

Tips from 'stone age' Pope Francis

By Carol Glatz | Catholic News Service

Whether you still stick to books or magazines or get everything online, Pope Francis said all media should encourage and edify — not enslave.



(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

"Back in my day — the Stone Age — when a book was good, you read it; when the book was bad for you, you chucked it," he told hundreds of youth in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina June 6.

Pope Francis greets young people in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, June 6.

Give up TV

The pope said he decided back in the middle of 1990 to stop watching TV because "one night I felt that this was not doing me good, it was alienating me" and he decided to give it up.

He did not give up on movies, however.

When he was archbishop of Buenos Aires, he would go on the archdiocesan television station to watch a recorded film he had picked out, which didn't have the same isolating effect on him, he said.

Forget about image

But even in this "age of the image," people should follow the same standards that ruled back "in the age of books: choose the things that are good for me," he said.

Content producers and distributors should choose programs that strengthen values, "that build up society, that move us forward, not drag us down."

Viewers, though, should also choose what's good, and change the channel when they see "filth" and things that "make (us) become vulgar."

Limit screen time

While the quality of content is a concern, it is also critical to limit the amount of time one is tied to the screen, he said.

If "you live glued to the computer and become a slave to the computer, you lose your freedom. And if you look for obscene programs on the computer, you lose your dignity," he said.

Later, in response to a journalist's question on the papal plane from Sarajevo back to Rome, the pope said the online or virtual world is a reality "that we cannot ignore; we have to lead it along a good path" and help humanity progress.

A related video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/pta1-9YVR5M>

"But when this leads you away from everyday life, family life, social life, and also sports, the arts and we stay glued to the computer, this is a psychological illness," he said.

Negative content, he said, includes pornography and content that is "empty" or devoid of values, like programs that encourage relativism, hedonism and consumerism.

"We know that consumerism is a cancer on society, relativism is a cancer on society, and I will speak about this in the next encyclical" on the environment, to be released June 18.

YO CALENDAR

Oct. 25, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.



What: 2015 Catholic Youth Summit. Bishop David Malloy, Father Keith Romke and Paul Vogrinc with the Arise Band will be back. Keynote speaker will be Mary Bielski.

Cost: \$25 youth; \$15 chaperones

Info: Your parish or www.rockforddiocese.org/youthsummit



VOCATION CORNER

The answer

Most of us know what we want in life . . . or at least we think we do! My guess would be that the majority of us, if we thought back to what we wanted to be when we were 5 years old, 10 years old, and 15 years old, the ideas wouldn't necessarily be the same. And we might not end up becoming any of the things that we wanted to be at those early stages of our lives.

This points to the reality that our ideas of what we think will make us happy change over time.

What we think will make us happiest in life one day might be completely different the next. On some level this might be discouraging because we might be left feeling like discovering what will make us objectively happiest in our lives is a futile task.

It's not, however, and here's why: When you were 5 years old, God had a plan in mind for your happiness, and when you were 10, and when you were 15.

Now that you are however old you are, God still has a plan in mind. The best part about this plan is that it is the same, and it doesn't change.

Now I don't know about you, but if I knew that someone had the answer to a question that I had been trying to figure out for my whole life, I think I'd try asking him or her for the answer!

So stop spinning your wheels and ask God His plan for your happiness and for your life!

— Father Keith Romke, Diocesan Director of Vocations
Write to him at kromke@rockforddiocese.org.

It's her mission

Catholic faith prompts winner to ask questions of herself and others

By CAROL ZIMMERMANN | Catholic News Service

Twenty-two-year-old Edith Avila Olea said her friends think she is a hippie.

"It's not so much that I'm a tree hugger, it's the conversations that I purposely stir up," she said, noting that she tends to ask a lot of questions and hopes to make people think.

And if she can get anyone to ask, "What am I doing to help my brother and sister?" she said she is convinced she is fulfilling her mission.

Avila, winner of the 2015 Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award, said she asks questions that might make people uncomfortable, particularly about helping those in need, but that's only because she asks herself the same things. One of her big questions is: "What does it mean to be Catholic?"

She started doing this, she said, during her four-month college internship with the Catholic Campaign for Human Development in the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois. "I learned more than I could have ever asked for and was completely out of my comfort zone," she said of her work there, which included helping to organize — on short-notice — a rally for wage increases.

