

# Inquiring Minds: Pondering the Month that was...

#27 February 2014

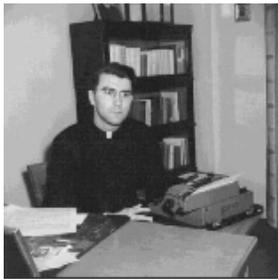
“Choose to be optimistic, it feels better.” --Dali Lama XIV ([more quotes](#))

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## REAPING WHAT ONE SOWS

My mother, now barely alive at 96, once told me I could catch more flies with honey than vinegar--though I wondered at the time why she wanted me to catch flies at all.

I remember my most upbeat teachers, Fr. Jack Olivier for one (1921-2014), who were beacons of light and joy in my seminary experience.



Reflecting on these things over the years brought home the fact that we all are, in a manner of speaking, co-creators of our own realities. Good-seekers are open to and often evoke the goodness in others. Those with critical eyes often see and bring forth the negative in the very same people.

To tap into this positive side is one of the reasons, I believe, people join and attend spiritual communities, go to parties, attend happy hours, etc.; these provide an opportunity to present one's best self, receive the best others have to offer, and bask in goodness. This is more basic than Psych 1, but bears remembering when trying to fend off all the negatives so emphasized in the world news.

I imagine the more down-to-earth people are “realists,” and the optimists and cynics are a bit tiring at times, but it's always nice to be open to glean and nurture those moments of joy and humor when one can. Think of Benigni's movie [Life is Beautiful](#), where he

remained most positive in a concentration camp mainly for his son. Victor Frankl and Anne Frank did the same. Such inspiration in the midst of adversity!

In the classroom when things could get ugly at times, I called upon these mentors and models to help me push through to the positive. Humor was also a great way out. JFK, Reagan, my dad, Uncles Joe and Angelo, *et al.* were my heroes of humor and wit. Humor was matador which sidestepped the rushing bull of confrontation, and allowed both combatants to laugh at themselves and the situation, and not take either too seriously.

I often summon optimism and humor to help me get through some of the dark moments in my life, though these have been few.

## MONUMENTS MEN: A TESTAMENT TO CIVILIZATION

Until I saw the story aired a year ago on PBS, I never knew about the Nazi plunder of the arts in WWII. Even though I am somewhat educated and a bit of a history buff, I was woefully ignorant of this historical fact.

Once again I am so elated that the movies, media for the masses, reminded us ignoramuses that civilization cannot be taken for granted. This movie is a must-see.

## FRONTLINE: SECRETS OF THE VATICAN EXPOSED

Aired on February 25, 2014, this [now-online](#) documentary summarizes the good, the bad, and the ugly about the Catholic Church all the way up to the top. It exposes a corrupt leader of an order too big to punish, corruption in the Curia,

etc.. Another sad must see, so that in seeing we may learn, and by learning, we may change.

## MEETING A CLASSMATE BISHOP AFTER 45 YEARS

Two weeks ago six fellow classmates and I attended St. Patrick's Day of Recollection with 40 other alumni. Bishop Rich Garcia (far right below) led the retreat in his humble and simple



way, much like Pope Francis might have. Rich shared his search for insight in the readings of Dag Hammarskjold, Thomas Merton and others. Bishop Rich is one of the most loved leaders in Monterey diocese, loved and respected by farmworkers and farmers alike.

## “DO NOT BELITTLE YOUR MOMENT OF PERFECTION.”

These were the words of a friend and [political cartoonist, Bob Englehart](#), when I apologized for making another hole-in-one, something I was “not worthy of” because I'm not that good of a golfer. Nevertheless, it borders on the miraculous. It's so unusual that



there must be a message therein-- exactly what I do not know.

-Be Good.