

## **GOD'S CORNER:**

### **What would Jesus tweet?**

By: Rev. Mr. Richard H. A. Washburn, Chaplain

I was reading an article recently and a reporter from an international wire service asked local priest in Westfield, Massachusetts a very serious question. Peggy Weber of CNS asked Fr. James W. Longe, Parochial Vicar of St. Mary's, *"Would Jesus have tweeted?"* His response was an emphatic, *"Absolutely! You know Jesus was not afraid of boundaries."*

I was stunned, I just said to myself *"shut the front door!"* Actually, I have to be honest here; I didn't use that term, but I think you all know what I mean. I was completely shocked. Are you trying to tell me that Jesus, the Christ, our Lord, God and Savior, would spend busy time out of saving souls, to tweet? Come on now, who are you trying to kid? Now, you have to understand; I'm ordained Catholic clergy serving three worship sites in Columbia County, I am no naïve kid (I just look like a young kid – in my mind).

What would he say? Who would follow Jesus? I mean specifically, who on Twitter™ would actually follow him? I mean, if it were really him, I guess I would. More importantly, who would Jesus decide he should follow? Do you think Jesus would follow Fox News? I doubt it. Even they probably wouldn't tell the story of the resurrection in a *"fair and balanced"* way. But what would he do? Who would he reach out too? What would Jesus tweet?

So, I decided to take the serious approach. If I were Jesus – what would I tweet? *"Yo Dude, what did I say? Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you."* That would work, its under 140 characters, He could do that. Then again, why would He? Does it really say anything? I mean, it's Twitter™, is it supposed to say anything? Perhaps, I just don't "get it?"

One of my best friends gave me a book. It's called, *"Go Tweet Yourself: 365 Reasons Why Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and Other Social Networking Sites Suck."* It's written by a self-professed cynic who *"selfishly and shamelessly aired (her) grievances about social networking"* as a way to make a point. Her words, not mine. So, is there anything to this technological craze? Should we all be tweeting?

Well I have to say, I broke down and read the book. Yes, I created a Twitter™ account. No, not under my own name; are you out of your mind? Yes, I honestly eavesdropped on other people's micro-blogging tweeted conversations. It isn't bad, that's what you're supposed to do. It is kind of cool. It is also kind of freaky, because people can do the same thing to do you – and you will say, "*who is this? Why are they talking to me?*" I even attended a two-day colloquium at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) specifically focusing on teaching and learning with social networking media and socio-technical systems (STS). I know, what really big fancy words to describe what my father would call time-wasters.

Can you believe; it is a year later? I've had my Twitter™ account exactly one year on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and guess what, I'm kind of a semi-expert using it. I'm pretty good at it, know how it can be used for practical purposes. When I'm on the train to Manhattan within seconds the MTA's Twitter™ account will update me of what subway lines to avoid and take in emergencies. The Thruway's will warn me about construction delays and the grocery store chain's can tell me about the freshest produce or the latest sales. I can also, waste large amounts of time, monitoring the gossip people are saying about a particular individual or specific place in town. Yes you can, I've done it, it's very amusing.

Now, I'm kind of wishing that CNS reporter would ask me the same question she asked the priest. "*Would Jesus have tweeted?*" And, you know what I would say? Jesus, God, and the Holy Ghost, would do whatever it takes to demonstrate their love, absolute forgiveness, and encouragement for you to be a good Christian. He would walk the longest path; He would climb the tallest mountain; He would continue to pester you, in any venue or technological media to track you down, and express His love for you. That's who He is. That's what He does. And, you are someone that He loves.

You know what I also learned about Twitter™ and the equipment I use it on? Well, both my mobile phone and laptop have a very powerful button on them. It is the most powerful button that any technological device has – the off switch. On occasion, with family, with God, and with your loved ones; you need to use it. Turn it off, and tune in to them. You know why? God and they love you, show them you love them back, and tweet about it later.

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***Peggy Weber is a reporter for the Catholic News Service (CNS) which was created in 1920 by the bishops of the United States, CNS is editorially independent and a financially self-sustaining division of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. CNS is staffed by trained, professional journalists; all eligible non-management staffers are members of The Newspaper Guild/Communications Workers of America. All their publications are available free of charge at [www.catholicnews.com](http://www.catholicnews.com).***