Avila currently serves as coordinator of the parish outreach and board of young professionals for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Joliet, both initiatives that she started.

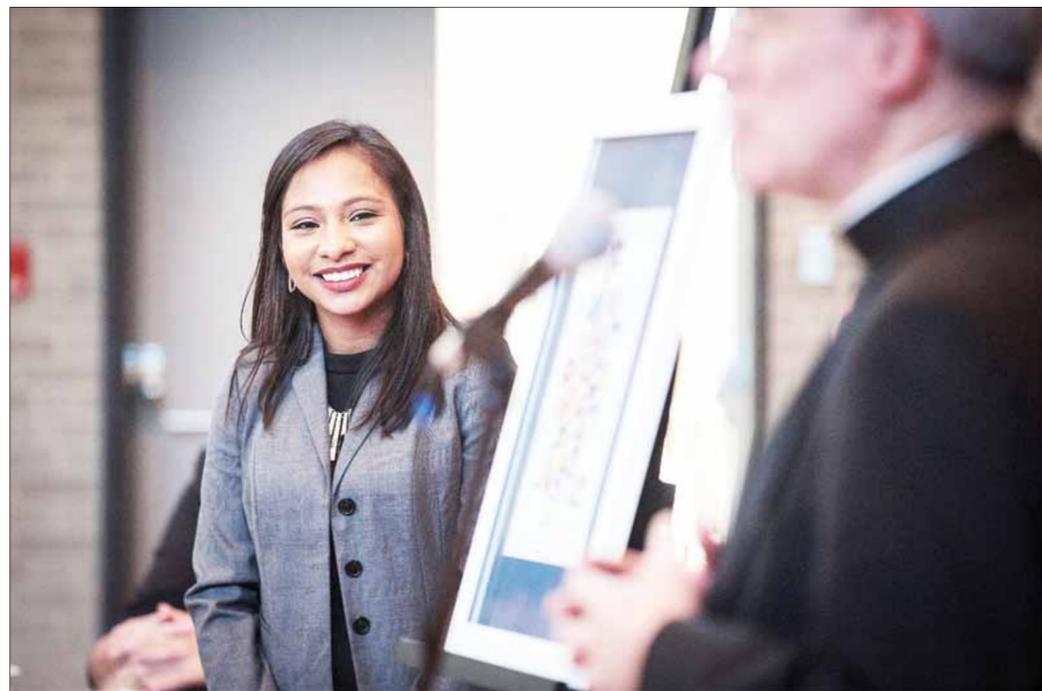
She was presented with the Cardinal Bernardin award June 11 in St. Louis by Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, during a reception sponsored by CCHD at the bishops' spring assembly. CCHD is the bishops' domestic anti-poverty agency.

The award, named for the late Chicago cardinal, has been presented annually since 1998 to a young adult working to empower others and respond to injustice in his or her community.

Avila said she was humbled by the award and thanked those who taught her about faith and justice. "I stand in awe of the Lord," she added.

Avila's petite frame belies her confident manner, but as she sees it, Catholics have to speak out and act on their faith to defend those living on minimum wage or trying to understand and fill out the maze of necessary government forms.

As she puts it: "Catholicism calls us to be anything but silent" and "Fighting for justice for all people isn't an option for Catholics, it is our mission."



(CNS photo/Lisa Johnston, St. Louis Review)

Edith Avila Olea of Joliet receives the Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award during the June 10 spring general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in St. Louis.

Avila, one of six children, immigrated to the United States with her family from Mexico when she was young. She said growing up poor wasn't easy. She attended five different elementary schools and two middle schools. Her family eventually settled in Georgia, where her parents worked multiple jobs to support the family.

At the awards reception she told Catholic News Service that she thinks a lot of young people leave the

church because they are not authentically living out their faith.

"They're living comfortably in the margins instead of in the trenches," she said.

Avila said there are so many avenues in the church where people can find ways to serve. For her, she said she "fell in love with social justice -- not just because of my personal story but I took the call to love your brother and sister very seriously."

The female Thor: Is she worthy?



