodNews*People participants among the 25 pilot parishes.

Jack holds a Master of Divinity degree from Notre Dame University. He brings to his presentations a sound knowledge of Scripture, an extensive background in parish ministry, and exciting insights into the intersection of spirituality and action. His presentation on Thursday, March 7th, will begin at 7 p.m. in the school cafeteria. All are welcome.

I especially encourage all of you who work in outreach ministries to come to this event. Also, I encourage those of you who have questions about the *Social Teachings* of the Church to come. Unfortunately, this is an aspect of the Church’s teaching that is very much misunderstood, or in some places much maligned.

GoodNews Program. Last fall, 150 parishioners participated in 16 small groups studying the Social Teaching of our Church.

*GoodNews*People comes to us from **JustFaith Ministries**, a national Catholic organization whose mission is to “form, inform and transform people of faith by offering programs and resources that sustain them in their compassionate commitment to build a more just and peaceful world.” JustFaith Ministries partners with Catholic Relief Services and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, international and domestic outreach programs of the United States Conference of Catholic bishops. Commenting on the

GoodNews program, one writer said: “This is not about liberal or conservative, left or right, one political party or another, but about taking very seriously our responsibility to work for change that really reduces poverty

Breakthrough—Nine Catholic Women Speak for Themselves

The back cover of this very interesting book states:

Catholic women are some of the most maligned, most caricatured, and most intriguing people in American society.

America is flirting with the idea that being a Catholic female means saying “yes” to the faith as a private source of comfort, but saying “no” to living out its more countercultural moral and social teachings.

Catholic women are facing unprecedented questions about sex, money, marriage, work, children, and the Church itself—questions with innumerable personal and societal repercussions. Is it even possible that the teachings of a 2,000-year-old religion are still relevant for today’s toughest issues?

A quick tour of leading cultural indicators seems to say “no.” But this is far from the whole story. Many women, courageously facing questions their mothers and grandmothers would never have encountered, are finding intellectually and spiritually satisfying answers within the framework of their Catholic faith.

Nine such Catholic women—varying widely in age, occupation, and experience—share personal stories of how they struggled toward the realization that the demands of their faith actually set them free. Their stories—full of honesty, but ultimately hope—shed new light and new clarity on women’s continued attraction to the Catholic faith.

Topics include:

- Navigating dating and sex expectations
- Feminism, freedom, and contraception
- Children versus a “better me”
- Being Catholic in light of the sexual abuse scandal
- Faith, psychology, and same-sex attraction

In the introduction, Helen Alvare, law professor and ABC news consultant on things Catholic, writes:

“This timely book is designed to showcase the ways that some Catholic women have drawn upon the resources of their ancient faith to face completely modern situations. You will see sometimes that the authors have explicit and well-communicated Church teaching to rely upon. Other times they do not. Consequently, they are often faced with confronting historically new circumstances as best they can, with the aid of their faith, with prayer, their best understanding of whatever guideposts they can find in Catholic teaching, and the example of loving and more spiritually mature role models.

All of the contributors are Catholic women who have struggled, successfully and with integrity, to figure out how the demands of their faith allow them to live freely and even with joy in the context of some very pointed and current challenges. Their stories and reflections—told in everyday language—should help clear up some of the mystery surrounding Catholic women’s continued attraction to their faith and demonstrate what they might bring to American culture.”

Before you allow our secular culture to decide what you or your daughters or granddaughters should be thinking on hot button issues that impact women, I suggest you read this book and/or share this book with the adult female members of your family. The contributors are all highly educated and successful Catholic women.

Loveandfidelity.org

Recently, I heard a young lady interviewed who was very concerned about the sexual promiscuity that occurs on college campuses. In an attempt to push back against this promiscuity, she started an organization called *Love and Fidelity Network*. If you wish to check out the website, go to www.loveandfidelity.org. The following is an excerpt from a letter that is addressed to parents about their concerns.

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your concern about the sexual climate and challenges your sons, daughters, and their friends are facing on their college campuses. Whether your son/daughter is currently attending college or will be attending soon, it is our hope that this letter will help you understand the invaluable role you have to play in helping your child redefine their campus sexual culture.

Unfortunately, **students today are surrounded by examples of sexual perversion, rampant hooking-up, and sexual promiscuity.** What is more, many universities now encourage this “hook-up culture” with

programs and services that present biased sexual health information. **Sexual experimentation and expression are often actively encouraged as healthy and normal.** Some college administrations have even allowed the screening of pornographic films, demonstrating a real lack of understanding of how such material is detrimental to young men and women as they negotiate their own sexual decisions and relationships.

The fact is college environments are often hostile to the values we hold dear. Sexual self-restraint, premarital abstinence, and notions of sexual decency are scorned and disregarded as unreasonable and outdated. There is an increasingly one-sided conversation on matters of marriage, family, and sexuality that favors a looser, “anything goes” standard. In such an environment, **the values you worked hard to instill in your child are often completely undermined as wrong and old-fashioned.**

Students are often unaware of the medical, sociological, and moral arguments supporting their values, making many unprepared to defend their views in or outside of the classroom.

We at the Love and Fidelity Network believe there is an urgent need to challenge and change this situation. We aim to educate students in the arguments their universities are not providing them—arguments supporting the value of the institution of marriage, the role of the family, and sexual integrity. **We coach student leaders across the country to proactively respond to their campus culture,** encouraging them to start student groups and to host speakers who contribute helpful information and resources on these matters.

However, these young men and women cannot accomplish this alone. Your help is invaluable to their success on campus.

We encourage you to take an active interest in the challenges your son or daughter faces at college. Encourage him/her to use our website and learn how to defend his/her beliefs and commitments. Don’t hesitate to encourage them to become leaders on campus and to enrich university discussion with the unique and important voice they have to offer.

You have an invaluable role to play in the college education and experience of your son or daughter. With your help and encouragement, we will undoubtedly see a shift from the current one-sided presentation of these issues to a thriving exchange of ideas.

Have a blessed week,

