

New Year's resolution: Learn more about Catholicism



Heather
BOZANT
YOUNG ADULTS

As the new year begins, I find myself thinking about what defines us as an American society, and I've turned, unwittingly, to the news. Interspersed between headlines describing crime and death, it is un-failing that there are stories depicting entertainment – or rather, what the latest celebrity news has uncovered. We see this daily in all media: newspaper, magazine, television and the Internet. And the question I always ask myself is, "How is that news?"

I recently read a Newsweek article titled, "The Greatest Show on Earth," that seems to answer my question. In the article, Daniel Boorstin is cited as having defined celebrity as "a person who is known for his well-knownness." And just why is it that today's society is so enthralled with the popularity of the celebrity?

The article describes our society as being fascinated with stories and narratives and, therefore, celebrities receive their popularity by creating narratives for us. The celebrity's life is one long (or short) soap opera providing success – as well as drama and mystery – for society to un-

ravel. But rather than other forms of entertainment, the celebrity enacts the narrative in reality and there are real consequences. Something is always at stake and we, as an audience, no longer have to suspend our disbelief as we would in movies or novels.

Wherever we may be, we are faced with the most recent celebrity news. When we stand in the checkout line at the grocery store, famous faces on magazine covers stare back at us on all sides, taunting us to pick up the magazine and read the latest gossip. The purveyors of celebrity gossip define us. As readers, we are guilty of this strange phenomenon.

Whenever I come home

from college, my sister tells me the latest in celebrity news. She can be counted on to tell me the latest break-ups, hook-ups and scandals. Yet, when my brother asks her whether she has heard of the latest earthquake, plane crash or other news events, she always says no. This is the cultural trap for teenagers and young adults.

If we think about this societal phenomenon, it can remind us of Jesus, who was himself a celebrity. Who were the people spreading gossip about him? The Pharisees. Rather than worry about their own lives and consequences that they may have to face, they worried about spreading lies and gossip about Jesus'

supposed blasphemy.

The Pharisees were like the modern-day paparazzi. Today, however, Jesus is not the celebrity that he once was. Today it seems that the only time we hear of Jesus' message and his deeds, particularly in the college realm, is when we attend Mass and hear the Scriptures and homilies. And even then, how many times do we actually listen to the message?

As the new year begins and we form resolutions, rather than resolving to lose weight or other trivial and superficial plans, perhaps it is time to resolve to change

our definition of American society. Rather than being held captive by the latest of what Hollywood has to offer, we can be held captive by learning our Catholic faith and living it.

This Christmas, my brother reminded me of this necessity by giving me a copy of the "Catechism of the Catholic Church." We are astounded by the amounts of violence in society, so why not learn peace by becoming more aware of our Catholic faith and live as Jesus lived?

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Catholic Charities, Christopher Homes benefit

Elaine Varist, a Catholic Charities' Food for Families/Food for Seniors client since Hurricane Katrina, reacts to receiving a robe from Hotel Monteleone volunteers. The hotel has donated 625 sets of sheets, blankets, dust ruffles, comforters, 2,500 pillows, pillowcases and shams to those in need through Catholic Charities and Christopher Homes.

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