(CNS photo/Marvel)

After five decades of wielding his characteristic weapon — an enchanted hammer that only those deemed spiritually worthy may use — muscled, mighty Thor Odinson is forced to relinquish it. His replacement as the device's employer is an initially anonymous woman whose identity is only gradually revealed as this radical reworking of a classic series of Norse mythology-based adventures progresses. Writer Jason Aaron and artist Russell Dauterman give fans a compelling fresh perspective on the narrative, and responsibly portray their Joan of Arc-like heroine as a gallant combatant, not a sex object. Their comic's battle scenes can be also characterized as more swashbuckling than bloody. Only the newcomer's battle with a life-threatening illness, a subplot that undeniably adds moral texture to the story for adult readers, may cause some parents to judge this otherwise faith-congruent chronicle unsuitable for their youngsters. There's stylized violence and a mature medical theme.

VideoGames A-II | T+

YO FATHER

Q Some friends of mine have invited me to activities with their church youth group. It was fun the first few times. We went roller skating once and to a paint ball range another time. But the last time it was a movie party at their church and they had a service first. They asked me if I wanted to take up the gifts and distribute communion. I said no and just sort of sat in the back. But now I'm not sure how to tell them that I wasn't looking for a new church to go to. I want to be true to my own faith. How can I tell them and still be their friends?

A What you have just discovered is the fact that sometimes in life it can be difficult to balance our friendships and our faith life, and that sometimes when you put the two together, it can be a bit uncomfortable!

That being said, I want to begin by affirming a few of the thoughts you express:

- 1 For desiring to stay true to your Catholic faith.
 - 2 For enjoying spending time with others.
 - 3 For wanting to maintain your friendship even though you're sensing some discomfort.
- Allow me to explain each of these three things a bit

deeper, and I hope by the end of my explanation you'll have your answer.

1 You desire to stay true to your Catholic faith. This is important to all of us, because our faith is the core of what we believe and what we stand for. What we believe determines our morals, our behavior, and what kinds of things we might do (or avoid).

At the root of this is staying true to who we are. We should *never* change our belief based simply on someone else's opinion or for the sake of gaining popularity or avoiding awkward situations.

Rather, instead of allowing situations to impact our faith, we need to allow our faith to impact how we act in each and every situation that we encounter in our lives.

2 It is good to have friends and to enjoy the various relationships God allows to emerge in our lives. **God Himself is a trinity of persons after all. He Himself is a relationship!**

God wants for us to be able to enjoy the gift of another person and for us to share our lives as well.

That being said, if there is someone we hang around with who tries to pull us away from our faith and our values, either by what they say or by their example, then we might try explaining to them how we feel, and if they don't agree, don't like what we have to say, or don't say they'll try to work on it, then it might be time to find some different company!

3 This flows directly from what I just said above: It is good to try to maintain friendships and to work through difficulties, hardships, and misunderstandings.

What I mean by this is that sometimes we get into situations where we enjoy spending time with certain people, but that there is something present that we are so uncomfortable with that we feel that we can't keep going down the road that things are going down.

When this happens, since we don't want to just go along with it we have two options.

We can block the other person out and stop speaking to or spending time with them anymore or we can express our concern or simply explain how we feel.

In your case, it won't necessarily be easy to voice your thoughts and you'll probably be nervous while doing it, but it is *so* worth it to authentically express and voice who you are and what you believe.

Chances are that your friends will accept you for who you are and for what you believe, and your friendship will be better because of it.

If, on the other hand, they don't respect what you have to say, then you'll know that the friendship wouldn't have been built on mutual respect anyway. In that case, it might be a good idea to invest your time with people and friends who love you for who you are rather than people who try to mold you into what they want for you to be.

So, in light of all of that, I encourage you to pray and ask God to give you the words to speak to be able to express yourself and your beliefs to your friends.

Then be assured that God will be watching over you as you talk with your friends.

This month's YO Father question is answered by Father Keith Romke. Send your questions to youngobserver@rockforddiocese.org.

Like Young Observer on



Follow @youngobserver on



Watch



Real Faith TV

sundays at 6 a.m. on WREX-TV, Channel 13 in Rockford.

too early? Catch it on the Web at www.realfaithtv.com

Brought to you by The Diocesan Office of Communications and Publications